



Getting the most out of workplace conversations

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At the end of this session, you will be able to:



- Increase the effectiveness of workplace conversations
- Manage the time constraints of workplace conversations
- Be more prepared in undertaking effective workplace conversations
- Apply a range of communication skills that support effective outcomes

Communication resources

Context

- Purpose
- Setting – meeting / conversation
- Time constraints
- Resources - notes, data, evidence ...

Participants and relationships

- Familiarity - extent of (working) relationship
- Power differential
- Individual goals

What is said

- Being heard
- Aligning goals
- Relationship building

How it is said

- structure, signposting, phrasing, voice quality, turn-taking, pausing, silence

Non-verbal

- gesture, stance, facial expressions, eye contact

Scenario video 1

Three people meeting



As you watch this video, think about the communication issues and make notes on the worksheet provided.

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Context

Purpose

Workplace conversations generally have a purpose, for example:

- reporting
- planning
- decision making.

Taking into account the purpose of the conversation will help you plan how to deliver your key message and achieve your goals.

Also think about other participants' messages and goals.

Setting

Meetings

planned
multiple participants
formal
fixed agenda
managed

Prepare

Conversations

impromptu
one-to-one
informal
organic/fluid agenda
negotiated

Anticipate & Prepare

Preparation

- identify the purpose and participants
- identify your goals for the conversation
- plan how you deliver your message
- think about the possible reactions of others
- formulate possible responses to those reactions
- develop strategies to deal with the unexpected
- develop **resources** to support/reinforce/summarise your message
- pre-meet with key players (eg Chair, Key Stakeholder)

Time

- making space to have the conversation
- importance and urgency - what happens if you delay or avoid having the conversation
- availability of participants
- adequate time to talk
- managing distractions
- re-scheduling

Participants and relationships

Participants and relationships

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- Power differential
- Individual goals

People... develop trust through interaction and conversation, in relationships with each other. (Solomon and Flores, 2001)

What is said

What is said

1. Focus	issue	person
2. Information	factual	assumptions/bias
3. Perspective	multiple/diverse	singular/limited
4. Outcome alignment	meets organisational need(s)	meets other need(s)
5. Takeaway message	clear/prominent	vague/contradictory

Takeaway message

To achieve your goals, leave your audience with a final, takeaway message that aligns with your goals. This could be:

- a call to action
- a commitment from you
- an agreement to discuss at a later date.

The takeaway message is an important communication resource that can help you manage power differentials.

Scenario video 2

Two people meeting



As you watch this video, think about what is being said and make notes on the worksheet provided.

How it is said

How it is said

Communication is more effective with the right:

- structure, signposting
- phrasing – statements, questions, commands
- voice quality – tone, pitch, *ums* and *ahs*
- turn-taking, pausing, silence.

Non-verbal

Non-verbal

Effective communication is supported by non-verbal resources such as:

- eye contact
- facial expressions
- gesture
- stance/posture.

Conclusion

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