

# *Communication: The importance of nonverbal cues*

*To aid in successful communications within your organization, it is best to start with the very basics: your knowledge of non-verbal communications.*

## ***The Importance of Non-Verbal Cues***

For instance, it's not always just what you say. It's also how you 'say' it – taking into account your eyes, your posture, your overall body language, even your appearance at the time the communication is exchanged, and the intonation in which you convey the message

## ***What are Nonverbal Cues?***

In verbal communication, an active dialogue is engaged with the use of words. At the same time; however, non-verbal communication takes place, relying on nonverbal cues, such as gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, even clothing and personal space.

Nonverbal cues are very powerful, making it crucial that you pay attention to your actions, as well as the nonverbal cues of those around you. If, during your meeting, participants begin to doodle or chat amongst themselves, they are no longer paying attention to you: Your message has become boring or your delivery is no longer engaging.

In addition, you need to be mindful of cultural differences when using or interpreting nonverbal cues. For instance, the handshake that is widely accepted in Western cultures as a greeting or confirmation of a business deal may not be accepted in other cultures, and can cause confusion.

While eye contact, facial expressions, posture, gestures, clothing and space are obvious nonverbal communication cues, others strongly influence interpretation of messages, including how the message is delivered. This means paying close attention to your tone of voice, even your voice's overall loudness and its pitch.

Be mindful of your own nonverbal cues, as well as the nonverbal cues of those around you. Keep your messages short and concise. This means preparing in advance whenever possible. And for the impromptu meeting, it means thinking before you speak.

## ***Why should you be aware of nonverbal cues?***

Having constructive communication skills means great verbal and non-verbal skills--many individuals struggle with the ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively – whether in verbal or written format. This inability makes it nearly impossible for them to compete effectively in the workplace, communicate information to fellow organization members and obviously in the classroom.

Getting your message across is paramount to progressing. To do this, you must understand what your message is, what audience you are sending it to, and how it will be perceived.

***Enhancing your communications:***

- Because gestures can both compliment and contradict your message, be mindful of these.
- Eye contact is an important step in sending and receiving messages. Eye contact can be a signal of interest, a signal of recognition, even a sign of honesty and credibility.
- Closely linked to eye contact are facial expressions, which can reflect attitudes and emotions.
- Posture can also be used to more effectively communicate your message.
- Clothing is important. By dressing for your job, you show respect for the values and conventions of your organization.
- Be mindful of people's personal space when communicating. Do not invade their personal space by getting too close and do not confuse communications by trying to exchange messages from too far away.