MODULE CONTENT

| Unit of Competency | **RECEIVE AND RESPOND TO WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION** |
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| Module Title | **RECEIVING AND RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION** |
| Module Descriptor | This unit covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to receive, respond and act on verbal and written communication. |
| Nominal Duration | **12 hours** |
| Summary of the Learning Outcomes: | |
| Upon completion of this module the student must be able to: | |
| LO1. Follow routine spoken messages | |
| LO2. Perform workplace duties following written notices | |

**LEARNING OUTCOMES 2**

**PERFORM WORKPLACE DUTIES FOLLOWING WRITTEN NOTICES**

**Assessment Criteria:**

1. Written notices and instructions are read and interpreted correctly
2. Routine written instructions /procedures are followed in sequence
3. Clarification is sought from workplace supervisor on all occasions when any instruction/ procedure is not understood.

**Contents:**

* Knowledge of organizational policies/guidelines in regard to processing internal/external information
* Work practices in handling communications
* Communication processes
* Receiving and clarifying communications, messages and information.
* Recording messages and information

**Conditions:**

The students/trainees must be provided with the following:

* Written policy/procedures
* Information and documentation
* Memos
* Manuals
* Journals/articles
* Printed materials
* Electronic ail
* Briefing notes
* General correspondence

**Methodologies**:

* Lecture /discussion
* Demonstration
* Modular

**Assessment Methods:**

* Written exam/test
* Practical

**LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES NO. 1 PERFORM WORKPLACE DUTIES FOLLOWING WRITTEN NOTICES**

| **Learning Activities** | **Special Instructions** |
| --- | --- |
| Read Information Sheet 1.2-1 Organizational policies and guidelines | If you have some problem on the content of the information sheet don’t hesitate to approach your Trainer.  If you feel that you are now knowledgeable on the content of the information sheet, you can now answer self-check provided in the module. |
| Answer Self-Check 1.2-1 Organizational policies and guidelines | Try to answer the Self-check without looking at the Answer Key  Compare your answer to Answer Key 1.2-1 |
| Read Information Sheet 1.2-2 Work practices in handling communications | If you have some problem on the content of the information sheet don’t hesitate to approach your Trainer.  If you feel that you are now knowledgeable on the content of the information sheet, you can now answer self-check provided in the module. |
| Answer Self-Check 1.2-2 Work practices in handling communications | Try to answer the Self-check without looking at the Answer Key  Compare your answer to Answer Key 1.2-2 |
| Read Information Sheet1.2-3 Communication processes | If you have some problem on the content of the information sheet don’t hesitate to approach your Trainer.  If you feel that you are now knowledgeable on the content of the information sheet, you can now answer self-check provided in the module. |
| Answer Self-Check1.2-3 Communication processes | Try to answer the Self-check without looking at the Answer Key  Compare your answer to Answer Key 1.2-3 |
| Read Information Sheet 1.2-4 Receiving and clarifying communications, messages and information. | If you have some problem on the content of the information sheet don’t hesitate to approach your Trainer.  If you feel that you are now knowledgeable on the content of the information sheet, you can now answer self-check provided in the module. |
| Answer Self-Check 1.2-4 Receiving and clarifying communications, messages and information. | Try to answer the Self-check without looking at the Answer Key  Compare your answer to Answer Key 1.2-4 |
| Read Information Sheet 1.2-5 Recording messages and information | If you have some problem on the content of the information sheet don’t hesitate to approach your Trainer.  If you feel that you are now knowledgeable on the content of the information sheet, you can now answer self-check provided in the module. |
| Answer Self-Check 1.2-5 Recording messages and information | Try to answer the Self-check without looking at the Answer Key  Compare your answer to Answer Key 1.2-5 |

**INFORMATION SHEET 1.2-1**

**ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

Learning Objectives

After reading this Information Sheet, you must be able to:

1. Understand the goal of organizational policy and guidelines

**INTRODUCTION**

Regardless of size or industry, every organization needs to establish a clear set of policies to help guide operations. But what is the purpose of policy?



1. **THE GOAL OF POLICIES**

Now that you know what a policy is, it helps to know the purpose of a policy. Rather than thinking of policies as a set of rules to follow, think of policies more in terms of their purpose and benefits for both the employees and the organization.

1. **Set Clear Expectations**

While policies offer a variety of benefits, the primary goal they accomplish is to put in writing what the company expects from employees in terms of the behavior, actions, and processes they take in specific scenarios.

This clarity allows employees to know and understand how they should respond according to the mission, vision, values the company establishes. In a nutshell, policies take the guesswork out of what employees should do.

When they are written in clear, easy-to-understand language, policies explicitly outline the company’s expectations of employees at every level. Different rules do not exist for different levels of employees. Instead, every employee must follow these guiding principles in the day-to-day routines of their jobs, which is the overarching purpose of HR policies.

1. **Create Consistency Throughout The Organization**

Clarity in the company’s guidelines leads to everyone operating according to the same principles and guidelines. In turn, this creates consistent experiences and processes, both internally among employees and externally regarding interactions with customers, vendors, and the general public.

This is especially true for new employees as clear policies help them learn quickly the expectations.

The same is true for company procedures. While policies set boundaries for decision-making, they do provide a bit of flexibility. On the other hand, procedures provide step-by-step instructions, checklists, or processes for specific, routine tasks.

Both policies and procedures help new employees quickly acclimate to the company’s values and mission as well as for specific ways they should do specific tasks.

1. **Reduce Risk**

Establishing the expectations and consistency outlined above allows leadership to ensure the company communicates all laws and regulations to employees. Plus, it ensures employees both understand the policies and know how these policies apply to their day-to-day jobs.

The result? When an organization clearly establishes expectations in writing and incorporates them into the fabric of the corporate culture, this reduces the number of fines and other legal risks for the company.

Building this culture of organizational accountability requires a concerted effort on the part of leadership, but it mitigates risk and drives compliance, which is every employee’s responsibility.

1. **Improves Employee Performance**

Clear policies allow leadership to institute and solidify best

practices throughout the organization. This can be

accomplished through both big-picture efforts – such as

mission statements, which should be included in the policy

manual – as well as through more detailed and specific policies

and procedures.

Beyond mere documents, policies set forth the company’s mission, vision, values, and culture, codified into a written format for employees at every level to access and follow. As living documents that change to reflect current needs and risks, policies are truly the heartbeat of an organization.

How? For starters, these consistent guidelines help build trust among employees, helping to drive accountability.

Developing that accountability mindset empowers both individuals and teams to be more collaborative and productive, allowing them to more effectively contribute to the organization’s overarching goals. Thus, fostering this culture of workplace accountability through the guidance of clear policies helps yield a high-performing company.

1. **Set High Standards For All Employees**

Another purpose of HR policies, it sets the bar high for the standards the company expects employees to live up to. For example, a solid foundation of company policies should address areas such as code of conduct and ethics, anti-harassment, and diversity.

It’s one thing to talk about the organization’s stance on these issues, but it’s another to codify these standards and expectations in writing for all employees. Such policies should clearly delineate the consequences and actions the company will take if an employee violates these rules and policies.

Again, this circles back to all the goals mentioned above, with all of these elements feeding into and off of each other.

1. **HOW TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE POLICIES**

Knowing what policies are, as well as their goals, provides a solid base to move forward with creating and implementing effective policies in your organization.

1. **Gather Your Policies Into One System**

A good first step involves collecting your existing policies together to see what currently exists.

Typically, policies are kept in isolation in a way that hinders communication and cooperation into different departments, which often use different terminology, use different systems to keep them updated, and probably use different templates and formats. This can be a nightmare when aiming for organizational consistency.

Therefore, the best thing you can do to improve the effectiveness of policies is to make them consistent in terms of a common template, format, and language. Also, carry this level of consistency through to where you store your policies by corralling everything into one central location so employees can easily find and access the policies.

1. **Establish A Policy Oversight And Approval Process**

Leadership needs to provide clear authority to a team of people to manage the policies. This could be a single person, such as a Chief Compliance Officer, or a team of people consisting of representatives from multiple departments.

Regardless of who are at the helm of your compliance efforts, this team should work with subject- matter experts and management to establish these company policies.

With a compliance team in place, the next logical step should involve outlining clear approval processes. What needs to be approved by department heads, or legal, or the CEO, or even the board? And when should this happen? Establish the approval process and timeline up front to avoid any surprises along the way.

1. **Track When Employees Were Given Policy Revisions**

When it comes to accountability, employees can only be held accountable to what information they were given at the time. That is why it is so important to be able to track when employees received specific policy updates or revisions.

To address this issue, many companies require employees to sign off on policies, attesting that they received, read, and understood the policy.

Thus, it’s imperative to be able to pull up the specific wording of the policy employees are signing.

Why? If an issue or a violation occurred, it will be evident what the relevant policy was at that time.

1. **Train To Your Policies**

The effectiveness of your policies rests largely in how well your organization communicates, and trains to, your policies.

Employees need to understand not only what to do, but also why these guidelines matter to them. Plus, they need to know where they can find this key information.

Your company must provide clear, consistent, on-going communication regarding new policies and any updates and/or revisions.

One way to solidify your communication efforts is to tap into the power of training, which helps educate employees on the company’s expectations and reinforce concepts outlined in the policies.

If your training aligns and even covers the specifics of the policy, it is much more likely that the employee will comprehend what it says, be able to apply it to their job, and comply. Training to your policies offers another way to boost the effectiveness of the policies themselves.

1. **Communicate Policy Changes When They Occur**

The business landscape changes all the time, with new risks and liabilities constantly popping up. This requires a nimble approach to policies, allowing your organization the ability to get ahead of issues by changing relevant policies as needed.

Say goodbye to the days when your company waits for an annual update to its binder full of policies or even lumps multiple policy revisions into a quarterly update. The regulations change too frequently and the risks are a moving target, so you do not have the luxury of waiting to update your policies.

You need to communicate the revisions, citing both what has changed and what has stayed the

same, which actually helps comprehension.

Because of the fluidity of ever-changing rules, regulations, threats, and risks, it seems antiquated, if not outright risky, to rely on printed policy handbooks and manuals.

They are too cumbersome and costly to update with any speed or regularity. You need a modern, digital solution that gives you the flexibility to update, distribute, and track your critical policies.

Enter, Power DMS, a complete policy management solution for modern-day problems. We securely host, manage, distribute, and track all your policies from a single, searchable system.

This means employees never need to guess where to look for the latest information, saving time and eliminating frustration. And this gives you a simplified-but-cutting-edge system to manage the entire creation, review, approval, delivery process.

The bottom line is, the purpose of policies is to help your organization tie together your mission, vision, values, and culture into clearly written and easily accessible documents for all employees to take to heart.

**PURPOSE**

Policies provide framework and structure for your organization. When consistently enforced, they contribute to the development of your company culture.

If you have strong policies on ethics, for instance, you can help instill the importance of integrity and ethical behaviors in employees.

Policies also serve as a way for management to communicate behavioral expectations to employees. Your guidelines also should convey consequences for employees who violate certain policies.

Good policies reinforce practices that benefit the workplace and customers; they don't arbitrarily and unnecessarily restrict employee freedoms and decision-making.

**INFORMATION SHEET 1.2-2**

**WORK PRACTICES IN HANDLING COMMUNICATIONS**

Learning Objectives

After reading this Information Sheet, you must be able to:

1. Apply the best practices for more effective communication

**INTRODUCTION**

**BEST COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN THE WORKPLACE**

Effective communication is a critical leadership skill, but it takes practice.



As the leaders of their organizations, CEOs are expected to effectively communicate with their stakeholders, customers and employees.

Always being in the spotlight, however, requires a certain communicative skill set. You have to ensure that employees are happy and that everyone feels like they're in the loop on key company happenings too. In essence, it's your job to set the tone for the entire organization.

In as much as the content of your message is important, so is the way you communicate it. Because of this fact, your company culture (which consists of your practices, goals and values) is an integral part of your internal communication strategies during times of change.

Your company culture should be effectively relayed to your employees so that they can, in turn, understand and act on it. This then goes back to the fact that the delivery of the message is as important as the message itself.

Knowing what we know about the importance of content and delivery, here are some of the best communications practices you can implement in today’s workplace:

1. **Create a plan and strategize.**

Before doing anything, you need a plan. Ask yourself questions such as

* “Where do the company’s internal communications stand right now?
* “What works and what needs to be improved?” and
* “How soon do I want to reach my communication goals?”

Use the answers you attain from these questions to create your internal communication strategies. Remember that what makes a strategy effective is that it keeps you on track towards your goal, and it gives you the efficiency you need to achieve the said objective.

1. **Utilize the right communication tools.**

In order for your internal communication strategies to be effective, you have to make sure that you tap into the right avenues. Make sure that you utilize communication software and systems that employees will willingly use, participate in and even enjoy using.

Tools such as cloud technology, group chats, email and others are tools that you may find useful in your organization.

1. **Create a dynamic and fun working environment.**

Gone are the days that work should only be about earning a living. Nowadays, employees seek work that not only gives them opportunities to earn, but to also live out their passions.

A 2013 survey done by PGi actually found that 88 percent of millennials prefer to work in organizations that promote a “fun and social work environment.” Work that is fun and dynamic not only boosts productivity and creativity, but also encourages employee engagement.

1. **Offer channels wherein feedback and ideas can be shared**.

Open and honest feedback is a crucial component to add to your internal communication strategies Not only is it vital to improving what needs to be improved, it allows the workforce and the organization to reach new heights.

Keep in mind that a good thought or idea has no value unless it is expressed or shared. Whether it be a staff meeting, a chat group or even a company open forum, make sure to give your employees the opportunity to express themselves and be heard.

1. **Avoid information overload.**

While information is vital to the operations of a business, do your utmost to avoid information overload. Information overload leads to important messages being disregarded or ignored.

1. **Encourage collaboration**.

Encourage your employees to work together – especially staff members who work in different departments, especially since collaboration is unlikely.

Adding collaboration between different departments as part to your internal communications strategies allows employees to learn from each other, and also deter them from feeling isolated.

Collaborations can be done through special meetings or even Q&A sessions.

1. **Information shouldn’t be the ultimate objective – inspiration should be.**

While relaying information to employees is, of course, crucial to a company’s work processes, it shouldn’t be the only goal in mind.

Internal communications should also go above information and delve into motivation and inspiration.

Through motivation and inspiration, employees feel the urge to act and behave a certain way for the betterment of the team and the whole company.

**INFORMATION SHEET 1.2-3**

**COMMUNICATION PROCESSES**

Learning Objectives:

After reading this Information Sheet, you must be able to:

1. Define Communication and communication process
2. Explain the different mode of communication

**INTRODUCTION**

**WHAT IS COMMUNICATION**

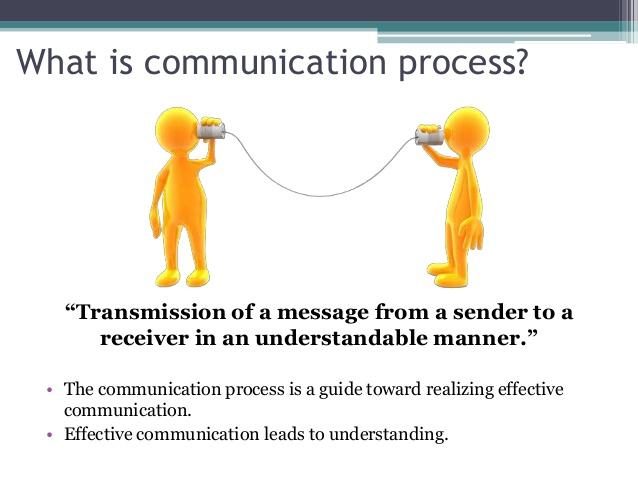
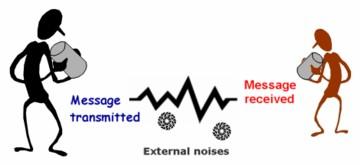


Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another.

Every communication involves (at least) one sender, a message and a recipient. This may sound simple, but communication is actually a very complex subject.

The transmission of the message from sender to recipient can be affected by a huge range of things. These include our emotions, the cultural situation, the medium used to communicate, and even our location. The complexity is why good communication skills are considered so desirable by employers around the world: accurate, effective and unambiguous communication is actually extremely hard.

**COMMUNICATION PROCESS**



A communication therefore has three parts: the sender, the message, and the recipient.

The **sender** ‘encodes’ the message, usually in a mixture of words and non-verbal communication. It is transmitted in some way (for example, in speech or writing), and the recipient ‘decodes’ it.

Of course, there may be more than one recipient, and the complexity of communication means that each one may receive a slightly different message. Two people may read very different things into the choice

of words and/or body language. It is also possible that neither of them will have quite the same understanding as the sender.

In face-to-face communication, the roles of the sender and recipient are not distinct. The two roles will pass back and forwards between two people talking. Both parties communicate with each other, even if in very subtle ways such as through eye-contact (or lack of) and general body language. In written communication, however, the sender and recipient are more distinct.

**Communication is the Exchange of Information, Messages and Thoughts.**

To be effective the information must be communicated to the right person, at the right time and in the right manner. The person receiving the information must also effectively listen, read and/or observe so they understand the communication.

Effective communication is vital in the workplace. It enables workers and supervisors to work together efficiently to meet both the goals of the enterprise and the needs of customers and clients.

**Effective communication is important so that**

* team members understand and agree with team goals
* goals and tasks can be clarified
* team members understand how their tasks fit in with other people’s tasks
* problems can be sorted out before they become too serious
* information that affects team goals can be shared
* the team can evaluate their progress and discuss ways to improve their work.

**Communication may either be oral or written**.

* Oral communication methods may include:
* discussion: to share ideas to facilitate a job being completed on time
* debate: when two people do not agree so put forward their point of view in order to convince the other person
* negotiation: when people discuss their differences of opinion but are willing to
* compromise with each other in order to get a job done
* speeches: for example, in a training session.
* Written communication methods may include
* instructions: to explain how a task must be completed in order to limit misunderstanding
* schedules: to prioritize tasks so that the most important is completed first

**Reports: often used as feedback or when evaluating a task/procedure**

**Effective communication helps workers to**:

* complete a schedule of tasks
* follow a set of instructions
* learn correct procedures and improve work practices
* solve problems
* work as part of a team
* follow the enterprise OHS and environmental procedures

**CATEGORIES OF COMMUNICATION**

There are wide ranges of ways in which we communicate and more than one may be occurring at any given time.

The different categories of communication include:

1. **Spoken or Verbal Communication**, which includes face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media.
2. **Non-Verbal Communication**, covering body language, gestures, how we dress or act, where we stand, and even our scent. There are many subtle ways that we communicate (perhaps even unintentionally) with others. For example, the tone of voice can give clues to mood or emotional state, whilst hand signals or gestures can add to a spoken message.

A significant aspect of face-to-face communication is non-verbal body language. This includes body posture, arm and hand positions, facial expressions, eye contact and hand gestures. Sometimes a conflicting message may be given because the words spoken do not match a speaker’s body language.

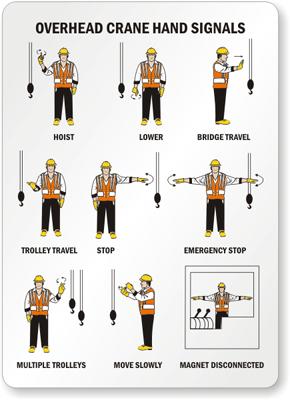
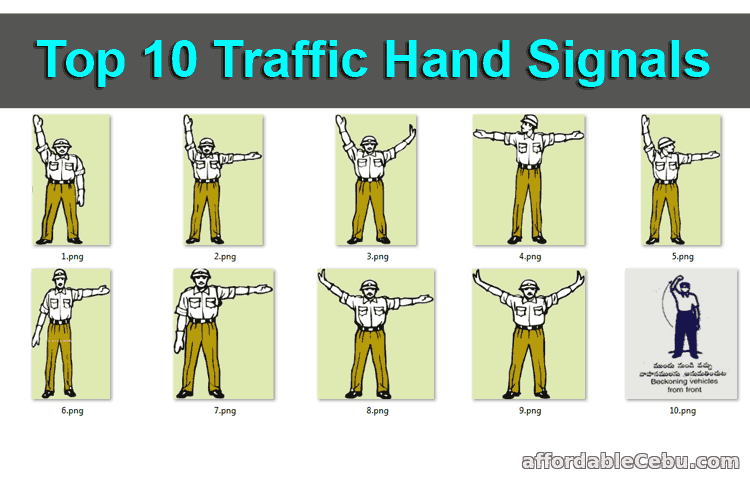
Good observation skills are needed to “read‟ what is really being communicated. Being aware of cues and signals is a crucial skill in understanding people’s attitudes.

Personal presentation, dress and hygiene also contribute to the impression a person makes when they are communicating.

Other forms of non-verbal communication regularly found in the workplace include:

1. **Signals**, for example hand signals used when operating machinery; traffic lights.
2. **Signs,** for example safety signs; workplace warnings; men’s, ladies and disabled toilets; first aid posts.
3. **Diagrams**, for example property maps; diagrams in machinery manuals.
4. **Symbols**, for example poison schedules; map legends; machinery gears and levers.

**Here are some of the Signals and Signs**







1. **Written Communication**: which includes letters, e-mails, social media, books, magazines, the Internet and other media? Until recent times, a relatively small number of writers and publishers were very powerful when it came to communicating the written word. Today, we can all write and publish our ideas on-line, which have led to an explosion of information and communication possibilities.
2. **Visualizations**: graphs and charts, maps, logos and other visualizations can all communicate messages.

**INFORMATION SHEET 1.2-4**

**RECEIVING AND CLARIFYING COMMUNICATIONS, MESSAGES AND INFORMATION**

Learning Objectives:

After reading this Information Sheet, you must be able to:

1. Understand and clarify communications in workplace

**INTRODUCTION**

**Understanding Communication Skills**

Applying the Seven Stages of the Communications Process

Conveying a message to other people clearly might sound simple, but it's a process that is often fraught with error.

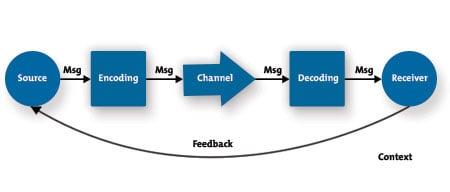
Many people struggle to communicate effectively – verbally and in writing. They impart thoughts and ideas that don't reflect their intended meaning, and that their recipients misinterpret or misunderstand.

This can result in confusion, frustration, wasted effort, and missed opportunities. Communication breaks down, causing collaboration and progress to become impossible

Research shows that good communication is one of the top "soft" skills that managers look for in employees. But communication will only ever be successful when both the person sending the message and the person receiving it understand the key messages being put across.

**How Do We Communicate?**

Did you know that any time that you communicate with another person, you are using the Communications Process?

It stands to reason then that understanding this process will help you to become more aware of what is happening as you communicate, and the things you can do to ensure that your message gets received "loud and clear."

To be an effective communicator, you need to make sure that your messages are clear, concise, accurate, and well planned. This will avoid misunderstanding and ensure that they get through each stage of the Communications Process without a hitch.

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively has become an increasingly sought-after skill in the workplace. Despite this, it's one that many people struggle with.

You can become a more capable communicator by gaining a better understanding of the Communications Process – that is the process we go through each time that we communicate with someone. It includes seven stages:

* Source.
* Encoding.
* Channel.
* Decoding.
* Receiver.
* Feedback.
* Context.

1. **Source**

The "source" is the sender of the message – in other words, you! And the "message" refers to the information and ideas that you want to deliver.

1. **Encoding**

This stage involves putting your message into a format that you can send, and that the receiver will be able to easily understand or "decode." Your success will depend on your ability to convey information clearly and simply, and to eliminate areas of confusion.

1. **Channel**

There are countless different channels that you can use to send your message.

Verbal communications channels include face-to-face meetings, telephone and videoconferencing. While written communications include letters, reports, emails, instant messaging (IM), and social media posts. You might also want to include videos, photos, illustrations, or charts and graphs in your message to emphasize your main points.

1. **Decoding**

Successfully decoding a message is as much a skill as encoding it is. To accurately decode a message, you need to take the time to read through it carefully, or to listen actively to it.

1. **Receiver**

No doubt, you'll want your audience members to react in a certain way or take a specific action in response to your message. Remember, though, that each person is different, and will interpret it subjectively.

Every receiver who enters into the Communication Process brings with them their own ideas and feelings that influence their understanding of your message, and their response to it.

1. **Feedback**

Your audience will likely give you feedback as soon as it's seen or heard your message. This might include verbal or non-verbal reactions. Pay close attention to these, as they will reveal whether your audience truly understood your message

1. **Context**

The "context" is the situation in which you deliver your message. This may include the current political and social environment, or the broader culture (for instance, the corporate culture or the national culture.)

**CLARIFYING COMMUNICATIONS, MESSAGES AND INFORMATION**

In communication, clarification involves offering back to the speaker the essential meaning, as understood by the listener, of what they have just said. Thereby checking that the listener's understanding is correct and resolving any areas of confusion or misunderstanding.

Clarification is important in many situations especially when what is being communicated is difficult in some way. Communication can be 'difficult' for many reasons, perhaps sensitive emotions are being discussed - or you are listening to some complex information or following instructions.

More often than not, when we communicate, the person we are talking to will not really understand what you are trying to say. Or maybe they weren’t really listening. Then they don’t ask questions to make sure they understand. The result can be misunderstandings, hurt feelings, unanswered requests, and even damaged relationships.

You can increase the understanding by learning three simple steps.

1. **Summarize**

The first step to getting your message heard is to summarize the major points of the communication. People don’t generally ask for clarification when they are communicating. So, it your job, to follow up directly after the communication happens.

Simply asking: “Do you understand?” is not enough. The answer will inevitably come back: “yes”, which often means “not really”.

You must go back over the major points you are trying to get across say saying something like, “so just to summarize what we talked about….

* I will be getting the dogs from the kennel,
* You will be getting the groceries, and
* We will meet at the house for dinner at 6.” Or, try: so “Let’s go back over what we agreed on…..” and detail the specifics.

1. **Document in Writing**

When being understood is especially important, after summarizing, follow-up with a written summary of the communication. For meetings, notes should be written up with specific assignments and deadlines, and sent as soon as the communication is finished.

If something needs to happen, write it down. Include what needs follow up and by when.

1. **Follow Up**

Once you’ve documented the follow up – make sure you actually do it!

Did you make a plan or ask for something to happen? Did you agree to something? Check back to make sure the message of the communication really was clear and carried out — before it’s too late to make adjustments.

Make Clarifying and Confirming a Habit

If you consciously use these three steps, they will soon begin to become a habit – one that will increase your chances of effective communication on a regular basis.

**INFORMATION SHEET 1.2-5**

**RECORDING MESSAGES AND INFORMATION**

Learning Objectives:

After this Information Sheet, you must be able to:

1. Know the purpose and importance of recording messages and information

**INTRODUCTION**

**WHAT IS A RECORD?**

A record is recorded information however recorded whether in *printed form*, *on file*, *by electronic means* or otherwise and includes *correspondence*, *a memorandum, a book, a plan, a map, a drawing, a diagram, a pictorial or graphic work, a photograph, a film, a microfilm, a sound recording, a videotape, a machine readable record,* any other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and any copy thereof.

It further states that any information that is capable of being produced by a machine and subject to the regulations any record that is capable of being produced from a machine readable record under the control of an institution by means of computer hardware and software or any other information storage equipment and technical expertise normally used by the institution.

International Standard Organization (ISO) Standard 15849 - Information and Documentation - Records Management

This standard defines a record as recorded information created, received, and maintained as evidence by an organization or person in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. It requires that records:

* correctly reflect what was communicated or decided or what action was taken;
* support the needs of the organization; and
* support accountability

**WHY ARE RECORDS IMPORTANT?**

Records are important for their content and as evidence of communication, decisions, actions, and history. As public institutions, school boards/authorities are accountable to the public and to government.

Records support openness and transparency by documenting and providing evidence of work activities and by making them available to the public. Records support quality program and services, inform decision making, and help meet organizational goals.

**WHAT ACTIVITIES AND TRANSACTIONS SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED**?

Records include any information that documents the mission and planning objectives of the

organization which includes planning, decisions, actions, and results, as follows:

* results of significant daily activities that support the mission and objectives of our organizations;
* advice and recommendations made to management and the decisions and actions taken as a result, along with supporting documentation;
* problems encountered in organizational operations and the steps taken to resolve the problems;
* interactions with the public, customers, clients, stakeholders, consultants, vendors, partners, and other government jurisdictions;
* verbal communications such as meetings, telephone calls, and face-to-face discussions where significant actions or decisions have occurred;
* legal agreements of any kind, including contracts, along with supporting documentation;
* policy, organizational planning, performance measurement, and budget activities, and supporting documentation;
* work done for the government by consultants and other external resources; and
* actions and decisions where payments are made or received, funds committed, services delivered, or obligations incurred.

**WHAT ARE OFFICIAL RECORDS?**

Not all records and information need to be retained. Records and information that should be retained as part of a records management are records that:

* are required to support daily operations; or
* document and provide evidence of business transactions; or
* are required by legislation; or
* protect the rights of citizens and the government; or
* provide evidence of compliance with accountability or other organizational requirements; or
* will have some future organizational, financial, legal, research, or archival value to the government and public; or
* are personal information that has been used by the organization which is required to be retained pursuant to the legislation; or
* evidence of compliance with a duty/responsibility to report a child in need of protection.

Official records should be stored securely so that they will be readily available to those who need them and are authorized to access them. This applies in both our paper-based and our electronic work environments.

**RECORD INSTRUCTIONS/INFORMATION**

Instruction may be in the form of spoken or written words, pictures, gestures, symbols and (for an interesting few) telepathic messages from a variety of intriguing sources. Most of the instructions that enters our life can be ignored or quickly forgotten.

But in the workplace, effective information is essential to our progress and well-being.

Without workplace information, nothing would be accomplished.

* Instructions could not be given;
* equipment and supplies could not be ordered;
* progress could not be measured; and
* Services could not be delivered to citizens.