

Meeting the Public

Certain skills such as being tactful and being sincere are important to use when working with the public. How you treat others at work will help determine the overall work atmosphere and the likelihood of customers' wanting to come back. Using good manners on the job says to others, "I am a concerned worker." Greeting people, exchanging information, clarifying a message, avoiding gossip, and giving sincere feedback are good communication skills all workers need to practice.

Greeting and Addressing People

In most jobs there will be some type of person-to-person contact, either with customers or with other employees. The overall atmosphere will depend on how you approach people. Some employers in service jobs, such as those in restaurants, in department stores, and in hospitals, have certain phrases

they want employees to use when addressing customers or patients. Here are some examples of these phrases:

- "Hello, may I help you?"
- "Good evening. Welcome to Burger Hut. May I take your order?"
- "Good morning, Mr. Smith. How are you?"

While on the job, good communication with your coworkers is important. This interaction usually sets the day's overall tone of the work area. Employees who have friendly, but not intimate, work relationships enjoy their work, and other workers want them on their teams. A typical conversation between employees might go something like this as Paul sees his friend Sam before work:

Paul: "Morning, Sam. How are you doing?"

Sam: "Pretty good. And you?"

Paul: "Not bad. How's the work going?"

Sam: "Good."

Paul: "See you at lunch."

Sam: "Okay. See you later."

Notice that they both used simple phrases. They did not talk too long. They knew there was work to be done but wanted to speak or acknowledge each other's presence.

Knowing the proper titles to use when addressing people is also important. Some people may be offended if you address them incorrectly. Here are some examples of the right ways to use titles:

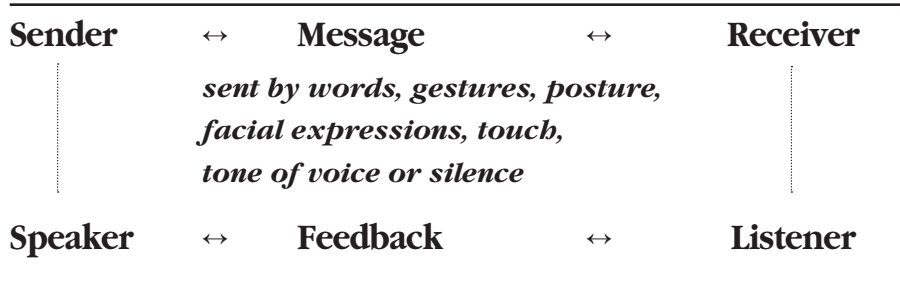
- **Mr. C** (men, any marital status)
- **Ms. C** (women, any marital status)
- **Mrs. C** (women, married)
- **Miss C** (women, single)

Most of these expressions begin with a general greeting followed by a more specific question. Remember, too, that Mr., Ms., Mrs., and Miss are only used with last names (family names). For example: Roger McDaniel would be Mr. McDaniel not Mr. Roger, and Ann Berg would be Mrs. Berg, not Miss Ann.

Communication Skills

When people communicate, they share feelings, ideas, facts, attitudes, and beliefs.

Good communication at work is important because it enables us to achieve success in



many ways. For example, good communication can be used in these ways:

- To test our thoughts
- To reduce tension
- To resolve conflicts
- To solve problems
- To help us gain understanding

Above is a visual picture of the communication process.

Listening, understanding, and asking questions are the basis of good communication skills. It provides a worker the chance to give feedback and to clarify the information being given. Here are some useful ways to ask for help when you don't understand something:

- "Please repeat those last three numbers."
- "I'm sorry. I don't understand what you're saying. Could you explain that again?"
- "Mr. Jones, will you explain how to use this new piece of equipment?"
- "Mrs. Jackson, did you want me to clean rooms 313-319 today or tomorrow?"
- "Ms. Johnson, what color did you say you wanted your hair colored—medium or dark brown?"

In most cases, asking for help will prevent problems and misunderstandings. Sometimes people ask questions just to make sure that the customer wants a certain product or service. It is common for waiters in a restaurant to repeat their customers' orders or for a hospital aide to check his or her list of room numbers for special diets.

Good listening involves concentrating on what is being said. It is helpful to keep your thoughts on the conversation and to avoid distractions. When responding to your speaker's comments, you are giving feedback on the statements made by the speaker. Your feedback should be directed to the statements that the speaker has made, not to the speaker. Avoid assumptions; ask if you are unsure.

You can be successful by working hard at your job and by being respectful to your coworkers and customers. Having good communication skills yourself will enable you to make the business or place of employment a more successful one, too. If a group of workers have close relationships, they contribute to the company's success and enjoy going to work every day.

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