



Competencies for Early-Career HR Professionals
PPT—Session 4: Communication
Instructor Notes

Slide 1

Instructor Notes:

- This final session begins with an experiential learning exercise. The insights gained during this exercise will be a useful reference for subsequent discussions in this session.
- Before the students enter the room, set up the chairs as shown in the illustration on the left (as seen in the Notes Page view of the PowerPoint deck). Each setup must have five chairs as indicated in the drawing. Try to include as many students as possible. For example, if you have 12 students in your class, have two sets of chairs set up (to accommodate 10 students), and then make the remaining two students observers.
- Place the General Manager handout on the chair at the front of the configuration *face down*. The participants must not see the handout before the exercise starts.
- Place the Supervisor handout on the middle chair face down.
- Place the Worker Left, Worker Middle and Worker Right handouts on the chairs in the back row (it does not matter which chair in the back row is considered left or right).
- Place a pen and a packet of sticky notes on each chair.
- As the students enter the room, make sure they do not touch any of the handouts on the chairs.
- Directions for running the activity appear on the next slide.

Materials for This Session:

- SHRM Competency Model.
- Communication simulation handouts (see notes on the right).
- Sticky notes and pens.

Slide 2

Instructor Notes:

- The majority of directions for this activity **must** be kept secret from the students until **after** the simulation begins. The students who are part of the simulation will each have slightly different directions on their handouts (but will not be aware of this). **Only** the General Manager understands that the task is to find the common symbol that exists within all the handouts.
- The intention is to simulate the type of confusion and challenges that exist with an organization when communication breaks down. In particular it demonstrates:
 - The importance of communication.
 - The importance of communicating across the organization, not just up and down the chain of command.
 - The challenges of being the communicator in the middle, sometimes referred to as the middleman.
- Ask for 10 volunteers for the exercise, and have them sit in the 10 chairs that you set up (two sets of five).
- Have them hold the handouts in their laps **face down** while you give instructions.
- The instructions should be very brief and intentionally vague. If a student asks a question, *only say* “follow the directions in your handout.”
- Tell them not to talk to anyone during the exercise.
- Tell them not to turn around to assess what others are doing during the exercise.
- Reinforce that each student’s role is to read his or her handout and to follow the instructions on his or her individual handout.
- Set the timer for eight minutes. Say “go.”

Slide 3

Instructor Notes:

- Use the questions on this slide to guide the debrief.

Slide 4

Instructor Notes:

- Review what is due today.

- Ask students if there are any questions about the content that was covered in Session 3.
- Instructors, note that you may also assign optional prework to assist with the second half of Session 4, which covers presentations. Identify some TED Talks or clips of public speakers. View them, and make notes about what was effective. Direct students to bring their notes to class where you will conduct a discussion and in-class debrief.
- Instructors, you may elect to also add this optional in-class additional assignment: To help students get acclimated to speaking in front of others, ask each student to take two minutes to talk about something that interests them. (Make this a different activity by asking students to not repeat information from the standard introductions you did in Session 1.) Possible topics for their two-minute talk: something about which they are particularly passionate, an event that changed their way of thinking and why, or an individual who has had great influence on the student as an individual and why.

Slide 5

Instructor Notes:

- Review the learning objectives.

Slide 6

Instructor Notes:

- Review the lessons that are covered in today's session.

Slide 7

Instructor Notes:

- Ask the students to characterize what communication is and how it is different than the other competencies we have discussed (HR Expertise, Ethical Practice, Relationship Management.) Some possible answers include:
 - Communication is central to human existence. It is not solely an HR or business-related competency.
 - Effective communication is highly subject to who is receiving the information.
 - Being an effective communicator can help you in all aspects of your life.

Slide 8

Instructor Notes:

- Review the definition and description provided.

- Feel free to elaborate on this information.

Slide 9

Instructor Notes:

- Ask the students which of these subcompetencies seems to be highly related to each other. For example:
 - Verbal communication skills and written skills are vital to being able to give good presentations.
 - Facilitation skills are essential when running an effective meeting.
 - Active listening skills are essential when giving feedback and when using diplomacy.

Slide 10

Instructor Notes:

- Review the Communication behaviors on the slide.
- Ask the students if one can share a story when he or she observed someone exhibiting one of the behaviors really well. For example, a student might have a story in which proactive communication was provided during a hurricane or similar type of emergency. Have the student explain what the individual did and why the student was so impressed by it.

Slide 11

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Slide 12

Instructor Notes:

- Have the students review the ideas for developing Communication skills that are on the slide.
- Encourage them to provide additional ideas for how to develop this competency.

Slide 13

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Slide 14

Instructor Notes:

- Explain that we will cover two topics in this lesson: 1) verbal communication skills and 2) facilitating effective meetings.

Slide 15

Instructor Notes:

- Ask the students (by a show of hands) if they have ever given a public presentation, recognizing that most will most likely have done so.
- For those students who have their hands raised, ask them what the experience was like.
 - What was the public presentation for, and how many people were in the audience?
 - Were they nervous?
 - Did they have to use notes?
 - Did they forget any key points they were supposed to make?
 - Were they able to engage the audience?
 - If they have done several presentations, do they find that presenting gets easier over time?
- Mention that it is natural for people to get nervous when speaking in front of an audience but that this is a skill that can be mastered.
- In this lesson we will give you a few tips for preparing for, giving and concluding a public presentation.
- Note to instructor: It is likely that some of the students will have competed in SHRM's Case Competition and Career Summit held each spring. In this competition they are required to prepare a written executive summary and an oral presentation, and are judged on both to potentially win the competition. You may want to ask if any students have been through this

experience, and if so, have them describe the types of skills it took to participate in this competition.

Slide 16

Instructor Notes:

- Review the points on the slides, and add any other tips that you have.
- Try to emphasize the importance of giving public presentations without using any notes. Notes tend to make the speaker look less confident and less knowledgeable about the topic. Only use notes if there are specific, technical references that must be quoted to the audience verbatim. Caution students against reading from notes.
- The overall process being described in this slide is first to write out all the points you want to say (the act of writing things out helps embed information into long-term memory) and then to determine which points are easy to remember and which ones take a bit of practice.
- Remind the students that practicing a presentation helps improve memory recall and will help build their confidence.
- The key to all of this is not to memorize everything they want to say. The key is to be comfortable with the intended flow of the presentation and to tell a story about the information they are presenting. It is much better to miss a few intended points than to read from the slides or your notes to avoid missing anything.

Slide 17

Instructor Notes:

- Review the tips on the slide and add in your own.
 - For the fifth bullet: Voice tracking is important because those in the audience can read the slides themselves; presenters do not need to read the slides to the audience.
 - For the eighth and ninth bullets, the same applies. There is no need to point out omissions or go back to cover something. If the information is on the slide, the audience will understand its importance by reading it for themselves.
- Ask if the students have additional ideas.

Slide 18

Instructor Notes:

- These final points are how to wrap up a presentation. Remind the students that last impressions can often be as important as first impressions.

Slide 19

Instructor Notes:

- State that ineffective meetings within companies are probably the single biggest wastes of productivity.
- If you multiply the hourly costs of each employee in a one-hour meeting, the total cost can be staggering (especially in a very large and long meeting with senior-level people).
- This is not to say meetings are always unnecessary, but we need to use them appropriately to ensure the organization is getting value out of the meetings.

Slide 20

Instructor Notes:

- Begin by asking the students to pretend they were asked to observe a series of meetings from behind a two-way mirror. If their assignment was to look for tell-tale signs of whether a meeting was effective or not, what would they actually look for?
- Review the examples of the ineffective meeting provided in the left-hand column of the slide (in the Notes View). Add in some of your own examples, and ask the students to do the same.
- Then go over the effective meeting points. Mention that the antithesis of each of the points describing an ineffective meeting would of course be a sign of an effective meeting (e.g., the physical environment *is* conducive).
- Reviewers liked that the slide reveals and discusses what is ineffective first, then what is effective.

Slide 21

Instructor Notes:

- Ask the participants to add some other ideas of what causes ineffective meetings.

Slide 22

Instructor Notes:

- Mention that even though planning and executing an effective meeting can involve a significant amount of work, not having meetings also presents risks.
- Meetings are effective because the written word carries only 7 percent of the presenter's true meaning and feeling.

- Meetings are better than telephone conferences because only 38 percent of the meaning and feeling is carried in the way that things are said.
- The other 55 percent of the meaning and feeling is carried in facial expressions and nonverbal signals. That is why meetings are so useful.

Source: Dr. Albert Mehrabian, <http://www.businessballs.com/mehrabiancommunications.htm>

Slide 23

Instructor Notes:

- Mention that the first step in ensuring successful meetings is to consider whether a meeting is even necessary. Many meetings do not need to be held at all.
- When you need to disseminate information that is relatively simple or to solve a simple problem, consider using e-mail, written memos or phone calls or taking another action yourself. Meetings are great for group brainstorming and problem-solving. They are also necessary when you want to share a complex message and ensure continuity in how the message is explained to a larger group.
- Review points on the slide, and feel free to add additional ideas you have for planning effective meetings.

Slide 24

Instructor Notes:

- Review the points on the slide.
- Optional Activity A: To give the students some experience at public speaking, have them each give a two-to-three-minute presentation on any topic. Then have the students critique each other. Some ideas for topics include:
 - Why some people avoid their HR partners.
 - How HR can become more strategic in an organization.
 - The most common pitfalls that HR professional need to avoid.
 - The most important issue of our time.
 - What future generations are likely to say about our generation.

Slide 25

Instructor Notes:

- Mention that now we are going to discuss a specific kind of communication skill—giving feedback to employees on performance-related or employee-relations issues.
- These types of situations require a supervisor to use a host of communication skills.
- Have the participants take out their homework and the scenarios that were assigned at the end of Session 3.

Slide 26

Instructor Notes:

- Give each team a few minutes to review their responses.
- Divide the class in half according to which set of scenarios they reviewed.
 - The left side of the room read Scenarios 1-5.
 - The right side of the room read Scenarios 6-10.
- Facilitate a group discussion about as many of the 10 as you can. Because time is limited, you could ask each team to pick one scenario the teams thought was particularly problematic and discuss their approach to solving it through effective communication.

The first question is, “What are the key communication behaviors you need to exhibit in all five of your assigned scenarios?” Examples of responses may include:

- Being direct.
 - Showing compassion.
 - Researching before speaking.
 - Being direct may be more difficult than being constructive.
 - Discussing with others.
 - Being consistent.
- **Ask if there are additional questions. If not, we will now switch gears to discuss social media as a communication tool for HR professionals.**

Slide 27

Instructor Notes:

- Have a short discussion with the students on the various uses for social media in HR and organizational communications.
- Point out that blogging/microblogging involves having experts within the organization sharing their expertise.
- Group communication can also include electronically facilitating communities of practice.
- Ask the students about other uses of social media they have seen used effectively (either in school or the workplace).
- Source: “3 Surprising Social Media Uses for HR.” Retrieved from <http://www.yourerc.com/blog/post/3-Surprising-Social-Media-Uses-for-HR.aspx>

Slide 28

Instructor Notes:

- Review the points on the slide, and ask if the students have other ideas.

Slide 29

Instructor Notes:

- Review the points on the slide, and ask if the students have other ideas.
- An optional activity if there is time is to divide students into groups and ask them to identify what components should be included in an organization’s social media policy. They should address topics like how to represent the company in social media posts, in blogs and on discussion boards and how to identify themselves as an individual whose views do not represent official company viewpoints.

Slide 30

Instructor Notes:

- If time allows, spend a few minutes discussing the questions on the slides.
- It is usually best if you have the students initially form pairs, discuss the questions and then lead a large-group discussion.
- Alternative approach: Show the students some examples of people giving presentations. Have them critique each video and tell us what is good (or not good) in each presentation. You can use any TED Talk, but here are some links you may want to use. Have the students pick out what

is bad about the two presentations listed as “bad.” Some of the presentations are less obvious, so get their opinions of what they like or do not like.

Bad Examples

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kgtpl4Q5OY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATfY8dvbuFg>

Less Obvious Examples

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5d8GW6GdR0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whTwjG4ZIJg>

Slide 31

Instructor Notes:

- Note: This four-part module is designed to be incorporated into a larger, semester-long course, e.g., an Overview of HRM course.
- You will need to provide your own transition back from the SHRM materials to the next section of the semester-long course.