



# Meeting the Public

**T**o be successful at work, it is important that you treat others with respect and communicate well. The way you treat and speak to 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." Good communication skills include knowing how to greet people, exchange information, clarify a message, avoid gossip and give sincere feedback.

## Greeting and addressing people

Most jobs will require that you have some type of person-to-person contact, either with customers or with other employees. The overall atmosphere depends partly on how you approach people. In some service jobs, such as those found in restaurants, department stores and hospitals, employees must use certain phrases when addressing customers or patients.

Here are some examples:

- "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 co-workers is important. It usually sets the overall tone of the work area for the day. Employees enjoy their work if they have friendly, but not intimate, work relationships. Other workers also want them on their team.

Here is an example of a conversation between employees:

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 greet each other with simple phrases. They do not talk too long. They know there is work to be done, but want to speak or acknowledge the other person's presence.

Good communication with your co-workers is important.

Another important aspect of communication is knowing the right way to address people with proper titles. Some people are offended if you address them incorrectly.

Here are some examples of the right ways to use titles when addressing people:

Mr.-----men (any martial status)

Ms.-----women (any martial status)

Mrs. -----married women only

Miss-----single women only

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 their 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:

- Test our thoughts
- Reduce tension
- Resolve conflicts
- Solve problems
- Help us gain understanding

Below is an illustration of the communication process:



Studies have shown that 70 percent of communication is nonverbal. That means that more than half of the information we get from others is not from the words they say, but from their facial expressions, body language or other actions.

Here are some examples of nonverbal communication:

- Frown
- Raised eyebrow
- Trembling chin
- Smile
- Shrug of the shoulders
- Patting foot
- Sweaty hands

The basis of good communication is listening, understanding and asking questions. They give workers a chance to give feedback and make the information more clear.

Here are some useful ways to ask for help when you don't understand:

- "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 Room 313 today or tomorrow?”
- “Ms. Johnson, what color did you say you wanted your hair—medium or dark blonde?”

In most cases, you can prevent problems and misunderstandings by asking for help. Sometimes people ask questions just to make sure the person wanted a certain product or service. It is common for waiters at a restaurant to repeat their customer’s orders, or for hospital aides to check the list of room numbers for special diets.

If you want to be a good listener, you need to concentrate on what is being said. Keep your thoughts on the conversation and avoid distractions.

When responding to your speaker’s comments, you are giving feedback on the statements made by the speaker. Make comments about the statements, not the speaker. Avoid making assumptions. If you are unsure, ask.

You can be successful by working hard at your job and by respecting your co-workers, supervisors and customers. Your good communication skills will help make the business more successful, too. If workers have a close relationship, they will contribute to the company’s success and enjoy going to work every day.

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