

Principles of Ethical Communication

There is a myriad of core principles associated with ethical communication, starting with the core value of honesty that all other values are connected. However, it can be said that there is a value underlying honesty (about ethical communication) and that is emotional intelligence/empathy as the precursor of all soft skills, which allows all personnel to be understood, and to effectively communicate with others. Emotional intelligence, within the framework of ethical communication, allows one to understand the needs of others, and meet those needs in the most efficient manner possible as if you were in their shoes.

1. Be Truthful And Honest

Being honest means communicating what is known to be true (only 100 percent of the facts) to a listener, with no intent to deceive or present only parts of the truth. It also means being as objective as possible, that is, not tailoring the story based on what the speaker *wants* the listener to believe. Letting the listener take the data that is objectively presented and believe what they choose to believe is a core goal of ethical communication. Ethical communication should be based on accurate information and facts – in a word, *do not lie*.

2. Active Listening

Hearing someone and *listening* to them are two different things. For ethical communication to be effective, it is necessary for the recipient to pro-actively listen to the speaker, and not just hear what they want to hear, or to hear only parts of the conversation. This also means asking questions when any point is not completely understood, for the sake of clarification.

3. Speak Non-Judgmentally

Ethically and concisely communicating means speaking in a non-judgmental manner with every recipient, negating unnecessary conflict, which typically creates a communication breakdown and causes misunderstandings.

Unnecessary conflict is never good for any business, and such conflicts usually result from unethical communications, with judgmental, accusatory, and overly-critical comments often being the catalyst for such breakdowns in communication.

4. Speak From Your Own Experience

Bringing your personal experience into a dialogue with business listeners is important, providing backup for your arguments with something more tangible. Such a communication method (experiential communication) paints a complete picture for your audience and helps to prove your points so that the listeners have a better understanding of what is being said.

5. Consider the Receiver's Preferred Communication Channel

You risk losing an audience if you use a communication channel that is not preferred by your intended receiver. To effectively communicate with your listeners, use the most preferred communication channel, whether that be face-to-face, email, conference call, phone call, messenger app, etc. Also, when presenting data to a business audience, be aware of the preferred method of presentation for that business, whether it is graphs, slides,



PowerPoint presentations, etc. Additionally, since body language is very important, it is often preferred to meet business clients face-to-face.

6. Strive To Understand

While it is important to be proactive in listening, it is important for listeners to also strive to fully understand what is being said before responding. While asking for clarification or confirmation of a point is fine, many times questions that listeners pose have already been answered. Listeners should think about what has been said before constructing a reply. Reading “in between the lines” is also an important skill that allows for understanding what *isn't* said, but was implicitly said or implied.

7. Avoid A Negative Tone

Ethically communicating assumes the speaker will avoid rudeness, be polite and professional, and have *tact*. The ethical communicator knows that it's not only important what you say, but how you say it. *Tone* is one of the most critical facets of communication. A listener may miss the meaning altogether if the tone is wrong, which can lead to unnecessary confrontations that decrease business productivity.

Controlling one's tone goes along with self-control, a soft skill that allows one to know how they wish to reply to a terse business message (for instance) versus the most effective manner for replying. Essentially, keeping the tone positive or neutral is best, as the tone of a written message – or of one's voice – is always picked up by the receiver, and can alter how the message is received and/or understood.

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Additionally, while it is acceptable, to be honest, and open, tact – and professional maturity – means knowing when it is inappropriate to speak up, and when it is crucial to. Tact also means knowing that being completely honest does not equate with being rude or negative – it is possible to be completely honest and open with one’s thoughts and feelings while still remaining polite and respectful.

8. Do Not Interrupt Others

Allowing others to speak is important for the creation of a civil, effective working environment. Interrupting others results in misunderstandings and unnecessary conflicts and a breakdown in workplace communications, which only hinders corporate progress and creates problems. Interrupting others not only shows a lack of respect but does not allow the listener to fully grasp what is being said, which often results in incorrect assumptions being made.

9. Respect Privacy And Confidentiality

Most businesses should include a clause in their code of ethics defining what is appropriate when it comes to honoring client and employee confidentiality and privacy. This can have a wide range of implications, including minimizing workplace gossip and mitigating toxic conversations about the private lives of clients and/or personnel.

10. Accept Responsibility

As noted before, a core tenet within any ethical communication framework is taking responsibility for the actions that result from one’s words, whether they be good or bad. This includes both short-term and long-term



consequences of one's communications. Owning one's words reinforces the importance of being conscientious about ethical communication.

Example Of Ethical Communication

There are myriad examples of how ethical communication can change the outcome of a problem in a business or workplace environment, revealing why ethical communication principles should be followed:

- Medical industry: In the medical industry, not only is there the key [HIPAA regulation](#), but there are numerous medical codes of ethics that medical professionals have to follow, regarding their actions, conduct, and communications. These principles ensure that all patients and fellow medical professionals have their rights protected. For instance, doctors are required by law to not divulge private information about patients to anyone to whom the patient has not consented to be privy to such private info.
- Property Consulting industry: Ethical communications in the property consulting industry can take several forms, including revealing key pieces of information to would-be homeowners of a property, including "negative" truths about the property – for example, divulging the entire history of the property, including any accidents or crimes that happened in the property.



- Marketing industry: Ethical communications in the marketing industry can include revealing to clients that their business marketing applications are not optimal and that a cheaper vendor, or a different form of marketing, will yield better results.

Virtually every industry can benefit from ethical communication principles, which always seek to ensure that every enterprise member is able to present valuable pieces of information so that the best decisions can be made.

Ethical Communication In An Organization

In business organizations, communicating concisely, ethically, and appropriately is all necessary so a business can operate effectively and efficiently. Operating according to a communication-based code of ethics is important for both small and large-scale person-to-person conversations. For larger audiences, it is often important for business members to employ additional values to their communication principles, such as:

- Choosing the right place/time: Speaking about a particular topic in a business often requires choosing the most pertinent and appropriate time and place in order for the message to be most effective. This requires knowing the recipients and having tact, along with utilizing strategy and planning.
- Knowing one's Audience: Certain audiences may prefer different verbiage or jargon or may prefer one communication channel over another. Being an effective communicator means knowing your audience in order to communicate in the way that he/she will understand the best.

Business communication requires ethical values to form the foundation of all of its relationships, which ensures that all enterprise workflows, short-term projects, and long-term projects are effectively managed and carried out.

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Any lapse in efficient and ethical communication can result in misunderstandings, conflicts, delays with projects, and the creation of an ineffective working environment.

Reference : Paradox Marketing