



Conversation guide

Leadership Dimensions

Influencing for results

Face to face discussions are the most effective way to communicate and help build positive relationships with others.

- A conversation helps you get a ***better understanding*** of what the other person is saying, as well as the mood of the person and the background.
- The ***information received is more accurate*** and you can ***quickly clarify*** any confusion and settle disagreements.
- ***Too many written messages at one time can overwhelm people.***

Cut down the number of emails and written messages by having face to face conversations with your team members.

When having a conversation...

- Plan - informal discussions tend to be spontaneous, but it pays to have an outline in mind. Make sure you also have adequate background knowledge.
- Establish the purpose - think in advance about what you want to get out of the discussion and check your team members are on the same page.
- Listen - allow plenty of time for the other person to express their views freely.
- Ask questions - make sure you understand and clarify what they are saying.
- Give feedback - show that you understand the other person's point of view even if you don't agree with it.
- Use your whole body - nod in agreement, use eye contact and facial expressions and maintain an alert body posture to show that you are interested.
- Be clear - make sure what you mean is clearly understood. The more specific, straightforward and factual information you share, the better the understanding will be.
- Keep the discussion moving - if you feel the conversation wandering than slowly redirect the topic to the main point.
- Be succinct - don't go on for too long.
- Summarise and set actions - restate the original aim at the end of the conversation and summarise the discussion to show that you both agree on what was achieved and the personal responsibilities for each action.

Use the additional ***tips and hints*** on the following page to help you fine-tune your conversation skills.

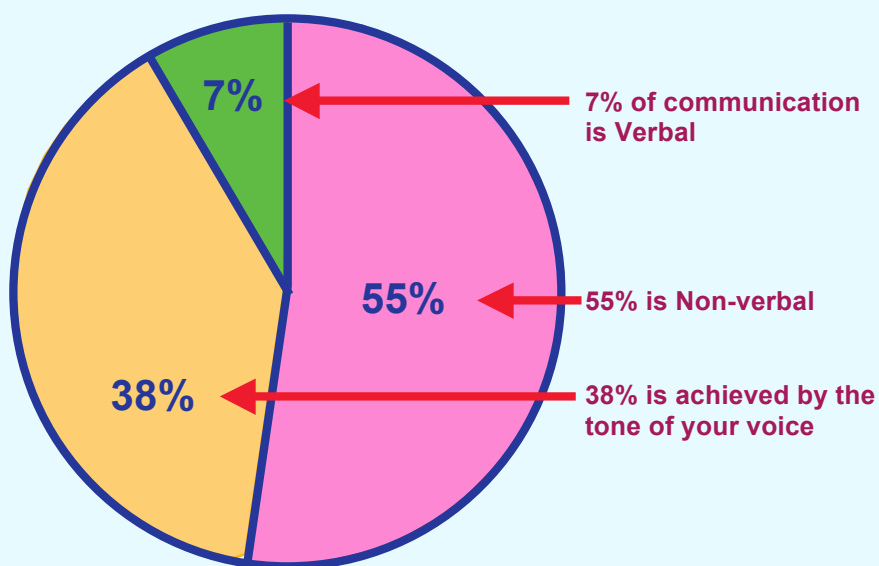
Tips and hints

Non-verbal communication

Although discussions are based on words, the way you communicate also plays an important part in how the message is received.

- Consider your eye contact, body language, facial expressions and hand gestures.
- Recognise different types of listeners and communication preferences.
- Consider the body language of the person you are talking with and what it is implying about how they feel.

UCLA professor, Albert Mehrabian, emphasised the importance of non-verbal communication when he proposed his 7% - 38% - 55% rule of communication.



Be careful not to...

- Interrupt - listen to the other person and then make your points
- Let your emotions control your listening - if necessary postpone the discussion
- Selectively listen - make sure you listen to the whole message
- Dominate - avoid showing anger or impatience. If differences arise, discuss them calmly and logically.