



Customer Service Notes for Effective Non-Verbal Communication

We sometimes forget how much our non-verbal communication can enhance our relationships with participants. Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication in conveying a message to participants. You want to be sure that your non-verbal communication, or body language, is consistent with your spoken words.

One of the simplest aspects of non-verbal communication is smiling. This is especially important when you meet a participant for the first time, or when you greet a participant you already know. Participants who may arrive pre-occupied can be put at ease by your smile, which sends a message that you are pleasant and ready to work with the participant. Also, smiling on the phone helps to maintain a positive attitude, even when you are stressed due to a challenging participant, or a heavy workload.

Eye contact is also important. While constant eye contact is not recommended, maintaining a good amount of eye contact lets the other person know that you are engaged with them in the communication process.

Speaking of eyes, be careful not to roll your eyes, as this is a sign of impatience and/or frustration with the participant.

With gesturing, remember to use open gestures so that you come across in a welcoming way with participants. Avoid crossing your arms or putting your hands on your hips, as these carry a negative connotation.

Be aware of personal space. Don't be so close to a participant that you are invading their personal space. Also remember that in working with a diverse population, participants from other cultures may carry different views about personal space. Also be cautious about touching a participant. While a handshake is universally acceptable, anything else should be avoided.

Keeping our non-verbal communication positive will help in providing stellar service to all participants!

Questions for Reflection:

1. Do you consistently smile when greeting participants?
2. Do you avoid negative non-verbal communication such as crossing your arms, smirking, or rolling your eyes?
3. Do you maintain eye contact when communicating with participants?

