

Speaking and Listening

Essential Communication Skills

Did you know that in a survey of 1,000 adult workers, 87% rated communication skills as “very important”? That is an even higher rating than computer skills.



Being a good communicator is essential to being a valuable employee and team member no matter where you work.

Success at work and in life depends on how well you communicate!

Barriers to communication are called noise. There are 5 types of NOISE:

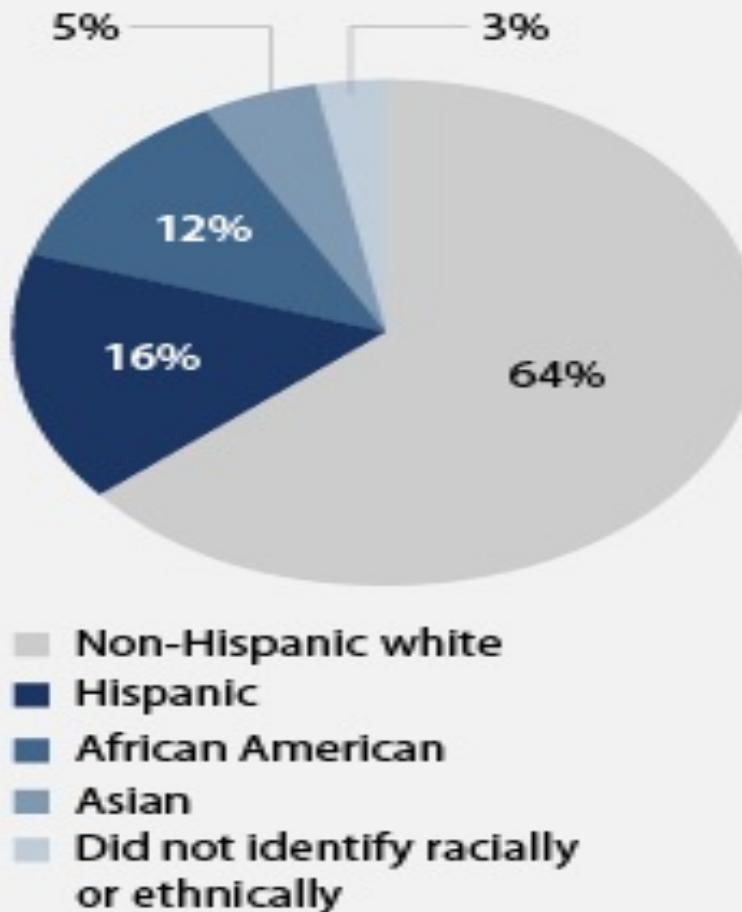
- ❖ **Experiences**- Communication can be difficult when there are significant differences in past experiences of speaker and listener.
- ❖ **Cultural Background**- Cultural differences reflect internal beliefs and thought patterns that cause people to react differently to the same situation.
- ❖ **Emotional Interference**- Our emotions and the way we feel can affect our willingness to be open to what others are saying.
- ❖ **Communication Styles**- Differences in communication styles, influenced by our personalities, can create challenges that affect the effectiveness of communication.
- ❖ **Poor Listening Skills**- People with poor listening skills are more concerned with what they have to say than what someone else is saying. “Are you listening or waiting to speak?”

For the first time in history, five generations are working side by side, each with different leadership, communication, and career development styles. Imagine the communication gap!



Traditionalists (ages 71-89)	Baby Boomers (ages 54-70)	Generation X (ages 34-53)	Millennials (ages 21-33)	Generation Z (under 20)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">< 1% of the U.S. workforce.Place a strong emphasis on rules.Lead with a "command and control" style.Prefer face-to-face interaction, but communicate best formally (e.g., memos).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">27% of the U.S. workforceMany can't afford to retire and want to work part time.Are inclined to seek contract work after retirement.Tend to be workaholics who get personal fulfillment from work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">35% of the U.S. workforce.Prefer independence and fewer rules.Seek to balance work and family.Want to communicate directly with leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">37% of the U.S. workforceTake an entrepreneurial approach to work.Prefer direct communication and feedback.Want a social, friendly work environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1-2% of the U.S. workforce.Are likely to be using Twitter to find jobs.Communicate best by smartphone/e-mail.Have large networks but not much job experience.

FIGURE 2
**People of color make up
nearly one-third of the
labor force**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Cultural diversity in the workplace can also impact communication.

Culturally diverse workers have different opinions, thoughts, beliefs, norms, customs, values, trends, and traditions.

Cultural differences cause behavior and personality differences like body language, thinking, communication, manners, norms, etc. which can lead to miscommunication.

Different cultures have different meaning of words, behaviors and gestures.

There are 4 Communication Styles:

Dominant/Driver- *They speak fast, move fast, and want results yesterday. People who are of this style will do everything they can to figure out how to go around obstacles. And if they can't go around—they may just go right through the obstacle! Although that may rub others the wrong way sometimes, this type of person can be relied on to get things done.*

Influencer/Interactive- *They also speak fast and move fast, but the language is far more personal. Influencers like to tell stories, are very interactive, positive, and talkative. Although it can be difficult for this style to keep track of details and stay organized, if you need someone to promote an idea or event, you can rely on this type of person.*

Stable/Steady- They are sensitive and steady. They are slower in movement and are more emotionally connected to the listener. This person will ask about you and your other teammates and is often the glue that keeps teams together. What is difficult for this person is conflict—they don't like to rock the boat. But you can always rely on this person to help coordinate or connect you with someone in their network.

Compliant/Cautious- They are interested in order, precision, and accuracy. They are slower moving and slow to speak, but when they do speak they may be somewhat direct. You can count on this type of person solve problems, plan effectively, and invent processes. If you want something done right, you can rely on this type of person.

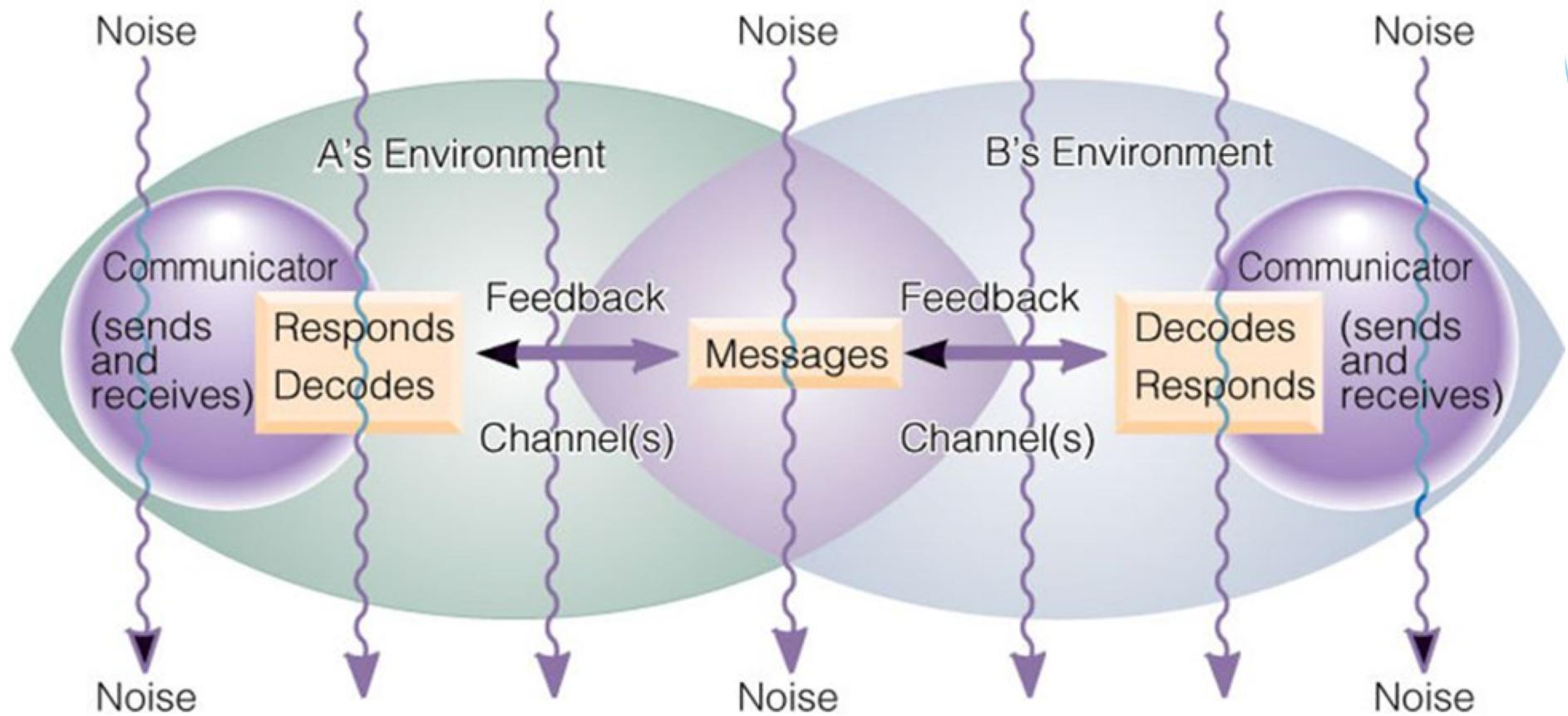


Figure 1-2 Transactional Communication Model

A & B's environment are comprised of time, place, space, emotions, and frame of reference.

Miscommunication Example #1:

In a meeting with Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton decided to give him a mock “reset button” to symbolize the fact that the U.S. and Russia were working on their relationship and forgetting past grievances.

*The word “reset” was not translated correctly from English to Russian, so the button said “overloaded” in Russian. The daily newspaper *Kommersant* declared on its front page: "Sergei Lavrov and Hillary Clinton push the wrong button." It took Mrs. Clinton a while to explain to Mr. Lavrov what she meant by the “reset button” and she narrowly avoided an even bigger miscommunication.*

This is an example of noise caused by experiences and cultural background.



Russian translations:
*Reset ~ **perezagruzka***
*Overloaded ~**peregruzka***

Miscommunication Example #2:

Anton has had some difficulty getting along with Gorge. He feels that Gorge is rude whenever they have to discuss tasks that they are working on. Gorge approaches Anton and says, “Have you finished reviewing the balance sheet yet?” Anton answers, “No.”

Anton feels that by asking him whether or not he has finished a task, Gorge is trying to show his superiority. Gorge has noticed that Anton seems to not like working with him because he gives him short answers whenever he asks him a question.

The noise that Gorge and Anton are most likely experiencing comes from emotional interference and differing communication styles.



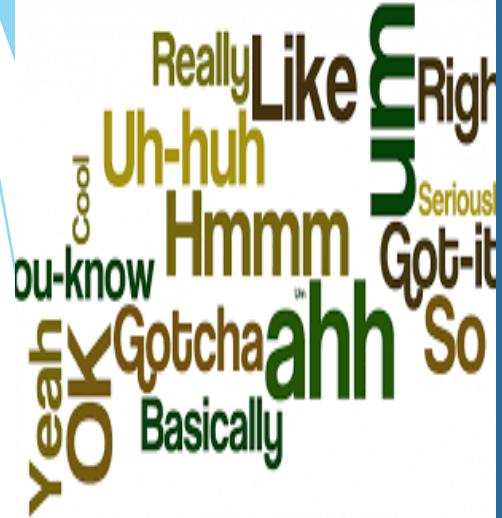
It is essential that you take time to prepare your thoughts before speaking and that you speak clearly and enunciate your words.

Eliminate Disfluencies!! Disfluencies are communication disruptions and are “credibility killers”. Words such as “uh”, “like”, “so”, “you know”, “right”, “ah”, “basically”, and “um” are distracting for listeners, make you sound bad, and weaken your message.

Researchers say that about 20% of words in everyday conversation are disfluencies. Disfluencies show up most often when people are nervous.



*The most important step in eliminating your distracting speech habits is to be more aware of what you are saying. Asking a friend or recording yourself will allow you to hear how often you use them, **more than 3 indicates a problem.***



Now that we have gotten your verbal communication skills up to par, let's focus on your non-verbal communication skills....



The 7% rule: Only 7% of communication is made up of spoken words, while 93% is non-verbal (55% is body language and 38% is tone of voice).

What else are you saying????



Body language is the use of physical behavior, expressions, and, mannerisms to communicate, often done instinctively rather than consciously.

Whether you're aware of it or not, when you interact with others, you're continuously giving and receiving wordless signals. All of your nonverbal behaviors—the gestures you make, your posture, your tone of voice, how much eye contact you make—send strong messages. They can put people at ease, build trust, and draw others towards you, or they can offend, confuse, and undermine what you're trying to convey. These messages don't stop when you stop speaking either. Even when you're silent, you're still communicating nonverbally.



In some instances, what comes out of your mouth and what you communicate through your body language may be two totally different things. If you say one thing, but your body language says something else, your listener will likely feel that you're being dishonest.

4 ways to improve non-verbal communication:



Make Eye Contact: Eye contact increases the chances of understanding the message and demonstrates interest in the message. Don't stare, this makes people uncomfortable! When listening to someone on the phone, try not to look at things that will take attention away from the conversation.

Adjust your Posture: Facing the speaker and leaning in slightly suggests that you are paying attention and helps you to stay focused. When on the phone, position yourself so that you are comfortable but not so relaxed that you lose the ability to listen to the speaker.



Give Verbal & Non-Verbal Acknowledgement: Acknowledge the speaker with head nods and verbal cues to show that you are paying attention.

Avoid Distracting Behaviors: Avoid behaviors like playing with a pencil, twiddling your thumbs or jingling change in your pocket because they may decrease your ability to listen and distract the speaker. Never use your cell phone when listening.



Effective Communication relies on Speaking and Listening



How are your listening skills??



Given all the listening that we do, you would think we'd be good at it! In fact, most of us are not, and research suggests that we only remember between 25% and 50% of what we hear.

That means that when you talk to your boss, colleagues, customers, or spouse for 10 minutes, they pay attention to less than half of the conversation.

Turn it around and it reveals that when you are receiving directions or being presented with information, you aren't hearing the whole message either. You hope the important parts are captured in your 25-50%.

3 Modes of Listening:

Combative Listening- takes place when we listen only to look for flaws in the other person's point of view. When we do this, we are mostly interested in delivering our message. We pretend to listen, all the while planning a comeback strategy.

Passive Listening- takes place when we truly try to hear the other person's point of view, but we do not provide feedback to verify whether we have understood the message.

Active Listening- is the most important listening technique. When we use active listening we provide feedback to verify whether or not we have understood the message. To be an active listener, you need to rephrase what someone says back to them to confirm that you understood the message and possibly ask clarifying questions.

Can you identify what type of listening these responses represent?

1. *Lisa, let me see if I understand your suggestion correctly. Are you suggesting that we make the entire payment process automatic?*
2. *Lisa, thank you for your suggestion.*
3. *Lisa, I can already see that there are 3 obstacles to implementing your suggestion.*

What Makes a Good Listener??

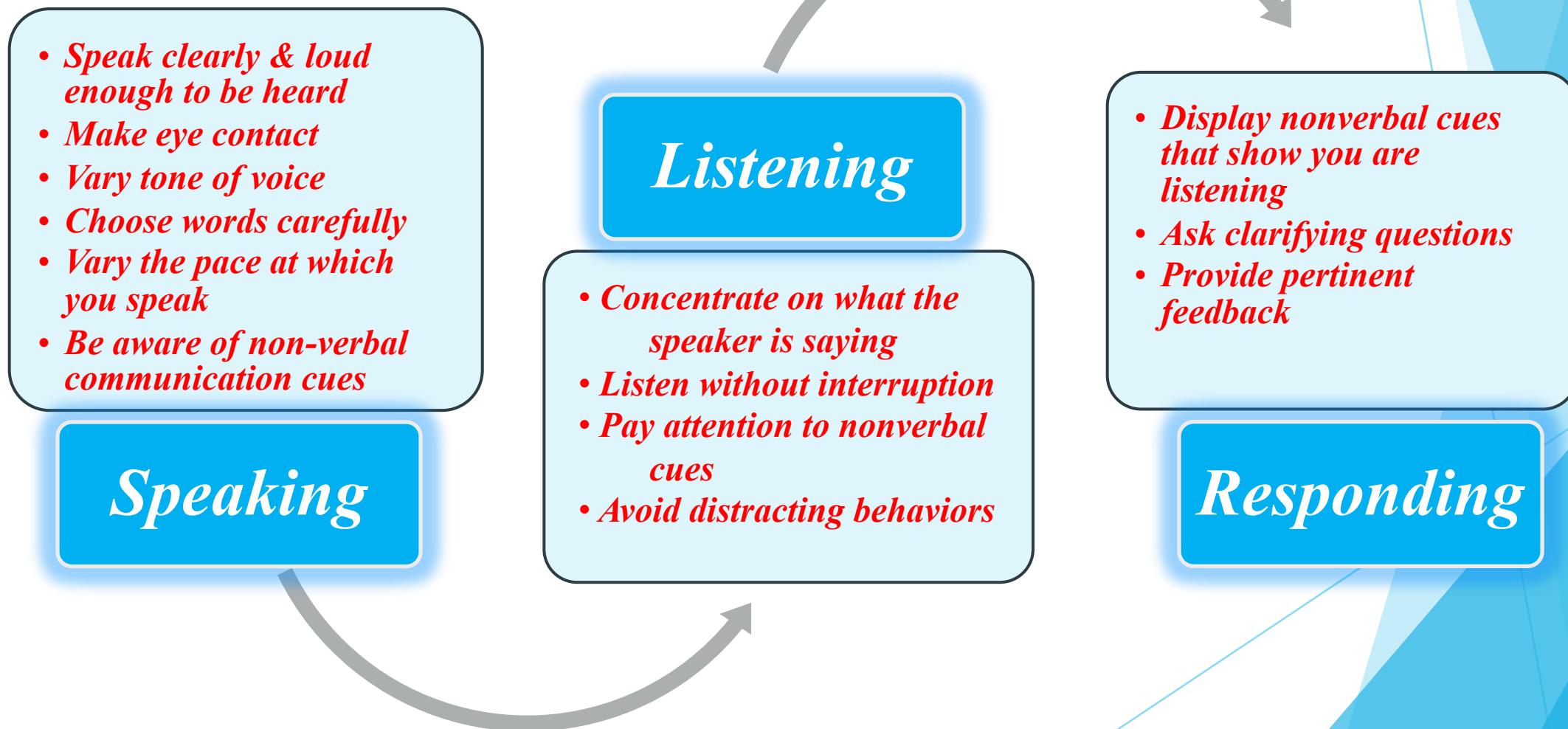
Good listeners always strive to fully understand what others want to communicate, particularly when the statement lacks clarity. Listening demands the attempt to decode and interpret verbal messages and nonverbal cues (e.g., the tone of voice, facial expressions, physical posture).

One way to demonstrate your listening skills is to allow the speaker to complete each statement or thought before responding. Do not interrupt and be sure that your responses or questions are related to the subject. Remember that it is perfectly fine to take a few moments to frame the right response. Doing so shows that you have fully absorbed the speaker's words and are considerate enough to formulate the best answer.

Talking too much is also problematic, as proper conversations should be well balanced, with parties getting equal time to speak. Monopolizing a conversation prevents you from listening and the other party from fully expressing what they want to say.



The Conversation Flow:



COMMUNICATION

Now that you have improved your speaking and listening skills, you are better prepared to interact positively with interviewers, co-workers, bosses, friends, and loved ones.

