

5 Tips for Developing Effective Communication Skills

1. **Listen:** Effective communication means that you *share* a conversation with another individual. This means that listening is a critical component of effectively communicating with others. One frequent mistake is to be thinking of what you're going to say next while someone else is talking, rather than truly listening to what that individual is saying. Key information can be missed in these instances which can affect the quality of the interaction. Be sure to actively listen to others.
2. **Pay attention to your non-verbal communication:** A great deal of communication is done through our body language, rather than our words themselves. When interacting with others, try to be aware of how you are standing and the expression on your face. Make direct eye contact with others, and acknowledge that you are listening to them throughout your interaction.
3. **Know your audience:** Not all groups of people, or individuals respond well to the same style of communication. Of course, the language that you use with fellow officers or law employment personnel is not always the same as the language you use with the public. However, communication styles may differ within these groups as well. Some individuals are better at communicating via email, while others may prefer to have in person or phone conversations.
4. **Remember that the message sent isn't always the message received:** It's important to understand that everyone filters messages and information differently. The intent behind the message you are trying to send another person, may not be the same one that they received. To communicate effectively, check for understanding and confirm with others to ensure you are on the same page. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification if you're unsure of another's message. These steps can avoid conflict and misunderstanding.
5. **Get to the point:** Of course, everyone is busy so being concise and clear with your communication is always helpful. When you think of something that needs to be communicated to another individual, or a group of people, think of the most effective way to do so while also balancing the content of the message. For example, an email may be the fastest way to tell a group of individuals about a change in over-time policy; but if this change may be controversial, the conversation might be better held in person.

Content adapted from <https://csuglobal.edu/blog/make-indispensable-5-workplace-communication-strategies>