



# Essential Skills for Entrepreneurs

Oral Communication



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Workplace Education Manitoba would like to express appreciation to the following for supporting the development of this curriculum:

**Human Resources Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)**

**and**

**Industry Workforce Development, Competitiveness Training  
and Trade, Province of Manitoba**

Essential Skills for Entrepreneurs was jointly funded through Human Resources Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the Workplace Education Manitoba Steering Committee (WEMSC).

Workplace Education Manitoba would also like to thank the individuals from across Manitoba who provided consultation, content and feedback.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



## ESSENTIAL SKILLS: *What are they and why should I care?*

There are 9 skills that are essential to performing well at work. They are the Essential Skills that are important for success as an entrepreneur.

### **The 9 Essential Skills are:**

*Technical Reading*  
*Document use*  
*Writing*  
*Numeracy*  
*Oral communication*  
*Thinking skills*  
*Working with others*  
*Computer use*  
*Continuous learning*

People use the Essential Skills in different ways in different workplaces. However, all of the Essential Skills are used in some way in every workplace. Here are a few examples of the way Essential Skills might be used in your work as an entrepreneur:

- Reading and interpreting legal documents like contracts, agreements and tax forms
- Filling out and keeping track of the paperwork required for running a business
- Getting financial information from charts, tables and graphs and interpreting financial statements
- Communicating and selling ideas to others
- Initiating contact with others, networking and making small talk
- Questioning and interacting with customers
- Resolving conflict with others
- Negotiating contracts with suppliers and customers
- Preparing a marketing plan
- Writing email, letters and short reports
- Developing and monitor budgets
- Analyzing the pros and cons of a plan
- Creating and monitoring schedules, making adjustments if necessary
- Evaluating the quality of advertising and making good judgments about design, layout, colour, logos, etc.
- Using problem-solving strategies to constructively resolve problems, issues and concerns
- Using a decision-making process to make sound business decisions
- Researching, gathering information and monitoring trends
- Making efficient use of time
- Organizing and prioritizing work tasks
- Dealing with interruptions and resolving tasks that go off-track
- Responding to situations that unexpectedly arise
- Remembering names, faces and voices of customers and their history as part of providing good customer service
- Taking a leadership role and communicating priorities
- Organizing and directing the work of others
- Taking advantage of learning opportunities
- Using computer technologies and software programs

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

## *What can I do?*

<b>Step One</b>	<p><b>I can:</b> Identify events or activities in my life where I have learned skills that I will use as an entrepreneur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What skills have I learned from school, paid or unpaid work, hobbies, sports, volunteer work, etc?</li><li>• Would an entrepreneur use these skills? How?</li></ul>
<b>Step Two</b>	<p><b>I can:</b> Take stock of my Essential Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I <i>know</i>...</li><li>• I <i>can</i>...</li><li>• I <i>am</i>...</li></ul>
<b>Step Three</b>	<p><b>I can:</b> Visualize my future as an entrepreneur and the learning goals that will help me get there.</p>
<b>Step Four</b>	<p><b>I can:</b> Identify my Essential Skills gaps and the supports I need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What Essential Skills do I need to work on?</li><li>• How do I get the help I need?</li></ul>
<b>Step Five</b>	<p><b>I can:</b> Create an action plan for reaching my goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do I need to do to get from where I am to where I want to be? (Specifically)</li></ul>
<b>Step Six</b>	<p><b>I can:</b> Do it!</p>

**What is the Essential Skills for Entrepreneurs workbook series?**

This Essential Skills workbook series covers the Essential Skills considered to be most important to an entrepreneur's success in any workplace.

There are four workbooks in this series:

- Document Use,
- Writing Skills,
- Oral Communication, and
- Thinking Skills

**How can the Essential Skills for Entrepreneurs workbook series help you?**

These Essential Skills workbooks will give you an opportunity to learn more about and practice the skills an entrepreneur needs to be successful. They will also help you find out what you need to learn more about.



# Oral Communication for Entrepreneurs

*Talking with  
others to give  
and exchange  
information  
and ideas,  
such as  
asking questions,  
making presentations,  
explaining,  
and persuading.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Oral Communication

<b>Parts of Effective Communication</b> .....	1
<b>Part 1</b> Send a Clear Message .....	1
<b>Part 2</b> Check to see that Others Understand your Message.....	10
<b>Part 3</b> Listen Actively.....	13
<b>Part 4</b> Check to See that You Understand Messages from Others .....	17
<b>Using your Communication Skills</b> .....	21
<b>Part 1</b> Be Polite.....	21
<b>Part 2</b> Use Good Telephone Manners .....	23
<b>Part 3</b> Make Small Talk Work for You .....	29
<b>Part 4</b> Interview Wisely.....	32
<b>Part 5</b> Make Confident Presentations .....	45
Answer Key .....	51





## Parts of Effective Communication

As an entrepreneur, you will communicate with many different people for many different reasons. You will give and receive many messages every day. It is important for you to know what to say when you talk to customers, employees, suppliers, salespeople, investors, and people who can loan you money (e.g., bank loan officer). It is also important to understand what they say to you. The way you communicate may change depending on who you are talking to. For example, you may use more technical words when speaking with a supplier than with a customer.

Oral communication is an essential skill for business owners. In this module you will first explore the basics of good communication. Then you will learn how to apply these skills in business situations.

There are four main parts to good communication.

<b>Part 1</b>	Send a Clear Message
<b>Part 2</b>	Check to See that Others Understand Your Message
<b>Part 3</b>	Listen Actively
<b>Part 4</b>	Check to See that You Understand Messages from Others

### Part 1 Send a Clear Message

Sending clear messages is a skill that can be learned. Sometimes we think we are sending clear messages when we are not. We send clear messages to others in many different ways. We use words to give instructions to employees, we shake hands with salespeople, and we look directly at people who can give us money, like a loan officer at a bank or a government official. Sometimes we communicate with words, but often we communicate in other ways. These different ways of communicating can be divided into two parts:

Verbal

Non-verbal

## Verbal Messages

Words that go back and forth between people are called verbal messages.

Words = verbal messages

## Non-Verbal Messages

Oral communication is also made up of non-verbal messages. Non-verbal messages include the tone (e.g., speaking in an angry, sarcastic, happy, calm, or sad manner) that you use when you speak or *how* you say something.

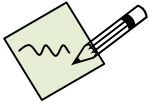
Non-verbal messages also include the body language that you use when you communicate with someone. Your body language is made up of many things, like how you stand or sit, and the expression on your face.

Tone + body language = non-verbal messages

Your tone and body language together give the person much more information than just the words you say. In fact, people believe that when we communicate, only 10% of the message is verbal and 90% of the message is non-verbal!

You will give and receive many non-verbal messages as a business owner. It is important for you to be aware of tone and body language when you communicate with your employees, suppliers, salespeople, customers, loan providers, etc.

#1



**TRY this**

**Practise saying these words out loud using the two different tones.**

Words	Tone 1	Tone 2
What's the problem?	concerned	defensive
I'll explain it again.	patient	impatient
I'll do that right away.	calm	rushed
I need you answer today.	assertive	aggressive

**Imagine that you are saying the same words to a customer. This time think about your body language. Say the words again using the two different tones, and also add body language.**

- How does the expression on your face change when you change tones?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How does the movement of your hands or shoulders change when you change tones?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Are you more comfortable looking into your customer's eyes when you use Tone 1 or Tone 2?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Match Verbal and Non-Verbal Messages

Non-verbal and verbal communication often happen at the same time. If verbal and non-verbal messages are different, the communication is not clear.

For example, you may say you understand something, but you look confused or upset. The person you are talking to may not be sure what to believe. They may not be sure if they can trust you. To send a clear message, verbal and non-verbal messages must match.

#2



### TRY this

Look at the pairs of verbal and non-verbal messages below.

- Draw a line to connect the messages that match.
- Make an **X** between the messages that do not match.

Verbal Message		Non-Verbal Message
Nice to meet you.	<b>—————</b>	shakes hands
How are you?	<b>X</b>	reads an invoice
I'm listening.		stocks shelves
I understand.		nods head up and down
Thanks for coming.		smiles and looks in eyes
Tell me about it.		sits and leans toward speaker
I see.		frowns and looks confused
Can I help you?		extends hands towards box of supplies

## Give Clear Instructions and Explanations

If you have employees, you will need to tell them *how* to do something. Often they will understand better if you also explain *why* it should be done.

### Explain the Reasons for the Instructions

- “We need to do this because....”
- “This is important because....”
- “I need you to....because....”

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#### Example instructions:

Repeat someone’s name when taking a message. Ask the person to spell their name if it is unclear.

Explanation: We need to do this because....

- getting a person’s name right is a sign of respect.
  - it shows our company pays attention to details.
  - we don’t want to waste time guessing the person’s name later.
- 

## Break the Tasks into Steps

If possible, show *how* to do something as you tell the instructions to your employees. Use signal words like these:

**1. First**

**2. Next**

**3. Then**

**4. Finally**

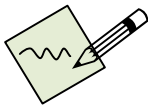
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**Example task:** Setting the alarm.

Explanation: The alarm must always be set for insurance purposes. If we set it off by mistake we will be charged by the alarm company.

1. **First** check that everyone else has left the building.
  2. **Next** enter code 4726 and press the ACCEPT key.
  3. **Then** wait for a beeping sound.
  4. **Finally** exit and lock the door from the outside.
-

#3



TRY this

You are training an employee to do the following task. What will you say?

**Task:** Taking customer orders by phone.

**Explanation:** You need to follow these steps every time you take an order so that you don't forget anything.

**First** answer the phone politely.

**Next** ask the customer's name and their account number.

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## Speak Assertively

**Assertive** people are good business people because they care about themselves and others. They balance their emotions. They know what they want and how to reach goals, while respecting themselves and others.

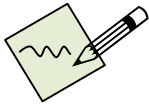
**Aggressive** people care mostly about themselves and getting their own way. They show little respect to others. They often use their negative emotions to get what they want. They are too “bossy.”

**Passive** people are so busy helping other people get their way that they have little energy to care for themselves. They show little respect for themselves. They often hide their negative emotions and don’t do what they want to do. They let people push them around.

When you speak assertively, you let others know what you think or need without becoming too emotional. You make sure your verbal and non-verbal messages match. You stand tall and hold your head up. You use a neutral tone of voice. You send a clear message to others.



#4



### TRY this

Look at the verbal and non-verbal messages on the left. Mark an **X** under the matching communication style.

Verbal and non-verbal messages	Assertive	Aggressive	Passive
“Sorry, I’m not interested in your product.”			
Points finger in person’s face.			
“I’ll think about your offer and call you on Monday.”			
“Whatever.”			
“Your product stinks!”			
“It doesn’t matter one way or the other.”			
Speaks directly to person.			
“I understand your position, but I don’t agree.”			
Sits as far away as possible from others.			
“If you don’t like it, too bad.”			
Mumbles.			
Slams phone down.			
“We must get this order out by 4 o’clock.”			
“I guess so…”			
“Get it done NOW, or else.”			
“Let’s sit down and talk about this.”			
“I need reliable employees. You have been late three times this week.”			
Moves very close to person and raises voice.			
“I have a strong proposal and I am a very hard worker. I really need this loan.”			

Speaking assertively is a skill that can be learned. Start practicing speaking assertively in your everyday communication with family, friends, and others. It will prepare you to deal with the different kinds of people you will meet as a business owner.

## Summary

You have learned that an important part of effective communication is to make sure that your verbal and non-verbal messages match. You have learned to give clear instructions and explanations. You have also learned to speak assertively. These are just some of the things that are important in sending clear messages. The table below tells about some other ways to send clear messages.

<b>Do</b>	<b>Do Not</b>
1. Look at the person when you speak.	1. Avoid eye contact or stare.
2. Place yourself so that the person can see your mouth and eyes.	2. Talk across the room or with your back turned to the person.
3. Speak slowly enough to say each word clearly.	3. Speak quickly and run your words together.
4. Speak loudly enough for a person to hear you.	4. Speak too quietly or too loudly.
5. Remove distractions.	5. Talk in a noisy environment.
6. Use short sentences.	6. Use long sentences with too much information.
7. Use common words.	7. Use technical words that the listener may not understand. Use slang.
8. Ask one question at a time.	8. Ask several questions at once. Answer your own questions.
9. Explain what you are doing one step at a time.	9. Explain the steps of a task all at once.

## Part 2 Check to See that Others Understand Your Message

You may be very good at sending clear messages, but others may have trouble getting the messages. There are many reasons for this. Maybe they are not listening well or are tired or worried about something else. They may be confused. It is your job to make sure that others understand your messages. Watch for clues that your message was not understood.

### Check non-verbal clues

- Does the person seem to ignore you?
- Does the person's face have a confused expression?
- Does the person shake their head or raise their shoulders?

Here are some things you can do if you think someone does not understand you.

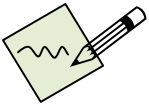
### Repeat

- Say the words again.
- Say the words with actions that match.
- Say the words a different way.
  - For example: ~ We need this ASAP.
  - ~ Can you put a rush on it?
  - ~ We need this part by tomorrow at the latest.

### Ask questions

- Do you understand?
- Do you know what I mean?
- Can you repeat what I said?
- Is this clear to you?
- What questions do you have about this?
- Can you show me?

#5



### TRY this

Identify the problem others have understanding your message. Explain what you would do to make sure your message is sent to the listener.

1. You are explaining a procedure to a new employee. You notice that she keeps looking at your earrings. When you ask her if she has any questions, she says, "Where did you get those earrings?"

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2. You deliver a catered lunch to the address listed on your order form. You ask the receptionist where you should leave the order. The receptionist looks very confused.

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3. You place an order for 3 bottles of toner, 10 packages of 8x11 copy paper, and 2 boxes of standard labels. You ask your supplier to repeat the order, and he says, "3 bottles of toner, 10 boxes of 8x11 paper, and 2 packages of standard labels."

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4. You are discussing your order desk clerk's job performance. She is busy checking inventory on a chart and she turns her back to you to look at something on the computer. When you finish talking, she says, "Is it time for lunch?"

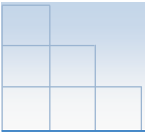
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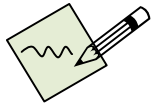
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#5



Continued

5. You have just pitched your business plan to two potential investors. When you are finished, they look at each other but say nothing.

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## Part 3 Listen Actively

*Have you ever had a conversation with a person who talks and talks but doesn't listen?*

*Have you ever talked to a person and noticed that he or she is not really looking at you?*

*Have you ever tried to communicate with a person who keeps interrupting you?*

These people forget that good communication goes two ways. They are sending you verbal and non-verbal messages, but they are not interested in what you are sending back. This can break the flow of communication and cause problems.

You know how to send clear messages. You also know how to check that the other person understands your message. You also need to know how to listen actively.

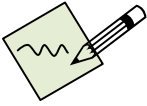
Listening is not the same as hearing. You may be sitting in the park thinking about a friend. You can hear children, birds, and cars, but you are not paying attention to them. The sounds they make are in the background. You are focused on your thoughts about your friend. You do not listen to the background sounds.

When you listen, you pay attention. When you listen actively, you **do many things** to make sure that you understand the message.



*Listening  
is not  
the same  
as hearing*

#6

TRY this

**This activity has four parts – A, B, C, and D.**

**Part A:** Do you think you are a good listener?

Read each of the sentences below and put an **X** beside the things you do.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I prepare to listen by removing noises or finding a quiet place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I think about something else when I am listening.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I pay attention to a person's tone of voice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I finish sentences for people when they pause.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I look at the person's face and nod my head to show that I understand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I become angry when people say things I don't agree with.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I pay attention to the speaker's body language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I pretend to understand instead of asking the person to repeat what he or she just said.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I think about what someone says before I respond.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I move around when I am not interested in what someone says.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I bring my attention back when it starts to go away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I think about how the speaker looks instead of what he or she is saying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I take notes when the information is important or difficult to remember.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I use the same response over and over so that the person thinks I am paying attention. For example, "um hmm...." "yes...." "right...."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I look directly at the speaker and nod my head to show agreement.

#6



Continued

All of these sentences tell about things people **do** when other people are talking. Not all of the things will help you to understand someone's message.

**Part B**

- Look at the sentences again.
- If the sentence tells a good thing to do when you are listening, put a circle around the number in front of it.

**Part C**

- Now check the answer key. It shows circles for all the good listening things. Make sure that your circles are the same as those in the answer key.

**Part D**

- Now look at your circles and **X** marks. Do the numbers in the circles match the places where you put an **X**? If they do, then you are a good, active listener.
- If they don't, then you need to change some of things that you do when you listen.



Body language and tone are important parts of listening. Your body language can show someone that you are interested in what they are saying. Their body language can give you important clues about what they are trying to tell you.

Non-verbal messages can also give you important information about what they are *not* telling you, especially when their verbal and non-verbal messages do not match.

#7



### TRY this

Imagine that you are listening actively to the messages below.

Think about if what you *hear* matches what you *see*.

Draw a line to connect the messages that match. Make an **X** between the messages that do not match.

Verbal message		Non-verbal message
We are very pleased with your service.	—	shakes your hand.
I'm not upset.	<b>X</b>	yells words.
Take your time.		keeps looking at watch.
Your proposal is interesting.		try not to yawn.
I'm okay.		looks you in the eye and smiles.
I don't need any help.		can't open container and starts banging it on counter.
I understand		does task correctly.
That's great!		turns and stomps away.
I think this space will suit your needs.		shows you around while explaining.

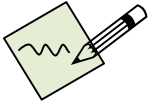
An important part of active listening is to check to make sure that you understand what the other person is trying to tell you. The next section gives you some ideas for how to do this.

## Part 4 Check to See that you Understand Messages From Others

Even if you listen very well, you may still not be sure about what another person is trying to tell you. There are many ways that you can check to see if you understand or to clarify something that you are not sure about. Here are some ways that you can do this.

Example	
<b>Repeat using your own words</b>	Your employee is upset. You have been listening to him talk about a disagreement between himself and another employee. You might say, "Let me make sure that I understand..."
<b>Ask for a demonstration</b>	A supplier claims that a new tool will save you steps to finish your product. You might say, "Can you show me how it works?"
<b>Show how to do the instruction</b>	You have been shown how to do a spreadsheet. You might say, "Can you watch while I try it, and let me know if I'm doing it right?"
<b>Ask for the meaning of unfamiliar words</b>	A repair person tells you that you need a labyrinth seal on your condensing unit. You might say, "What does the word <i>labyrinth</i> mean?" or "I don't know what a <i>labyrinth seal</i> is. Can you explain this part and how it works?"

#8



### TRY this

This activity gives three different scenarios or situations. For each scenario, imagine that someone has sent you the message that you see below. You missed the parts that are underlined. Write what you could say or do to make sure that you understand the message.

#### Scenario 1:

*You need to repair a sink faucet in your shop.*

*You visit a hardware store and the clerk explains the procedure to you.*

**“Take the nut off the stem with a channel lock.”**

1. What could you say?

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**“Next, replace any O rings and washers.”**

2. What could you say?

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**“After that, use the reaming tool to clean out the seat.”**

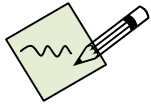
3. What could you say?

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4. What could you do to make sure that you understand the whole message?

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#8



Continued

**Scenario 2:**

*You are trying to find the building of a supplier in an unfamiliar part of the city. You stop someone to ask for directions.*

*This is what you hear:*

**“Keep going for two blocks until you come to the next traffic light. Turn right and go for three blocks, then hang a left, and cop a 270 to the end of the street. The building you want is the last one on the south side of the street.”**

1. What could you say?

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2. What should you pay attention to while the person is talking?

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3. There are many steps to these directions. What are some things you could you do to remember all of the directions in the correct order?

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#8



Continued

**Scenario 3:**

*You are closing your restaurant at the end of the day.*

*You hear a loud noise in the kitchen and you go to check what it is.*

**Your employee is sitting on the floor with a frightened look in his eyes. He is holding his chest, but he says, “I’m okay now.”**

1. What should you say? What questions could you ask?

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2. What should you do?

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Think about what might happen in Scenario 3 if you do not pay attention to body language.

## Using Your Communication Skills

In the first part of this module you explored the basics of good communication. Now you will learn how to apply these skills in business situations.

The amount of formality you use (how “proper” and professional you act) will depend on what kind of business you have, how well you know the person you are speaking with, and the purpose of your communication.

Your language and your body language, including your tone, may change depending on the context of your communication. Still, if you want to be taken seriously, and you want others to believe in you and your business, you should follow these five basic guidelines:

<b>Part 1</b>	Be Polite
<b>Part 2</b>	Use Good Telephone Manners
<b>Part 3</b>	Make Small Talk Work for You
<b>Part 4</b>	Interview Wisely
<b>Part 5</b>	Make Confident Presentations

The remainder of this module will help you explore these guidelines more closely. Always think about how they could relate to your own business.

### Part 1 Be Polite

If people think that you are polite they will be much more willing to do business with you than if they think you are rude. Even if you don’t think you are rude, the words you use could make others think that you are. Here are some polite phrases you could use for different purposes.

<b>Interrupting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excuse me....May I interrupt?</li> <li>• Sorry to interrupt....</li> <li>• May I ask a question?</li> <li>• If I could just add something here....</li> <li>• A little slower please.</li> </ul>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Asking for repetition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you repeat that please?</li> <li>• I didn't catch all of that. Can you say it again?</li> <li>• Would you please repeat that?</li> <li>• I'm sorry. I missed part of what you said. Would you say it again please?</li> <li>• Can you show me one more time?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Checking for understanding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you saying....?</li> <li>• Let me make sure I understand....</li> <li>• So, in other words,....</li> <li>• Are you telling me....?</li> <li>• This is what I understand....</li> <li>• Is this correct....?</li> </ul>

If you do not already use some of these polite phrases, you should. A good way to help you remember these phrases and practise them is to cut out these three boxes with the phrases. Carry these phrases with you and practise them until being polite becomes a habit.

And remember, when you use the words “please” and “thank you,” you show others that you are concerned with their “pleasure” and that you are “thinking” of them. These are powerful messages to send to customers, employees, and others who can help make your business a success.

## Part 2 Use Good Telephone Manners

Good telephone manners matter! Every connection you and your employees make is important to the profits of your company. In business, being impolite to others on the phone is totally unacceptable. To avoid losing business, follow these tips.

1. Do not permit the phone to ring at your office more than three times.
2. Make sure you speak clearly and identify yourself when you answer the phone.
3. Always use a pleasant and friendly tone. If you smile when you answer, your tone will be positive.
4. Do not answer the phone if you are eating food or chewing gum.
5. Before placing a caller on hold, ask their permission first and thank them.
6. It is better to return a call than to keep someone on hold too long. If the phone rings back to you, you've kept them on hold too long.
7. Do not give the impression that you are rushed. It is better to return the call when you can give the person the time they need to handle the reason for their call.
8. Do not forget to return the call as you promised.
9. Never interrupt a caller while they are talking to you.
10. Never have an argument with a caller.
11. Always ask for the best number (and an alternate), as well as the best time to return the call, especially when someone other than yourself must return the call.
12. Do not return calls before 8:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. unless you have permission to do so.
13. Never leave a message with someone else or on voice mail regarding details of an overdue account. Instead, leave a message asking the person to call you back.



14. Return calls that have been left on voice mail promptly.
15. Hang up the phone gently.
16. Do not make it a habit of receiving personal calls at work.

#9

**TRY this**

Test yourself! You have just read 16 good telephone manners. It is important to understand the reasons why these tips are listed.

Match the tips above with the explanations below. Write the numbers of the tips these explanations refer to on the line provided. There may be several correct answers. The first one is done for you.

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <u>9, 7</u> | 1. The caller will feel that you are a poor listener and that you don't think what they are saying is important. |
| _____       | 2. You may disturb someone's private time when you call outside of office hours.                                 |
| _____       | 3. Your voice may be distorted or the caller may think you are rude.   |
| _____       | 4. You won't have to play "phone tag" with the caller if you know where and when to call back.                   |
| _____       | 5. The caller will think you are aggressive and may not want to do business with you.                            |
| _____       | 6. This type of call should be private. You don't want the wrong person to get this message.                     |
| _____       | 7. The caller may think they have the wrong number.  |
| _____       | 8. You may miss important business calls by tying up the lines with calls unrelated to business.                 |

#9



Continued

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The caller may think that you have hung up on them, and then hang up themselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The caller may think that you don't value their business if you can't be bothered to call back promptly.

The best way to develop good telephone skills is to practise with real phone calls. Start practising good telephone manners when making everyday business calls. You may find that this effective way of communicating will soon become a habit.

## The Complaint Call

Complaint callers who are irate are really saying, "I rate."

When a caller complains, lend them your **EAR**:

- **E**mpathize with the caller. Try to understand how the person is feeling.
- **A**pologize and acknowledge the problem.
- Accept **R**esponsibility. Make sure you *do* something.

Use these problem-solving steps whenever possible.

1. Listen completely to the complaint. Avoid argument.
2. Do not blame anyone. Even if you know who is to blame for a problem, do not share this information with the caller.
3. Restate the problem as you understand it. Ask questions if you do not understand.
4. Offer solutions or alternatives. Alternatives give the caller the feeling that they are part of the solution.
5. Confirm the solution with the caller. Make sure the caller agrees with what has been decided.

#10

TRY this

Useful phrases make the caller feel like you take their complaint seriously and that you want to solve their problem. Useless phrases make the caller feel like you don't care about their problem or that you are not willing to solve it.

Read the list of phrases below. Put a check mark before the useful phrases and an **X** before the useless phrases.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ "How can I help you?"
2. \_\_\_\_\_ "No...."
3. \_\_\_\_\_ "What can I do for you?"
4. \_\_\_\_\_ "I'm sorry this happened. Let's get this problem solved."
5. \_\_\_\_\_ "We can't do that."
6. \_\_\_\_\_ "I'll check this out and get back to you right away."
7. \_\_\_\_\_ "I'll make sure this information gets to the right person."
8. \_\_\_\_\_ "**You** will have to...."
9. \_\_\_\_\_ "That's a good question. Let me find the answer for you."
10. \_\_\_\_\_ "That's a tough one. Let's see what we can do."
11. \_\_\_\_\_ "We aren't able to do that, but we **can**...."
12. \_\_\_\_\_ "I don't know."

Many of the phone calls that you will receive will test your problem-solving skills. Some people may make unreasonable demands or ask you to do things that you can not do. If you think about some of the kinds of calls you will get before they happen, you may be better prepared to deal with the calls quickly and effectively.

#11

**TRY this**

Imagine you have a home pet-grooming business and you receive the following calls. Think about how you would respond respectfully. Write your response on the lines provided.

1. An old client wants her dog shampooed. She does not have an appointment, but says it must be done today. You are very busy. This is not the first time she has called at the last minute.

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2. The mother of a 15-year-old girl phones fuming mad and demands to know why you let her daughter talk you into shaving their long-haired cat.

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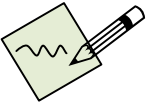
3. A caller says that her cat is scratching her new sofa and she wants to have it de-clawed. You do not do this procedure and you believe that it is cruel.

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#11



Continued

Imagine you own two coffee trucks which supply snacks to workers in an industrial area during their breaks. Think about how you would respond respectfully. Write your response on the lines provided.

4. The manager of a work site phones to tell you that one of your drivers was involved in a shouting match with one of his workers. He wants to cancel his contract with you.

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5. The owner of your building calls to let you know that your rent will be increased by 10% in the upcoming year.

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Your business may be very different from the ones above, but you will have to deal with angry or demanding callers. Think about the kinds of problem calls you may get and how you will respond.

## Part 3 Make Small Talk Work for You

You may have a great business plan and strong skills in your area of expertise, but you may be very uncomfortable making small talk. You are not alone. Most people think of themselves as shy, and many people hate making small talk.

As a business owner, your ability to make small talk is an essential skill. This skill will:

- help you to *break the ice* when meeting new associates and potential customers
- help you to *think on your feet* and ease your way into more important conversations
- make others feel that you are confident and easy to talk to

Like all skills, your ability to make small talk can be learned with practice. Start making small talk in your everyday dealings with strangers. For example, at the store, the bank, the gas station, a restaurant, when you pick your child up at school, etc. You may be surprised that making small talk gets easier each time, and that others respond very positively to you.

The stakes may be much higher when making business small talk than when chatting with someone in line at the supermarket. In business, you are often making small talk for a purpose, and that purpose is to increase your network of contacts in order to increase your business. With this purpose in mind, there are several things you can do to help increase your small talk skills.

<p><b>Think ahead</b></p>	<p>Think about conversations you are likely to have, even those informal meetings that may happen because of where you will go that day. As you prepare for a business function, spend some time thinking about what you will have in common with the people who will be there. Then try to come up with three things to talk about.</p>
<p><b>Have something to say</b></p>	<p>Watch the news, and read the newspaper and trade magazines. Find interesting things to talk about, both serious and humorous. Stay away from long-winded stories, or negative or controversial topics. Ask questions. Start with leads like, "What do you think of ....?" "Have you heard ....?" "What is your take on ....?"</p>

<p><b>Listen actively</b></p>	<p>Really focus on what the person is saying, and you should be able to add relevant comments when they are finished talking. Do not let your eyes wander around the room. Do not interrupt. Listen more than you talk.</p>
<p><b>Pay attention to body language</b></p>	<p>People who look uncomfortable make others uncomfortable. Act confident even if you don't feel confident. Smile when you first meet people, and shake hands. Place yourself within talking distance of others. Look at the speaker, not past the speaker. If someone gives you a business card, accept it as a gift. Hold it in both hands and take a moment to read what is written on it. When you're done, put it away in a shirt pocket, purse, or wallet to show that it is valued. Before entering into a conversation that is already in progress, observe and listen. Look for a good time to join in.</p>
<p><b>Exit gracefully</b></p>	<p>Have a few exit lines ready so that you can both move on. For example, "I need to check in with a client over there." "I skipped lunch today, so I need to visit the buffet." "I'm going to get a drink (of water)." "Excuse me, I need to make a call." "It was good to meet you."</p>

#12



### TRY this

When you meet someone in a business setting for the first time, some small talk topics are better than others. Imagine that a total stranger approaches you at a trade show and brings up these topics. Put an **X** before conversations that you would *not* want to continue. Be prepared to explain your choices.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ That's an unusual name. What is your ethnic background?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Who do you think is going to win the series?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you think our troops should pull out?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ How did you find out about this event?
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The traffic is horrible! Did you have trouble getting here?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I'm building a deck on my house. Do you do home repairs?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ What do you think of this city? Is it your first time here?
8. \_\_\_\_\_ It sure is cold out there! Where are you from?
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you go to church?
10. \_\_\_\_\_ How much did you have to pay for your space at this show?
11. \_\_\_\_\_ What do you think of reality TV shows?
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Politicians are all the same. They are all a bunch of crooks.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ For you, my friend, I can get these same parts for half price.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Attendance looks pretty high this year. How long have you been coming to this trade show?
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Are you married?

**Note:** Even if you are comfortable talking about these topics, your listener may not be.

You should also make small talk work for you when you speak with your customers. Always greet customers in a friendly way. Try to get to know what interests them. Remember their faces and small details about them. Welcome repeat customers back. Ask what they think of your service or product, and if there is anything you could improve upon. Follow up on any suggestions to show that you really value their business.



## Part 4 Interview Wisely

As an entrepreneur, you need to make sure that all of your employees will make a positive contribution to your business. If you interview wisely, you will have a good chance of hiring people with the right skills and similar values and work ethics as yourself.

Part of interviewing wisely is asking good questions. You may want to use some from the list below. Each question is followed by an explanation or things to look for in the person's response.

### 1. *Can you tell me a bit about yourself?*

- This is an ice breaker. It gives the person a chance to talk about a familiar topic.
- Look for responses that show the person has a variety of interests, is a self-starter, and is in charge of their life.
- Be prepared to kindly cut the person off after a few minutes.

### 2. *What interests you about this position?*

- See if they have done their homework and that they know something about your company and the job they hope to fill.

### 3. *Tell me about your most recent position.*

- Look for skills that are similar to the ones needed for the position.
- Beware of someone who criticizes past employers or co-workers.

### 4. *How would your colleagues describe you?*

- This question gets to the heart of interpersonal skills. It gives you clues about how they will fit in with others in your organization.

### 5. *What makes you the best person for this job?*

- Look for skills needed for the job, such as a positive, enthusiastic attitude and self-confidence.

### 6. *What are your short- and long-term goals?*

- How committed is the person to growing with your company?
- Do they lack goals or motivation?
- Will they only stay until a better job comes along?

**7. What are some things that you find difficult to do?**

- Look for a response that shows the person has a good understanding of areas that they need to develop without being too self-critical.

**8. What are some things that you find easy to do?**

- The person has a chance to really showcase their strengths.

**9. Describe a challenging work situation and how you handled it.**

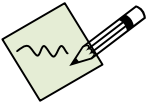
- The response should show the person's ability to solve problems. You could also develop a *What if...* question directly related to your business, and see how they would handle a potential problem.

Try to look at the whole person during the interview. Some people are great at interviews, but not so great as employees. Likewise, some people are very nervous and hesitant during an interview, but they become great employees.

Some people may have the skills needed to perform the job, but they are unable to work with others without conflict. They may be qualified, but be poorly groomed or have a negative attitude during the interview. If they don't care about how they look or act at an interview, they won't start caring once they get the job.

Try to choose someone who is in tune with you and what you think is important. Above all, look for honesty. Don't be afraid to trust your instincts.

#13



### TRY this

Two small businesses are described below. Each business owner needs to hire one person from two possible candidates (Person A and Person B).

You will take the role of owner for each business. You must choose the best candidate for each job based on their interviews. Use this scale to score each candidate's response. Write the score on the line provided after each response. It will help you make your final decision.

Scale	
0	unacceptable
1	somewhat acceptable
2	acceptable
3	excellent

#### Business #1

You are a young entrepreneur with a new line of chocolate products for home parties hosted by women. You need a representative to visit homes to sell your products.

**Can you tell me a bit about yourself?**

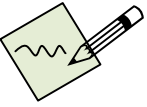
**Person A:** *I'm a real self-starter. I love people. I love meeting people....uh, what else? I like parties. I'm single, and always available. I really need to work.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I'm a single mom. I have two great kids, ages eight and five. I'm anxious to get back to work now that they are both in school. I used to sell real estate. I love sports. I play volleyball once a week and I coach soccer. I'm on the board of our local community centre.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

***What interests you about this position?***

**Person A:** *I like the flexibility. I hate being stuck in an office, 9-5, you know what I mean? I can still have a social life, and I get to meet new people. I love chocolate!*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I like the flexibility. I can balance my responsibilities and interests and still earn some money. I think this business really has potential. Everyone loves chocolate!*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

***Tell me about your most recent position.***

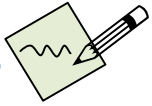
**Person A:** *Do I have to? Just kidding! It was alright. I worked in a shoe store. I learned a lot about what customers want and how to treat them with respect. You have to let them know that you are there to help them, but not to force anything on them. I had to work long hours for minimum wage.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *Well, I haven't worked for eight years. I worked as a real estate agent for two years. It's tough to sell big ticket items like houses. That's why I thought I would be good selling something more affordable to most people, like chocolate.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

***How would your colleagues describe you?***

**Person A:** *Peppy? Happy? I always get along great with others. If you have to work, I think you should enjoy yourself.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *Well, I worked mostly independently and it was a competitive field. But I was always honest and I would never steal anyone else's business. In fact, if I got too busy, I would give some leads to other agents.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

***What makes you the best person for this job?***

**Person A:** *Like I said before, I really need this job! I have lots of energy and I really like your product. I think I can get that across to customers.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I'm mature and confident. I enjoy making presentations. As I said before, I am honest, and I think this comes across to potential buyers.*

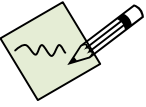
Score \_\_\_\_\_

***What are your short- and long-term goals?***

**Person A:** *I'm not sure. Well, my short term goal is to get this job. I've always wanted to go to university, so I guess that would be my long-term goal. I'm interested in psychology. I need to start earning some money before I can think about that.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

**Person B:** *I'd like to start working for you on a part time basis. I think this business really has potential and I would like to be on board as it expands. I could see making a career of this.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**What are some things that you find difficult to do?**

**Person A:** *You mean at work? I find it hard not to say anything when people are rude. I mean, you're just trying to do your job, and some people are so miserable. But I've learned to hold my tongue.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I find "hard sells" are hard to do. I was trained to look for uncertainty in a client and to use that to convince them that they need what I am selling. I was never comfortable with this. I would rather back off, give them a chance to think about it, and get back to me.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**What are some things that you find easy to do?**

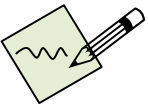
**Person A:** *I can talk to anyone....at the supermarket, walking down the street, anywhere. I've always found it easy to strike up a conversation with anyone. I think this is really important when you are trying to sell something.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I think I am pretty good at reading people. It may sound a bit strange, but I can sense how they feel and provide support when they need it. This works well in my personal life, and I think it's also a good skill for a sales associate.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

**Describe a challenging work situation and how you handled it.**

**Person A:** *One time these two guys came into the shoe store and they just wanted to give me a hard time. They kept asking for all kinds different kinds of shoes and sizes, and I knew they didn't have any money. I told them that buying shoes is a big investment and that they should look closely at all of our choices and prices before deciding which ones to try on. They just walked out of the store!*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *Well, we found that one of our board members at the club was stealing money. We could have called the police, but we decided to handle it internally. I spoke with the person directly and listened to his explanation. There is never a good excuse for dishonesty, but there were special circumstances in this case. He agreed to pay the money back in installments and I convinced the board to accept his offer.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Now score each candidate's appearance and behaviour:**

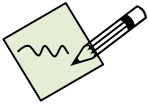
**Person A:** She is a young woman, probably between 20 and 25. She is wearing a slightly wrinkled blouse and a skirt to just above the knee, along with a pair of clunky shoes. She is wearing tasteful make-up and jewelry, and has a few rings in her brow. She smiles a lot. Her legs are crossed and she shakes one foot up and down during the interview.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** She is probably in her late 30's. She is wearing black slacks and a well-pressed blouse with low-heeled pumps. Her hair is pulled back off her face and she wears little make-up, but very large hoop earrings. As she crosses her legs, you notice a tattoo on her ankle.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

1. Add up the scores for each person. Which one would you hire?

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2. What were the most important factors you considered in making your decision?

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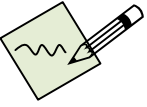
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If possible, have someone else do this exercise and compare their decision with your decision. They may consider some things that you overlooked. Be prepared to defend your decision!



#13



Continued

**Business #2**

You have created a portable wooden massage table which is in high demand by massage therapists. You need a craftsman to follow your prototype and make 15 tables by the end of the month.

Scale	
0	unacceptable
1	somewhat acceptable
2	acceptable
3	excellent

***Can you tell me a bit about yourself?***

**Person A:** *Well, I'm the whole package. I love creating things from scratch. I've always loved drawing, designing, and constructing things from wood. I also have lots of experience in sales. I can take a product from conception to profit.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I like working with wood and natural products. I love nature and spending as much time as possible in the forest. I love jazz and I'm an amateur saxophone player. I've started painting as a hobby.*

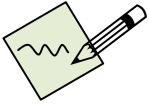
Score \_\_\_\_\_

***What interests you about this position?***

**Person A:** *I'd love to be part of your team! You have a great product here and I know there is a high demand for it. I'd like to get in on the ground floor. I'm a hard worker and I want to show you that I can meet the demand for this product.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

**Person B:** *I have more free time now, and I still want to be active. I think you guys have a great idea. I know I will enjoy working with my hands, and making something that will help people have a better quality of life.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Tell me about your most recent position.**

**Person A:** *I worked as a journeyman carpenter for two years with my uncle. I also sold kitchen cabinets on the side. They were both good jobs, but I'm ready for a new challenge.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I owned my own upholstery business for the past 25 years. I learned a lot about working with wood and fabric, and I take pride in my work. I've had a lot of responsibility being my own boss and I'm ready to work for someone else.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**How would your colleagues describe you?**

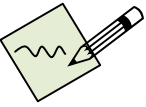
**Person A:** *Energetic, motivated, a real team player.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *Well, most of my colleagues were my employees, but I think they would say that I was honest and fair. I always worked hard and expected the best from my workers.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

***What makes you the best person for this job?***

**Person A:** *I'm young, I'm talented, I'm motivated. I can and will meet deadlines.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *I'm a craftsman. I take pride in every piece I bring to life. I can help you build a solid reputation in the field.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

***What are your short- and long-term goals?***

**Person A:** *Short term, I want to work to get your product made. Long term, I would like to market it. It is an absolutely fabulous product with an unlimited growth potential!*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *Well, as you know, I have recently "retired" from my own business. I want to help you produce your tables for as long as I am able. I believe there is a great demand for this product, and I would love to be around to see you succeed.*

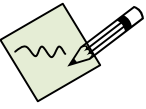
Score \_\_\_\_\_

***What are some things that you find difficult to do?***

**Person A:** *I have never met a problem that I can't solve. Having said that, I have a hard time saying "no." Just ask my friends....I'm just a big softy.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

**Person B:** *I always had trouble trying to collect outstanding payments for my services. People had so many reasons they couldn't pay, and many of them were legitimate. I have trouble being "the heavy."*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**What are some things that you find easy to do?**

**Person A:** *I am great at following instructions. Just tell me what I have to do, send me on my way, and let me listen to my music. You won't find anyone who can stay focused as long as me.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *As I have said, I love working with wood....the smell, the feel, the beauty of the patterns in the grain. Creating something out of wood is the easiest thing in the world for me.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe a challenging work situation and how you handled it.**

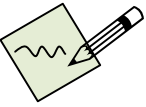
**Person A:** *When I was selling cabinets, one of my colleagues thought that he should get the full sales commission because he was the first person who took our clients around the showroom. I closed the deal when he was out of town. I decided to share the commission 50/50 and my colleague was thrilled! Like I said, I'm a team player.*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** *My customers had a living room set recovered and couldn't pay their bill. Their son had dropped out of school and was stealing everything he could get his hands on. I told them that they could have their furniture if their son would work off the debt in my shop. He was one the best workers I ever had!*

Score \_\_\_\_\_

#13



Continued

**Now score each candidate's appearance and behaviour:**

**Person A:** He is a young man dressed in slacks, a shirt, and a sports jacket. He is well-groomed and confident in appearance. He looks directly into my eyes and uses a lot of expression.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Person B:** He is a middle-aged man dressed in cords and a shirt. He has longish graying hair and a neatly trimmed beard. He talks softly. He moves his hands to add to what he is saying.

Score \_\_\_\_\_

3. Add up the scores for each person. Which one would you hire?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What were the most important factors you considered in making your decision?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

If possible, have someone else do this exercise and compare their decision with your decision. They may consider some things that you overlooked. Be prepared to defend your decision!

## Part 5 Make Confident Presentations

When you make a presentation, you introduce something new to someone. As an entrepreneur, you will make many different kinds of presentations to many different kinds of people. Some presentations may be short and informal, such as showing a customer a new product. Other presentations may be longer and more formal, such as pitching your idea to potential investors or to people who can give you a loan.

As an entrepreneur, you have a product or service to sell. No matter what kind of presentation you make, you need to do it with confidence. People will not want to waste valuable time and money supporting a business if the owner cannot show that they believe in themselves and what they have to offer.

There are things you can do before, during, and after your presentation to make it more effective.

Before your presentation	
<b>Know your product</b>	<p>Think very deeply about the message you want to send to your listener. When you are preparing, MOST of your time should be spent on creating this message. Make notes of key points or catchy phrases, and practice your delivery of them. Even if your speaking style is awkward, you will be more successful if your listener can see that you have really thought about what you have to offer them.</p>
<b>Consider your audience</b>	<p>As an entrepreneur, the purpose of your presentation is always the same: to convince someone that your product, your business, or your knowledge is worth hearing about. Your audience is the thing that changes, and it should be a key consideration in your presentation.</p> <p>It is important for you to find out as much as possible about your audience as you can before your presentation. This will help you make decisions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what you need to tell them and what they already know (are they familiar with the business, or similar products?)</li> <li>• what kind of language you need to use (technical, simple)</li> <li>• what visuals you need to support what you say (samples, PowerPoint)</li> <li>• what tone to use (friendly, professional, hard sell)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Consider your audience (continued)</b></p>	<p>What is appropriate for one audience may not be appropriate for another audience. For example, you may say, “Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen” at a formal presentation, but it would not be an appropriate opening for a one-on-one demonstration of your product.</p> <p>To build your confidence before a presentation, tell yourself that your audience is made up of people who have something to learn from you. Remind yourself that you are the expert and that you have something important to say.</p>
<p><b>Prepare visuals</b></p>	<p>Most people take in information best when they can see something, as well as hear it. When you <b>show</b> as well as you <b>tell</b>, your presentation will be stronger. Decide in advance how you can best show your audience what you have to offer. Examples of visuals are a product, a drawing, a chart, a tour, etc. If you are not comfortable making presentations, visuals allow you to take the focus off yourself temporarily. Make sure you have enough copies for your audience. Don’t let your visuals take the place of your words – use them to support what you are saying.</p>

<p><b>During your presentation</b></p>	
<p><b>Pay attention to your body language</b></p>	<p>The way you carry yourself will make a big impression on your listener. If you stand or sit (and you should always sit straight and tall), make eye contact and show energy as you begin your presentation. You will give the listener an impression of confidence. If you slouch or constantly look down, your listener may think that you don’t believe what you are saying is important, or even worse, that you have something to hide.</p> <p>Take some deep breaths and smile before you speak. Keep your body upright and relaxed during your presentation. Only use hand movements or body movements when they really match what you are saying. With more experience, you can add more body language, but at first, keep it simple.</p>

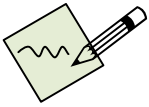
<p><b>Speak with emotion</b></p>	<p>Most people make decisions based on their emotional responses. Advertisers are well aware of this and use it to their advantage. When you appeal to people's emotions, you reach them in a way facts and figures rarely do. Show your listener that you are passionate about your business with your words and tone.</p> <p>Speaking with emotion does not mean speaking quickly. You need to speak slowly enough for your listener to receive and understand your message. Also, when you speak slowly, you have more time to think about what you want to say and how you can adapt your message to your particular listener.</p>
<p><b>Build trust</b></p>	<p>You will begin to build trust with your audience if you show them that you have done “your homework.” In other words, you have taken the time to develop your ideas, you have thought about your audience’s needs, you have anticipated problems, and you are actively looking for solutions.</p> <p>People will begin to trust you if they think you are honest and positive. Tell them what you can do, and <b>never</b> make promises that you can’t keep. Admit it if you don’t know something, but reassure them that you will find out and get back to them. Use personal experiences to bring your material to life, and give the audience something they can relate to. If you are comfortable, use gentle humour to reduce tension.</p>

### After your presentation

<p><b>Take action!</b></p>	<p>Ask for feedback, get the answers you need, make follow-up appointments, and keep any promises you made. If you sold something as a result of your presentation, don’t forget to provide after sales service. This is how you truly earn the trust you have started to develop. It is also how you earn new customers, because satisfied contacts will provide references for you.</p>
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#14

TRY this

Two presentations are described below. Read about each presentation. Use the guidelines above to answer the question that follows each presentation.

### Presentation #1

*A young entrepreneur wants to start a Japanese food catering business. He has an appointment with a loan officer at the bank who has already read his business proposal.*

**Loan officer:** *Tell me why you think we should give you this loan.*

**Entrepreneur:** *Well, as you know from my proposal, I have seven years experience working in a Japanese restaurant for someone else. I believe that I have the skills needed to make it on my own in this competitive field. This is a new concept, I have a quality product, and I have many contacts who are already interested. I live in an area with many new businesses and young clientele who are concerned about healthy food choices for their business meetings. I have a marketing plan which includes making cold calls and delivering samples of my product. I am confident that once they try my food and they consider the competitive prices, the orders will start coming in. Here is a flyer with pictures of my finished product. On page two of my proposal I have included a detailed breakdown of projected costs and potential revenue. Three of my family members are excited to contribute their labour, and I'm prepared to work 24/7 for as long as it takes to make this business a go.*

1. Is this a confident presentation? Support your answer with at least five reasons.

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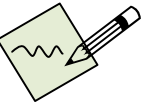


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#14



Continued

## Presentation #2

*A young entrepreneur has a prototype for home storage sheds in a rural area. He approaches a local lumber yard manager to negotiate bulk rates for supplies.*

**Lumber yard manager:** *Tell me why you think we should give you bulk rates on our supplies.*

**Entrepreneur:** *Ah....because I plan on buying a lot of wood once these things start selling.*

**Lumber yard manager:** *How will people know about your product?*

**Entrepreneur:** *I figure mostly word of mouth. Everybody needs sheds and my design is better than anything else around here. Plus people won't have to ship stuff in.*

**Lumber yard manager:** *Do you have any photos or blueprints to show me?*

**Entrepreneur:** *Ah, I didn't think you'd need to see them.*

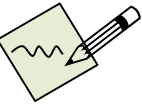
**Lumber yard manager:** *Do you have any orders yet?*

**Entrepreneur:** *Ya, two of my neighbours saw mine and they said they want me to build ones just like it for them.*

**Lumber yard manager:** *How many people will be working on the construction of these sheds?*

**Entrepreneur:** *So far just myself. But some buddies said they would help out on the weekends.*

#14



Continued

2. Is this a confident presentation? Support your answer with at least five reasons.

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Oral communication is a very important part of business. Even if you have a great product or service, if you can't tell people about it and answer their questions, they may not appreciate what you have to offer them. As you practice the things you learned in this module, you will become more comfortable and confident communicating with others.

# Answer Key





## Parts of Effective Communication

### TRY this #1

Answers will vary, but you can communicate better using Tone 1 instead of Tone 2. Here are some suggestions:

1. The expression on your face will be more positive when you use Tone 1 instead of Tone 2. You will look more approachable.
2. Your body language should be friendly when you use Tone 1. The movement of your hands and shoulders will be more relaxed and open when you use Tone 1 instead of when you use Tone 2. You may use your hands to emphasize something important.
3. You should be more comfortable looking into your customer's eyes when you use Tone 1 instead of Tone 2.

### TRY this #2

Verbal message		Non-verbal message
Nice to meet you.		shakes hands
How are you?	X	reads an invoice
I'm listening.	X	stocks shelves
I understand.		nods head up and down
Thanks for coming.		smiles and looks in eyes
Tell me about it.		sits and leans towards speaker
I see.	X	frowns and looks confused
Can I help you?		extends hands toward person

### TRY this #3

Answers will vary, but should include the following steps:

**Then** take the customer's order.

**Next** read the order back to make sure it is correct.

**Next** let them know the cost and when to expect the order.

**Finally** thank the customer and say goodbye.

### TRY this #4

Verbal and non-verbal messages	Assertive	Aggressive	Passive
"Sorry, I'm not interested in your product."	X		
Points finger in person's face.		X	
"I'll think about your offer and call you on Monday."	X		
"Whatever."			X
"Your product stinks!"		X	
"It doesn't matter one way or the other."			X
Speaks directly to person.	X		
"I understand your position, but I don't agree."	X		
Sits as far away as possible from others.			X
"If you don't like it, too bad."		X	
Mumbles.			X
Slams phone down.		X	
"We must get this order out by 4 o'clock."	X		
"I guess so..."			X
"Get it done NOW, or else."		X	
"Let's sit down and talk about this."	X		
"I need reliable employees. You have been late three times this week."	X		
Moves very close to person and raises voice.		X	
"I have a strong proposal and I am a very hard worker. I need this loan."	X		

## TRY this #5

Answers will vary, but here are some suggestions:

1. Your employee is not paying attention to what you are saying. Explain that it is important for her to concentrate on the procedure. Tell the employee you will repeat the instructions and that you expect her to show she understands when you are finished.
2. The receptionist is not expecting your order. Check the order to make sure you are at the correct place. If necessary, ask for directions or to speak to someone in charge. You should always have the name of a contact person on an order.
3. Your supplier has mixed up the order. Explain that there is an error on two of the products. Repeat the order and ask for the supplier to read it back to you again.
4. Your clerk is doing and thinking other things instead of giving you her undivided attention. You tell your clerk that this is important, but she seems to be occupied with inventory. Wait for your clerk to sit down and pay attention before you continue with the discussion.
5. The investors have not indicated that they have received and understood your message. Ask if they have any questions or suggestions.

## TRY this #6

**Part A** - Answers will vary.

**Part C** - These are the good listening behaviours:

1. I prepare to listen by removing noises or finding a quiet place.
3. I pay attention to a person's tone of voice.
5. I look at the person's face and nod my head to show I understand.
7. I pay attention to the speaker's body language.
9. I think about what someone says before I respond.
11. I bring my attention back when it starts to go away.
13. I take notes when the information is important or difficult to remember.
15. I look directly at the speaker and nod my head to show agreement.



**TRY this #7**

Verbal message		Non-verbal message
We are very pleased with your service.	_____	shakes your hand
I'm not upset.	X	yells words
Take your time.	X	keeps looking at watch
Your proposal is interesting.	X	tries not to yawn
I'm okay.	_____	looks you in the eye and smiles
I don't need any help.	X	can't open container and starts banging it on counter.
I understand.	_____	does task correctly
That's great!	X	turns and stomps away
I think this space will suit your needs.	_____	shows you around while explaining

**TRY this #8**

Answers will vary. Here are some suggestions.

**Scenario 1**

1. What is a channel lock? What does a channel lock look like?
2. What are O rings? Can you show me?
3. I don't know what the seat is. Is this the seat?
4. Repeat the instructions to check that you understand, or ask for a demonstration.

**Scenario 2**

1. I don't understand what you said after you told me to turn left. Can you repeat that please?
2. You should pay attention to the person's body language, as well as the person's words. The person will be pointing while giving you directions.
3. Repeat the directions so the person can correct you if you are wrong.
  - Write the directions down.
  - Ask the person if they know the names of the streets where you should turn.
  - Check a map if you have one.

### Scenario 3

1. Tell him that you want to make sure he is okay, and you are going to call for help.

Possible questions:

- When did the pain start?
  - What does it feel like?
  - Where does it hurt?
  - Do you have medication?
2. Call 911. This is an emergency.
    - If he has heart medication, make sure he takes it.
    - Have him rest in a position that helps his breathing.

**Note:** Your employee has fallen, is clutching his chest, and looks frightened. Even though he says he is okay, he may have had a heart attack. His health is unstable and could get worse if you ignore his body language. Take no chances.



## Using Your Communication Skills

### TRY this #9

- 2) 11, 12
- 3) 2, 4, 9, 10
- 4) 8, 11, 14
- 5) 9, 10
- 6) 13
- 7) 1, 2, 4
- 8) 16
- 9) 6
- 10) 8, 14

## TRY this #10

These are the numbers of the useful phrases: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11

These are the numbers of the useless phrases: 2, 5, 8, 12

## TRY this #11

Answers will vary. Here are some suggestions:

1. I am sorry, but I'm fully booked today. Although you are one of my best clients, I can't accommodate you today. Can you bring him in on....?
2. I'm sorry that you're upset. I did not know that you did not want the cat shaved. In the future, I will only take orders from you.
3. I'm sorry, we don't de-claw cats. We can clip your cat's nails. Do you have a large scratching post? Have you tried keeping your cat out of the room with the sofa?
4. I'm very sorry about this. I will speak to my driver immediately. We value your business and I'm sure we can work something out to make up for this. I'll get back to you today.
5. Thanks for letting me know about this. I will need to see the reasons for this increase in writing. When can we meet to discuss this?

## TRY this #12

Answers will vary.

The following topics may be too personal or controversial for many people when speaking to a total stranger in a business setting.

1. That's an unusual name. What is your ethnic background?
3. Do you think our troops should pull out?
9. Do you go to church?
10. How much did you have to pay to enter this show?
12. Politicians are all the same. They are all a bunch of crooks.
15. Are you married?

**Note:** Even if you are comfortable talking about these topics, your listener may not be as comfortable as you are.

## TRY this #13

The answers for this activity will vary, as different people will judge each response in a different way.

The purpose of this activity is for you to become familiar with some common interview questions and the reasons why they are asked. It will help you think about the kinds of responses you can expect to these questions. You will make judgments about what qualities and skills you think are important for your employees to have.

## TRY this #14

Your answers may be different from these, but you should include some of these ideas:

1. This is a confident presentation for the following reasons:

- The entrepreneur shows he has prepared in advance. The loan officer already has a copy of his proposal. The proposal has details about costs and revenues. He also has a marketing plan.
- The entrepreneur uses strong visuals – the proposal and the flyer.
- The entrepreneur reminds the loan officer about his skills and experience. He says he is confident. He “sells” himself.
- The entrepreneur uses key words to sell his product. For example, “new concept” “quality product” “healthy food choices” “competitive prices”
- The entrepreneur shows that he already has excited employees, and that he will work very hard to make the business a success. He is enthusiastic about his business.

2. This is not a confident presentation for the following reasons:

- The entrepreneur did not prepare in advance for this meeting.
- He did not make an appointment.
- He did not offer information, but only responded to questions.
- His responses were vague. It is clear he has not really thought about what it takes to run a business.

- He wants a discount for a bulk order, but he doesn't have enough business for this kind of order.
- He has no visuals.
- He has no marketing plan.
- He does not have steady employees or enough manpower to handle big orders.
- He does not show enthusiasm for his business.