

The First Day

Congratulations. You've endured the interview process and you've been hired. Employment isn't a sprint though; it's a marathon. Now it's about embodying the habits of a good employee, which starts with being prepared and managing time well.

Here are some steps to make sure you have a successful first day.

1. Plan out your route.

Avoid getting lost on the way to your first day at a new job by knowing the best way to get there. Practice driving there a couple of times at the same time you will be heading to work so you can time the drive and plan ahead for any potential traffic issues.

Find an alternate route. You need to know more than one way to get to your new job in case you find yourself stuck in traffic or encountering an unexpected hangup. Search online maps before you leave the house to give you an idea of multiple ways you can try to get to your new job on your first day. Also, search for phone applications that can provide traffic updates.

2. Lay out your clothes the night before.

For work you need to dress appropriately. Ask for your company dress code or try to think of what style the employees were wearing when you had your interview. If the company supplies uniforms and you haven't received yours yet, be sure to ask your company what you should wear on your first day. Knowing what you are going to wear to the first day at your new job will be one less thing for you to worry about. Be sure to have your outfit hung up somewhere safe to avoid pet hair or wrinkles before you leave

the house. Place the shoes you intend to wear where you can easily find them. Make sure they are clean and polished.

Ideally, you should wake up an hour to hour and a half earlier than the time you should leave.

Remember to have the average time you need to commute to your work in mind. You don't want to be late.

3. Necessary items.

You may want to keep a purse or backpack ready. There are some certain items you need to be sure you have.

Among these items: a small bottle of water, a small bag hygiene products (deodorant, sanitary products, hand sanitizer, cologne, toothpaste and toothbrush), your wallet (ID, driver's licence, credit cards and some cash for emergencies), cell phone along with a charger, a pen, a notepad, gum/breath mints. Remember, some employers will not allow you to bring bags into the work area, so be sure to ask your employer in advance. If not, find out if you will have a locker available or if you need to leave your bag in your car.

Just pack whatever you need for a quick fix during the day.

4. Take something non-perishable for lunch.

You want to be able to be flexible at lunchtime on your first day. You won't know what the refrigerator situation is or if your new coworkers will plan a lunch outing, so bring a non-perishable lunch that can sit for a later date. This way your new coworkers won't feel bad if you need to leave your packed lunch behind.



5. Make sure you have change for the vending machines.

If there is a refrigerator in the break room, bringing your own soft drinks will save money.

6. Before helping yourself to coffee and/or danish, find out what the policy is.

Ask if communal food in the breakroom free or does everyone chip in?

7. Put together a kit to keep in your desk.

Make sure it includes over-the-counter medication for headaches and digestive problems, and other emergency items.

8. Keep your schedule open on the first day.

While getting settled it is best not to plan anything for after work. You want to be available in the event you are asked to stay late or are invited to out by your new coworkers.

9. Turn your cell phone off or keep it on vibrate.

Make sure you follow the company's phone and internet usage policies.

10. Leave yourself plenty of time.

Fill your car's gas tank the day before instead of stopping on the way.

Even though you have practiced the route to your new job several times, you never truly know what you are going to find on your way to work on any given day. Tack on a few extra minutes to the anticipated drive time so you aren't stressed out about getting to work on time and can focus on doing your best on your first day.

11. Have someone you can call to give you a ride should your car not start.

If you live on a city bus route, familiarize yourself with the schedule. Find out if the bus stops at or near your workplace.

12. If you do find you are going to be a few minutes late because of a completely unexpected emergency, be sure to call and let them know.

Don't assume that a few minutes won't matter. Add the main number of your new workplace to your cell phone's contact list ahead of time. You can add other numbers as you learn them.

The First Few Weeks

Your first day is over, it was probably spent doing paperwork, going through orientation, or taking a tour of the facility. Well, that is over and its time to get immersed in your new job and your first week of work will officially begin.

Whether it's your first position or your fifth, those first few days on the job can be more than a little intimidating. But with these key rules, you can get comfortable in your new surroundings, get up to speed quickly, and get off on the right foot with your new boss and co-workers.

Here are some do's and don'ts for success in your first week(s).

- **Do: Be a Sponge**

One of your most important duties your first week is absorbing everything. Getting to know your company's culture, the working and communication styles of your teammates, the problem projects, office politics, and department or company-wide goals means that you'll be able to start your real work sooner (and be more effective when you do).

So, maybe sign up for professional development classes and attend all the team and office meetings you can, even if you're not yet sure what's going on or they don't 100% pertain to your work.

Also join in on the informal events. If you get asked to lunch, happy hour, or the office softball league (whether as a participant or onlooker), say yes. It's a great way to meet people, and it shows that you're excited to be part of the team.

- **Don't: Overcommit Yourself**

Do be careful, though, to balance your schedule—you want to have plenty of time to learn the ropes. The last thing you want is to look like you have too much to juggle, seem overwhelmed, or show up late to a commitment because you're stuck somewhere else.

- **Do: Ask Questions**

As you learn about new processes, projects, and people, don't be afraid to ask questions. You need to get up to speed, and people will expect it from the new person on the team. Also take detailed notes about everything you learn, even if it seems simple. Your brain is going to be on overload this week, and writing everything down will make sure you don't have to ask the same question twice.

- **Don't: Be Afraid to Speak Up**

At the same time, don't be afraid to contribute and add value—you do want to reinforce that you're the right person for the job! No, you won't know everything (nor should you act like you do!), but you can make suggestions in team meetings or brainstorming sessions, or ask questions like, "Has this been tried before?" And if you have a skill or ability that you've been hired to bring to the team, pipe up and share that knowledge. But be careful to read your audience. You don't want to come on like gangbusters or step on someone's toes.

- **Do: Offer to Help**

There may be some down time during your first few days on the job as your boss and team adjust to having you there. But don't sit around

waiting for others to figure out tasks for you—volunteer to help your new teammates on a project. You'll show initiative, you'll build rapport with your boss and co-workers, and you'll learn about expectations, procedures, and how things are done.

- **Don't: Turn Down Help or Advice**

If your boss or co-workers give you advice or offer to help you with a task or project, take them up on it—yes, even if you're totally capable of handling things yourself. It's a great way to bond with your office mates, plus you may get valuable insight into the company's expectations or a more efficient way to do the work you'll be given.

- **Do: Find a Mentor**

It never hurts to have an experienced, knowledgeable, successful professional to bounce ideas off of and to be groomed by, but it's especially useful when you're the newbie. Look around. Who are the stars of the organization—the ones who radiate likability, confidence, and initiative? Introduce yourself, and pick their brains.

- **Don't: Rely Only on Your New Mentor**

Undoubtedly, the people who make you feel most comfortable will become your go-tos as you navigate your first week. But remember the time it takes for people to help you out is time being taken away from their own tasks. Be sensitive to this by trying to figure things out for yourself first, asking a variety of people when you do have questions, and showing appreciation for everyone who helps you out.

- **Do: Keep Your Boss Informed**

Throughout the week, ask for periodic meetings with your boss (instead of popping in their office for every question you have!). In addition to

getting their direction on projects and tasks, you should use this time to update the boss on what you're learning and who you're meeting with.

Ask questions like “Are there additional tasks I should be taking on or skills I should be learning?” and “Can you give me feedback on the project I just completed?” to show initiative, but also do a lot of listening, too. Your boss' feedback and insight is going to be one of your greatest resources at this point—after all, you're going to be spending the next weeks, months, and maybe even years working there, and learning how management thinks early on will serve you well.

- **Don't: Compare Everything to Your Last Job**

Surely you could rattle off things you loved (or loathed) about your last job and how this position compares—but don't! You want to give yourself every opportunity to shine, and that means keeping your initial first week impressions to yourself. You're in a new place, and this is a new opportunity, so embrace it and move forward!



Employability Skills for Success

Most employers look for certain skills and qualities in their job candidates, in addition to academic qualifications. Known as employability skills, these skills may not be job-specific, but they play an important role in improving your likelihood of success and value in the workplace. These skills can also have an impact on your ability to progress in your career.

In this section, we will explain the employability skills you need to increase your chances of getting the job you want.

What are employability skills?

Employability skills are transferrable skills that are useful in nearly every job. They involve the development of an expertise, knowledge base or mindset that makes you more attractive to employers.

Employability skills are also often referred to as employment skills, soft skills, work-readiness skills or foundational skills. They improve your performance, minimize errors, and promote collaboration with coworkers, enabling you to perform your role more effectively. Ultimately, the main benefit of having these traits is that they can help you stand out among other job candidates.

Certain employability skills are more sought after in specific industries.

Examples of employability skills

Employers have high regard for employability skills because they are much harder to teach than job-specific skills. Some employable qualities come naturally, while others must be developed.

You may already have some of these key employment skills, but you can work to improve

those skills and develop new ones. Here are 10 common employability skills that employers look for:

1. Communication

Communication is one of the most important employability skills because it is an essential part of almost every job. The communication process involves five elements: the sender, receiver, message, medium, and feedback.

When these elements work together, you can deliver and understand messages clearly and efficiently, eliminating unnecessary misunderstandings and errors. Excellent communication skills make you more employable because they can enhance a company's productivity and efficiency and help prevent the waste of valuable time and resources.

Being an effective communicator involves conveying your thoughts and ideas clearly to achieve certain outcomes, as well as listening to your coworkers' instructions, ideas and intentions.

Depending on the job you want, you may have to be competent in several different types of communication, such as verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual. For instance, a customer-facing employee needs to have excellent verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

The best way to improve your communication skills is to communicate as frequently as possible. Some activities that can help you develop better communication skills include:

- Communicating on social media
- Joining a local club
- Practicing awareness of your facial expressions and other nonverbal cues.

2. Teamwork

Good teamwork skills refer to the ability to work harmoniously with your colleagues to achieve a shared goal. Teamwork skills such as collaboration can increase your hiring chances because you may be able to help a company reach its goals more effectively and efficiently.

These skills can also contribute to a more positive work environment. To become a great team player, you need to be comfortable working with people, take responsibility for your share of work, and contribute to team goals.

There are many things you can do to boost your teamwork skills, including:

- Volunteering to help coworkers
- Volunteering at a local organization
- Joining a sports team

3. Reliability

Reliability makes you more employable because it promotes trust between you and your employer. You are a reliable employee if you can consistently complete your tasks on time, deliver quality work, and make minimal mistakes. You must also be able to respond to inquiries and emails promptly and only make promises you can keep.

You can become more reliable by:

- Consistently meeting or exceeding your expected levels of work performance
- Creating schedules for your daily tasks and maintaining them
- Acknowledging your mistakes and making a conscious effort to avoid them in the future

4. Problem-solving

Problem-solving involves identifying key issues and their implications, having a clear understanding of problems, and determining

the most effective solutions. For more complex problems, you need to know how to divide them into smaller parts that are easier to understand and more manageable.

Problem-solving skills can set you apart from other job candidates because they can help your potential employer maintain an efficient operational process and achieve objectives more efficiently.

If you're a good problem-solver, you can play an important role in troubleshooting issues, which can enable your team to overcome obstacles and solve complex problems. Depending on the position you are applying for, you may need a certain set of sub-skills to solve problems effectively, including research, analysis, and decision-making.

You can become a better problem-solver by:

- Undertaking research assignments and projects
- Participating in brainstorming sessions
- Regularly developing your skills by solving puzzles and playing games

5. Organization and planning

Being able to organize and plan effectively is important because it helps you and your employer save time, effort, and money by improving workflow. It ensures that assignments and projects are completed on time and prevents confusion and errors that can be costly to the company.

To be a good organizer and planner, you should be able to identify tasks, prioritize them, create schedules for them, and complete them on time.

You can develop organizational and planning skills by:

- Developing a timetable for your daily activities

- Organizing an event
- Writing down your tasks and activities in a planner

6. Initiative

Taking initiative means recognizing a problem and solving it, preparing for a potential crisis by taking preemptive action, and taking advantage of opportunities and remember to keep a positive attitude.

It shows that you can think for yourself and take the necessary actions without being instructed to do so. As a person with initiative, you have a strong drive to succeed and a desire to keep improving yourself through continuous learning, which makes you valuable to any organization.

Employers consider initiative one of the key employability skills and value employees who possess self-motivation to complete tasks without being asked.

You can improve your ability to take initiative by:

- Approaching companies and other organizations to inquire about job opportunities
- Proposing changes to the policies or activities of a group you belong to
- Setting up a local club or fundraiser

7. Self-management

Self-management refers to the ability to perform job duties satisfactorily with little or no supervision. For higher-level employees, it also means delegating tasks to ensure you complete them on time. Additionally, self-managed employees can motivate themselves to deliver solid work performance consistently.

If you have good self-management skills, you can help your supervisor or manager save time and effort simply because you need minimal guidance and assistance from them. Also, being a self-motivated person means you may be less



likely to have productivity issues. These abilities can make you an appealing candidate to most employers.

You can develop self-management skills by:

- Asking for more responsibilities at work
- Creating schedules for certain activities and maintaining them
- Participating in volunteer work that allows you to work independently

8. Leadership

Employers look for good leaders because they can benefit organizations in many ways. As a leader, you play an important role in ensuring that your team shares the same vision as the company and works in unison with other teams and departments to achieve a common goal.

Additionally, you can develop strategies for achieving objectives, keep your team constantly motivated, and monitor work performance to produce better results for the company.

Leadership skills are important at every level. If you are seeking a managerial position, you need to be a good leader to motivate your team members. You can also benefit from having some leadership ability in entry-level positions because it may help you stand out and climb the ranks faster.

You can show leadership by directing and motivating your coworkers, setting objectives and goals for your team, improving work practices, and coaching your colleagues.

You can learn to become a better leader by:

- Attending a leadership course
- Starting a local group
- Reading about the habits of successful leaders, particularly those in your industry

9. Learning

Having strong learning skills means understanding new concepts and methods quickly, taking on new tasks, adapting to

change, and having the tendency to improve your knowledge and skills continually.

Employees who have good learning skills may help employers fill challenging roles more quickly and reduce the cost of staff training. Good learners are especially desirable to companies that are at the forefront of innovation because they can help transition to new methods and technologies more smoothly.

You can increase your ability to learn by:

- Taking a course to improve your learning skills, such as a speed-reading, memory-boosting, or an accelerated-learning course
- Researching skills and activities related to your job, such as organizing, teamwork, or presentation skills
- Teaching yourself a new skill or hobby

10. Technology

Companies search for candidates with technical skills to help them use the latest technology and stay ahead of their competitors. Depending on your job, the technology skills you need may vary greatly, from word processing and sending email to video editing and using programming languages.

If you can grasp technology-related concepts and learn how to use new technologies quickly, you may be more attractive to employers. Technology skills are acquired through learning and practice.

Some of the ways to develop and improve technology skills include:

- Enrolling in a technology course
- Trying out new apps and technology in your daily life
- Staying up-to-date with the latest technology in your industry

Time Management is a Priority

Whether in your personal life or in a professional setting, you've most likely encountered situations with a need for good time management. From time crunches to struggling with double booking family appointments, improving time management techniques in your life can pay off in big ways for everyone involved.

In this section we are going to look at five key benefits of time management, and explore some time management strategies that can make you a stand out success in your career.

1. Overcome Indecisiveness.

Try dividing specific tasks into blocks of time to accomplish them through the week. For larger projects, set your own deadlines to accomplish intermediate tasks as you work toward completing the overall project. Force yourself to make decisions and move on at a regular, predictable pace, this can prevent you from losing time overthinking small issues.



2. Maximize Your Working Time.

If you find yourself with only small blocks of time between meetings in which you can get things done, try approaching your day by making a checklist of tasks you expect to accomplish.

If you know you have a larger task at hand that requires more focused attention, block off time on your own calendar so your coworkers schedule meetings around it. Protecting your own time and maximizing your effectiveness during it are key to unlocking the benefits of time management in the workplace.

3. Help Your Team Grow.

If you are, or one day hope to be, in leadership role, one of the hidden benefits of time management is the opportunity to help your team members develop. When you delegate responsibilities, take care to not just put people in situations that maximize their existing strengths, also but give them tasks that take them out of their comfort zones as well. As your team members learn to successfully deliver results in an increasingly wide variety of scenarios, they will grow individually as professionals and strengthen your team as a whole.

4. Care for Your Mind and Body.

Strong time management means setting priorities and boundaries, and one of its key benefits is to improve the health of your mind and body. Try to protect time for personal care breaks that are important to you: Go for a walk, take time to prepare a healthy lunch in the morning, leave work in time to visit the gym. Your happiest and healthiest self is also your most productive, and taking care of yourself is not only good for you but for your company as well.

5. Improve Your Work, Improve Your Confidence.

Successful time management is not about getting more done; trying to just produce more can allow quality to slip in favor of quantity. Try setting goals that prioritize quality. One of the most significant benefits of time management in this sense is the effect this can have on your own confidence. When you produce work of a higher quality, you draw positive attention from your peers and supervisors, which in turn should lead to a more positive sense of your own capabilities and your value to the organization. All companies should strive to maintain high levels of employee confidence and positivity, and effective time management is a powerful way in which to do so.

Because of the value of time management, in the following section we are going to look at ten tips for mastering time management at work.

1. Take a deep look at how you're currently spending your time.

To optimize your personal time management, you first need to figure out where the time is going. Try tracking time for a week by listing daily activities. This will help:

- Determine how much you can accomplish in a day.
- Identify time drains.
- Focus on activities that provide the highest returns.

As you make your list, it will become obvious how much of your time is spent on unproductive thoughts, conversations, and activities.

The review will also provide a sense for how long certain types of tasks take you. This exercise

can also help you determine the time of day when you are most productive — that way, you know when to work on your projects requiring the most focus and creativity.

2. Create a daily schedule—and stick with it.

This step is vital for learning how to manage time at work. Try starting your day with an organized to-do list. Before you leave work for the day, create a list of the most pressing tasks for the next day. This allows you to get going as soon as you get to the office.

Putting everything on paper will prevent you from lying awake at night tossing and turning over the tasks running through your brain. Instead, your subconscious goes to work on your plans while you are asleep, which means you can wake up in the morning with new insights for the workday.

If you can't do it the day before, make sure you write out your list first thing in the morning. You'll find that the time you spend creating a clear plan is nothing compared to the time you'll lose jumping between tasks when you lack such a plan.

3. Prioritize wisely.

As you organize your to-do list, prioritization is key for successful time management at work. Start by eliminating tasks that you shouldn't be performing in the first place. Then identify the three or four most important tasks and do those first—that way, you make sure you finish the essentials.

Evaluate your to-do list and make sure you organized it based on the importance of a task rather than its urgency. Important responsibilities support the achievement of your goals, whereas urgent responsibilities require immediate attention and are associated with the achievement of someone else's goals. We tend to let the urgent dominate when we should really focus on activities that support our business goals.

Try breaking down tasks and putting them into one of four quadrants, known as the Eisenhower Matrix:

- Important and urgent: These tasks have important deadlines with high urgency—complete them right away.
- Important but not urgent: These items are important but don't require immediate action and should involve long-term development strategizing.
- Urgent but not important: These tasks are urgent but not important. Minimize, delegate, or eliminate them because they don't contribute to your output. They may result from the poor planning of others.
- Not urgent and not important: These activities hold little if any value and should be eliminated as much as possible.

4. Group similar tasks together.

Save yourself time and mental energy by trying to complete all of one type of to-do before moving on to the next. For example, create separate chunks of time for answering emails, making phone calls, filing, etc. Don't answer emails and messages as they come in, as doing so is distraction at its finest. Turn off your phone and email notifications to completely eliminate the temptation to check at an unappointed time.

5. Avoid the urge to multitask.

This is one of the simplest time management tips for work, yet it can be one of the hardest to follow. Focus on the task at hand and block out all distractions. It can be tempting to multitask, but it doesn't help. You lose time and decrease productivity when switching from one task to another.

6. Assign time limits to tasks.

Part of creating your schedule should involve setting time limits instead of just working until

they're done. To-do lists are great, but sometimes you might feel like you never check anything off.

If you're looking to set a steady pace to your workflow, try the Pomodoro Technique. It can help you check off your to-do list in 25-minute chunks by taking short breaks in-between and a longer break after completing four tasks. This balances focus with frequent breaks, reducing mental strain and maintaining motivation.

If the Pomodoro Technique doesn't work for you, try setting your pace with timeboxing. Timeboxing allows you to block out varied amounts of time equal to how long you estimate one task will take you. Once you've spent the designated amount of time on that task, move on to the next activity.

7. Build in buffers.

Research shows that regular breaks increase productivity, mental well-being, decision making, and memory. And skipping breaks can lead to faster burnout and more stress.

Make breaks a part of your schedule. When you finish a task, give yourself time to step away. Take mini breaks to recharge.

8. Learn to say no.

You'll never learn how to manage time at work if you don't learn how to say no. Only you truly know what you have time for, so if you need to decline a request in order to focus on more important tasks, don't hesitate to do so. And if you take on a project that is obviously going nowhere, don't be afraid to let it go.

Rather than doing a lot of tasks that yield little or no value, complete fewer tasks that create more value. Remember the 80/20 rule — 80% of your output comes from 20% of your inputs. Focus your efforts accordingly.

If you can't say no, delegate it. While delegating can be a hard skill to learn, it can work wonders

for your personal time management. You've put together a talented team, so determine the tasks you can pass on.

9. Get organized.

For effective time management, this tip needs to actually go on your to-do list. There are few things as frustrating as wasting valuable time looking for misplaced items. Not to mention how hard clutter can make it to focus.

Little things make a big difference. If you work in an office, create a filing system for documents. Unsubscribe to emails you no longer need. Automate repetitive tasks or processes where you can. Create systems for organizing and accomplishing tasks to increase your efficiency. With good organization, you only have to do it once, but you get the benefits forever.

10. Eliminate distractions.

Social media, web browsing, co-workers, text messages, instant messaging — the distractions at work can be limitless. A key to personal time management is being proactive about getting rid of them. Shut your door to limit interruptions. Close all tabs except the ones you are currently working on. Turn off messaging notifications and leave your personal phone calls for lunch.

You can do this step-by-step. Identify your top two distractions and focus on conquering those for a few weeks.

Better time management is about skills not hacks.

At the end of the day, no "pro-tip" or calendar tool will magically make your time management woes disappear if you don't have a foundation of good time management skills.

Communication in the Workplace

Today, we're in almost constant contact with our coworkers. You might not put a lot of thought into saying "hi" to your coworker or sending a gif of a cat wearing pajamas to your team—and that's ok. Even though you're communicating at work, there's a difference between these types of messages and communication in the workplace.

What does "workplace communication" mean?

Workplace communication is any type of communication you do at work about work. This includes things like communicating about individual tasks, sharing project status updates, or giving feedback to managers or employees. Knowing how to communicate in the workplace is a key part of effective collaboration—because if you can't communicate clearly, then you risk miscommunication, confusion, or even unintentionally hurting someone's feelings.

Communication in the workplace can happen face-to-face, in writing, over a video conferencing platform, or in a group meeting. It can also happen in real time or asynchronously, which happens when you're communicating about work over email, with recorded video, or in a platform like a project management tool. Some examples of workplace communication include:

- Team meetings
- One-on-one discussions
- Receiving information
- Communicating about project status or progress
- Collaboration on cross-functional tasks
- Nonverbal communication

What makes communication good?

Now that you know what type of communication can be included in workplace communication, how do you start getting better at it? There are a few key notes of good communication that you can use no

matter the type of communication it is. In particular, good communication:

- Aims for clarity. Whether you're sending a Slack message, drafting an email, or giving an off-the-cuff reply, aim to clearly communicate your message.
- Seeks to solve conflicts, not create them. The reason you're communicating is to solve a problem or promote effective collaboration on a project or task. Good communication in the workplace can allow your to provide feedback—but make sure the goal is to get to a better place than where you are now.
- Goes both ways. Every instance of communication in the workplace is an exchange of information—even if one person is only communicating nonverbally.

Clear, effective workplace communication can:

- Boost employee engagement and belonging
- Encourage team buy-in
- Increase productivity
- Build a healthy workplace and organizational culture
- Reduce conflict
- Increase retention

Tips for more effective communication in the workplace.

Effective communication in the workplace is all about where, how, and when you're communicating. Try these seven tips to become a stronger communicator.

1. Know where and what to communicate about.

Communication happens in many different forms—face-to-face, email, instant message, and in work management platforms. To be most effective, make sure you're following communication guidelines and messaging about the right things in the right places.

Sometimes, knowing where to communicate is half the battle. Your company may have different communication tools — which makes knowing which tool to use all the more important.

When deciding which tool to use, ask yourself these questions. Which tool is appropriate for your question or comment? Do you need to communicate in real time, or is it ok to send a message? If you're not sure, ask a team member or manager where you should be sending different types of messages. It is important for everyone to be on the same page. For example:

- Teams
- Outlook
- Zoom
- Slack

2. Build collaboration skills.

Collaboration is the foundation of effective teamwork. In order to build strong team collaboration skills, you need to practice open and honest communication. This doesn't necessarily mean always agreeing on things—

knowing how to disagree and work through those differences is a key part of collaboration, too.

You can build good collaboration by communicating effectively — but knowing how to collaborate is a key component of strong communication. Essentially, this just means you'll have to practice improving both collaboration and communication skills over time. As you improve team collaboration, you'll get better at conveying information and opinions in a work environment. As a result, that honest communication will make collaboration feel more effortless.

3. Talk face-to-face when you can.

Perhaps the most tried-and-true way to avoid miscommunication is to talk face-to-face. If your team is virtual, speaking via video conferencing also works. Face-to-face communication is particularly important if you know a conversation is going to be difficult. Tone can be challenging to



communicate through writing, so ideally you want your team member to be able to see your facial expressions and body language.

If your team is remote communicating, a phone call instead of a video conference can work as well. Video conferencing fatigue is real, and it can make collaboration and communication particularly difficult for remote teams. Communicating over the phone reduces some of the visual strain, while still giving you the ability to hear your team member's voice and tone.

4. **Watch your body language and tone of voice.**

Communication isn't just about what you say—it's also about how you say it. Make sure you aren't crossing your arms or coming off as curt. Oftentimes, your body language may have nothing to do with the current situation—maybe you're tired or stressed about something in your personal life. But your team members, who might not have that context, could see your actions and assume you're angry or upset about something. Particularly for hard conversations, try to relax your body language and facial expressions to avoid giving off any unintentional cues.

5. **Prioritize two-way communication.**

Listening is just as important to communication in the workplace as talking. Part of being a collaborative team member is listening to other people's ideas instead of just trying to put your own ideas out there.

There are two common types of listening: listening to reply and listening to understand. When you listen to reply, you're focusing on what you're going to say next, rather than what the other person is saying. With this type of listening, you risk missing key information or even repeating what the other person just said.

Instead, try to listen to understand—that is, listen to what the other person has to say without

thinking about how you're going to reply. If you do think of something you want to say, jot it down so you can go back to listening to understand, instead of trying to remember the thing you want to say next.

6. **Stick to facts, not stories.**

"Facts vs. stories" is a technique recommended by co-founder of the Conscious Leadership Group, Diana Chapman. In this case, "facts" are things that have actually happened—things that everyone in the room would easily agree on. A "story," on the other hand, is your interpretation of the situation.

For example, let's say your manager gives you live feedback during a small team meeting. That is a fact. You weren't expecting the feedback, and you feel like your manager shared the feedback in the group—instead of saving it for your 1:1—because they're dissatisfied with your work. This is a "story" because you have no way of knowing if this is true or not.

Stories are inevitable—we all create stories from facts. But try to separate stories from facts, and avoid acting on stories until you're able to validate them. For example, in this case, you might want to talk to your manager during your next 1:1 and ask why they shared feedback in a team meeting.

7. **Make sure you're speaking to the right person.**

Effective workplace communication is as much about who you're talking to as it is about what you're saying. Poor communication often occurs when you're talking to the wrong people, or trying to share information in the wrong setting.

To avoid this, make sure the right people are in the room or receiving the message. If you aren't sure who that would be, go through an exercise to identify any important project stakeholders who might be missing.

5 tips to build leadership communication skills

If you're a leader, you have the power to set and establish communication conventions on your team. Strong communication can build healthy company culture, trust among your employees, and break down silos between cross-functional teams. Here's how:

1. Address any underlying changes.

Before you start improving your team's communication skills, ensure there are no underlying issues that keep everyone from communicating honestly. Does everyone feel comfortable talking openly? Is there anything that might make a team member feel like they can't be their full selves?

One of the most valuable things you can do as a leader is to make sure your employees feel comfortable showing up to work as their whole selves (or as much of themselves as they want to bring). Whether that means voicing disagreements, talking about their passions outside of work, or being honest about what type of communication works best for them—make sure to understand each team member's needs, and ensure they're being met in the team environment.



2. Frequently ask for feedback.

If you don't ask for feedback on your communication style, you may never get it. Even though communication in the workplace impacts every other interaction, team members might not immediately think of it as something to provide feedback on. By asking your employees for feedback on your communication style, you can continue to improve and develop clear communication strategies for your team.

3. Understand team communication styles.

Another effective way to build communication with your team is to ask them how they want to communicate. Communication preferences shouldn't be a secret—or a guessing game—and knowing off the bat if your team members prefer video conferences or phone calls, early morning meetings or afternoon jam sessions, can help you create an environment where they can thrive.

Important questions to ask include:

- Are they an early bird or a night owl?
- Do they like structured meetings or prefer free-flow brainstorming sessions?
- Do they do their best thinking out loud, on the spot, or on paper?
- What personality type do they identify with: introvert, extrovert, or ambivert?
- Do they feel like they know their team members, or would they prefer more team bonding activities?
- What type of meetings or tasks are most energizing for them?

4. Make time for team building or icebreakers.

Getting to know your team is a critical part in knowing how to communicate with them. It's particularly important to make time to get to know your team outside of a workplace setting. Icebreaker questions can help bring an element

of personality and fun to every meeting, so consider starting with a light chat before diving into your meeting agenda.

5. **Set the tone.**

Remember: the way you communicate and collaborate will impact your entire team. It's up to you to set the standard for open and clear communication in the workplace. Once you set and communicate this standard, your team will follow suit.

Every few months, make a note to check back in on how everyone is feeling about team communication. Are there any habits that have cropped up in the last few months that you want to cull or encourage? Regularly thinking about how your team communicates—instead of “setting and forgetting” your team practices—can help you be more intentional about your communication methods.

More types of workplace communication

Most discussions about communication in the workplace assume the “workplace” is in person. But, there are a variety of ways to communicate across different locations—from global offices to remote teams. Most communication best practices still apply to any type of team, but there are a few additional considerations and best practices you can use to help team members truly connect.

- **Distributed teams**

Distributed teams work across multiple national or global offices. These teams might span different time zones and languages, and each office will have its own culture and habits. Don't expect each distributed team to communicate in the same way—in fact, one of the advantages of distributed teams is the variety of thought you're exposed to by working with teammates from all over the world.

If you work on a distributed team, it's critical to over-communicate so that team members in different time zones and offices stay in the loop. Make sure to document everything in a central source of truth that team members can access when they're online, and look for a tool that updates in real-time so no one has to slow down due to information lag.

Keep in mind that time zones might affect how people come to a conversation. Try to schedule meetings when everyone is available, or offer recordings and notes if team members can't make it. It's also critical to double check that the right people are in the loop, and that they aren't just being left out because they're in a different office than the majority of your team.

- **Online coworkers**

If you're working with a virtual team, it's critical to establish where you're going to communicate and how frequently. Knowing exactly what each communication tool should be used for can help team members feel connected—even while they're remote.

Remote team members can feel siloed and disconnected from one another, so consider doing an exercise with your entire team about preferred communication habits. Some team members might love cold calls, while others might prefer scheduled meetings with clear agendas. Because team members have fewer chances to interact in person, it's critical to establish these preferences as a team, so you can keep the communication channels open.

Finally, make sure to bring team members in for regular team bonding events. Whether you're doing icebreaker activities at the beginning of every meeting or scheduling some time to just chat at the end of each week, dedicated team time can help team members connect no matter where they're dialing in from.

- **The cherry on top of effective workplace communication.**

The last component of clear communication is having a central source of truth for all of your communication and work information. Using a centralized system like a work management

tool can help you coordinate work across all levels of your team. Learn more about how work management makes project coordination and communication easier in our introduction to work management article.



Types of Communication

Communication is arguably one of the single most important aspects of businesses and organizations. A company may have an exceptionally fine product or service, but without effective communication, consumers may be unaware of its existence or the level of quality. Similarly, the mission, vision, and objectives of an organization may be compelling, but to be effective, leaders must communicate these frequently and passionately to their employees. A common barrier to effective communication is the lack of it. For example: mistakenly believing that others have understood certain nuances or read particular actions as a given when, in fact, they have not.

When delivering unpleasant news to employees, managers can make mistakes in communication by avoiding the conversation altogether or not understating the issue at hand. Leaders earn respect when they treat their workforce as partners in communication. Effective communication involves both speaking and listening. Since words do not always convey the intended message, a good practice is to check for understanding at key intervals to ensure that the communication is on track.

There are a myriad of reasons why organizational communication is essential, and we will explore ways that leaders can use communication effectively. This section will look at strategies that can be used to help decrease and overcome many of the common workplace communication barriers. Awareness of how perception, culture, channel, and language can create barriers is a first step. For example, it is important to recognize and acknowledge when someone has a different perception than yours because perception absolutely matters. How an individual chooses to communicate also matters. Email is not the appropriate channel for all communications despite its ubiquity.

Besides focusing on communication in this section, there will also be discussion of various individual and organizational decision-making models. Knowing our own preferred style of decision-making helps us assess how we may be able to work more effectively within our organizations. For example, if an individual typically uses an intuitive decision-making model, but works in an organization that is driven by analytics, there likely is going to be a problem with fit unless the individual recognizes that data will be needed to support key decisions made at the organizational level. This can become even more complicated when we are working across cultures, such as in global organizations. Given the globalization of so many work environments of the 21st century, we will also examine how culture can influence both communications and decision-making.

There are three types of communication, including: verbal communication which involves listening to a person to understand the meaning of a message, written communication in which a message is read, and nonverbal communication which involves observing a person and inferring meaning. Let's start with verbal communication, which is the most commonly known form of communication.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communications in business take place over the phone, by video conferencing, or in person. The medium of the message is oral. Let's take a printer cartridge scenario as an example. The message is being conveyed from the sender (the manager) to the receiver (an employee named Bill) by telephone. Let's look at how the same message can travel successfully from sender to receiver.

While the process may be the same, high stakes communications require more planning, reflection,

and skill than normal day-to-day interactions at work. Examples of high stakes communication events include asking for a raise or presenting a business plan to a venture capitalist. In addition to these events, there are also many times in our professional lives when we have crucial conversations, which are defined as discussions, in which not only are

EXAMPLE OF GOOD VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

Manager (*speaking on the phone*): “Good morning Bill!”

(By using the employee’s name, the manager is establishing a clear, personal link to the receiver.)

Manager: “Your division’s numbers are looking great.”

(The manager’s recognition of Bill’s role in a winning team further personalizes and emotionalizes the conversation.)

Manager: “Our next step is to order more printer toner cartridges. Would you place an order for 1,000 printer toner cartridges with Jones Computer Supplies? Our budget for this purchase is \$30,000, and the printer toner cartridges need to be here by Wednesday afternoon.”

(The manager breaks down the task into several steps. Each step consists of a specific task, time frame, quantity, or goal.)

Bill: “Sure thing! I’ll call Jones Computer Supplies and order 1,000 more printer toner cartridges, not exceeding a total of \$30,000, to be here by Wednesday afternoon.”

(Bill, a model employee, repeats what he has heard. This is the feedback portion of the communication. Feedback helps him recognize any confusion he may have had hearing the manager’s message. Feedback also helps the manager hear if she has communicated the message correctly.)

the stakes high, but also the opinions vary and emotions run strong. One of the most consistent recommendations from communications experts is to work toward using “and” instead of “but” when communicating under these circumstances. In addition, be aware of your communication style and practice being flexible; it is under stressful situations that communication styles can become the most rigid.

Written Communication

In contrast to verbal communications, which are oral, written business communications are printed messages.

Examples of written communications include memos, proposals, e-mails, letters, training manuals, and operating policies. They may be printed on paper or appear on the screen. Written communication is often asynchronous.

That is, the sender can write a message that the receiver can read at any time, unlike a conversation that is carried on in real time. A written communication can also be read by many people (such as all employees in a department or all customers). It’s a “one-to-many” communication, as opposed to a one-to-one conversation.

There are exceptions, of course: A voice mail is an oral message that is asynchronous. Conference calls and speeches are oral one-to-many communications, and e-mails can have only one recipient or many.

Normally, a verbal communication takes place in real time. Written communication, by contrast, can be constructed over a longer period of time. It also can be collaborative. Multiple people can contribute to the content on one document before that document is sent to the intended audience.

Verbal and written communications have different strengths and weaknesses. In business, the decision to communicate verbally or in written form can be a powerful one. Each style of communication has particular strengths and pitfalls. When determining

whether to communicate verbally or in writing, ask yourself: Do I want to convey facts or feelings? Verbal communications are a better way to convey feelings. Written communications do a better job of conveying facts.

Picture a manager making a speech to a team of 20 employees. The manager is speaking at a normal pace. The employees appear interested. But how much information is being transmitted? Probably not as much as the speaker believes. The fact is that humans listen much faster than they speak.

Nonverbal Communication

What you say is a vital part of any communication. Surprisingly, what you don't say can be even more important.

Research shows that nonverbal cues can also affect whether or not you get a job offer. Judges examining videotapes of actual applicants were able to assess the social skills of job candidates with the sound turned off.

They watched the rate of gesturing, time spent talking, and formality of dress to determine which candidates would be the most socially successful on the job. Research also shows that 55% of in-person communication comes from nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, body stance, and

tone of voice. According to one study, only 7% of a receiver's comprehension of a message is based on the sender's actual words, 38% is based on paralanguage (the tone, pace, and volume of speech), and 55% is based on nonverbal cues (body language). To be effective communicators, our body language, appearance, and tone must align with the words we're trying to convey. Research shows that when individuals are lying, they are more likely to blink more frequently, shift their weight, and shrug.

Listen Up and Learn More!

A different tone can change the perceived meaning of a message. See the table below for how clearly this can be true. If we only read these words, we would be left to wonder, but during a conversation, the tone conveys a great deal of information.

Now you can see how changing the tone of voice in a conversation can incite or diffuse a misunderstanding. For another example, imagine that you're a customer interested in opening a new bank account. At one bank, the bank officer is dressed neatly. She looks you in the eye when she speaks. Her tone is friendly. Her words are easy to understand, yet professional sounding.

"Thank you for considering Bank of the East Coast. We appreciate this opportunity and would love to

CHANGING YOUR TONE CAN DRAMATICALLY CHANGE YOUR MEANING

I did not tell John you were late.	Someone else told John you were late.
I did not tell John you were late.	This did not happen.
I did not tell John you were late.	I may have implied it.
I did not tell John you were late.	But maybe I told Sharon and Joseph
I did not tell John you were late.	I was talking about someone else.
I did not tell John you were late.	I told him you still are late.
I did not tell John you were late .	I told him you were attending another meeting.

explore ways that we can work with you,” she says with a friendly smile.

At the second bank, the bank officer’s tie is stained. He looks over your head and down at his desk as he speaks. He shifts in his seat and fidgets with his hands. His words say, “Thank you for considering Bank of the West Coast. We appreciate this opportunity and would love to explore ways that we can work with you,” but he mumbles his words, and his voice conveys no enthusiasm or warmth.

Which bank would you choose? The speaker’s body language must match his or her words. If a sender’s words and body language don’t match—if a sender smiles while telling a sad tale, for example—the mismatch between verbal and nonverbal cues can cause a receiver to actively dislike the sender.

Following are a few examples of nonverbal cues that can support or detract from a sender’s message.

Body Language

A simple rule of thumb is that simplicity, directness, and warmth conveys sincerity. Sincerity is vital for effective communication. In some cultures, a firm handshake, given with a warm, dry hand, is a great way to establish trust. A weak, clammy handshake might convey a

lack of trustworthiness. Gnawing one’s lip conveys uncertainty. A direct smile conveys confidence.

1. Eye Contact

In business, the style and duration of eye contact varies greatly across cultures. In the United States, looking someone in the eye (for about a second) is considered a sign of trustworthiness.

2. Facial Expressions

The human face can produce thousands of different expressions. These expressions have been decoded by experts as corresponding to hundreds of different emotional states. Our faces convey basic information to the outside world. Happiness is associated with an upturned mouth and slightly closed eyes; fear with an open mouth and wide-eyed stare. Shifty eyes and pursed lips convey a lack of trustworthiness. The impact of facial expressions in conversation is instantaneous. Our brains may register them as “a feeling” about someone’s character. For this reason, it is important to consider how we appear in business as well as what we say. The muscles of our faces convey our emotions. We can send a silent message without saying a



word. A change in facial expression can change our emotional state. Before an interview, for example, if we focus on feeling confident, our face will convey that confidence to an interviewer. Adopting a smile (even if we're feeling stressed) can reduce the body's stress levels.

3. Posture

The position of our body relative to a chair or other person is another powerful silent messenger that conveys interest, aloofness, professionalism, or lack thereof. Head up, back straight (but not rigid) implies an upright character. In interview situations, experts advise mirroring an interviewer's tendency to lean in and settle back in a seat. The subtle repetition of the other person's posture conveys that we are listening and responding.

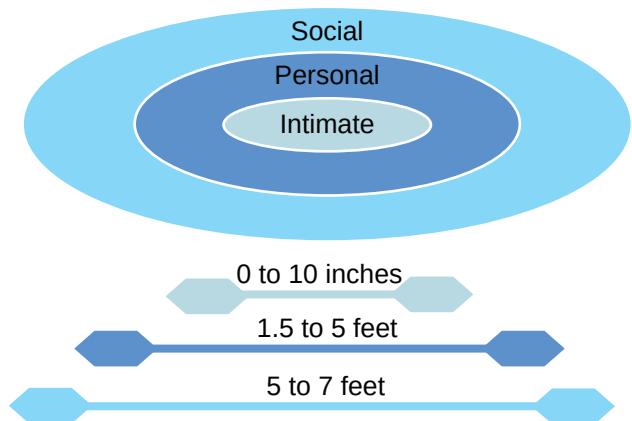


Defensive

Open vs. Closed Stance

4. Touch

The meaning of a simple touch differs between individuals, genders, and cultures. In Mexico, when doing business, men may find themselves being grasped on the arm by another man. To pull away is seen as rude. In Indonesia, to touch anyone on the head or to touch anything with one's foot is considered highly offensive. In the Far East and some parts of Asia, Americans, as we have noted above, place great value in a firm handshake. But handshaking as a competitive sport ("the bone-crusher") can come off as needlessly aggressive both at home and abroad.



5. Space

Anthropologist Edward T. Hall coined the term proxemics to denote the different kinds of distance that occur between people. These distances vary among cultures. The chart above outlines the basic proxemics of everyday life and their associated meaning.

GUIDE FOR WHEN TO USE WRITTEN VERSUS VERBAL COMMUNICATION	
Use Written Communication When:	Use Verbal Communication When:
Conveying Facts	Conveying Emotion and Feelings
The message needs to be part of a permanent file	The message does not need to be permanent
There is little time urgency	There is time urgency
Does not need immediate feedback	Needs immediate feedback
The ideas are complicated	The ideas are simple or can be made simple with explanations

6. Distance between speakers is partially determined by their intimacy level.

Standing too far away from a colleague (public speaking distance) or too close to a colleague (intimate distance for embracing) can thwart an effective verbal communication in business.

Communication Channels

The channel, or medium, used to communicate a message affects how accurately the message will be received. Channels vary in their “information-richness.” Information-rich channels convey more nonverbal information. Research shows that effective managers tend to use more information-rich communication channels than less effective managers. The figure below illustrates the information richness of different channels.

Information channels differ in their richness.

The key to effective communication is to match the communication channel with the goal of the message. For example, written media may be a better choice when the sender wants a record of the content, has less urgency for a response, is physically separated from the receiver, and doesn't require a lot of feedback from the receiver, or when the message is complicated and may take some time to understand.

Oral communication, on the other hand, makes more sense when the sender is conveying a sensitive or emotional message, needs feedback immediately, and does not need a permanent record of the conversation.

Like face-to-face and telephone conversations, videoconferencing has high information richness, because receivers and senders can see or hear beyond just the words that are used—they can see the sender's body language or hear the tone of their voice. Handheld devices, blogs, and written letters and memos offer medium-rich channels, because they convey words and pictures or photos. Formal written documents, such as legal documents and budget spreadsheets, convey the least richness, because the format is often rigid and standardized. As a result, the tone of the message is often lost.

Information Channel	Information Richness
Face-to-Face Conversation	High
Videoconferencing	High
Telephone Conversation	High
Emails	Medium
Handheld Devices	Medium
Blogs	Medium
Written Letters & Memos	Medium
Formal Written Documents	Low
Spreadsheets	Low



Business E-mail Do's

1. DO use a subject line that summarizes your message, adjusting it as the message changes over time.
2. DO make your request in the first line of your e-mail. (And if that's all you need to say, stop there!)
3. DO end your e-mail with a brief sign-off such as, "Thank you," followed by your name and contact information.
4. DO think of a work e-mail as a binding Communication.
5. DO let others know if you've received an e-mail in error.



Business E-mail Don'ts

1. DON'T send or forward chain e-mails.
2. DON'T put anything in an e-mail that you don't want the world to see.
3. DON'T write a message in capital letters—this is the equivalent of SHOUTING.
4. DON'T routinely CC everyone. Reducing inbox clutter is a great way to increase communication.
5. DON'T hit send until you've spell-checked your e-mail.
6. DON'T use exclamation points in your e-mail.

The growth of e-mail has been spectacular, but it has also created challenges in managing information and increasing the speed of doing business. Over 100 million adults in the United States use e-mail at least once a day. Internet users around the world send an estimated 60 billion e-mails each day, and a large portion of these are spam or scam attempts. That makes e-mail the second most popular medium of communication worldwide, second only to voice. Less than 1% of all written human communications even reaches paper these days. To combat the overuse of e-mail, companies such as Intel have even instituted "no e-mail Fridays." During these times, all communication is done via other communication channels. Learning to be more effective in your e-mail communications is an important skill. To learn more, check out these business e-mail do's and don'ts.

An important, although often ignored rule when communicating emotional information, is that e-mail's lack of richness can be your loss. As we saw in the chart above, e-mail is a medium-rich channel. It can convey facts quickly. But when it comes to emotion, e-mail's flaws make it a far less desirable choice than oral communication — the 55% of nonverbal cues that make a conversation comprehensible

to a listener are missing. Researchers also note that e-mail readers don't pick up on sarcasm and other tonal aspects of writing as much as the writer believes they will.

The sender may believe that certain emotional signifiers have been included in a message. But, with written words alone, those signifiers are not there. This gap between the form and content of e-mail inspired the rise of emoticons—symbols that offer clues to the emotional side of the words in each message. Generally speaking, however, emoticons are not considered professional in business communication.

You might feel uncomfortable conveying an emotionally laden message verbally, especially when the message contains unwanted news. Sending an e-mail to your staff that there will be no bonuses this year may seem easier than breaking the bad news face-to-face, but that doesn't mean that e-mail is an effective or appropriate way to break this kind of news. When the message is emotional, the sender should use verbal communication. Indeed, a good rule of thumb is that more emotionally laden messages require more thought in the choice of channel and how they are communicated.

Direction of Communication Within Organizations

Information can move horizontally, from a sender to a receiver, as we've seen. It can also move vertically, down from top management, or up from the front line. Information can also move diagonally between and among levels of an organization, such as a message from a customer service rep to a manager in the manufacturing department or a message from the chief financial officer sent down to all department heads.

Organizational communication travels in many different directions.

There is a chance for these arrows to go awry, of course. In large organizations the dilution of information as it passes up and down the hierarchy, and horizontally across departments, can undermine the effort to focus on common goals. The organizational status of the sender can impact

the receiver's attentiveness to the message. For example, consider the following: A senior manager sends a memo to a production supervisor. The supervisor, who has a lower status within the organization, is likely to pay close attention to the message. The same information conveyed in the opposite direction, however, might not get the attention it deserves. The message would be filtered by the senior manager's perception of priorities and urgencies.

Requests are just one kind of communication in business. Other communications, either verbal or written, may seek, give, or exchange information. Research shows that frequent communications with one's supervisor is related to better job performance ratings and overall organizational performance. Research also shows that lateral communication done between peers can influence important organizational outcomes such as turnover.



Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace

Diversity and inclusion, more commonly known as D&I, is gaining popularity in the everyday workplace. Businesses are becoming increasingly inclusive by developing D&I policies at every level.

Incorporating diversity and inclusivity isn't a trend or just one person's opinion. It is a reflection of a changing world that seeks to include all people. More businesses are embracing it because its seen as a driving force of growth, revenue, and profit. It reflects the desire for both employee and customer satisfaction.

What is Diversity?

Diversity is defined as the full spectrum of human differences. It refers to unique characteristics in people along the lines of gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, ethnicities, race, geographical location, culture, class, physical ability, etc.

Diversity in the workplace refers to an organization's workforce being comprised of people those different backgrounds.

Diversity can be of many types. Let us have a look at what these are.

The Different Diversity Types in the Workplace

There are different types of diversity in the workplace. While some are visible to the world, others are much more internal. Some can be controlled and changed, and still, others remain the same.

Here are the different types of diversity dimensions that you will find in any workplace:

- Internal
- External
- Organizational
- World View

1. Internal Diversity Types:

Internal Diversities are the various diverse factors that a person is born into or belongs to. In most cases, a person has no control over changing these diversities. These include factors like:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Cultural Diversity
- Age
- National Origin

2. External Diversity Types:

External Diversity is those diversities or characteristics related to a person; however, they are not born into it. In other words, these characteristics can be changed or modified by a person. External diversities include:

- Education
- Religion
- Citizenship
- Experiences
- Skills & Interests
- Geographical Location
- Socioeconomic Status
- Relationship Status

3. Organizational Diversity Types

Organizational diversities are the different diversity factors that pop up in any organization or workplace. The different types of Organizational Workplace Diversity are:

- Work Location
- Department
- Level of Seniority
- Job Function
- Management Status
- Socioeconomic Status

4. World Views

World View Diversity is precisely what the term suggests: the difference and diversity in people's world views. Our unique experiences, knowledge of history, beliefs, political philosophies we

subscribe to, etc. can shape our world views. World view diversity might include the following:

- Political Beliefs
- Knowledge of History
- Cultural Events

What is Inclusion?

The Society for Human Resource Management defines 'Inclusion' as "the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success."

Inclusion in the workplace means ensuring that every employee feels included and a part of the team. An inclusive workforce will feel valued, seen, heard, and respected. Consequently, you will notice a boom in innovation, higher cooperation, and increased employee engagement.

Difference Between Diversity and Inclusion

It is said that the first step in creating a diverse and inclusive culture is acknowledging the fact that diversity and inclusion are two different concepts.

Companies must not confuse diversity with inclusion. Although paired together, and talked about together, both the terms are not synonymous, and one does not automatically imply the other.

Diversity without inclusion will not amount to any significant change in the company culture and employee experience. For instance, a company might hire African Americans, or women of color to create ethnically diverse teams. But unless and until their opinions, perspectives, and experiences are taken into account while making decisions and policies, inclusion is not being fostered.

The Risks of Confusing Diversity with Inclusion

If the company you work for mistakes diversity for inclusion, it attracts a myriad of risks. Here is a brief discussion of a few of them:

- In the absence of psychological safety, employee engagement will be a bare minimum, and they will hardly succeed professionally.
- Compromising on inclusion will mean that employees will not feel free to participate in the decision-making process actively, and hence, business performance will suffer.
- Suppose your company hires a diverse workforce but fails to make them part of the team. A sense of alienation and negative feelings towards the company will take hold. Thus, the diversity policies might backfire if they are not balanced well with inclusion policies.

Diversity

- Refers to the differences in social, racial, cultural, socioeconomic backgrounds, geographical locations, age, interests, physical and mental abilities, etc.; that make individuals unique.
- The concept of bringing different people together in the same place.
- Achieved when recruiters aim toward heterogeneity and fight any biases in the hiring process.

Inclusion

- Refers to the conscious efforts, behaviors, policies, and norms to make every person feel seen, heard, and valued with their unique differences.
- The strategies and methods that help diversity work in an organization.
- Achieved when all members in an organization feel psychologically safe and included.

How Can You Support Diversity and Inclusion as an Employee?

1. Know the diversity goals and vision of your organization and their connection to the overall business objectives. Commit to the process by understanding how diversity impacts your role, and how your role impacts the success of the diversity initiative.
2. Participate in employee engagement surveys and respond as openly and honestly as possible. Finding an internal champion with whom you can comfortably express concerns and/or elicit advice can be instrumental in supporting your efforts.
3. Actively engage in the diversity effort. Take part in or start an Employee Resource Group, or volunteer to chair or serve on committees that organize diversity-related events and activities. Consider becoming a mentor, mentee, or part of a co-mentoring relationship. These activities require a commitment of time, but represent a valuable opportunity for personal and professional development.
4. Become culturally competent. Take the time to learn about different cultures, races, religions, and backgrounds represented by your colleagues. Ask your coworkers to share some of the customs and practices associated with their cultures. Become familiar with diversity-related terms and, if you err, apologize and ask for help.
5. Treat people in a way they wish to be treated rather than the way you wish to be treated. Common social activities and practices that are comfortable for you may not be comfortable for everyone. Do not tell offensive jokes that may alienate those who are different from you — even if they are not present at the time. Most importantly, be respectful always. Diversity

exists everywhere — not just in the office. Take these diversity principles into your community and your home.

6. Drive positive change in the organization. Be a spokesperson for diversity issues that are not necessarily your own. Any organization will find it difficult to ignore the powerful voice created when groups representing different diversity dimensions unite.
7. Welcome ideas that are different from your own, and support fellow teammates. The creativity that comes with diversity can help you generate new ideas or improve a process already in place. It can also make work more interesting, engaging, and fun.
8. Understand the diversity elements you personally bring to the organization. Diversity comes not only in the form of culture, race, and gender but also includes elements such as socio-economic background, education level, geographic location, sexual orientation, thought, and many others. Each of us brings to the table a lifetime of experiences and knowledge. Each of us is different and adds value to the organization because of these differences.
9. Commit to continuous improvement. Be willing to learn, accept feedback, and listen to the concerns of those around you. Even the most enlightened individual can find opportunities for growth.
10. Communicate and educate. Diversity work is a journey, not a destination. It takes time, patience, and perseverance. Be tolerant of coworkers who do not yet appreciate the value of diversity or who may not always behave respectfully. Often, negative behavior comes from ignorance rather than malice. A willingness to educate can go along way.

Conclusion: Know the Value of Employability Skills!

To get, and keep, a job you typically need a variety of technical skills. Dentists need to know how to fill cavities. Secretaries need to type 100+ words per minute. Accountants need to be certified. Beyond the technical skills, though, which dentist do you go to? The one who is pleasant and takes time to answer your questions; or the one who treats you like a number in a long line of numbered mouths? Which secretary do you retain when times are lean? The one whose attitude is positive and upbeat, and who is always willing to help; or the one who is inflexible and has a hard time admitting mistakes? Likewise, think about accountants. The one who has a great work ethic and encourages his colleagues is the one who will, most likely, excel in his position and organization.



In these situations, and all the others like them, it's the employability skills that matter.

While your technical skills may get your foot in the door, your people skills are what will open most of the doors to come. Your work ethic, your attitude, your communication skills, your emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes are the skills that are crucial for career success.

Employability skills can make you a leader. Problem solving, delegating, motivating, and team building are all much easier if you have good interpersonal and employability skills. Knowing how to get along with people – and displaying a positive attitude – are crucial for success.

Most employers no longer dismiss the value of those types of skills, and are willing to train in the technical skill if the foundation is there. That means organizations expect people to know how to behave on the job and assume that everyone knows and understands the importance of being on time, taking initiative, being friendly, respecting coworkers and their differences and producing high quality work. Employers have learned that they can not assume employability skills are universal.

That can work to your benefit, when you understand that it is important to focus as much on employability skills training and development as you do on traditional hard skills. Not the least of which is nonverbal communication, so practice nonverbal cues such as tone of voice or body language and expect success.

Exercise 3.1: The First Day

1. There were 12 tips to make sure your first day at a new job goes well. Name as many of them as you can remember.

1.	_____	7.	_____
2.	_____	8.	_____
3.	_____	9.	_____
4.	_____	10.	_____
5.	_____	11.	_____
6.	_____	12.	_____

Exercise 3.2: The First Weeks

1. Name as many tips as you can remember to help you breeze through your first few weeks at work.

2. Which one(s) do you consider the most beneficial and why?

Exercise 3.3: Employability Skills for Success

1. What are employability skills and why are they valuable for career success?

2. What do you consider your strongest employability skill and why?

3. What is your weakest employability skills and how can you improve it?

Exercise 3.4: Time Management as a Priority

1. Why is time management such a valuable tool for success?

2. Provide at least four of the five benefits of time management.

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

3. From the examples given, or from your own experience, identify at least one time waster you have been guilty of, and something that can be done to fix it.

4. From the list of time management tips, what is at least one time saver that you can adopt to help you with time management.

Exercise 3.5: Communication in the Workplace

1. What are some traits of good communication?

2. What are some tips for effective communication in the workplace?

3. Name at least four of the five tips for building leadership communication skills.

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

Exercise 3.6: Types of Communication

1. Name and give examples of three types of communication?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Draw a line to the coresponding meaning behind the tone of each sentence.

I did not tell John you were late.

I told him you still are late.

I did **not** tell John you were late.

I may have implied it.

I did not **tell** John you were late.

I told him you were attending another meeting.

I did not tell **John** you were late.

I was talking about someone else.

I did not tell John **you** were late.

Someone else told John you were late.

I did not tell John you **were** late.

But maybe I told Sharon and Joseph

I did not tell John you were **late**.

This did not happen.

3. Name at least four of the six areas of body language that were identified in this manual.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

4. Of the nine information styles provided, what is your favorite and why?



Exercise 3.6: Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace

1. Based on the section you studied, in your own words, define diversity.

2. Based on the section you studied, in your own words, define inclusion.

3. Name some things that you can do, as an employee, to support a diverse and inclusive workplace.

