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**Non Verbal Etiquettes of an Employee in Corporate Work place****Deepanjali Mishra***Assistant Professor, School of Humanities (campus3), KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, (Odisha) India***Abstract**

Communication is the process by which transmission of message takes place from the sender to the receiver through a medium which results in an understanding response. It is of two types namely verbal and non verbal. Verbal Communication takes place through written or oral form of words. Nonverbal communication comprises of one's overall body language, including appearance and posture as a form of communication with others. Rather than using words, people can communicate using nonverbal gestures, facial expressions and eye contact. Also, an individual's voice tone may communicate nonverbal messages to others. In the workplace, people interact with each other throughout the workday using verbal and nonverbal communication. In essence, the way individuals deliver nonverbal messages can be just as important as verbal dialogue.

**Keywords:** Communication, Etiquettes, Non Verbal, Corporate, Workplace

**Introduction**

Corporate communication can be considered as a management function that is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the work done by communication practitioners in different specialist disciplines, such as media relations, public affairs and internal communication. Therefore, corporate communication obviously involves a whole range of 'managerial' activities, such as planning, coordinating and counseling the CEO and senior managers in the organization as well as 'tactical' skills involved in producing and disseminating messages to relevant stakeholder groups. Overall, if a definition of corporate communication is required, these characteristics can provide a basis for one:

One consequence of these characteristics of corporate communication is that it is likely to be complex in nature. This is especially

so in organizations with a wide geographical range, such as multinational corporations, or with a wide range of products or services, where the coordination of communication is often a balancing act between corporate headquarters and the various divisions and business units involved. However, there are other significant challenges in developing effective corporate communication strategies and programmes. Corporate communication demands an integrated approach to managing communication. Unlike a specialist frame of reference, corporate communication transcends the specialties of individual communication practitioners (e.g., branding, media relations, investor relations, public affairs, internal communication, etc.) and crosses these specialist boundaries to harness the strategic interests of the organization at large.

Richard Edelman, CEO of Edelman, the world's largest independent PR agency, highlights the strategic role of corporate communication as follows: 'we used to be the tail on the dog, but now communication is the organizing principle behind many business decisions'. The general idea is that the sustainability and success of a company depends on how it is viewed by key stakeholders, and communication verbal or non verbal, is a critical part of building, maintaining and protecting such reputations.

### **Non Verbal Communication**

Nonverbal communication comprises of your overall body language, including your appearance and posture as a form of communication with others. Rather than using words, people can communicate using nonverbal gestures, facial expressions and eye contact. Also, an individual's voice tone may communicate nonverbal messages to others. In the workplace, people interact with each other throughout the workday using verbal and nonverbal communication. In essence, the way individuals deliver nonverbal messages can be just as important as verbal dialogue. Nonverbal communication encompasses numerous modes of expression. Physical examples include posture, gestures, eye contact, touch, physiological responses (such as clammy hands or a sweaty brow) and manner of movement. Clothing and adornment choices can also be a form of nonverbal communication. Because business often involves frequent human interaction, understanding the elements of nonverbal communication can be an enormous benefit in terms of working with colleagues, competitors, clients and potential clients.

The key to good nonverbal communication is observing what the client needs and wants, Jones says. Also, it is important to remember that in the U.S. politeness and friendliness are key behaviors in a business interaction. It is the businessperson's job to "pick up on nonverbal cues and facial expressions," or note when a client is increasing physical distance or using blocking gestures, she adds. Clients are satisfied when you can perceive what they want by their unsaid communication, such as posture, tone of voice, voice speed or body position.

### **Communication Enhancement**

Knowledge of nonverbal communication in business plays two roles. Managers use nonverbal communication to effectively lead other employees and team members. And team members in the business, whether they realize it or not, use nonverbal cues to communicate information to individuals outside the business, whether they're clients, competitors or colleagues in a complementary industry. "About 65 to 75 percent of all communication is nonverbal in nature," says Susanne Jones, associate professor of communication studies at the University of Minnesota. Nonverbal cues give us information "to make sense of how we feel and think about others," she adds. "People use nonverbal cues to arrive at judgments about how they relate to co-workers" or to interpret employee performance, she says.

Supervisors display power and dominance by having a larger office or having more space. "How a supervisor communicates power and dominance has a huge impact on

job productivity,” Jones says. For example, if a boss communicates in a distant manner, such as through email, or calls employees into her office and has them sit far away, this can be “perceived negatively.” In small businesses, “the connections among people are far stronger” than in a large corporate setting that has more formality, Jones says. “People usually work better when they know they are part of the business.” In business, nonverbal communication can affirm or belie the words actually being spoken. Communication can be hindered when nonverbal cues seem to contradict what’s being said. When verbal and nonverbal communication messages act in concert, information is communicated more effectively.

### **Examples**

Nonverbal communication in business occurs on a daily basis. Cooperating people tend to sit side by side, while competitors will frequently face one another. Crossed legs or folded arms during a business meeting may signify relaxation or resistance to the ideas being presented. Eye contact with a speaker during a business meeting communicates interest, and a manager in a company may maintain eye contact longer than a subordinate employee does. Tactile communication can help or hinder business interactions. A firm handshake might be interpreted as confidence, while other physical touches, such as a lingering touch on the shoulder, might be seen as invasive of personal space.

### **Benefits**

Business owners can gain from learning about nonverbal communication and its

potential benefits. Nonverbal communication can increase the opportunity to interact with colleagues, competitors, clients and potential clients through avenues outside of explicit word choice. Posture, vocal tone and eye contact can deliver subtle messages that reinforce what’s being said to convey consistency and trustworthiness. Another benefit is that nonverbal communication can help demonstrate confidence, enthusiasm and professionalism through attire choice, active listening cues and the ability to present a message. Nonverbal communication can play a special role in international business settings, where even with the aid of translators there may be a natural wariness about the accuracy of intentions, details or offers revealed.

### **Approaches**

Practice beneficial nonverbal communication through effective eye contact while giving a presentation to large groups of people by alternating various approaches. Scan the audience, make eye contact with different areas of the audience or make four- to five-second eye contact with individual audience members. Rather than standing in one spot during the presentation, stroll around the stage naturally.

### **Nonverbal Cues**

Nonverbal communication includes what you wear, how you wear your clothes, facial expressions, body gestures, eye contact, voice, posture, and the distance between you and your audience. Nonverbal cues affect how people understand what you are attempting to communicate, and their

reaction corresponds to how you delivered your message. If you are expecting a certain response by the receiver of your message, your nonverbal communication affects their response.

### **Communication Enhancement**

Depending on your occupation, you may be required to communicate messages to others on a regular basis; certain occupations -- such as teachers, salespeople, journalists, doctors, lawyers and corporate executives -- spend a great deal of their workday communicating with others. Using nonverbal cues can enhance how people receive your communication. Nonverbal communication indicates how a person is feeling in relation to what they are saying, and it also reflects how people react to the message. Communicating an important message to your colleagues with excitement and enthusiasm may have a greater impact on your audience in regards to the importance of the message versus delivering the message with a monotonous tone and facial expression.

### **Workplace Relationships**

Having a conscious awareness of your nonverbal communication when you are also communicating verbal messages allows others to receive the message the way you intended to deliver your message. Positive nonverbal communication helps colleagues in the workplace build positive business relationships, whereas negative nonverbal communication can cause conflicts and other negative disturbances in the workplace. Many people build positive business relationships by consistently

delivering positive nonverbal communication to others.

Effective communication is important to managers in business organizations because their communication with employees affects how employees perform their duties. Managers may provide information to employees in regards to various job-related matters, such as employee policies, job performance objectives, work schedules and deadlines. Employees must make adjustments to any changes communicated by managers in regards to workplace matters. The manager's attitude, which is mostly communicated by nonverbal messages, can produce either positive or negative attitudes by the employees; this can affect their attitude and emotions when performing job duties and either raise or lower employee morale. In other words, communicating positive nonverbal cues when speaking with employees can increase employee morale and job performances.

Nonverbal communication, or the expression of messages through facial expressions, gestures and body language, is essential to successful relationships in the workplace. Examples of this type of communication include eye contact, posture and voice speed. Employees and managers should be aware of how they communicate in these nonverbal ways in the workplace.

### **Importance in the Workplace**

"About 65 to 75 percent of all communication is nonverbal in nature," says Susanne Jones, associate professor of communication studies at the University of Minnesota. Nonverbal cues give us information "to make sense of how we feel

and think about others,” she adds. “People use nonverbal cues to arrive at judgments about how they relate to co-workers” or to interpret employee performance, she says.

For example, an employee may conclude that a new worker doesn’t like him because that person doesn’t make eye contact or keeps a physical distance. But the person could be shy or introverted and may have been interpreted incorrectly. Jones says it is important to remember that it takes two people to communicate: one to express and the other to perceive.

### **Examples of Nonverbal Communication to enhance Workplace Relationships**

Jones emphasizes that in our culture “eye contact is very important.” We learn “display rules” as children about how to appropriately express emotions and respect. These expressions come into play in the workplace, such as in a job interview. Someone who makes eye contact has open eyes and blinks appropriately, and in our culture this expresses that she is paying attention, Jones says. “Preening gestures” such as quickly patting your hair or your shirt, are also perceived positively. Behaviors such as gesturing or fidgeting express nervousness, while speaking loudly and quickly expresses aggression.

### **Power and Dominance**

Supervisors display power and dominance by having a larger office or having more space. “How a supervisor communicates power and dominance has a huge impact on job productivity,” Jones says. For example, if a boss communicates in a distant manner, such as through email, or calls employees into her office and has them sit far away,

this can be “perceived negatively.” In small businesses, “the connections among people are far stronger” than in a large corporate setting that has more formality, Jones says. “People usually work better when they know they are part of the business.”

### **Success as an Employee**

As an employee hoping to succeed in your workplace, you should observe the behaviors of other people in the office and try to emulate or conform to them. Also observe how people dress and how fast they walk, says Jones. Notice how people display emotions and what is considered appropriate for the workplace. People with successful careers are “really good at maintaining relationships with other people,” she says. These people know how to “observe and engage other people” in a work environment where being able to perceive the feelings and thoughts of others is key.

### **Nonverbal Communication with Clients**

With clients, the key to good nonverbal communication is observing what the client needs and wants, Jones says. Also, it is important to remember that in the U.S. politeness and friendliness are key behaviors in a business interaction. It is the businessperson’s job to “pick up on nonverbal cues and facial expressions,” or note when a client is increasing physical distance or using blocking gestures, she adds. Clients are satisfied when you can perceive what they want by their unsaid communication, such as posture, tone of voice, voice speed or body position. Unspoken Messages can be Critical to Workplace Communication. It is important



to recognize how the eyes, face, body and appearance can send nonverbal messages.

### **Time**

Respecting the time of other workers is also a nonverbal form of communication. For those that attend meetings with co-workers, being on time is of utmost importance. Arriving on time shows respect for others time and contributions. Employees who are continually late for meetings and other appointments with co-workers signal that they may not respect their fellow employees' time or jobs. For example, someone who is continually several minutes late for an 8 a.m. production meeting shows other employees that it is okay to arrive late and that the employee may not believe his or her time is as important as their time.

Nonverbal communication skills are crucial to success at any given workplace. It does not just start from the first day of work but as soon as an employee applies for a job. First impressions are usually a result of nonverbal skills. It is important to continue having a proper way to communicate nonverbally in the workplace because it reflects a lot about your personality. Nonverbal skills can also help in promoting respect, teamwork and efficiency at work.

### **Eye Contact**

Employees need to give fellow workers the respect they deserve. By looking someone in the eye, the speaker feels as though the message is being carried through to the recipient. Eye contact promotes understanding and honesty. Often times, if someone does not look the other person in the eye, there may be a feeling of insecurity or dishonesty.

### **Posture**

Slouching in the chair signifies a person who may not care about the message being sent. A sloppy posture says that the recipient may not be paying attention or may be purposely trying to distract the speaker. Leaning back in the chair or rocking back and forth shows boredom and a distinct lack of interest in the message. In contrast, sitting up straight and leaning in slightly tells the speaker you are interested in the communication that is occurring.

### **Office Appearance**

If a desk is messy and scattered with paperwork, a person glancing at the office may believe the occupant has a cluttered mind and is stressed when it comes to work. Saving only the paperwork that will be needed in the future can cut down on the paperwork stack that many people experience. In addition, it is important to remember that only the things that are needed throughout the day need to be on the desktop itself. For example, a stapler, tape dispenser and pencil cup can be permanent fixtures on a desk. Correction fluid, sticky notes and extra notepads can be kept in a draw and pulled out only when needed. An uncluttered, clean desk communicates an organized and neat individual.

### **Space and Touch:**

When communication takes place through space it is known as proxemics. Personal space and touch are used differently in different nations. Americans tend to prefer larger amounts of personal space than do some Latin Americans, Italians, and Middle-Easterners. Germans, Chinese, and Japanese prefer larger amounts of personal space,

similar to what Americans prefer. Thus, when conducting business with people from other cultures, it is important to understand and respect their personal space needs. Americans who do business with those who prefer less personal space may have to fight the urge to step back and therefore avoid insulting a business partner.

Each individual has a personal space, which is like an invisible bubble surrounding them. This bubble becomes larger or smaller, depending on the person with whom we interact. We are comfortable standing or sitting closer to someone we like and more comfortable with someone we dislike or don't know well standing or sitting at a distance. However, the amount of personal space that a person desires depends on many characteristics, including gender and age.

The personal space that a person prefers also depends on the situation. When interacting with friends, relatives, or conducting casual business, most people prefer a distance of one and a half to four feet. When conducting formal or impersonal business, most individuals prefer a personal space of 4 to 8 feet. Therefore, a person is likely to be more comfortable standing closely to a trusted coworker than to a new customer.

Although there are broad norms for a comfortable personal space, it is not uncommon for a person to feel that their personal space has been violated when another person sits or stands too closely. When personal space is violated, there are several reactions that people might have. First, they may withdraw by backing up or leaving the room. Second, if anticipating the possibility of a personal space violation, a

person may avoid having their space violated. This could mean staying away from meetings, crowds, and parties. Third, people may insulate themselves from intrusion of personal space. A manager who puts her desk in her office in such a way that no one can sit near her is insulating. An employee who takes a seat at the end of a table during a meeting might be doing so to prevent others from sitting near him. Finally, a person may fight to keep his personal space by asking the other person to back up or move away. In a business setting, it may be helpful to recognize the behaviors that others engage in when their personal space is violated. That is, if you notice that others step back from you when speaking, sit at more of a distance, or if they seem physically uncomfortable, they may have a larger personal space, which should be respected.

In the workplace, people may use touch to communicate nonverbally. The functional-professional touch is businesslike and impersonal. The touch that a physician uses when conducting a physical examination is a functional-professional touch. However, touch is not a part of most professions, and thus, this type of touch is not used often in business settings. The social-polite touch, such as a handshake, is much more common. This type of touch is used to recognize other individuals. It is an expected touch in many business settings. Finally, the friendship-warmth touch shows that you value another as a person. A pat on the back or a hug is a friendship-warmth touch. In most workplaces, the social-polite touch is the only necessary touch, and most managers and employees are encouraged to

avoid using touch (particularly the friendship-warmth touch) in the workplace. While many people see a hand on a shoulder or a pat on the back as a useful touch to convey encouragement or concern for another's well-being, sexual harassment fears have made many avoid all types of touch beyond handshakes.

### Conclusion

In addition to technical knowledge and good work ethics, proper business etiquette and an elevated level of manners can truly set a professional apart from the pack. It equips

today's professionals with exceptional manners and networking skills which enhances their personal communication skills and to improve any workplace environment. The Etiquette Network provides individuals and organizations with the knowledge of the basic rules of etiquette and networking skills that can help them grow and experience success. The success of any business, team or personal endeavor depends on the ability to build relationships with colleagues, customers, teammates and others who provide new opportunities for business and various other aspects of life.

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