

Differences

What are the differences compared to "normal" communication?

Only about 7% of communication takes place via the spoken word. Gestures, facial expressions and body posture are more important as we perceive them unconsciously and they have a considerable effect on the impression we leave on other people. When talking on the phone, our body language becomes less important. 38% of the nonverbal signals we sent are due to tone and pitch of our voice.

Basic rules for talking on the phone

- ▶ friendly voice
- ▶ clear pronunciation, do not speak too quickly
- ▶ address conversation partner by name, say "please" and "thank you", smile
- ▶ Listen carefully: Give signals that you can follow (yes, mmh,), ask questions
- ▶ Take the lead in the conversation by asking questions
- ▶ No secondary activities, exception: they are in the interest of the other person (e.g., fetching documents), explain secondary activity if necessary
- ▶ Excuse interruptions and delays and explain briefly, offer to call back if necessary (e.g. when having to do additional research)
- ▶ End the telephone call: thank them, say goodbye in a friendly manner

How to talk

- ▶ Pronunciation: The clearer the better

Many people tend to mumble and swallow words and endings. Unclear pronunciation often leads to misunderstandings. It also makes listening more difficult. Therefore, do not speak too quickly.

- ▶ Emphasis: Emphasizing important messages

By emphasizing individual words, sentences or parts of a sentence, you determine the effect of the messages that reach your conversation partner. This way, you also give your statements the desired meaning. Let's take the sentence: "I heard that he stole the money today." Without any special emphasis, this sentence sounds factual, neutral, distanced - similar to a newscaster.

► Volume: The right tone at the right time

Varying as well as adjusting the volume is also important.

Know that "soft speakers" don't like to talk to "loud speakers" and vice versa.

In addition, if you speak too softly, you will come across as insecure. If you speak too loudly, you will come across as arrogant and dominant. So, pay attention to how your conversation partner speaks and adjust your volume.

► Pauses: a stylistic device that benefits everyone

If you pause while you speak, you can take a breath, think ahead and gain time.

Those who remain silent for a moment now and then also appear more confident.

This is because pauses also give the other person the chance to ask questions.

Short "stops" also make it easier for your conversation partner to "digest" your information.

► Length of a sentence: Power lies in brevity

Speaking without full stops and commas, i.e., without pauses, tires our conversation partners.

The same applies to long nested sentences. Over time, listeners react to them with boredom and annoyance. Moreover, unnecessary complex formulations lead to you quickly getting lost yourself.

► Speech tempo: Appropriate speed is crucial

If you speak too quickly, you usually reduce the impact of your speech.

This is because speaking too fast reduces the clarity of the pronunciation. In addition, there is no time to emphasize correctly. Pauses while speaking are necessary to create tension and make statements more effective.

► Tone: The right tone supports the message

Often managers and parents complain: "I tell my staff or children something, but they just don't do it." A common cause of this: they give the other person a command, but towards the end of the sentence their voice rises. This makes their request sound more like a question - i.e., doubtful or not meant seriously.

Killer phrases

► "You should have known yourself"

► "We've already tried everything, it doesn't work."

► "Typical male!" (female, beginner, etc.)

- ▶ "Get some work experience first."
- ▶ "That doesn't work in practice."
- ▶ "You have no idea."
- ▶ "If you had prepared yourself better, you would know that ..."
- ▶ "You still have a lot to learn."

Killer phrases lead to:

- ▶ INSECURITY
- ▶ Hurt
- ▶ HELPLESSNESS
- ▶ FRUSTRATION
- ▶ Anger

CONCLUSION: No constructive conversation is possible

To avoid killer phrases, formulate open-ended questions instead:

- ▶ How do you see it?
- ▶ What would you suggest?
- ▶ What do you mean exactly?
- ▶ What do you wish?
- ▶ What is more important to you?
- ▶ What would improve your situation?

It is also advisable to avoid a hard "No" in order to keep the conversation positive, even if your statement is negative:

- ▶ "That sounds very interesting, but unfortunately it's out of the question for me at the moment".
- ▶ "That sounds very exciting, but I'll have to think about it again".
- ▶ "Maybe there is another possibility..."

Preparation

A good preparation is key in order to have a successful conversation on the phone. As part of your preparation, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ What do I want to achieve with the following telephone call?
- ▶ What questions and objections might I encounter?
- ▶ What do I know about the person I am talking to and about their nature?
- ▶ How do I start the conversation?
- ▶ What do I want to achieve?
- ▶ Important phone calls in a quiet place without distractions.
- ▶ Have a notepad and pen at hand

Possible questions:

- **Think of other examples for “killer phrases”**
- **Think of three scenarios, in which “killer phrases” are used and try to do better by formulating appropriate questions instead.**