



**Developed by  
Subroto Ghosh**

Indian School of Business, Hyderabad  
(Hospitality services managed by Sarovar Hotels and Resorts Pvt. Ltd.)  
Ph: 040-23818933, Fax: 040-23007125  
E-mail: Sarovar\_trainingmgr@exchange.isb.edu

# Table of Contents

<b>Overview</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Case Study: 01</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Myths of Communication</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Roadblocks to Effective Communication</b>	<b>6</b>
☞ <b>Tips for avoiding roadblocks to effective communication</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Elements of Communication</b>	<b>8</b>
☞ <b>Nonverbal Communication</b>	<b>8</b>
☞ <b>The Impact of Nonverbal Communication</b>	<b>9</b>
☞ <b>Vocal Communication – the 38%</b>	<b>9</b>
☞ <b>Visual Communication – the 55%</b>	<b>10</b>
☞ <b>Verbal Communication – the 7%</b>	<b>12</b>
☞ <b>Verbal Communication in Action</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Listening</b>	<b>15</b>
☞ <b>Work – Related Listening Activities</b>	<b>15</b>
☞ <b>Professional Benefits of Improving Your Listening Ability</b>	<b>15</b>
☞ <b>Active Listening</b>	<b>16</b>
☞ <b>Some effective Suggestions for Effective Listening</b>	<b>17</b>
☞ <b>Tips for Effective Listening</b>	<b>18</b>

## Overview

---

Have you ever felt you just weren't getting your ideas across to a co – worker? Have you ever found your mind wandering as someone spoke with you? If either of these situations sounds familiar, you've experienced a breakdown in communication. Communication is the successful exchange of information from one person to another. Good communication is vital to your success as a supervisor in the hospitality industry.

The good news is that anyone can learn to communicate better. Communication is a skill. And like all skills, good communication requires practice. With desire and hard work, you'll gain enormous benefits. A good supervisor is a good communicator. If you set for yourself the goal of being a good communicator and work at it, you'll improve your ability as a supervisor. Remember, the supervisor is the most important link in a property's communication process.

As a supervisor, you communicate with many different people: guests, owners, management, fellow supervisors, and the employees who work for you. As we discuss communication in this book, we'll generally refer to your interacting with the employees who work for you. However, the very same skills apply to all your work – related communication situations.

## Case Study: 01

---

### ***At the Seasons Inn . . .***

Bala is waiting in her supervisor's office. She has come to talk with Manoj about a problem concerning next week's staff schedule. Just after Bala arrives, Manoj receives a phone call. He has an angry exchange with the caller, slams down the receiver, and storms out of the office, muttering to Bala, "wait here!"

"What a rotten time to have to bring this up," Bala sighs. "He's in a lousy mood."

When Manoj returns, it's clear he's still angry. He throws his clipboard on his desk and does not look at Bala, but asks reduly, "What do you want?"

As Manoj shuffles through some papers on his desk, Bala says, "Several weeks ago, I asked for next Saturday off for my sister's wedding, Sir. I just looked at next week's schedule and I'm working on Saturday."

Manoj stops his paper search, glares at bala, and shouts, "you said you needed the third Saturday off, and I gave it to you. The third Saturday of the month is the 20<sup>th</sup>".

"I meant the third Saturday from when we were talking. I need the 13<sup>th</sup> off," Bala sighs. "This is terrible. Can we do something about it?"

Manoj leans back, covers his eyes with his hands, and replies sarcastically, "No problem, Bala. I'll be happy to rearrange the schedule to suit your family's needs."

### **What do you think?**

Respond to each statement below by checking the appropriate box.

True / False

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>1. We communicate only when we want to communicate.</b>                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>2. Words mean the same thing to both speaker and listener.</b>                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>3. We communicate chiefly with words.</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>4. We believe what a person says, not boar he or she says it.</b>                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>5. Communication is a one – way flow of information from the speaker to the listener.</b> |

## Myths of Communication

Myths of communication are common misunderstandings about communication. When people believe these myths, they make mistakes in communication.

### **1. We communicate only when we want to communicate. FALSE**

We communicate all day, every day, often without realizing it. As long as people can observe or hear us, they're getting information from and forming opinions about us.

### **2. Words mean the same thing to both speaker and listener. FALSE**

When Bala said she needed the third Saturday off, she thought she was being clear. Manoj thought he clearly understood. However, both of them attached entirely different meanings to the same set of words. Words hold different meanings for different people based on their experiences, perception, and interpretations.

### **3. We communicate chiefly with words. FALSE**

Manoj communicated a great deal without using only words. He argued, slammed the phone, stormed out, muttered, threw the clipboard, glared, shouted, and replied sarcastically. And Bala clearly got his messages! In reality, we communicate most of our messages nonverbally. We use our tone of voice, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and the way we sit or walk to communicate what we are feeling and to support the words we speak.

### **4. We believe what a person says, not how he or she says it. FALSE**

When Manoj leaned back, covered his eyes with his hands, and replied sarcastically, "No problem, Bala. I'll be happy to rearrange the schedule to suit your family's needs," do you think Bala really believed it would be no problem and that Manoj would be happy to do it? It's not likely. She believed Manoj's tone of voice and what she saw, not the words he spoke. When a person's verbal message and nonverbal message don't match, the listener will believe the nonverbal message.

### **5. Communication is a one – way flow of information from the speaker to the listener. FALSE**

During their meeting, both Bala and Manoj spoke, listened, and responded to what the other has to say. Some people believe that communication is a speaker talking *at* a listener rather than *with* a listener. In reality, effective communication takes place when both individuals participate actively. They do this when the listener gives the speaker feedback. Feedback is a listener's reaction to the speaker's verbal and nonverbal communication. Feedback can be verbal, such as "I don't understand what you mean," or it can be nonverbal, such as scowling or shaking your head.

## Roadblocks to Effective Communication

---

Communication should be a simple, clear process in which each person honestly tries to understand what the other is saying and feeling. Unfortunately, in practice, we make communication much more difficult. We set up roadblocks that interfere with the true communication message and cause misunderstanding. While there are many roadblocks to effective communication, we'll look at five that cause special problems for supervisors.

### **Unfair Comparison**

It's a mistake for us to compare one employee with another. Whenever possible, evaluate each employee by how well he or she matches up to the standards for the job. This is especially important in coaching and evaluating employees.

### **Just – Like – Me**

We tend to like those individuals who behave or think as we do, or who have similar backgrounds and characteristics. This may lead us to favor these people and to disregard those who are different from us. Be very careful to avoid this type of comparison when interviewing applicants or conducting employee evaluations.

### **Stereotypes**

Stereotyping occurs when we form general opinions about certain groups, and then apply these opinions to every person in that group. As result, when we meet a member of that group we form a hasty, incorrect first impression. Don't think that all people who belong to a group are the same. Everyone is an individual, and we should not assign a behavior characteristic a person until we see him or her use that behavior. This is important when interviewing, coaching, evaluating, and disciplining employees.

### **Good Day / Bad Day Effect**

We all have good days and bad days. Some supervisors allow their feelings to affect communication with their employees. If they're having a bad day, they're more critical of their employees. If they're having a good day, they're less strict about employees' work. We must work to evaluate performance consistently. This is especially important when coaching, evaluating, and disciplining employees.

### **Halo or Pitchfork Effect**

We practice the halo effect when we favor a person because he or she has a quality we find attractive or valuable. In the process, we may overlook some negative behavior on the part of the person. The pitchfork effect occurs when we dislike someone because they have a quality we don't value. Try to avoid this all – or – nothing thinking, especially when you're training employees or evaluating them.



### *Tips for avoiding roadblocks to effective communication*

**Unfair Comparison** – Don't compare one employee's performance with another's. Compare each employee's performance with the standards for his or her job.

**Just – Like – Me** – Look at your employees' strengths and don't concentrate on how they are different from or similar to you.

**Stereotypes** – Look for the special individual qualities in each employee.

**Good Day / Bad Day Effect** – Separate your personal feelings from what is happening in the workplace.

**Halo or Pitchfork Effect** – Look at all of an employee's characteristics before making a value judgment about that person.

#### **You should know**

The supervisors are the most important link in the company's communication process.

Those people have certain false beliefs about communication called myths. If I'm aware of these myths, I can improve my communication skills.

#### **That as a supervisor, I should avoid the five roadblocks to effective communication:**

- ✓ Unfair Comparison
- ✓ Just – like – me
- ✓ Stereotypes
- ✓ Good day / Bad day effect
- ✓ Halo or pitchfork effect

## The Elements of Communication

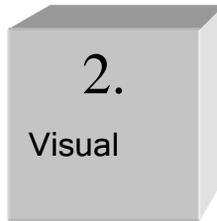
---

Albert Mehrabian, a professor at UCLA, studied the amount of information people get from the three elements or channels of communication:



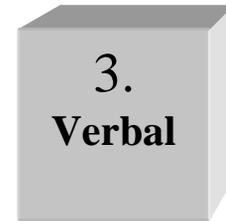
The voice of  
the speaker

This includes the vocal  
Variety, quality, rate,  
and vocalized pauses.



What we see of  
the speaker

This includes eye contact,  
posture, gestures, and  
Facial expression.



The speaker's  
actual words

This is what the person  
actually says.



### Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication consists of the vocal and visual elements. That is, nonverbal communication is **how** we say something (vocal and visual), not **what** we say (verbal).

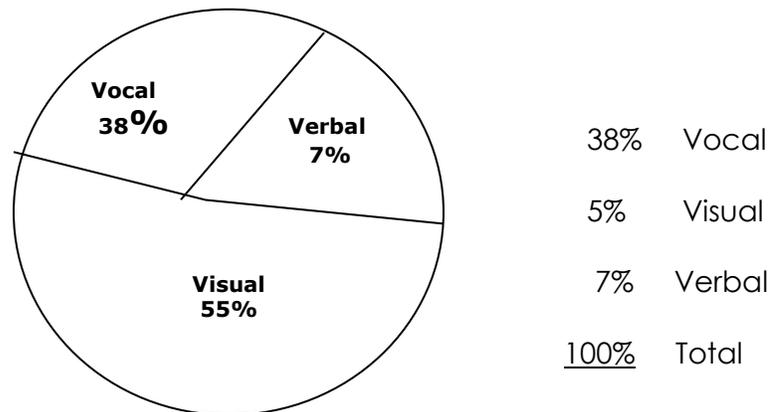
#### ***At the Seasons Inn . . .***

Mary tells Lucy, a cook's helper, that she is short a dishwasher for the lunch shift. When Mary asks her to fill in, Lucy looks upward and says in an irritated voice, "Sure. No problem." As she fills the dish machine, Lucy bangs pots and pans around and slams them on the counter. She also breaks several plates and saucers.

If Mary reads Lucy's nonverbal communication correctly, she would realize that Lucy was probably upset about filling in for the dishwasher. Though she told Mary she was glad to help, Lucy's vocal and visual communication give a different message. If Mary doesn't want to lose Lucy and wants to avoid more broken dishes, she should speak with Lucy. Her angry actions may be related to something that happened outside of work, but Lucy needs to know that her behavior is unacceptable. Mary should approach Lucy immediately and discuss the difference between what she said and how she's acting. For example, Mary might say, "Lucy, you said you'd have 'no problem' washing dishes. Now you seem upset. What's the matter?"

☞ **The Impact of Nonverbal Communication**

As the previous story shows, the words we use don't always tell the whole story. While we like to think that the words we speak have power, the real power in our communication is nonverbal. We communicate with more than just our spoken language. As a supervisor, you'll interpret the visual and vocal signals that guests, employees, peers, and managers send when interacting with you or with others. In addition, these same individuals will react to you mainly on the quality of your nonverbal communication skills. **The old saying, "Actions speak louder than words," is true.**



These results indicate that when a person speaks with us, 93% of the information we get comes from the nonverbal channel! They also suggest that 93% of the information you give or the impression you make as a supervisor comes from the nonverbal channel. To make nonverbal communication work for you, let's look at the two elements of nonverbal communication – vocal and visual.

☞ **Vocal Communication - the 38%**

If we had our eyes closed and several people we knew came up and spoke with us, we could probably tell, who each person was, even though we couldn't see them. This is because everyone's voice has unique characteristics. These characteristics should help us, not work against us, when we speak with fellow employees. Consider the following vocal characteristics and see how they apply to your voice. You might want to ask family, friends, or co – workers for their opinions of your voice if you're uncertain or want outside input.

**Variety** – No one likes to listen to a person who talks with no variety in his or her voice. This is called speaking in a monotone. People who speak in a monotone sound as if they're not interested or excited. When you speak, use variety in the tone of your voice. As a supervisor, variety will add interest and enthusiasm to the words you speak.

**Quality** – It's important for a supervisor to have good vocal quality. This means the voice should not be nasal (speaking through the nose) or breathy (shallow sounding because too much air is escaping as the person speaks). A supervisor needs good quality to add authority and believability to the words he or she speaks.

**Rate** – A supervisor should speak at a rate of speed that allows people to understand and remember what is being said. This means the rate should not be too fast, especially if the message includes many details or technical information. On the other hand, if the information is not technical, the rate should not be too slow, or people will become bored or offended. When a person speaks too slowly to us, we may feel that person is talking down to us.

**Volume** – How loudly or softly you speak will be decided, in part, by how noisy the workplace is. In addition, you may want to raise the volume of your voice if you wish to emphasize a point. However, if you always talk loudly, it can have a negative effect on co – workers. At the same time, never speak so softly that you can't be heard.

**Vocalized pauses** – Vocalized pauses are made when a person interrupts his or her message and makes sounds such as, “uhm” “er” or “ah”. Vocalized pauses happen when you repeat phrases such as “you know” or “like that”. If you find that you use vocalized pauses, make a deliberate effort to eliminate them from your speaking. Vocalized pauses make people sound as if they're unsure of themselves. A supervisor always wants to speak with confidence.

### **Visual Communication - the 55%**

When people communicate, they get a great deal of information by looking at one another. As you read about the following visual elements, think of how you use them when talking with co – workers. In addition, ask yourself if you use these elements to get information from others as they speak to you.

**Eye Contact** – Eye contact is looking at the person with whom you are communicating. It is perhaps the most powerful form of nonverbal communication. When you use eye contact in communication, you're really saying, “I'm interested in you. I'm paying attention to you.” Eye contact is a compliment to the other person. Alternatively, when you don't use eye contact people generally think you're unsure of yourself, are lying, are uninterested, or don't care about the person with whom you are talking. All of these reasons send negative messages. Eye contact, therefore, is important to effective communication. As a supervisor, using eye contact says you're confident about yourself and you care about the person with whom you're talking.

**Posture** – How you hold and carry your body sends very clear messages. For example, standing or walking with rounded shoulders or slouching over sends a message of being tired, unassertive, or bored. Supervisors should carry themselves with ease and confidence. This means standing upright with your shoulders back in a relaxed, not stiff, manner. Carry your body as if you feel good about yourself, and your co – workers will get the message.

**Gestures** – Gestures include moving your hands, arms, shoulders, and even your head as you speak. Use gestures to help explain or support what you're saying. They add information and variety. As we watch others speak, we can learn much from their gestures. For example, if employees play with their hair, chew on their lips or fingernails, or repeatedly fold and unfold a tissue, you may correctly conclude they are uneasy.

People can reveal nervousness by repeating movements, including swinging their feet or drumming their fingers.

One of the most common gestures is crossing one's arms in front of his or her chest. This can indicate anxiety, disagreement, or the desire to protect oneself. Therefore, be careful to consider the gesture in the context of the entire situation. For example, crossed arms may be simply a more comfortable position for a person to use.

**Facial Expression** – The expression on your face reveals a lot about your attitude. Most people look at your face as you talk with them. By simply watching your facial expression, they can learn whether you are happy or sad, angry or confused. Facial expression is very natural, but some people avoid using it. These people use a “dead – pan” expression, which means they're not showing their feelings through facial expression. Not only is it uninteresting to talk to a person with a dead – pan expression, but it also makes us uncomfortable because it's so unnatural. We should also remember that facial expression is not always completely reliable. Many of us, for example, have learned to face a certain facial expression when we think it is expected. Finally, facial expression does not always match the words a person is speaking. When this happens, we tend to believe the facial expression and not the words.

**You should know:**

**That the nonverbal part of communication is very important.**

That nonverbal communication is made up of what we see of a speaker and what we hear in the speaker's voice.

That eye contact is probably the most important form of nonverbal communication.

That I can evaluate my nonverbal skills and improve in areas that are weak.



## Verbal Communication - the 7%

It's not likely that you'll be giving formal public speaking presentations as supervisor. However, you'll speak to individual employees or to small groups of employees. When you have information you wish to share, whether you're presenting it to one person or 100 persons, the following guidelines will help you be more effective.

### **1. Keep it simple.**

The most important guideline in speaking is to KISS, that is keep It Simple, Supervisor. What's the one main idea you want your listeners to remember? Be able to say it simply, in one short sentence. People generally can't remember a lot of information. Therefore, don't present information that doesn't relate to the one main idea you're presenting. Don't overload your listeners with information.

### **2. Explain and / or Provide an Example.**

Once you've stated the point you're trying to make, express the point in different words to explain it. You can also present an example of what you mean. This will help your listeners understand and apply your point.

### **3. Use Clear, Direct Words.**

The point of speaking is to have the listeners understand your message. Therefore, use language that can be easily understood. Don't talk over your listener's heads.

### **4. Respect Your Listeners.**

Keep your listeners' interests in mind. Let them know how the information will help them and tell them how to apply it. If you're speaking with one individual, use the person's name. People are complimented when their names are used. Finally, always treat your listeners as persons who are important.

### **5. Repeat Your Main Idea.**

Before you finish your message, repeat your main idea. Repeating the main idea will emphasize it and help the listeners remember it.

### **6. Check for Understanding.**

Ask if you can clarify anything or if your listener has any questions. If you wish to check whether the listener understood the message correctly, try comments such as, "I'm not sure I said that clearly; let me hear what you think I said."



## Verbal Communication in Action

Mary must talk with Feroz about a dinner she will be serving to a small party. Below, in the left column, you will find what Mary said to Feroz. In the right column is an explanation of how Mary followed the six vocal communication guidelines:

“Feroz, you have a small party to set up for as soon as your shift begins today.

### **Keep it simple.**

In this single sentence, Martin stated the main point he wanted Feroz to remember.

“A group of 14 will arrive at 6 p.m. They’ve asked for a “U – shaped’ table arrangement. We’ll put it in the Bay Room, just as we set up for the Book Club luncheon yesterday.

### **Explain. Provide an Example.**

Here, Mary explained what he meant by “small party” and “set up” and gave Feroz an example (Book Club luncheon)

### **Use Clear, Direct Words.**

Notice that Mary used clear, direct words: “They’ve asked

for a ‘U-shaped’ table arrangement.” He did not bury the idea in confusing language such as, “In dialogue with our guests, I identified that a conversational arrangement is a high – priority item. Therefore, a ‘U – shaped’ table composition will facilitate their interaction.”

“I wanted to let you know about This party, Feroz, so you could set Up early before guests start arriving and you really get busy.



### **Respect Your Listener.**

Notice that Mary and Feroz’s interests in mind. He told her how setting up Early would benefit her. In Addition, Mary used her Name to personalize his Message.

“It’ll make it a lot easier to set it up as your shift begins, so you’ve ready when the group arrives. Thanks, Feroz.

### **Repeat Your Main Idea.**

Before Mary finished, he Repeated the main point he wanted Feroz to remember.

“Do you have any questions?”

### **Check for Understanding.**

Finally, Mary gave Feroz the Opportunity to get more Information if she needed it.

**You should know**

That when I talk with people, I should have one single point in mind that I want them to remember.

That providing an example helps listeners understand and remember.

That when I talk I should use clear, direct words.

That I should always treat my listener with respect.

That I can increase my listener's understanding by repeating my main idea.

That I can increase my listener's understanding by checking to see if he or she has any questions.

## Listening

---

### Work - Related Listening Activities

Supervisors spend a good deal of their workday in activities that involve listening. The following is a partial list of work – related activities that involve listening. Check those that apply to you.

- \* Attending meetings, briefings, and lectures
- \* Giving instructions
- \* Receiving instructions
- \* Sharing information with management and employees
- \* Receiving information from co - workers
- \* Making decisions based on conversations
- \* Marketing products or services
- \* Supervising others
- \* Interacting with guests to provide services
- \* Providing services for groups or departments
- \* Giving presentations
- \* Using the telephone

Most supervisors spend about 60% of their workday listening. You're probably no exception. The bad news is that if you listen as well as the average person listens; you're probably understanding and remembering only about 25% of what you hear. If we spend so much time listening and are so poor at it, there is clearly much room for improvement!

### Professional Benefits of Improving Your Listening Ability

Your responses on the previous page probably show that you spend a large part of your workday in listening – related activities. Therefore, if you improve your listening ability, how will it benefit your professional life? An increased listening ability will help to:

Make you more successful and efficient in all the activities you marked on the previous page.

Gain the respect of people with whom you interact.

Increase your job satisfaction.

Make you more aware of what is going on at the property.

Improve your decision – making and problem – solving abilities.

Improve the property's profits.

Increase your self – confidence and self – esteem.

Make you a more successful supervisor.

Make you a more valuable employee.

Make you a more promotable.

Increase your income.

Ensure that more people will listen when you talk. One great by – product of listening to others is that they're more likely to listen to you.

Assist you in creating a professional network of associates throughout your career.



## Active Listening

A good listener is an active listener. That is, the listener is an *active participant* in the communication process. He or she is involved:

Verbally  
Nonverbally  
Mentally  
Physically

### 1. **Get involved Verbally.**

As a listener, you can use several verbal responses to a speaker. You can encourage the speaker by occasional comments such as "I see," "Tell me about that," or "That's interesting." You can ask the speaker questions when a point is not clear or when you want more information. You also can get involved verbally by using a technique called paraphrasing. When you paraphrase, you repeat to the speaker in your own words what you think he or she has said. Paraphrasing allows you to check with the speaker to see if you have correctly understood what he or she was trying to say.

### 2. **Get involved nonverbally.**

As an active listener, give the speaker good nonverbal feedback. Most importantly, this means using good eye contact – look at the speaker as he or she talks. Give appropriate facial or head responses such as a smile or a nod of approval. As an active listener, you also should observe the speaker's nonverbal behavior. Remember, how the speaker says something may be more important than the actual words he or she speaks. Observing the speaker's nonverbal behavior will help you find the feelings hidden behind the speaker's ideas.

### 3. **Get involved Mentally.**

While the person speaks, listen for the main idea he or she is presenting. Summarize the points the person is making. You also can get involved mentally by asking yourself if there are things the speaker is saying that are not clear to you or about which you want more information.

### 4. **Get involved Physically.**

Sometimes it makes sense for you to take notes. You may need to write down a few facts so you have them for later reference. Remember, we only retain 25% of what we hear. Write it down. The shortest pencil outlasts the longest memory. Another good retention method is to report or repeat what you hear. You can report the information to someone else or even to yourself. When you do this, you are more likely to remember this information.



## *Some effective Suggestions for Effective Listening*

Poor listeners have bad habits, but bad habits can be broken. If you follow the suggestions below, you'll avoid several common bad listening habits.

### **Don't Interrupt**

Interrupting is a clear message to your employee that what you have to say is more important than what he or she is saying. Hearing a person out is a wonderful compliment. It says, "I value what you have to say."

### **Don't Prejudge.**

Listen to the employee's point of view. Don't assume you know the point the person is making until you hear him or her to say it.

### **Don't Script – Write.**

Concentrate on the employee and what he or she is saying to you. Don't script – write. That is, don't allow yourself to mentally prepare your response while the person is still speaking.

### **Don't React Emotionally.**

We all have words, issues, and personalities that seem to excite us or irritate us emotionally. As supervisors we must keep our emotions in check. When a co – worker or subordinate speaks with you and touches on of your emotional triggers, try to concentrate on the issue, not the emotion. If you keep control of your emotions, you'll keep control of the situation. Put a check mark by the emotional triggers on the following list if they are things or people that bother you.

- A "know –it-all" attitude
- Complaining or whining
- Pushy people
- Bad grammer
- Ethnically biased statements
- Strong or bad language
- Sexually biased statements
- People who always tell you what to do
- Being spoken to rudely, e.g., "Shut up!"
- Cultural differences

### *Tips for Effective Listening*

- \* Be an active listener. Get involved;  
Verbally  
Nonverbally  
Mentally  
Physically
- \* Don't interrupt
- \* Don't prejudge
- \* Don't script - write
- \* Don't react emotionally

### **You Should Know**

That listening is a major part of my job as a superior.

That if I improve my listening ability, I improve my value as a professional.

That listening is a four – step process.

That being an active listener requires my verbal, nonverbal, mental, and physical involvement.

That I must avoid bad listening habits.

- Communicate your message correctly and receive it correctly.....