

3 COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND BRANDING



Hon Keabonye Ntsabane WPP Situational Analysis Launch Gaborone Botswana.

Photo: Mboy Maswabi

The objectives of this module are to:

1. Understand the different kinds of communication and tools and how these can be used effectively.
2. Build capacity on public speaking and how to use media in advocacy and in messaging.
3. Build confidence of politicians to use social and mainstream media.
4. Develop self-branding personal profiles.

COMMUNICATION

Broken Telephones



Participants stand in a circle. A message is whispered into one person's ear and this should be whispered on to the rest. The last person should say what message they finally received. This should be compared to the original message.

Try to find out where and how the message broke down?

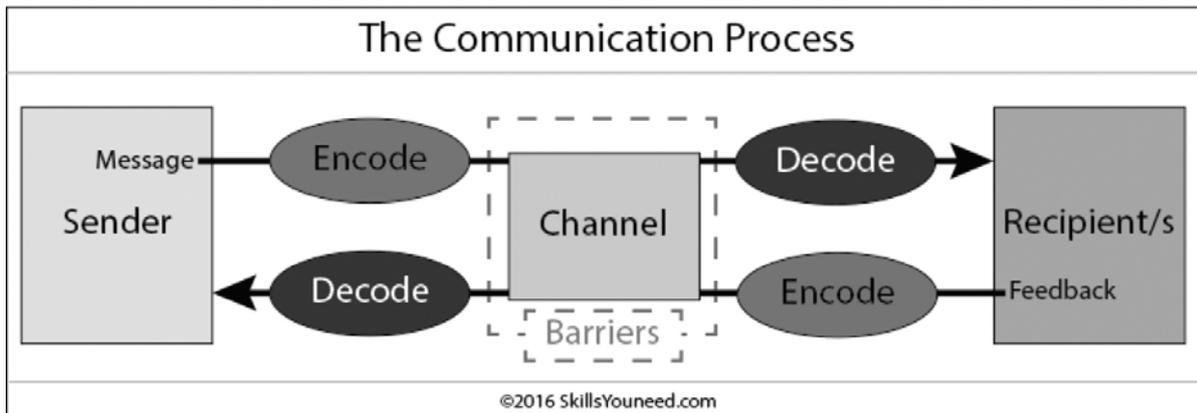


What is communication?

Communication is conveying a message from one party to the other in the most effective way possible. The way in which the effectiveness of the message is measured is by the feedback that is received.

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages through verbal or nonverbal means, including speech, or oral communication; writing and graphical representations (such as infographics, maps, and charts); and signs, signals, and behaviour. More simply, communication is said to be "the creation and exchange of meaning."

The Communication Process



A message or communication is sent by the sender through a communication channel to a receiver, or to multiple receivers.

The sender must encode the message (the information being conveyed) into a form that is appropriate to the communication channel, and the receiver(s) then decodes the message to understand its meaning and significance.

Misunderstanding can occur at any stage of the communication process.

Effective communication involves minimising potential misunderstanding and overcoming any barriers to communication at each stage in the communication process.

An effective communicator understands their audience, chooses an appropriate communication channel, hones their message to this channel and encodes the message to reduce misunderstanding by the receiver(s).

They will also seek out **feedback** from the receiver(s) as to how the message is understood and attempt to correct any misunderstanding or confusion as soon as possible.

Receivers can use techniques such as **Clarification** and **Reflection** as effective ways to ensure that the message sent has been understood correctly.

Senders and receivers are of course vital in communication. In face-to-face communication the roles of the sender and receiver are not distinct as both parties communicate with each other, even if in very subtle ways such as through eye-contact (or lack of) and general body language.

There are many other subtle ways that we communicate (perhaps even unintentionally) with others, for example the tone of our voice can give clues to our mood or emotional state, whilst hand signals or gestures can add to a spoken message.

In written communication the sender and receiver are more distinct. Until recent times, relatively few writers and publishers were very powerful when it came to communicating the written word. Today we can all write and publish our ideas online, which has led to an explosion of information and communication possibilities.

Written communication is also useful as a way of recording what has been said, for example taking minutes in a meeting.

Encoding Messages

All messages must be encoded into a form that can be conveyed by the communication channel chosen for the message.

We all do this every day when transferring abstract thoughts into spoken words or a written form. However, other communication channels require different forms of encoding, e.g. text written for a report will not work well if broadcast via a radio programme, and the short, abbreviated text used in text messages would be inappropriate if sent via a letter.

Complex data may be best communicated using a graph or chart or other visualisation. Effective communicators encode their messages with their intended audience in mind as well as the communication channel. This involves an appropriate use of language, conveying the information simply and clearly, anticipating and eliminating likely causes of confusion and misunderstanding, and knowing the receivers' experience in decoding other similar communications. Successful encoding of messages is a vital skill in effective communication.

Decoding Messages

Once received, the receiver/s need to decode the message. Successful decoding is also a vital communication skill.

People will decode and understand messages in different ways based upon any *Barriers to Communication* which might be present, their experience and understanding of the context of the message, their psychological state, and the time and place of receipt as well as many other potential factors.

Understanding how the message will be decoded, and anticipating as many of the

potential sources of misunderstanding as possible, is the art of a successful communicator.

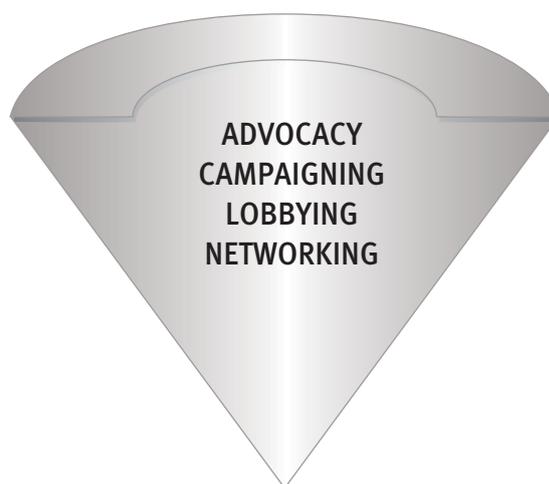
Feedback

Receivers of messages are likely to provide feedback on how they have understood the messages through both verbal and non-verbal reactions.

Effective communicators pay close attention to this feedback as it the only way to assess whether the message has been understood as intended, and it allows any confusion to be corrected. Bear in mind that the extent and form of feedback will vary according to the communication channel used: for example feedback during a face-to-face or telephone conversation will be immediate and direct, whilst feedback to messages conveyed via TV or radio will be indirect and may be delayed, or even conveyed through other media such as the Internet.

Different approaches to communication

Now think of some of the techniques that you can use to relay information to others. If you think of communication as an umbrella, what are some of the different forms of communication that you would find under it? What are the differences between those forms of communication?





Give one example of when you would most likely use each one of these approaches

Tips: Here are some examples:

APPROACH	COMMENT	EXAMPLE
Advocacy	Believing in and vigorously conveying a message, but often on behalf of others.	You take up protests on behalf of landless rural women.
Campaigning	Also vigorous, but may be for yourself (e.g. in politics).	In order to advance the chances of the women getting land, you run for parliament.
Lobbying	Targeting the receivers of the message, using personal as opposed to mass communications.	In order to advance the chances of the women getting the land, you approach or caucus women members of parliament.
Networking	Linking with many like-minded people, not necessarily trying to convince them of your point of view, but benefiting in direct and indirect ways from associating with them.	To increase the pressure for recognition of women's land rights, you form an alliance of NGOs on Women's Land Rights.

All these are forms of communication that you are likely to use in one way or the other in your communication strategies.



A **medium** is the channel through which communication is sent. Types of channels include radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, video, film, compact disk or CD, e-mail, websites, newsgroups, posters, pamphlets, stickers, meetings, and new forms of social media.

Media: The multiple ways humans use to communicate with each other.

Kinds of media

MEDIA	EXAMPLES	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Letter box	Posters, pamphlets, stickers	Catchy, recorded, good for branding	Costly to distribute; might be ignored where there are masses around.
Personal	Face-to-face	Most effective, direct, immediate feedback	Costly, human resource intensive.
Traditional	Song, drama, poems, dancing	Easy to identify with and therefore a good means of conveying complex or difficult message; have an element of edutainment	Might be taken lightly, forgetting the message.
Mainstream	Radio, television, newspapers, magazines	Reaches many people, if independent, may be more credible than your “advocacy” voice	No control over the message. Not interactive, therefore no instant feedback except radio/TV talk shows, letters to editor.
Community	The above, but with a specific community focus	A good way to reach specific targets, often more accessible than mainstream media.	May not reach certain people important for your communication strategy e.g. policy makers.
New media	Internet, e-mail, electronic discussion forum, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn	Cheap, reaches many people, no editorial control, the “freest media”; quick feedback (even real time is possible)	“Free zone” may also invite backlash; access still limited in Africa.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



Giving interviews role-play - record an interview between a journalist and a politician on their campaign or any other pertinent issue. Play these back and ask participants to comment.

Tips: The most common pitfall is long sentences and fuzzy answers. This is especially a problem for television, where time is at a premium. Repeat the process after the comments from the floor, and see if the playback and critique helps to improve the quality of the interview.

The Role of The Media

As one of the most powerful tools for politicians and for social awareness, the media is a critical factor in the efficacy of women in politics. All politicians have a love-hate relationship with the media. For women in politics, this relationship is that much more troubled.

In Botswana, the media sector includes television, radio, and print. The media play a key role not only in educating and creating public awareness on gender issues but also support on the national socio-economic and political

development agenda. Print and broadcasting media make biased reports of women as followers, sex objects, beauty pageants. These all undermine the ability of women as fit and capable politicians. The media tends to attack women who campaign for elections rather than focus on the issues that they are articulating. Media has to date failed to give special coverage to female candidates' campaigns or to interview them, further reinforces their marginalised situation.

Strategies for Using the Media Effectively

Building relationships



- What has been your experience with the media ?
- What are some of the way you can seek to build relationships with the media. Who would you target?
- Are there media women's associations in your country? In what way are you working with them?

Tips: Media practitioners are human beings! Communicating with journalists makes a difference. The first step in establishing and maintaining good relationships with media professionals is to identify the proper person to make contact with, depending on what you wish to accomplish.

For effectively building and maintaining professional relations with media personnel:

- Professionalism - be factual not rhetoric
- Respect - do not attack a journalist
- Honesty
- Commitment
- Confidence

Tips on pitching a story to the media

- Be creative, but keep your list of ideas short.
- Know your organisation's priorities - what part of an event or issue do you want in the public eye?
- Use statistics wisely - data can be powerful ammunition to back up your arguments, but keep it simple and to the point.
- Reporters and editors are always short on time - if you don't grab them in the first few moments of your pitch, you won't secure their interest.

- **Place and dateline** - place and date of the press release.
- **Catchy, informative lead paragraph** which if possible should include the 5 W's: Who, what, where, when, why and how.
- **Three to four paragraphs** outlining the key points in order from most important to least.
- **Contact information** - who should the press contact for more information, Name, position, telephone number, email address

How to get journalists to attend your event

- Identify what journalists to invite
- Make an innovative invitation
- Argue why your event is newsworthy
- Send out a short innovative press release
- Follow up invitation and press release with calls

Different types of writing

- Press releases
- Opinion and Commentaries
- Letters to editors

Tips for writing press releases

- **Title** - catchy headline of what's most important.

The infographic is titled "Press Release CHEAT SHEET" and is divided into three columns, each with an icon and a "WHY?" section. The first column features a calendar icon and lists the best days to send a press release as Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The second column features an alarm clock icon and lists the best time to send a press release as between 9am and 2pm. The third column features a globe icon and advises considering time zones, listing GMT, CAT, and CET. A small "mu" logo is in the bottom right corner of the infographic.

Best days to send:	Best time to send:	Consider time zones:
<p>1. TUESDAY 2. WEDNESDAY 3. THURSDAY</p> <p>WHY? Tuesday's open rate is over 22%, and it is also the most popular day to send press releases, followed by Wednesday.</p>	<p>Between 9am and 2pm</p> <p>WHY? The open rate is over 45% at those times. After lunch, the open rate drops to a low of 15%.</p>	<p>GMT: Greenwich Mean Time CAT: GMT +2 CET: GMT +1</p> <p>WHY? Keeping time zones in mind will ensure your press release arrives at the journalist at the optimal time, wherever they are.</p>

Tips for writing opinions and commentaries

What editors look for?

- The argument or point of view should be right up front in the piece.
- The argument must be strong [passion].
- A strong news peg (i.e. a piece which is based on an event, issue or trend that is topical in the society, as well as forward looking; also can be a new perspective or new/fresh insight into an event or issue
- The argument should be informed - research, data, anecdotes(human interest), national laws, regional and international conventions and declarations (accountability)

What to avoid:

- Do not think that just because you write a piece, you are entitled to space. You must convince an editor why it is important to publish your piece. The piece must be compelling and informative.
- Do not write a piece that is too specialized which can be understood only by a small audience.
- Avoid inaccuracies in facts and data.
- Avoid one-side and unfair arguments. Be balance.
- Avoid a didactic/preachy/prescriptive tone in your piece.

How to pitch your piece:

- Call an opinion page editor, rather than sending unsolicited articles. Better tactic is to go and see the editor and be persistent.
- Have a 2-3 page brief with you when you pitch which outlines the article.
- Know the newspaper you want to publish your article in (know its values, editorial policy, its

readers, etc); research the newspaper before you approach it.

- Be brave when pitching your opinion.
- Know the area you are writing about; show that you know the issues well.
- For dailies: allow three weeks lead time to pitch your piece. For weeklies: allow six weeks lead time.

Key Pointers:

- BREVITY
- CLARITY
- KEEP THE ARGUMENT CENTRAL

Tips for letter to the editor

Such a letter could:

- Stress a particular point of view.
- Draw the public's attention to certain facts or occurrences.
- Comment on general issues frequently covered in the media.
- Air a grievance against the newspaper, an organisation, an individual, an institution or a story that has made headlines in the news. NB! Make your letter timely. If you are not addressing a specific article, editorial or letter that recently appeared in the paper you are writing to, then try to tie the issue you are writing about to a recent event.

It is important to:

- Support your facts. If the topic you address is controversial, consider sending documentation along with your letter.
- Find others to write when possible. This will show that other individuals in the community are also concerned about the issue.

How do I build my personal brand?

Your personal brand needs to be constructed so that it is easily articulated in an online environment, as well as clearly communicated verbally and through behaviours and actions.

1. **Start thinking of yourself as a brand**

What do you wish for people to associate with you when they think of your name? Is there a certain subject matter in which you want to be perceived as an expert or are there general qualities you want linked to your brand? Once you understand how you wish your brand to be perceived, you can start to be much more strategic about your personal brand. This doesn't mean you can't be human. On the contrary, as Michael Simmons writes, authenticity is key in the digital age.

2. **Audit your online presence**

You cannot mould perception without first understanding the current status. In other words, Google yourself and setup alerts for your name on a regular basis. Cultivating a strong personal brand is just as much about being responsive to what is being said as it is about creating intellectual property.

3. **Secure a personal website**

Having a personal website for yourself is one of the best ways to rank for your name on the search engines. It does not need to be robust. It can be a simple two to three page site with your CV, link to your social platforms, and a brief bio. You can always expand on the website with time.

4. **Find ways to produce value**

Someone in your network posts something utterly mundane or ridiculous, and you wonder what compelled them to do so? A medium is not a substitute for a message. Find ways to add value to your audience by creating or curating content that is in line with your brand.

5. **Be purposeful in what you share**

Every tweet you send, every status update you make, every picture you share, contributes to your personal brand. It is an amalgamation of multiple daily actions. Once you understand how you wish your brand to be perceived, you can start to be much more strategic about your personal brand.

6. **Associate with other strong brands**

Your personal brand is strengthened or weakened by your connection to other brands. Find and leverage strong brands which can elevate your own personal brand. Start with the three C's: company, college, colleagues. Which school did you attend? Are there groups you can join? An alumni newsletter you can contribute to? What hidden opportunities are available within your company which you have yet to tap? Consider submitting a guest post to the company blog or look at other digital assets you can connect to your brand.

7. **Reinvent**

A strong personal brand is dependent on a strong narrative. In other words, what is your story?



Profile: Keabonye Ntsabane

I will die a happy person because I have done something for my country



After a long career in gender and media activism Keabonye Ntsabane, fondly known as KB, entered local politics in 2014. With limited time to prepare and campaign, mainly because of the costs of campaigning and the challenges of being a woman in politics in Botswana, and in the opposition, she lost the local government elections by a mere five votes.

Four years on, in 2018, she was recruited by the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) to stand for elections in Taung village, Ramotswa. She was approached by Vice President, now President, who knew of her activism work, “He knows me because he has seen me in his office talking about gender... asking him to do this and that, he knows that this person can persuade you. I was reluctant but he said, 'you can make it'.” She won the primary elections against four men from the BDP and is now one of five women, out of 11, in her council.

Ntsabane became a gender activist working in the area of women in media and the issue that kept on coming up was 'why can't women make it to decision-making positions, what are the obstacles to women participating in politics?' and after many years of witnessing how few women were entering politics and trying to address these issues from the outside, she decided to see for herself. What she says, is that it is possible, but it's not easy.

One of the main obstacles in standing for elections is economical. Ntsabane tells me that “There are 2,013 constituents that are scattered across her village, with many working the land, making it difficult to access them during the day. So to meet the people you have to have a car and when you bring people together at a meeting they expect you to provide lunch - so you need a car and money for petrol and food, and it all is your own money, but If we work hard with the little resources we have, we can make it.”

Ntsabane has been working on gender issues for over 20 years and remembers when gender equality was still a new issue in Botswana, “we were still talking about Beijing [the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995], questioning what gender equality is and people, even at the government level, were not accepting or understanding what gender equality is”. Civil society had to work hard to convince people that gender equality is not about dividing people or that women want to push in. She recalls that it was hard at the beginning but it is easier now, and government and communities are now saying that there must be equal numbers of women at every level - parliament, cabinet, local government.

But she has witnessed change over the last two decades since Beijing after which people started moving together. At the regional level when the women's movement were lobbying for the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development it wasn't easy for heads of state to agree to the asks, but there was a glimmer of hope when countries signed the Protocol in 2008, although Botswana only

signed much later. And now gender equality is mentioned as a key issues in the country's 2036 vision.

Ntsabane attributes the progress to the work of civil society in the country. She remembers how few organisations were working in gender issues when she started, now there are many more dealing with issues such as gender-based violence, the role of men and boys etc. GBV is close to her heart and she has established a trust on GBV in her village. Every 16 Days [of Activism against violence against women] the different villages commemorate the 16 Days. Heads of state also take a lead and these are the issues which show the success of all the work done by NGOs.

Through her work with Gender Links and Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA) on gender mainstreaming in councils, the work is ongoing. Gender focal points in councils now take responsibility for the gender activities and also co-fund these with CSOs and sharing of responsibilities, for example 16 days has become an important even on the calendar.



Ntsabane is passionate about gender issues, which she will push in council. She is particularly passionate about GBV, which she established a trust to address. She understands the importance educating people on women in decision making and power sharing to encourage women to stand for election. At the rural level there is more work to be done as much of the work has been focused at the national level, “We need these issue to trickle down from the national level to the grassroots level.” In line with this she has managed to reach out to people in villages and has started working with Dikgosi [chiefs/ traditional leaders] to sensitise them about gender and GBV, which she will continue to do as an elected councillor. She believes it is her work in the community and her reputation that she is where she is today.

In 2018 Ntsabane was recognised with an Award from the President, nominated by the community because of the good work that she has done for the country. She was also recognised as a hero in the pension fund calendar. She says “I will die a happy person because I have done something for my country”.

What is the most important aspect of the job? She says “It is about caring for the community, being passionate about the people and giving them your heart.”

Personal Branding on Social Media

A greater online presence is necessary for personal branding, disseminating products, networking, advertisement of events and creation of online relations with other constituencies and

organisations. The Following are the most common Social media platforms (among others), you can utilise for personal branding.



What social media platforms are you on?

Social Media Platform	Yes/No	What do you post?	Frequency of use?
Twitter			
Facebook			
Instagram			
Snapchat			
LinkedIn			



Facebook is a social networking Web site that allows people to communicate with their friends and exchange information. In May 2007 Facebook launched the Facebook

Platform which provides a framework for developers to create applications that interact with core Facebook features

How to create the visibility?

- Paid Ads to reach larger audience.
- Sponsored Posts / short videos/ infographics to showcase work.
- Raise awareness on your events, by creating event on Facebook event section.

Getting people to engage by:

- Share a post, photo, video, article or infographic from your page.
- Tag, email or sign a letter to encourage or thank a public figure.

- Post about your cause to inform your networks.
- Share a personal story related to your cause.



Twitter is an example of a micro-blogging service. Twitter can be used in a variety of ways including sharing brief information with users and providing support for one's

peers and other networks. Twitter isn't about friending-it's about following. You can follow people you know personally, or artists or projects you're a fan of.

Once you create your account, Twitter offers a kind of set-up wizard to help you get started. If you're into wizards, follow the steps. It'll suggest some accounts to follow to get you started based on your interests

How to create the visibility?

Twitter will continue to offer suggestions for who to follow as you use it. These suggestions will appear in your feed if you're using the app, or on the side of the screen if you're using the website:

- Infuse personality in your profile.
- Keep adding people.
- Learn the habit of using Hashtags: Hashtags are best used for adding to a larger conversation. For example if you're Tweeting about the Sustainable Development Goals, use the hashtag #SDGs to add to the conversation.
- Sponsored Posts / short videos/ infographics to showcase work.

Getting people to engage by:

- Tweeting Consistently.
- Creating tweets that stand out.
- Share a post, photo, video, article or infographic from your page.
- Connecting people.
- Post about your cause to inform your followers and their followers.
- Share a personal story related to your cause.



How are you currently using social media for campaigning and support? How can you strengthen your use of social media as a branding tool?



LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and

document networks of people they know and trust professionally.

Linked in Profiles are where first impressions are formed, where potential employers, partners and other users silently answer the question. "Can I see myself working with this person?" - *Business LinkedIn 2018.*

How to create the visibility?

- Infuse professionalism in your profile.
- Follow relevant individuals.
- Use Sponsored Posts / short videos/ infographics to showcase work.

Getting people to engage by:

- Engage with connections.
- Share a post, photo, video, article or infographic from your page
- Introduce your content with a personal note.

speaking is a very common fear. Or they may just be shy or introverted. For those reasons, many people avoid public speaking if they can. If you are one of those people who avoid public speaking, you are missing out.

Over the years, public speaking has played a major role in education, government, and business. Words have the power to inform, persuade, educate, and even entertain. And the

spoken word can be even more powerful than the written word in the hands of the right speaker.

How to become better at public speaking

The truth is that public speaking is a skill. It can be learned. While some people may have more natural speaking ability than others, or a more pleasing voice, or are more charismatic-anyone who can speak can learn to be a better public speaker than they are right now. It just takes some know-how and some effort.



10 TIPS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

1. Nervousness Is Normal. Practice and Prepare!

The best way to overcome anxiety is to prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Take the time to go over your notes several times. Once you have become comfortable with the material, practice-a lot. Videotape yourself, or get a friend to critique you.

2. Know Your Audience. Your Speech Is About Them, Not You.

Before you begin to craft your message, consider who the message is intended for. Learn as much about your listeners as you can. This will help you determine your choice of words, level of information, organisation pattern, and motivational statement.

3. Organise Your Material in the Most Effective Manner to Attain Your Purpose.

Create the framework for your speech. Write down the topic, general purpose, specific purpose, central idea, and main points. Grab the audience's attention in the first 30 seconds.

4. Watch for Feedback and Adapt to It.

Keep the focus on the audience. Gauge their reactions, adjust your message, and stay flexible. Delivering a canned speech will guarantee that you lose the attention of or confuse even the most devoted listeners.

5. Let Your Personality Come Through.

Be yourself, do not become a talking head-in any type of communication. You will establish better credibility if your personality shines through, and your audience will trust what you have to say if they can see you as a real person.

6. Use Humour, Tell Stories, and Use Effective Language.

Inject a funny anecdote in your presentation, and you will certainly grab your audience's attention. Audiences generally like a personal touch in a speech. A story can provide that.

7. Do not Read Unless You Have to. Work from an Outline.

Reading from a script or slide fractures the interpersonal connection. By maintaining eye contact with the audience, you keep the focus on yourself and your message. A brief outline can serve to jog your memory and keep you on task.

8. Use Your Voice and Hands Effectively. Omit Nervous Gestures.

Nonverbal communication carries most of the message. Good delivery does not call attention to itself, but instead conveys the speaker's ideas clearly and without distraction.

