

23U02 Professional Communications

Hello everyone. Welcome to the PUNLA CoffeeTable for one of our student conversations. PUNLA Christian Ministries in conjunction with our ministry partners in the Philippines has developed a series of informative modules to provide information, guidance are career selection, motivation and preparation for your future jobs and careers. As with all things in life, your relationship with God is the first priority.

In Today's conversation we will discuss Professional Communication. Communicating is perhaps the most important skill in life. How we communicate shows other people our values, our priorities and discipline. No two people have exactly the same manner of communicating, which is critically important in finding a job. Does your communication make you more hireable or does your communication make it tougher for you to be hired.

Let's pray. *Heavenly Father, thank you for providing for us. Thank you for giving us opportunities you give us. Lord, I pray for everyone listening today, you know the troubles they are facing, life is hard. We all struggle with our troubles, but I know Lord that you and you alone can guide us, can help us. Can give us peace and hope no matter what we are facing in our lives. I trust you Lord. And I pray in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.*

Let's talk about types of communication for a moment. There are three primary types of communication.

- Face to face
- Written
- Virtual

Face to face communication is personal. Any time you are in person, in front of other people. This can be one-on-one or in groups, it can be formal or informal. It can be part of an event or a meal. Face-to-face communication is more than what you say, it's how you look, your body language, your facial expressions.

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Written communication is impersonal. You don't see the other person's face; you don't get real-time responses. This can be letters, emails, texts or even message boards and chat groups. You have time to formulate what you want to say and check it before you press send or mail. You can articulate your full thoughts without interruptions.

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Virtual communication can be both personal and impersonal at the same time. This includes phone calls, video calls, chat groups, etc. Any time you are having an active back and forth conversation in real-time but not in person or physically in front of the other person.

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First, how to communicate. Often times you can choose what type of communication to use for a given situation. The method of communication you choose must be appropriate for the specific situation. You have to use the method best suited to the type of communication. What you choose affects how people will view you.

REMEMBER business and personal communication are different. So treat them differently. Even if you know the other person, how you communicate should depend on the circumstances. Be professional.

EXAMPLE. I have a good friend I have known for years. We often talk on the phone or text. These are personal communications. But, I am contracted by their company for a job. I am very careful to communicate business only via email. This way there is a clear record of all business communications. If I have a call or a text from them about business, I always follow up with an email summarizing our conversations. I'm being professional about our business communications.

I don't ask about their family or their vacation or their Facebook posts during these conversations, because these are personal issues. Don't mix personal and business communications. Even if they mix them, you keep them separate. Be Professional.

Face-to-face communication.

Communication is not limited to what you say. They are looking at you, turn off your phone, put it down and make eye contact with them as they speak to you. Avoid letting something distract you from the conversation. Listen. This is a very important business skill. You need to listen to what the other person says. Don't interrupt people as they speak. Don't try to have the last word in a conversation. Listen and answer appropriately.

Be concise in your conversation. Answer questions specifically with a direct answer. As few words as possible without being abrupt. Don't just say yes and no but elaborate just enough to answer but briefly. Also, when agreeing to a time for a face-to-face meeting, be aware of the other person's time. Ask what time is best, how long the meeting might last. It is always best to schedule a face-to-face meeting in advance so both of you have time to prepare and the length of the meeting is understood in advance. Remember in business, time is money. You must respect the time of others. Just because you have plenty of time, does not mean the other person has time for you. Respect their time.

Face-to-face meetings at meals. Eating with others in a business setting is complicated. Always order after your host. This allows you to gauge, type of meal, expected cost of meal and other factors. Order something easy to eat. Something that won't be messy to eat. Never order a meal that is more expensive than what the host orders. Don't order a drink unless your host orders one first. Now for eating. Don't talk with your mouth full. Eat, swallow, then talk. Manners matter. Watch your host's behavior and don't be too casual. Thank you host. Be polite to waiters and waitresses. Treat other dinners with respect. No matter what happens, be polite and courteous.

If your meal meeting is a group meal. Be polite. Answer questions directed at you. But do not monopolize the conversations. Remember the purpose of the meeting and stay focused on that purpose, no matter what others are talking about. Last, do not check your phone during a meeting or meal. I suggest turning the phone off completely until your meeting is over. Whatever you do, do not answer your phone while in a meeting. This is disrespectful and very unprofessional. Be professional.

Events. These face-to-face meetings are tricky because there are many distractions. Events are like conferences, social events like concerts or fiestas. But remember, this is business communication. Stay professional. During your face-to-face conversation, don't get distracted. Be polite. Thank them for taking the time to meet with you.

This is a good chance to ask questions, if you have questions pause the video or take notes and send me your question later.

Written communication.

I want to talk about a couple types of written communications. First email but this can apply to actual letters as well. Addressing. Use a professional email address. Do not use cutey email addresses for business communications. Something simple with your first and last name or initials and last name. You can use numbers if needed. But use an email address that people know to be yours. When they see the email address, they know who it is from. Be appropriate. Next be careful with CAPSLOCK. People infer you are yelling at them when you capitalize all letters in words. It's difficult to read. It's not appropriate for business communication. I actually had this happen to be early in my career. I sent an email and my CAPSLOCK was accidentally on. I missed it. I later got a call from my boss. The woman I had written too was in his office crying that I had yelled at her. I was not even in the same building and had not seen or talked to her. But she was copied on my email and thought I had been yelling at her. To say the least I was surprised. So don't do this. Be careful.

Also, don't use cute background, fonts or colors in Business communication. I know it looks cool to you, but they are hard to read and can be very irritating to the reader. It can also look disrespectful or appear that you are not serious. Bad for business communications. Italics and bold face type is the same way. Use them only when needed for an emphasis in the communication. Less is more. Be professional.

Emoji's. Just don't use them. Emoticons are not appropriate for any business communications. Save these for your personal messages. Remember be professional.

Shorthand and acronyms. Just don't use them. Spell it out. Not everyone understands and it is possible they may think it means something else. To avoid misunderstanding, just spell it out. There are exceptions but be very careful to use these unless the person you are communicating with has previously used it in your communications.

Do not forward chain emails using work email addresses or to other people's work email addresses. Beyond the obvious security issues these email pose. You can get the

receiver in trouble with their company. If you use your work email for personal use, you can be sanctioned or fired. When I was a manager, we used email use and misuse as grounds to fire staff. Generally, if you are doing this, you are signaling to the people you work for you are not working. You are doing personal and play communications on company time using company resources.

Let's talk about those emails or letters. Complete, organized thoughts are essential. You have time to think this through so do so. The subject line of the email should contain the purpose of the message, make it concise and direct to the point. I receive hundreds of emails each day. If an email does not have a subject heading or a specific subject heading, this tells me it's not important. The sender did not take the time to tell me the purpose of the message, so I'm not going to waste my time looking at it. If you want your messages read, then be purposeful, concise & direct subject lines are essential.

Every message should begin with some sort of greeting. Typically the name of the person and or title. If sending to an office or department, start either Sir/Ma'am. This has a positive psychological impact on the reader, so they are ready to read your message. Message length. Remember be concise. Include only relevant items. Don't give long back stories unless absolutely necessary. Spelling and Grammar. We have no excuses today. Use the spell checker and grammar tools in your word processor or email platform. Any spelling errors, show the ready you are sloppy or don't respect them. Be professional.

Then end your message with some sort of sign off. Make sure it is appropriate. If it's my company email. I say, Best Regards, followed by my name, title, and contact information. I want to reinforce my name and title, and make my contact information and phone number easy for them to find and use. Be professional.

Other signoffs can be, respectfully, Sincerely, Thank you. Look forward to hearing from you. Choose the appropriate sign off for your message. Be professional.

Here is an example email. Clear Subject, Greeting, concise body and closing. Clear and to the point. One last thing. Emails have several send to options. To, CC, BCC. The email address in the "TO" line should be only the person or persons you are directly writing to.

"CC" stands for Carbon Copy; this is an old term but the purpose is to copy others on communication who are not your primary person for the correspondence. Example is, I am submitting a proposal for work. I am going to write the message specifically to the person I was told to submit the proposal too. But I may have been working with two or three others. I would typically CC them on the message so that they know what and when I sent the proposal. I don't expect them to read this message, just be aware it was sent and to who.

“BCC” is “blind carbon copy” again this is an old typing term. This is used when you are sending the same message to multiple people, but you do not want every person to see everyone else’s emails. I do this when I communicate with the students in our college program. Same message to hundreds of students but each student only sees my email address as sender and theirs at “to”. Another advantage is when someone replies to a BCC email, it only comes back to me instead of everyone on the email chain. DO not reply to all unless you really want to send your response to everyone on a given email. Be careful, be professional.

One last thing, if it is an important message, have someone proof read it before you press send. You only get one chance for a first impression, and it is impossible for the reader to unsee your mistake or poor choice of words.

These rules also apply to texting and messaging, as well as chat boards. Clear, straight forward professional communications. Keep your personal touches for your personal communication.

Instant messaging and texting are forms of written communications. But I caution you not to use these unless there are no other options. Again use of shorthand abbreviations, or emojis is not professional. It can lead to miscommunication. Do not use these if it is important or sensitive communication like bad news. Texting should really only be used for urgent response situations. And again, chat boards are not appropriate for business communications. Use very cautiously and avoid if at all possible.

This is a good chance to ask questions, if you have questions pause the video or take notes and send me your question later.

Virtual communications.

These include any communication where you are not face-to-face and have instant response. These include Phone calls & video calls. Skype, Facebook live, google meet, zoom and many others. Let’s talk about phone calls or any sort of audio only call. You can’t see the other person and they can see you. They can’t see your facial expression or head nods or gestures. You have to use words and tone. Be careful of your volume. Do not whisper and don’t scream, adjust your speaking volume such that the person you are talking with can hear you clearly. Your tone matters. Beware of your surroundings. Background noises are very annoying to the person you are talking to. Rustling papers or tapping pens. Or if outside traffic and wind. All these are distractions. You want them to hear you not all the background annoying things. This is especially important if you have a conference call with multiple people. Mute your mic when you are not talking to minimize the distractions for all the people on the call. This is being polite and professional.

Don’t have side conversations with someone else at your location while on a call. This is very disrespectful and distracting. Be professional.

Video calls add to the complications. Be aware of your surroundings. People are looking at your background, try to minimize these distractions if at all possible. Again, if it is a group call, mute your mic when you are not talking. This is just respectful of others. Be professional. And test your connection and equipment before the call. Making people wait for you to join is not professional and disrespectful of others.

One last thing about phones. If you are in a meeting either in person face-to-face or on computer call, either audio only or video. Turn off your phone. Whoever is calling you can wait until after your meeting. Give your full undistracted attention to every meeting and every call. Be professional.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father God. I thank you for everything. Guide me so I can be respectful of others. Treat others as you want them to be treated. I thank you when things are great when I feel like life is good. I thank you when it's tough and I'm struggling to make it through. I trust you Jesus because I know only you can truly help me. I'm no good when I'm in control, so I pray that everyone listening surrender control to you. Thank you, Jesus, for seeing the good in me when I did not see it in myself. I love you Jesus. And I pray in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay, let me leave you with this today. Be professional. What does this really mean. Be respectful. Treat others respectfully. Don't be distracted, be conscious of our words. Be concise and direct. Respect the time of others. Every communication is important or don't communicate. Take every opportunity to communicate seriously. Be professional.

Thank you so much for allowing me to have this conversation with you today. Put God first in everything you do every time and trust God with everything. Then experience the abundant satisfying life that God has planned for you. Life in the kingdom of God right here on earth.

I don't know what God has planned for you, but I can promise that God's plan for you is bigger and better than anything you could ever imagine. If you want to speak with me, you can find my email on our website. www.punla.org. Or on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr. Until next time. God Bless

MODULE: Professional Communication (23U02) 38m

OUTLINE (timestamp)

- Introduction Professional Communication (00:0)
- Opening Prayer (1:30)
- Types of Communication (2:16)
 - Face-to-face (7:09)
 - <BREAK>
 - Written (email & texts) (14:15)
 - <BREAK>
 - Virtual (phone & video calls) (29:30)
- Closing Prayer (35:30)
- Last Thought – Be Professional (36:27)