

UTS:HELPS

HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

INTENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Higher Education Language & Presentation Support (HELPS)

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1. KNOW YOUR COMMUNICATIVE STRENGTHS & YOUR BRAND IDENTITY

ONWARDS & UPWARDS

It's more important than ever (in this highly competitive job-hunting environment) that we as university students focus on bettering our communication skills. Whether it's working at our part-time jobs or focusing more on graduate opportunities once we've finished our degrees, employers all say they want graduates that are 'expert communicators, team players, creative and innovative thinkers'. It doesn't seem to matter what industry we apply it to; most employers are saying the same thing – excellent communicators get the best paying jobs and the most rewarding careers!

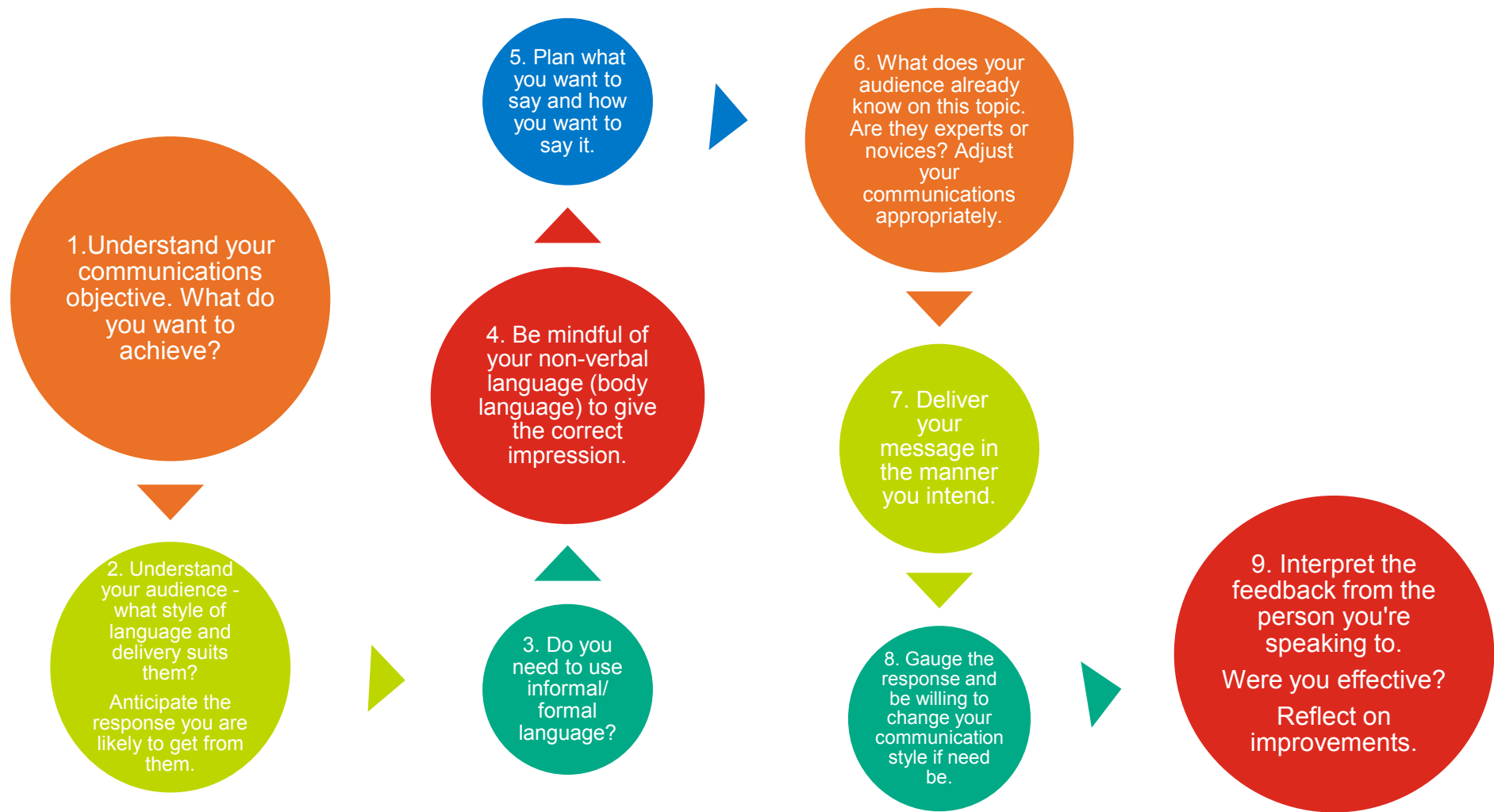
WHAT IS EXPERT COMMUNICATION?

We asked several experts from around the university as to what they thought an 'expert communicator' was. They all agreed on the following points:

- > Expert communicators can easily convey their messages without misleading or misrepresenting themselves.
- > They can easily and effectively communicate with whomever they are talking to – whether it was to the office cleaner, or a Senior Executive in a boardroom.
- > Individuals who can easily navigate from 'informal casual communicative settings' to more formalised and 'polished' types of communications (both written and spoken).
- > Excellent communicators show a mastery and command of language. (We especially liked this one!).

HOW D'YOU GET IT?

As we've seen already, experts agree that a good definition of an 'expert communicator' is someone who can 'craft' a clear and well delivered message that can be effectively understood by the receiver. Are you an expert communicator already? Follow our step-by-step process for 'improving on' your communication style.



WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Ok, so let's take this a bit further and see how good your communication skills are. Try our quick quiz *questi-mator* to get a simple snapshot of your communication skill levels. Are you a novice or a pro? Let's find out!

Task

Read each statement and choose the ONE best response that applies to you in each section. Mark your answer. Check your results at the end.

Listening:

- > I use active listening skills effectively when I talk to others.
- > I usually prefer to talk rather than listen to others.
- > I've never considered my listening skill ability.
- > I often find I miss important details when I listen to other people speak.

Speaking:

- > I try to be conscious of whom I am communicating with, and alter my style, language and vocabulary accordingly.
- > I'm aware of the situations when I can use informal, casual language, and also when I need to be more polished, more formal and professional.
- > I communicate just the way that I communicate. I don't really alter my style at all.
- > I don't see this as being important – speaking is just speaking.

Writing:

- > I can comfortably write professional business emails, memos and other documents for work.
- > I'm not really confident about the way I write business or professional correspondence.
- > I focus on being clear and meaningful, but keep my style pretty much the same.
- > I'm not sure if my style of writing is appropriate for the world of work yet.

Reading:

- > When I read work/uni documents or emails, I often find myself missing important details.
- > I don't like reading, and will avoid it if I can.
- > I take time to read important emails and work/uni related documents to ensure I don't miss any details.
- > I often have to read things several times before I fully understand what the message is fully discussing.

Leading:

- > I am interested in leading others, and think I have strengths in this area.
- > I consider myself a good people-person and happy to contribute to the team when I have to.
- > I'm not interested in being a leader/group leader, or taking the lead on work/uni projects.
- > I don't know enough of how to be a leader or team player to have an opinion on this.

Questioning:

- > I am happy asking questions when I don't know how to do something, or if I'm unsure.
- > I don't like to admit I don't know the answer to something. I just keep quiet or pretend I know.

- > I choose the appropriate time to ask questions if I'm unsure of what to do, or how to respond. ●
- > I don't really like to ask questions about things. I'll just work it out my way. ●

Initiating:

- > I like to take action myself and show what I'm capable of. ●
- > I prefer for others to tell me what to do. ●
- > I like to learn from others, then try it out for myself. ●
- > I'm willing for others to make the mistakes until I build up my skills. ●

Feedback

Have you mostly chosen lighter colours as your answers? Then, perhaps, you need to focus on your particular weaker areas and work towards improving them as you may not be communicating as clearly as you may like. If you try to improve your communication skills, they most likely will have a large impact on your job-hunting success, career trajectory and, ultimately, affect your salary increases also. Whilst we are all different (introvert and extrovert, and all categories in between), employers are always telling us they are looking for independent thinkers who are creative, fantastic communicators, can work by themselves, as well as work well in a team environment. If you want to succeed, it's important to practise your skills in these communicative areas as much as possible. See our suggested resources at the end of this unit.

Have you mostly chosen darker colours as your answers? Then you are doing a lot of really good things and doing much of what employers are looking for, but it also pays to keep upgrading your communication skills and improving potential areas of weakness. Of course, all industries and careers are different, and employers are looking for different sets of skills, 'knowledge sets' and personalities to complement their roles and cultural fits of their organisations. We are all different too, and we're not saying that you always need to be 'an outgoing, extrovert type who's not afraid of being the leader and who sees themselves as the next CEO'. We're just pointing out that employers are looking for great communicators, team players, not afraid of taking the lead if need be, thinking creatively and innovatively, and contributing positively to the organisational goals. It seems, perhaps, you're doing much of this already – but remember, continuous improvement is also our watchword, and will help your job-hunting and career success into the bargain too!

PERSONAL BRANDING

It's all about YOU!

In these very competitive job market times, it is essential that job seekers (whether for a part-time job at Macca's, an internship at Deloitte, or a graduate position at a cool start-up) are aware of, and developing their personal brand.





Brand you?

Personal branding has gathered lots of traction over the past number of years. What does it mean exactly? Well, it works in exactly the same way as other brands do. Think of the Italian luxury brand 'Gucci' and what do you think of? Perhaps, 'high end, well made, expensive, timeless and classic luxury goods' might spring to mind. Alternatively, picture 'Kmart' and

perhaps the words ‘convenient, low cost and reliable’ might be terms you could choose. Personal branding tends to keep on the positive side of things, so, generally, negative descriptions usually take a back seat to the more positive side of personal branding communications.

Task

Look at these famous people. Can you identify their role and possible personal branding? See how many you can match up.

Name	Richard Branson	Kim Kardashian	Hugh Jackman	Malala Yousafzai
Role	Successful human rights figurehead and Nobel Peace Prize winner. Demands social justice and equal rights.	Entrepreneur and successful businessman. Started the Virgin Group of companies.	Successful entertainment figure and charity campaigner.	Successful business woman famous for self-promotion and a multi-millionaire entertainment/life style portfolio.
Personal Brand	Entrepreneurial, risk-taking, unique, driven and innovative.	Committed, passionate, dedicated, true to their values and ethics. A social reformer.	Confident, entrepreneurial, opportunistic, career focused and driven.	Amiable, approachable, talented, communicative, equalitarian and confident.
Picture				
Agree? Disagree? Comment on their personal brand				

“Personal branding allows you to be comfortable with ‘who you are’ and what you stand for, the key messages you ‘believe in’, the values and ethics you project and the style in which you communicate them”
Careers Team, UTS

We asked a range of employers who take UTS graduates, and over 85% of them said that they were more likely to employ a graduate that they have engaged and can identify with (and like the brand of), rather than an unknown and unseen application.

Why brand?

Whether you like it or not, ‘branding’ is probably here to stay. As a university student, it can be helpful to think of ourselves in this way in order to help ourselves pitch effectively to a potential employer (see our module on that) and to market yourself effectively in the job pool. So, are you more of a David Jones product or humble home brand?

Essentially, developing yourself as a ‘brand’ is an opportunity for you to have a ‘unique selling point’, or differentiate yourself from a very crowded pool of job applicants.

5 excellent reasons why branding is a ‘cool communications tool’ for you

1. It helps you to position yourself firmly in the job market
2. It helps you give a clear, consistent message in your job hunting process and your career
3. It can help you identify what type of positions/industry and working environment suits you best
4. It can help you when networking and complements giving ‘elevator pitches’ nicely
5. It helps you uncover the ‘authentic you’, which is what employers are truly after!

Video watching

Watch the following video on personal branding, and make notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaTLXNFRg1w>

Task

Develop your personal branding statement

Follow our step-by-step process for uncovering your personal brand statement. Write one word (positive words only please!) in the box. Sometimes, getting a good friend or colleague to do this with you can give you some great insights. Now is NOT the time to be humble or shy – you want to ‘project the best YOU’ in this exercise.

	ANSWERS Example	ANSWERS YOU
QUESTIONS to get you thinking	David Beckham 	
How would your best friend describe you?	A talented professional athlete who is also considerate and genuine.	
What makes you brilliant and different from others?	Ability to have a dramatic and positive effect upon a sporting team.	
How would close colleagues describe you?	A great asset to a team.	
What are your best attributes?	A team player who takes pride in his soccer.	
What do most people like about you?	Approachable, easy-going and humble.	
How do you stand out from other people you know?	Talented, yet quietly confident.	
What great things can you bring to a working environment?	Can bring a team together to achieve a common goal.	
How do you positively contribute to a team?	Can lead a team effectively.	
Put it all together in a statement	A talented professional who can easily lead a team to greatness, yet who is also humble and easy-going. Dedicated to achieving fantastic results, a true team player with unique skills and professionalism.	



This is your personal branding statement! Well done, you! 7

TAKEAWAYS/SUMMARY DO'S/DON'TS

- > Remember your personal brand translates to your online presence also. Make sure your social media channels reflect your personal branding and personal standpoint.
- > Be consistent with your messaging. Try not to seem like you're a 'Jack of All Trades', but more like a 'Master of Some'.
- > Reflect on what you're good at and what direction you think you want to be heading in, i.e. 'what do you want to be known for?'.
 - > Think about doing these activities with a close friend or family member; sometimes, they can often see things which you can't.
- > Get used to the idea of "marketing yourself". Competition is fierce in employment circles. You now have global competition in many industries; you need to 'market yourself effectively' to get a good job, a satisfying career and to stay ahead in your profession.
- > Do also show humility – no-one likes a boaster! Don't take yourself too seriously, don't lie about your accomplishments, and don't call yourself an expert (*unless you are one, and even then, think twice about it*). Be humble, genuine and, most importantly, honest about what communicates you as 'a brand'.

IMPROVE YOUR BRANDING

A QUICK REMINDER OF HOW TO INSTANTLY IMPROVE YOUR PERSONAL BRANDING COMMUNICATIONS

- 1** BE CONSISTENT
- 2** GET FEEDBACK FROM OTHERS WHO KNOW YOU WELL
- 3** COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
- 4** COMMUNICATE PROFESSIONALISM
- 5** COMMUNICATE MOTIVATION
- 6** APPLY TO ALL COMMUNICATIONS e.g. SOCIAL MEDIA, RESUME & INTERVIEWS etc.

The infographic features a red background with a white dashed border. It includes icons for each tip: 1. Three people silhouettes; 2. A jagged line graph; 3. A thumbs up gesture; 4. A clipboard with a magnifying glass; 5. A flexing arm; 6. Social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Role play

Practise this role play set in job interview situation. Student A needs to be clear about what his/her personal brand is (or use your imagination).

Student A (Interviewee/Job Applicant)	Student B (Interviewer/Senior Manager)
1. Greet the interviewer and introduce yourself.	2. Reply positively and welcome the candidate to the company. Then introduce yourself and say what you do at the company.
3. Reply positively and say how glad you are to be here today.	4. Ask the candidate what attracted him/her to apply to this company and for this position.
5. Reply to the interviewer's questions (imagine/make up your answers).	6. Respond positively. Ask the candidate what s/he thinks his/her personal brand is.
7. Reply with details about what your personal brand communicates about you, and what makes you unique and different to a potential employer.	8. Respond positively. Ask the candidate what his/her short-to-medium term career goals are.
9. Respond with the appropriate information about what you think your short-to-medium career goals might be.	10. Make some positive comment to the candidate.

2. EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

WORK IT LIKE A PRO

We all hear about the importance of networking, but for many of us it can be a daunting exercise and fill us with dread. We know; we've been there.

We'd like to make networking a lot easier, more enjoyable and more realistic for us all. Come along with us and we'll show you strategies that you can use to make networking productive, effective and...dare we say it, fun!

Task

What are your thoughts about networking? Take our quick quiz on networking: tick only one box in each column.

	Feelings	Ability	Improving	Using
a	<input type="checkbox"/> Love it	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm a pro	<input type="checkbox"/> I feel like I'm skilled at networking	<input type="checkbox"/> I use networking all the time
b	<input type="checkbox"/> Loathe it	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm OK when I have to be	<input type="checkbox"/> I feel I'm OK, but need to improve	<input type="checkbox"/> I sometimes need to network
c	<input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent	<input type="checkbox"/> I am no good at it	<input type="checkbox"/> I feel I'm not good	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't network a lot (but perhaps I should be)
d		<input type="checkbox"/> I am no good, and I feel like I'll never be any good at networking	<input type="checkbox"/> I feel like I'd like to be better at networking	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to network – it's too scary

Feedback

If you answered mostly (a), the chances are your networking skills are good. But we know that we can always improve, right? So read on as we're sure there's loads of useful information here for you.

If you answered mostly (b) or (c), the chances are your networking skills could be bettered. Networking doesn't have to be hard or uncomfortable. Relax, up your networking skills, enjoy it, and grow your contact lists.

If you answered mostly (d), the chances are your networking skills could be somewhat improved. Don't overthink the process too much, but realise it's an important skill for life and with any skill, 'the more you practise, the easier it becomes'. Stick with us and read on. We'll breakdown the process of effective networking for you to make it as painless as possible.

“It’s not about what you know...but who you know and...what they know about you”.

We’ve heard this a thousand times, but we often don’t realise just how true this is. This statement really captures the concept of networking.

The Facts

Did you know your chances of finding work through a mutual contact/friend/family member/business associate/old colleague are roughly 80% higher than sending out random applications?

Did you also know that employers prefer hiring someone that has been recommended to them, rather than advertising a role externally and then going through a very long and expensive recruitment process?

So, with these things being true – it’s essential that we as university students focus on our communication and build our networks effectively. And for the most part, you already have lots of experience in communicating effectively, meeting new people and interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds at university. So, let’s see how extensive your networks already are?

Video watching

Watch the following video on professional networking, and make notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M7ahzk0dGU>

Task

There are quite a few grammar mistakes and typing errors in this quote about networking. Can you find all 6, then highlight and correct them?

Good networking is all about being yourself, being friendly and be pleasant. In no way should networking be about being arrogant, pushy or aggressive. Its simply about being nice too others and enjoying talking to them; and perhaps if your lucky ‘developing a further relationship with them’. But it’s totally OK if nothing more then the pleasant conversation is had between you.

Task

Outline a quick network communications map here

Chances are that you already have lots of existing contacts already. Use this template to get a clearer picture of who you already know, and what’s the best medium for contacting them. In this way, you can start to build on your networks and begin effectively communicating with them to ensure long-lasting positive relationships which will help you with your job hunting and career success into the future.

Contact type? 	Who?	What industry/ sector?	How might they be able to help me look for work, an internship, a part-time job, a career change, advice, career wisdom, support or mentoring?	How can you communicate best with them? Face to face? Email? Social media? Cold calling?
Current circle of friends				
My family/ extended family				
Work colleagues				
High School contacts				
Sports & social clubs				
Professional associations				
Industry bodies, e.g. CPA				
Networking associations				
Social media contacts				
Others				

Less shark...more charm!

Often, networking is sold to us as being some aggressive, quick way of talking to as many people as you can in order to get what you want from them (i.e. a job, a contact, a recommendation or something). For the sake of argument, we'll call this a 'Shark' approach. This is not an effective way to network. Students doing this can seem pushy, arrogant, not effective communicators, 'non-people' people... and after all...who likes Sharks?

Charm offensive

A better way to networking is to take the 'charm offensive'. After all, who doesn't like people with genuine interest, genuine communication skills and a good deal of charm? We'll show you an effective strategy and some tips and advice to make networking simpler, less stressful, more effective and a lot more enjoyable; even for the shyest university student out there.

We spoke to several networking experts and ex-recruitment advisors about the common mistakes that university students make when they are networking. The table below summarises what they told us.

Do's	Don'ts
Be your authentic self – just 'be you'.	Don't try to be something/someone you're not. Just take it easy and 'be yourself'.
Research the event and who is attending beforehand.	Don't be too pushy or like a shark in a fish bowl, nor be too assertive/aggressive with potential contacts.
Be courteous, polite and genuinely friendly at all times...and smile! See every interaction as a networking opportunity!	Don't just show up at a networking event without knowing who is likely to be attending. It makes you look uninterested and unprepared.
Have some chit-chat questions and a 'good description of yourself' worked out beforehand (see our earlier post on describing yourself).	Don't just show up without knowing the dress code. Is it smart casual? Is it smart business attire? Is it Black Tie? You need to know this beforehand! If not sure, go relatively formal and then you can remove your tie or jacket when you get there.
Do show interest in the people you're speaking to. Ask them lots of questions and seem genuinely interested in their responses.	Don't expect to 'instantly' be offered a job or asked for your resume! You are there to make potential future networking investments! You need to play the 'long game' and not 'instant scratchies'!
Employ active listening skills. Repeat key information back to the speaker to show you're listening carefully.	Don't skip on personal presentation. Great appearance, clean hair and fingernails, fresh clean breath and deodorant are all very important. Some students forget these tiny details!
Try (if you can) to add value to the interaction. Offer to help the person you're speaking with (if appropriate), or send extra information, or put them in touch with a useful contact if it's relevant.	Don't forget to leave a lasting impression with anyone that may be a useful future contact. Contact them again within 48 hours to thank them for their time/help. Drop them a brief polite email or LinkedIn message to do this because you already picked up their business card, didn't you?

Our strategy for networking effectively

	Step / Process	Relatively formal language	Informal language
1	Initiating conversation	Hello, do you mind if I join you?	Hello, how are you going?
2	Break the ice statement	This is a great event. Have you been to one of these before?	Great event, isn't it?
3	Introduce yourself politely	Nice to meet you. My name is Suwati. I'm a Masters student here at UTS.	My name's Suwati. Nice to meet you.
4	Show interest in person you're talking to	So, what drew you to this event today? How did you find out about this event? What is it that you do for a living?	What brings you here today? How did you hear about this event? So, what do you do?
5	State your career interests/ goals briefly	I study Civil Engineering and I'm looking forward to working in that industry.	I'm studying Engineering at UTS and really want to get into that industry.
6	State what you're looking for	I'm majoring in Civil Engineering, and I'm passionate about infrastructure that better the community.	I'm really loving my course and I'm hoping I can get a rewarding job in the construction industry.
7	Ask an interesting question of them	How did you get started in your career?	How'd you get started in your career?
8	Ask a 'take action question' if appropriate	Are you on LinkedIn, and would it be possible for me to connect with you?	Do you have a LinkedIn profile? It'd be great if we could connect and keep in touch.
9	Keep conversation going/ and/or end politely	Thank you so much for your time. It was great chatting with you. Please excuse me.	Great to meet with you and thanks for your time. Hopefully be in touch with you soon.

Task

Here are some useful phrases you can use at your next networking event. These useful phrases, however, are mixed up. Can you unravel them?

1. Have / before / been to / you / this event

2. Can I / you / ask / living / what / do for a

3. What / typical / is a day like for you / you where / work

4. What / achieve / do you hope to / in your / in the / career / next few years

5. What / about / things / are the best / your job

6. Do you / else / know / here at / anyone / all

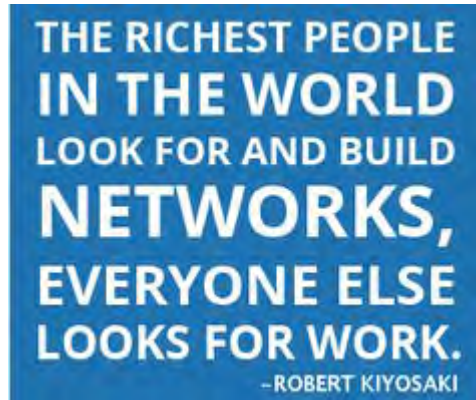
Great 'small talk' questions

We have learnt a great tip for keeping conversation going and it's simple. Try to avoid asking questions that require a 'yes or no' answer; instead, ask 'open' questions that need a longer and more in-depth response (thus, making a more interesting conversation into the bargain). A good way to do this is to make questions that start with 'who', 'where', 'what', 'how', 'when' and 'which'. Here's our top pick for making more interesting conversations at networking events!

- > What brought you to this event today?
- > How did you start out in your career?
- > How is your industry changing these days, and how have you found the best ways of dealing with this change?
- > What's your best piece of career advice you've ever been given?
- > What does a typical day look like for you in your job/organisation/industry?
- > What do you see the next 5 years looking like in your career?
- > What's your best piece of networking advice?

Disclaimer

Of course, don't learn these questions rote fashion, nor fire them one by one to the person you're speaking with. Instead, communicate well. That means relax, enjoy making conversation, don't overthink it, and use lots of open-ended questions to inspire discussion and active listening. Your aim is to have a useful conversation that leaves you both feeling glad to have met one another.



Great 'take action' questions

Remember how we showed you our 9-step process of effective networking communication? Here are some extra questions that you can ask in Step 8 – more 'TAKE ACTION' questions. This is where you can ask your new contact to help you out if you feel like it's appropriate. Here are some of our examples:

- > I'd love to take you for lunch, if you could share some of your industry knowledge with me.
- > Can you please give me any tips for how to get into the industry?
- > Could I buy you a cup of coffee sometime? I'd love to speak to you more about how you got started in your field.
- > I'd really appreciate if you could put me in touch with someone in your industry/organisation who could give me some further information.
- > Is there anyone you know I could contact about possible job possibilities/internships/vacancies at all?
- > What advice would you give me for how to get started (develop my skills) in that profession/career/industry?
- > I'd love to know how I could develop my career in the same way that you have. Do you have any advice?
- > What best piece of advice would you give to someone starting out in their career?



Video watching

Watch the following video on how not to network with new people, and make notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Qt4XxGVa5w>

Role play

Practise this role play situated at a large conference networking event. Follow the prompts below.

Student A (Person A)	Student B (Person B)
1. Start the conversation by making some small talk or a comment about your surroundings.	2. Reply positively and make a comment in reply.
3. Continue the conversation by making another observation/comment about the conference/surroundings/speakers, etc.	4. Respond appropriately. Then introduce yourself and say what you do for a career (imagine these details).
5. Respond and introduce yourself. Ask some small-talk questions to Person B.	6. Respond positively – talk for 20 seconds if you can. Then continue the networking conversation. Also, ask if Person A knows anyone else here.
7. Reply to Person B's questions. Also ask him/her if s/he is from the local area.	8. Respond politely. Explain you are from interstate (imagine which state) and that you are here for business for 3 weeks.
9. Make some relevant comment and interesting observation about where Person B is from (their town or state).	10. Respond. Then explain it was nice talking with them, but you need to make an urgent phone call. Close the conversation politely and say farewell.

SUMMARY

1. Did you know that you're approximately 80% more likely to find a job through your networks than you ever are through making applications alone?
2. Whether you're a first year student or nearly ready to graduate, you need to invest, populate and increase your personal networks.
3. You don't have to dread your next networking event. You can make it an ideal opportunity to hone your communication skills. Try to make the process more enjoyable and seamless using our **9-step approach** that we have covered here. Remember, the more you practise these skills, the better you'll be.
4. It's not about getting instant results, but investing your time, effort, charm and patience in building good quality networks that can help shape your career wisdom, job search and career opportunities. Happy networking!

OUR GOLDEN TIPS/TAKEAWAYS

- > Start to build your networks as soon as you start at UTS.
- > Talk to people as if you sort of knew them already, and do some research beforehand on who's likely to attend and some conversation starters/industry news to share.
- > If you're shy or somewhat lacking confidence, practise our tips and strategies with your close friends, or at your next party. Also, try to approach people who are on their own as it is often easier to try to start up a conversation that way.
- > Don't expect instant results and instant job offers. Look for cultivating long-term 'investments' and good networks.
- > Try to learn to enjoy networking as much as possible. Practice makes perfect.

3. EMAIL AND WRITING EFFECTIVELY AT WORK

GETTING THE WRITE RIGHT

Despite newer technology on the communications horizon (think Twitter, Skype, Facebook and WhatsApp), emails are still predominantly the way that most organisations internally and externally communicate.

Whilst we appreciate most of us know how to write an email, we'll cover off some of the good tips and advice to ensure that the emails we write once we're at work are professional, courteous and, of course, effective.

Emails 'written well' - inform, educate, request or simply 'please the reader'.

Emails 'written badly' often confuse, anger or downright 'annoy'. The choice is ours every time we type one.

Anon

QUICK STATS

We spoke to our graduate employers, recruiters and UTS staff about the most annoying things that they find about workplace email communication. We did all the hard work for you and made our top 10 most annoying email list, just for you.

1. People who write overly long emails which are too lengthy to easily read.

2. People who use 'reply all' too often and send everyone their response.

3. Poor spelling & grammar mistakes in the message that clearly wasn't proofread before sending.

4. Getting the tone wrong. Either being too formal or, conversely, too informal for your workplace.

5. People who forward or send inappropriate jokes, links or images to colleagues.

6. People who inappropriately use cc (carbon copy) to send emails on to others.

7. People who send a long email train of messages without editing or condensing it first.

8. People who write highly charged emotional, rude, aggressive or unprofessional emails.

9. Sending out too many emails about the same topic, e.g. 'oh and one more thing', and then 'oh, I also forgot this'...

10. Receiving very curt or short emails which can be misread as having a rude or angry tone to them.

TOP TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL EMAIL WRITING

Task

Use the words below to complete our top 6 tips. One word is used twice!

subject polite concise proofread face information

1. Always have a courteous and _____ tone in your emails.
2. Try to always use clear _____ headings in your emails.
3. As much as possible, keep emails _____ and _____.
4. Don't email anything you wouldn't have the courage to say to someone's _____.
5. Avoid sharing sensitive or personal _____ in company emails. The company's server will save a copy of everything you're sending more often than not.
6. Before sending your email, make sure you've _____ it first!

INDUSTRY SAYS

"Write your words in emails wisely because once they are sent, they can't be easily taken back (and you've also left behind black and white printable evidence) to prove what you communicated."

UTS Staff member

Task

We've put together a quick multiple-choice quiz for you to select the best professional email behaviours at work.

1. Politeness: Which do you think is correct?

We'd recommend always being polite in emails and not being too informal in workplace emails. Which one do you think is most appropriate as an email response to an executive in the company you've just been working at for 6 months?

- A. Hiya, watchya been up 2?
- B. Morning, Can you please let me know the current status of the report you've been working on?
- C. How's it going? So, are you done yet wid that report – it's, like, been forever!

Feedback

OK, hopefully you have chosen B. We know that in some workplaces and perhaps places where you have a good friendly informal relationship – the other responses may work too – we don't want to sound unreasonable and 'like your dad' here. But if you're new, response B is not going to offend anyone sometime soon – so it's probably your best default response!

2. Subject Headings: Which do you think is correct?

We'd recommend making good use of email subject headings. These are useful in two ways in that (1) they grab your attention easily and can be actioned accordingly and (2) they make emails more easily searchable later on if need be. Which is the clearest and most effective subject line for an email to your work team?

- A. re: meeting
- B. re: meeting next month
- C. Re: Tourism meeting agenda – Jan 17th @ 9.15am / RSVP

Feedback

Hopefully, you have chosen C. This subject heading gives the most amount of information to the recipients and, also, if you want to check that you sent the email correctly (and search for it), this amount of information in the subject line heading makes it the easiest way to track it down.

3. Tone of message: Which do you think is correct?

Check the tone of the message. Emails can sometimes mislead the reader. Sure, we've all had the experience of thinking someone sounded a bit angry in an email, when in fact they were actually fine. Which is the most appropriate tone to use for most everyday email messages at work?

- A. Joe, I need that spreadsheet asap! It's been like 2 hours already!
- B. JOE- SPREADSHEET – MY DESK – LIKE NOW- OK?????!!!!!!:(
- C. Hi Joe, Can you please let me have that spreadsheet you've been working on as soon as you're done. Thanks Kathy.

Feedback

The best answer is C. The other two are VERY likely to offend, particularly answer B. No matter if you're angry, frustrated, tired, bored, or asked a thousand times, keep your emails professional, polite, courteous and with a clear greeting and friendly close. Also, when writing an email (put yourself briefly into the receiver's shoes/inbox), think what it would be like to receive the message you've penned. Always, always, always keep it polite, friendly and professional, folks. It's even more important the higher up the executive ladder you climb!

Video watching

Watch the following video on effective email writing, and make notes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBIG3_YVub0

THE FOUR C'S OF BEST EMAIL COMMUNICATION

We talked to our fellow students, some UTS staff and other people around the university, and asked them if they had to put together some rules or guidelines for written effective and professional workplace emails, what would it be? We've amalgamated their responses and come up with this model for you (aren't we clever?).

1. COURTEOUS

This has to be the number 1 rule. Always keep to polite, clear, non-emotional email writing at work.

2. CLEAR

Don't mislead or confuse in your emails. Often, misspelling, bad grammar, poor sentences or bad punctuation can easily cloud your message.

3. COHERENT

Is the information flowing clearly in your email? Is it logical, in order and easy to follow? Keep it brief, well-structured and logical at all times.

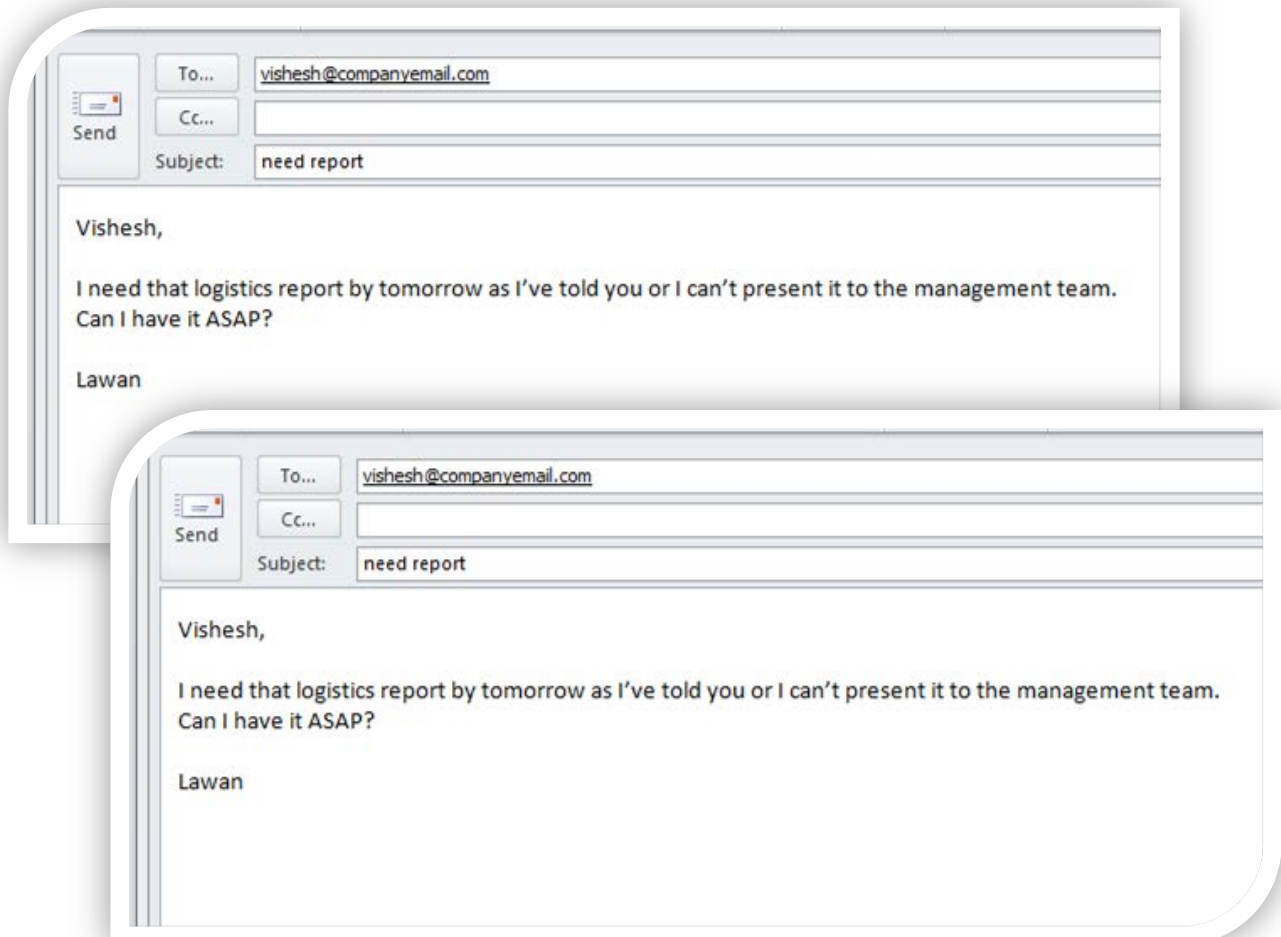
4. CALM

Keep the tone of your workplace emails positive, neutral, or calm. Never send angry, aggressive, or rude emails. If you do, this can be a disaster for your career.

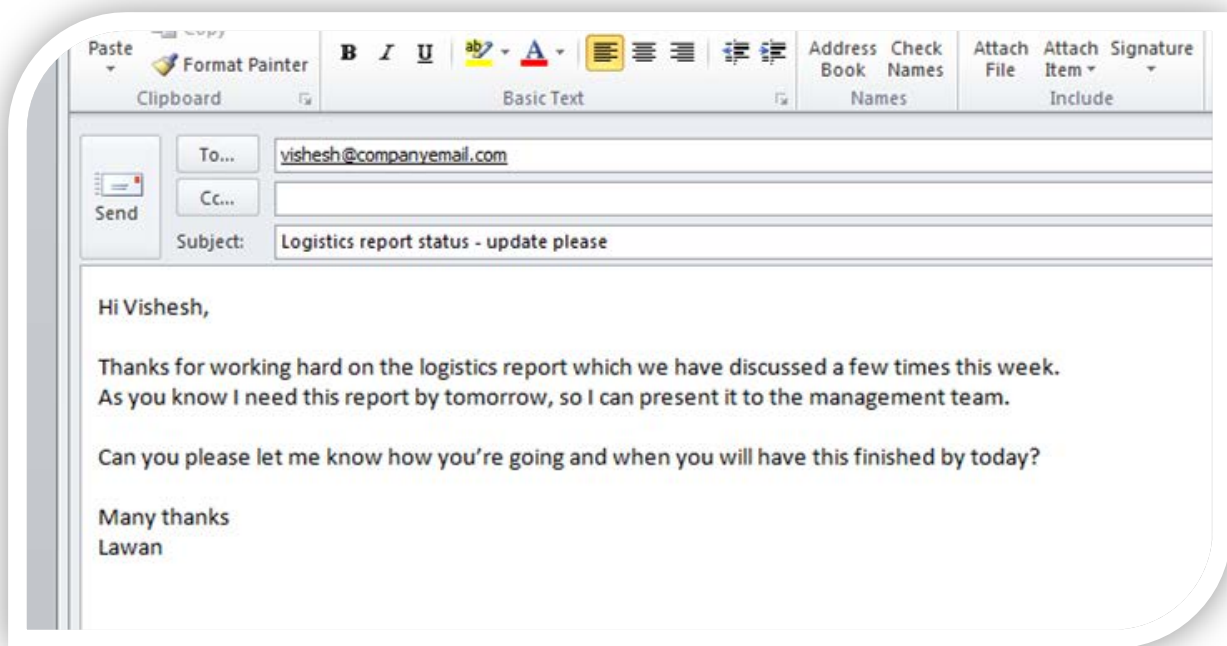
Task

Change the tone of this email from initially 'sounding angry' to 'sounding neutral/friendly'

Bad example



Our model example



What do you notice that is different in the model example as compared to the bad example?
Click all that apply.

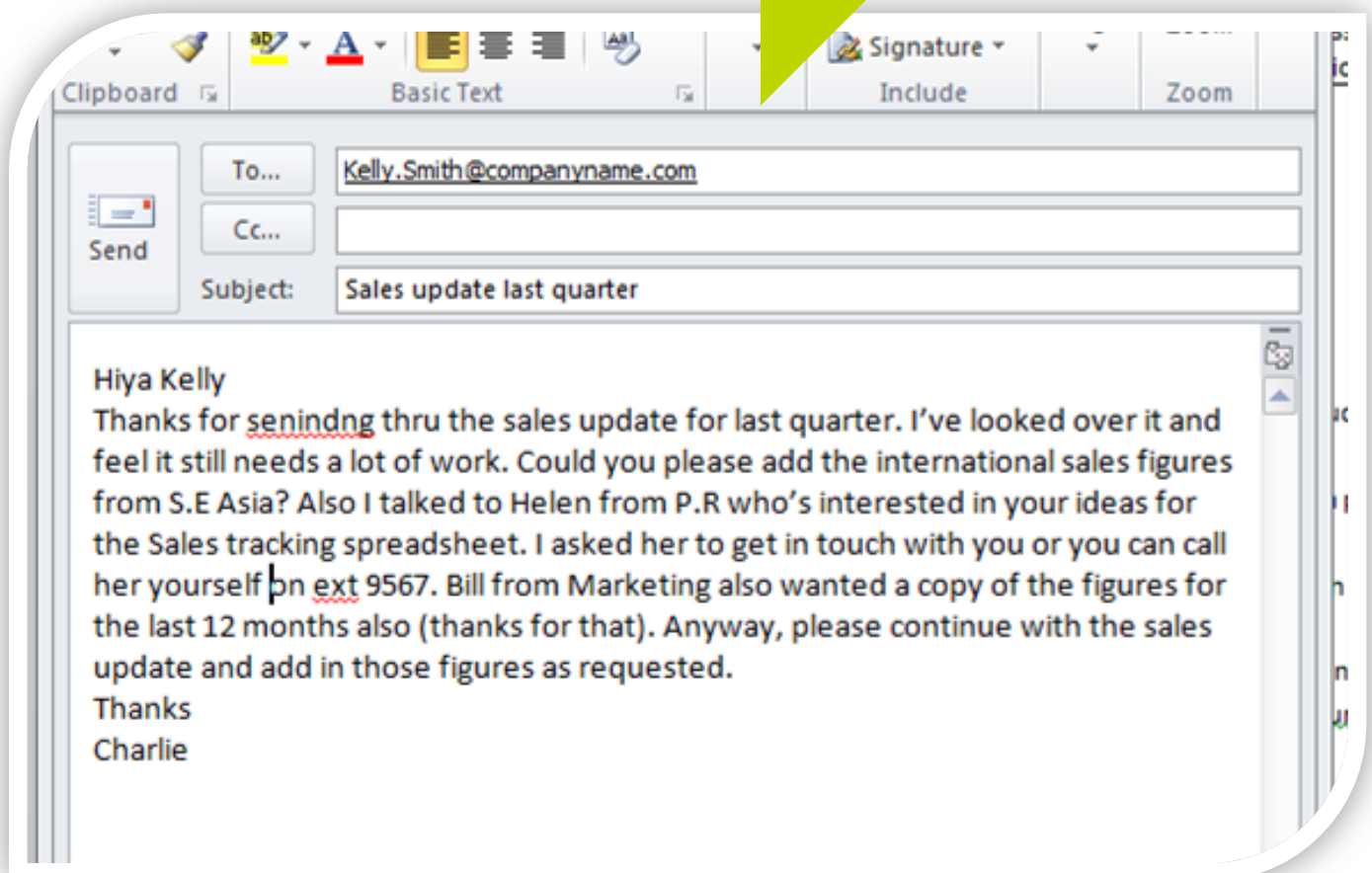
<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly greeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Useful subject heading	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate tone	<input type="checkbox"/> Different font size
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for a RSVP	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly and non-threatening tone throughout	<input type="checkbox"/> Respectful and grateful language	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear and structured message
<input type="checkbox"/> Style is not curt	<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Cc	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear deadline request	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear message and expectations

OUR HOT EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS TIPS

- > Always try to make emails concise, clear and 'to the point' without sounding rude, angry or aggressive.
- > Ask yourself if an email is even necessary? Would it, perhaps, be better (or even preferred) to speak directly to the person(s) involved?
- > Shy away from sending individual people sitting next to you or across from you an email if you can. Go and talk to them in person first!
- > It's good to remember that our written emails are a reflection of our professional brand and image. Don't let a hasty angry 'reply all' or an insensitive joke or awkward picture stuff up and undo all of your good work in the office.
- > Before hitting that 'send' button, make sure you spell and grammar check your drafted message.
- > We'd also recommend going easy at work, particularly in your first weeks and months, on emoticons and abbreviations such as LOL, BTW, OMG, BRB, etc.

Task

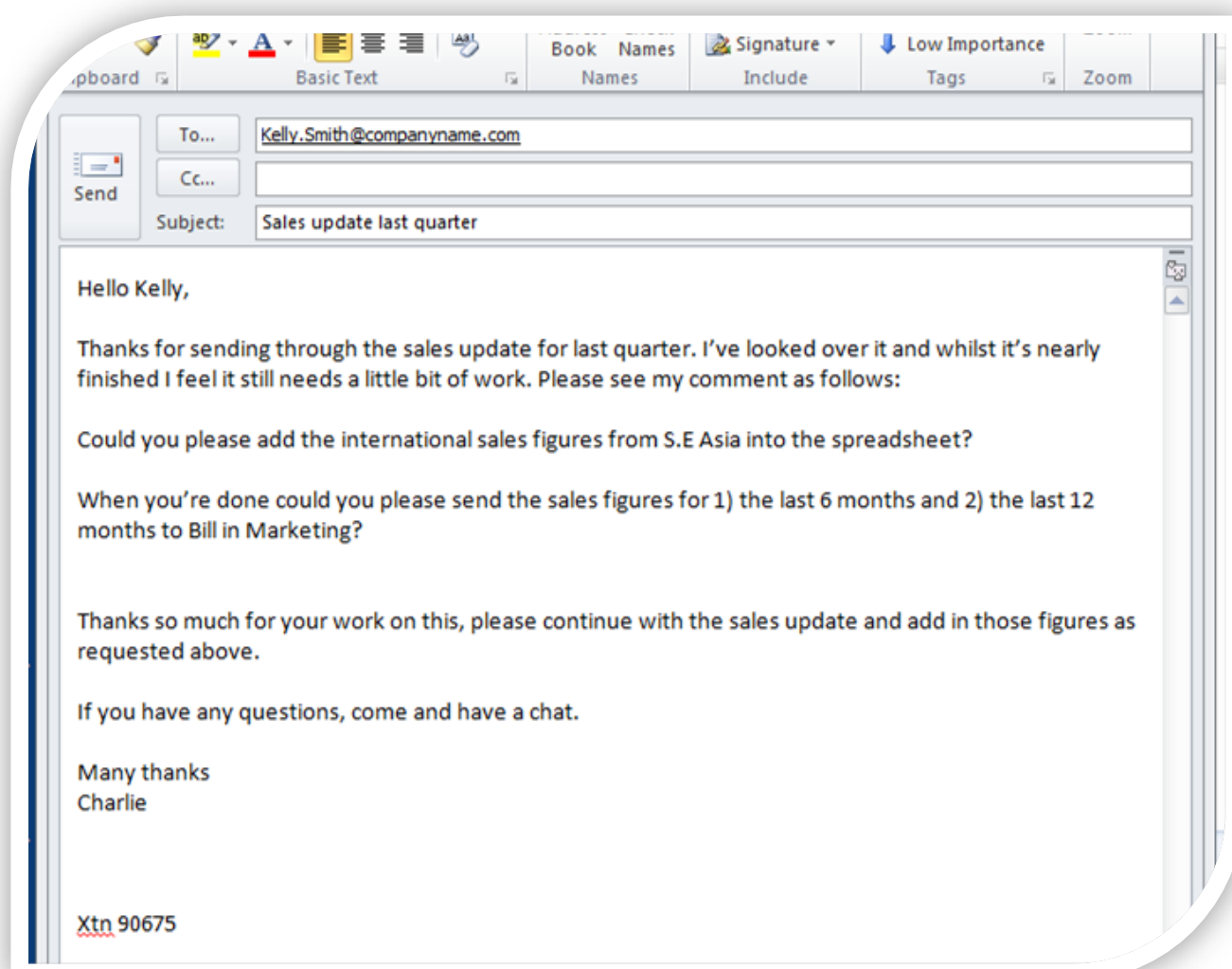
How could you make this email clearer? Discuss with a partner.



Tick all that apply.

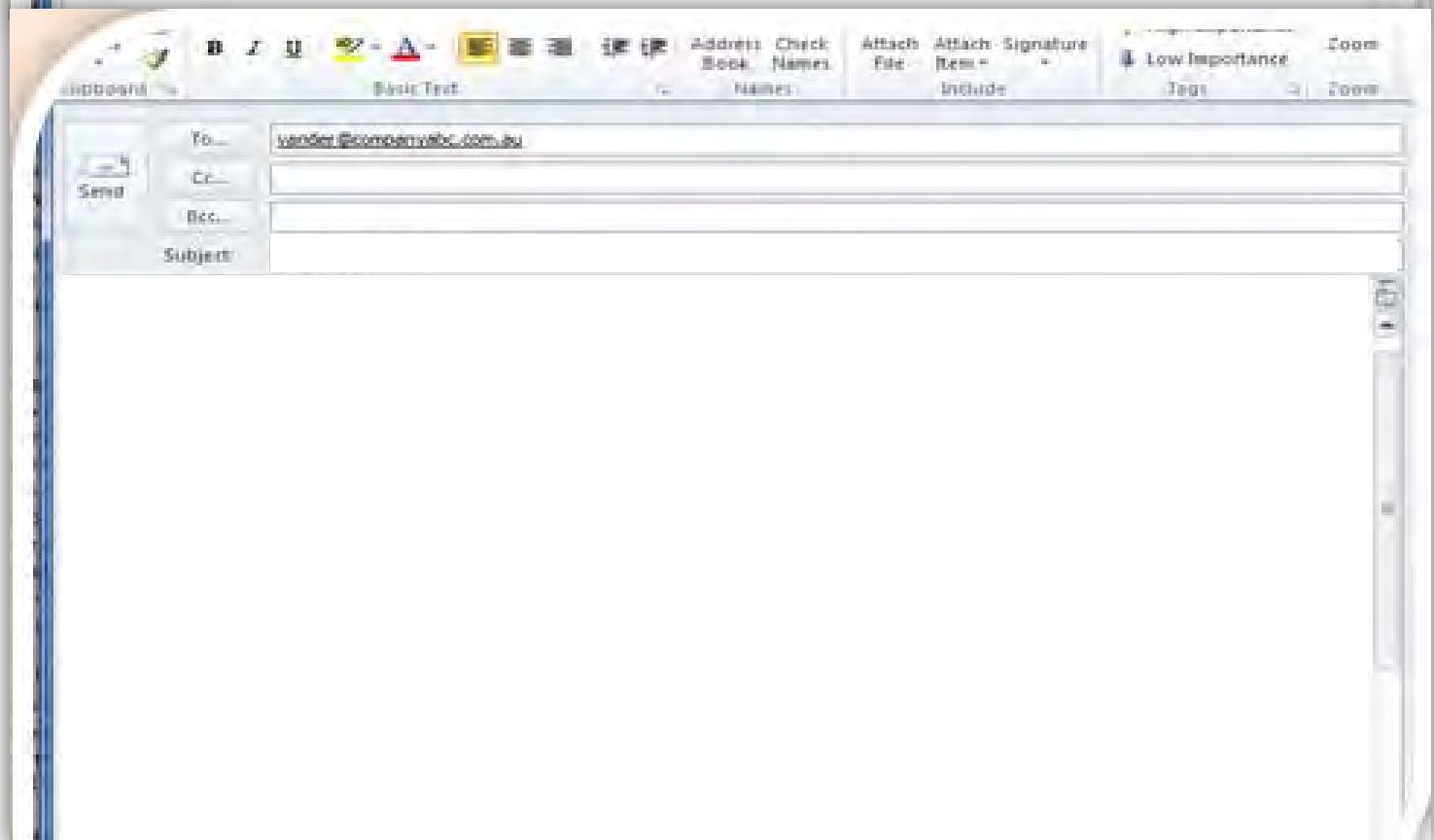
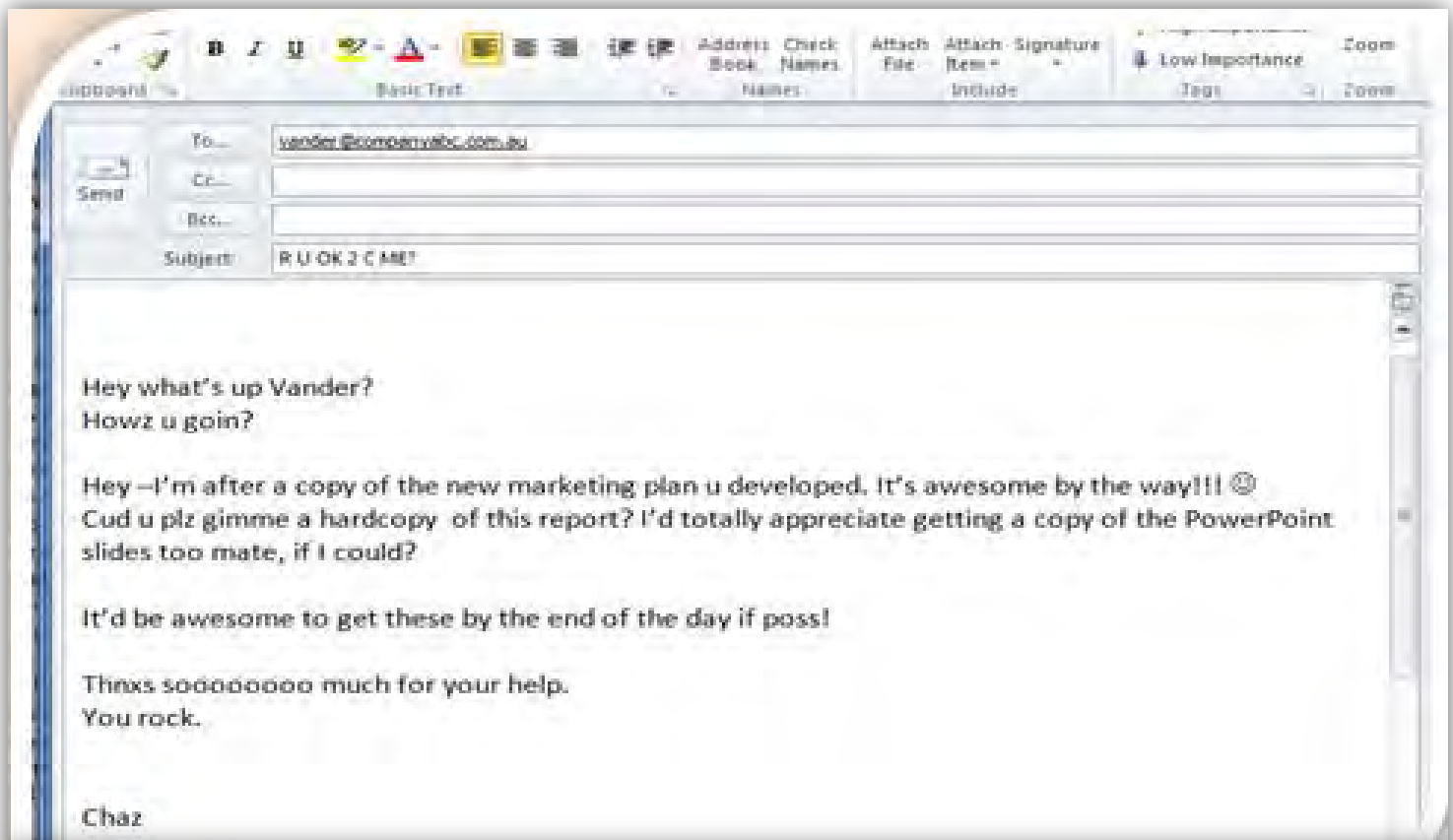
<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly greeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Useful subject heading	<input type="checkbox"/> Send a separate email about the spreadsheet	<input type="checkbox"/> Different font size
<input type="checkbox"/> Make the email shorter	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly and non-threatening tone throughout	<input type="checkbox"/> Spell check the email before sending	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure the message more clearly
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep to one topic per email	<input type="checkbox"/> Make it more formal	<input type="checkbox"/> Thank the staff member for their work	<input type="checkbox"/> Include more space between sentences

There are many ways you could rewrite this email. Essentially, the tone is reasonably OK in that it sounds friendly and non-threatening. However, there's generally improvements to be made in its presentation and overall structure. We'd like to see it clearer, more logical, more white space separating ideas, and no typing errors. We'd also recommend sending a separate email (not included here) about the 'sales tracking spreadsheet, as that was not connected to the topic of this email.



Task

The following email is far too casual for a professional work environment. There are at least 5 mistakes in this email. Identify them. Then, re-write the email in a professional tone (keep the purpose/aim the same, however).





TIPS TO BETTER EMAIL ETIQUETTE



Think, write, and think again.

Email is a static, one-way channel – unlike live communication, there's no way to get immediate feedback (from facial expressions or voice responses) to know if we are being effective or even understood. So think twice before hitting the send key.

Use a meaningful subject line.

This is the first thing your reader sees. Use a subject that relates to the message you're sending. Without a subject line your note will probably be seen as another piece of junk mail. Avoid generic words like "Hi" or "Check This Out".

The beginning, and the end.

Always use a salutation, even if it's short, like "Hi", or "Hello", or "Dear", whatever works best for the intended recipient. Don't forget the end of your message too! Always sign your messages with your name, and say "Thank You", or "Sincerely" or the like.

Protect your recipients identity.

If your email is being sent to just one person, use the "To:" field. When your email is being sent to more than one person, use the "CC:" field. For email sent to multiple recipients when they don't need to know who else you sent to, use the "BCC:" field.

Give memory a helping hand.

When replying to emails, include a copy of the prior emails you've traded with the person on the topic, don't just send a new message. It's not always possible to remember every single 'conversation' you have had with every single person.

Use the 'Read Receipt' sparingly.

In normal day-to-day activities you should not request a read receipt for every message you send. Not only is it annoying to the recipient, but don't forget – just because they have received it doesn't mean they have actually even read it.

URGENT! The boy who cried wolf.

Do not send all your messages as URGENT, or HIGH PRIORITY. If your recipients keep receiving messages marked that way, then eventually the red exclamation point loses its effectiveness – except to reinforce how important YOU think you are.

Avoid Special Coding or Formatting

Don't use colored email backgrounds, colored fonts, special fonts, images or other "pretty" type of formatting to your messages. Keep them clean – this makes it easier for the intended recipient to read them and reply. They will also load faster!

Don't SHOUT at your recipient.

Typing in all caps is seen as yelling, or that you were just too lazy to use proper text formatting. It's also hard on the eyes – it takes longer to read something written in all caps than it does to read something that is properly formatted.

Proof, spell-check, and proper formatting.

Poor writing skills are a direct reflection on you! Spell checking will prevent most misspelled words, but you should always proof your email in case you've written the incorrect word. Use proper capitalization, punctuation and formatting.

Take the time to send a reply.

When someone emails you something that doesn't need a direct response, follow up with them in a timely manner just to let them know you received it. It's amazing how often people will ask for advice, and not even reply with a short "Thank you".

If they didn't request it, don't sent it!

You cannot email someone about your product/service without their permission. Unless they request that you send them an email, or you have previously done business with them, then it is illegal to send them an email, period. (Can-Spam Act)

Compress, Compress, Compress!

If you are sending an email with several large attachments, it is often better to send them in a few separate emails, so that you don't send a document that is too large to even open. Or, you can try compressing your messages into a zipped file.

Hoaxes as helpful hints.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Do not forward everything that gets sent to you. If you receive one from a friend, reply to them (in a very nice way) and explain to them why this isn't true, or ask them to stop forwarding them to you.

Virus, or virus advice?

Many viruses are spread by email masquerading as warnings about – a virus! If you get a virus warning, which usually contains instructions for removing a virus... check google.com for that virus BEFORE doing anything. It's likely a hoax.

Task

What are these things called in English?

@	#	/	http:	xx_xx	(x)
ABC	*	abc	xx-xx	.	

Further things to consider

- > Be clear and specific in your emails. Use bullets or numbers if this helps to make things clear.
- > Be polite and courteous at all times.
- > Think twice before forwarding/sending jokes, images or non-work related emails which may be tasteless to colleagues.
- > Stick as much as you can to '1 topic per email'.
- > Use 'reply all' with caution. Ask yourself, 'does everyone really need to read my response?'.
- > Try to respond to important emails within 48 hours.
- > If you need to resolve a conflict at work or a misunderstanding, try to speak to the person face to face, rather than by email.

Task

Interpret the tone

Generally, try to minimise the use of BLOCK, underline, **BOLD**, or *italics* in emails. It can give the wrong impression.

Match up to what we commonly associate these styles to unconsciously mean. The first one has been done for you.

BLOCK CAPITALS	<u>underline</u>	BOLD	<i>italics</i>
sounds as if you're trying to stress the importance of something.	sounds as if you're shouting in an email.	can give the impression you're angry or irritated.	can give the impression you are impatient or annoyed with someone.

Feedback

Try to avoid, if you can, using BOLD, all capital letters, and/or lots of underlining. Though your intention may be quite the opposite, using these text features in written communication can give a very off-putting and rude or aggressive tone to your writing. Please use with caution!

Communication tip

As much as you can, consider our 5-sentence structure as a bare minimum for your email messages.

Step 1	Start with a friendly and polite greeting.
Step 2	Write a brief introduction sentence as background info to orientate your reader.
Step 3	Write your action, intention or request in clear language.
Step 4	Follow with a friendly-ending sentence wrapping up.
Step 5	Finish with a friendly close and your name.

Golden Tip

Remember work emails are the intellectual property of, and usually belong to, the organisation you work for. They can be (and have been) used as evidence in some situations. So, always be mindful of what you're writing and your communicative tone!

EMAIL COMMUNICATION NETIQUETTE

Task

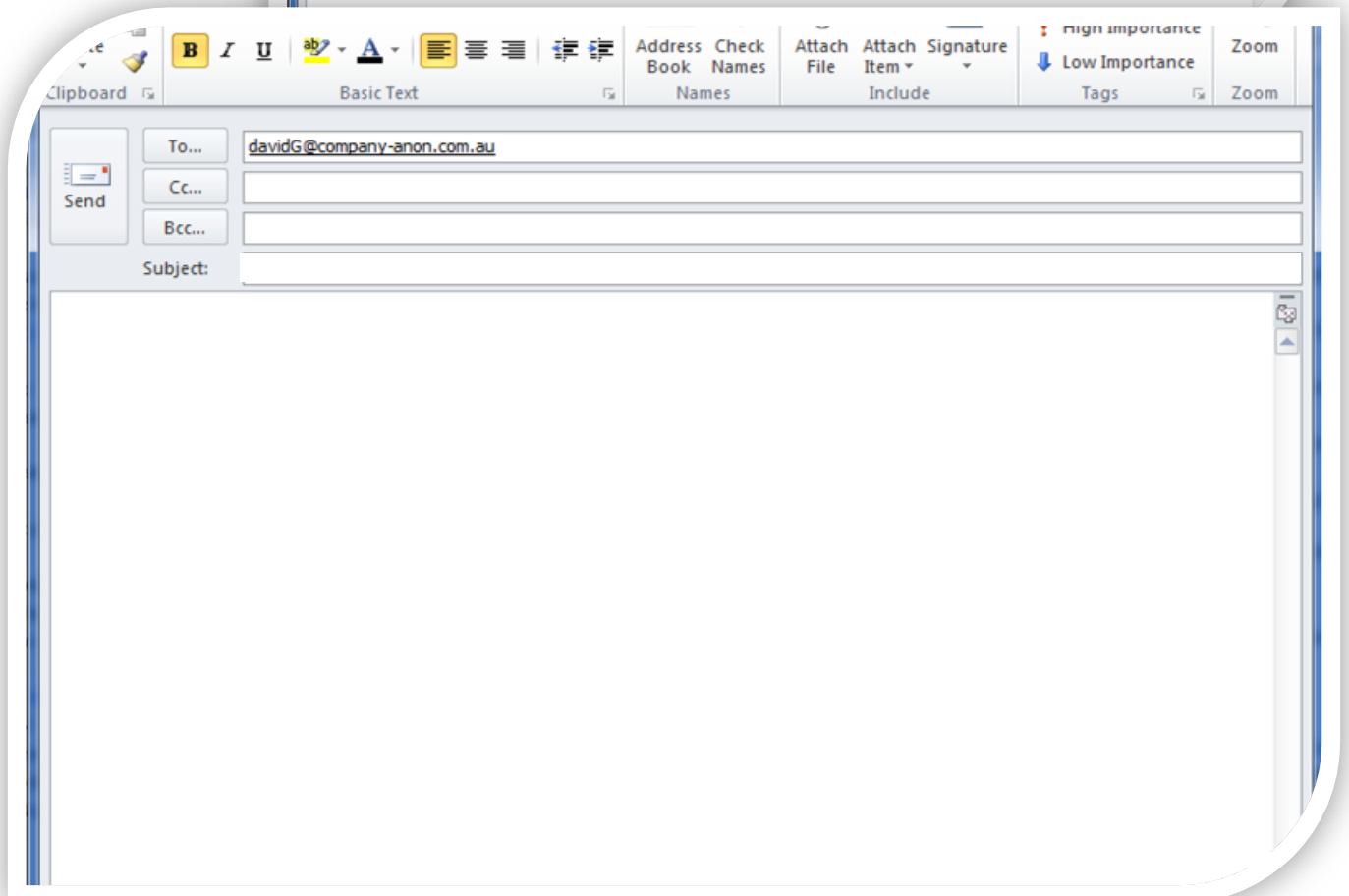
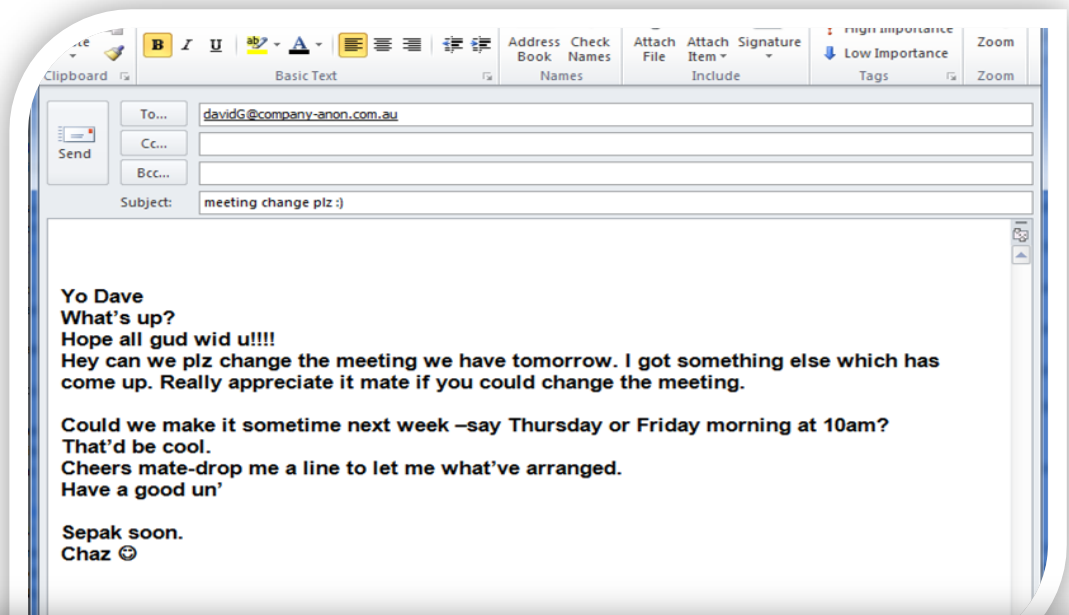
Are these statements True or False?

1. A good way to think about your communications style in emails is for you to be happy with any of your emails to be featured on the front page of a major newspaper (and not cause offence obviously!). TRUE FALSE
2. Using BCC (blind carbon copy) is a good way to protect other people's email addresses if need be. TRUE FALSE
3. Stay away from sending any form of sarcastic reply, ironic response, or anything that might offend, particularly when you're new and don't know your colleagues very well.
 TRUE FALSE
4. Work emails are the intellectual property of, and belong to, the organisation you work for. They can be (and have been) used as evidence in court or disciplinary proceedings. Even if you've deleted them from your sent box there's a copy sitting on your company's server. Always, therefore, be mindful of what you're writing and your communicative tone.
 TRUE FALSE
5. Try not to mix your private and personal emails together. Better to use your work email for work, and personal email account for private correspondence. If you do get a personal email at work, create a special folder in your inbox to store these messages, so when your manager comes to talk to you at your desk, there's no evidence of your personal emails on the screen or inbox feed. TRUE FALSE
6. Cut the length. Before forwarding very long email conversations onto a third party, consider cutting or deleting the older posts or anything that may cause offence, bad feeling, disclose private information or anything confidential. TRUE FALSE

"The things I appreciate in well written emails are a clear message, short and brief, but friendly sounding. My pet peeves however are, either really, really long emails or being cc'd on things that don't concern me, or 'rude, curt sounding' very short responses. Long story short...'be nice, get to the point, be clear, and be consistent!'" UTS recruiter

Task

This email is too informal. Please rewrite it in a formal and polite manner (keep the purpose the same, however).



Role play

Practise this role play between a new employee and the boss. Follow the prompts below.

Student A (Boss)	Student B (New employee)
1. Explain to the new employee that you want him/her to write an email to the Rome sales office in Italy.	2. Agree and ask what the email is about.
3. You want the email to talk about the Sydney office sales growth this year, and that the company has hired 2 new sales staff.	4. Ask your boss what the sales growth figure actually is (in %).
5. Respond with a figure (in %).	6. Ask your boss if you should attach the recent sales and marketing presentation materials.
7. Respond positively, and ask him/her to attach the recent sales prize giving award photographs to the email too.	8. Respond positively, and confirm you will do this.
9. Request this email to be sent to rome@italysalesoffice.com.it and for it to be cc'd to the entire sales team in Sydney also.	10. Respond positively, and confirm you will do this by this afternoon. Ask if there is anything else you need to do.

SUMMARY/TAKEAWAY

Hopefully, we've given you some communication strategies and activities to help shape your thinking and writing skills about delivering more effective professional emails.

As we know, once an email is sent, it is nigh on impossible to recall it; so, it's imperative as university students (and graduates) that we stay true to our professional brand and always play to our communicative strengths. To help you do that, stick to our 4 C's of best email communication, as well as the strategies and tips that we've unpacked for you here; and hopefully you won't go too far wrong.

4. DESCRIBING YOURSELF EFFECTIVELY AND EFFECTIVE BODY LANGUAGE

STARTING OFF

Just about every interview situation starts off with that initial question, ‘So, tell me a little bit about yourself’, doesn’t it?

Whilst the question itself is pretty straightforward, giving the right answer is critical in setting the right communicative tone for the rest of the interview, as well as portraying yourself in the best possible light.

IT’S ALL ABOUT HOW YOU COMMUNICATE!

In this unit, we’ll look at a few communication models that will help give a great self-description that will make you appear confident, well rounded and professional. We’ll also cover essential positive body language to us in the interview too, so that you can display a confident, self-assured and professional groomed persona when the time comes.

Think you don’t need to study this unit? Well, perhaps, think again. We spoke to several recruiters of UTS graduates who said that

“...whilst university students often make great written applications, many students and graduates let themselves down by appearing unprepared, unprofessional or simply too nervous to communicate well at the interview stage”.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

So, stay with this unit because we will show you all the tools you need to talk and describe yourself really well in the interview, as well as project a confident and well-prepared image during your interview.

Task

Here are some words that are used to describe a person. What do they really mean? Match the words with an appropriate explanation. The first one has been done for you. Then, choose 3 or 4 of the words that you didn’t know and make a sentence with them.

	Word		Meaning
A	Motivated		skilled at solving problems and making decisions on your own
B	Disciplined		working or operating quickly and effectively in an organised manner
C	Conscientious		using new methods or ideas
D	Efficient		behaving in a very controlled way
E	Resourceful		sets specific, measurable improvement goals and matches resources, tools, and action plans to the requirements of accomplishing success
F	Innovative		wanting to do something very much and not allowing anyone or any difficulties to stop you
G	Customer-oriented		putting a lot of effort into your work
H	Results-focused		reasoning in a clear and consistent manner
I	Logical	A	to want to do something well; eager
G	Determined		paying great attention to the needs and opinions of clients

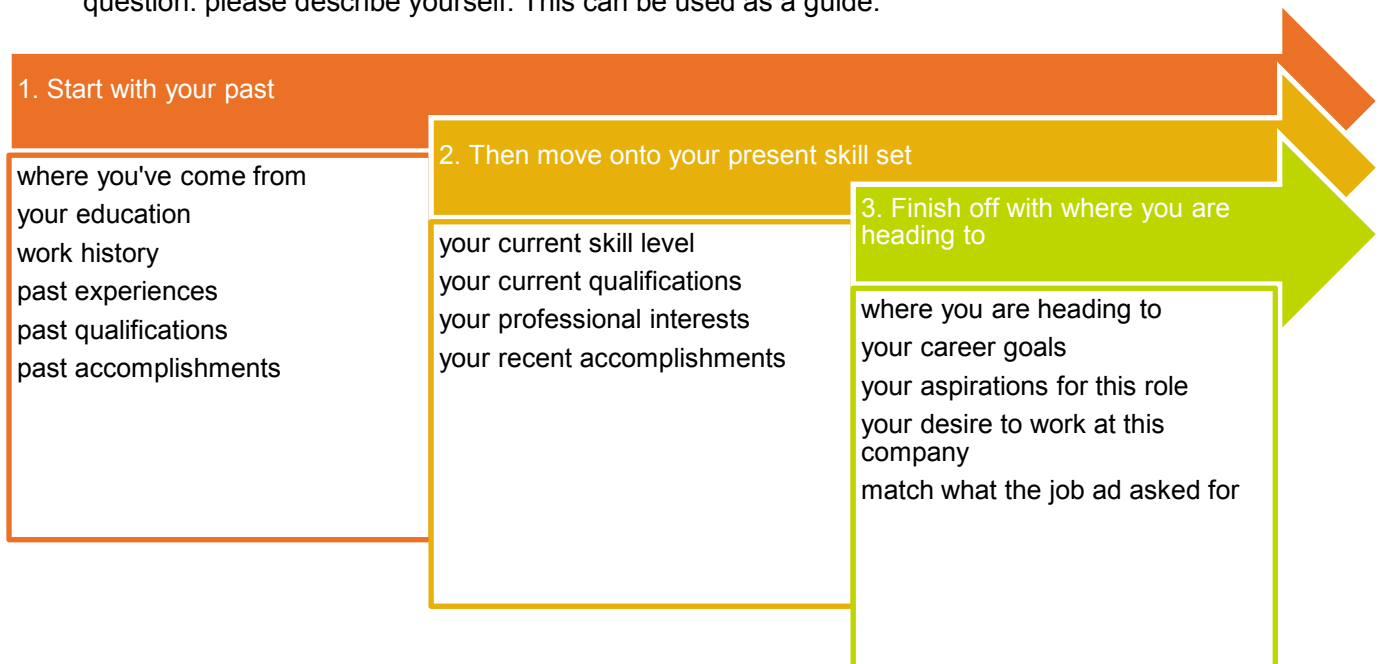
Task

Complete the following sentences so that they are true for you.

- I think the best word to describe myself would be _____ as I am very conscious of clients' needs.
An example of this is/was _____
The result of this is/was _____
- My colleagues have often referred to me as _____ because I always do my work thoroughly.
An example of this is/was _____
The result of this is/was _____
- I feel that I am _____ because I work quickly and effectively in an organised way.
An example of this is/was _____
The result of this is/was _____
- I constantly think of, and use, new ideas and techniques, so the best adjective to describe myself would be _____.
An example of this is/was _____
The result of this is/was _____
- I am good at solving problems and making decisions on my own, so I think I am _____.
An example of this is/was _____
The result of this is/was _____

Use a process

Let's firstly look at the communicative process of how to answer that often-asked interview question: please describe yourself. This can be used as a guide:



**“BODY LANGUAGE IS A VERY POWERFUL TOOL.
WE HAD BODY LANGUAGE BEFORE WE HAD
SPEECH, AND APPARENTLY, 80% OF WHAT YOU
UNDERSTAND IN A CONVERSATION IS READ
THROUGH THE BODY, NOT THE WORDS.”**

DEBORAH BULL

© Lifehack Quotes

Here are our 5 steps to ace answering ‘please describe yourself’ effectively

1. Plan out some bullet points about yourself, your background, your education, and your levels of expertise and industry experience, or plan some bullets around the model we described above.

2. Practise with a friend who can listen to your self-description and give you some good feedback on how it sounds, your levels of confidence, body language signals and your levels of eye contact.
3. Record yourself on your smart phone and self-evaluate or critique yourself (also useful to have a trusted and well-informed friend/family member to do this with you).
4. From the feedback you receive, assess your good communicative points, as well as areas that you might need to improve in the future.
5. Practise also showing your enthusiasm, levels of engagement and your active listening skills. Using phrases in response to the interviewer's questions such as ' Ah, good point', 'Great question', or 'I'm glad you asked me that' can show your positive attitude and that you're motivated and engaged in the interview process.

Golden Tip

Go back to the original job advertisement and highlight any skills or knowledge sets that the employer (interviewer) is looking for. It would be good to bring these into your self-description at some stage, wouldn't it? Highlight any skills, attributes that the employer has communicated.

Graduate Social Media (WeChat) Internship - Mandarin Speaking

Private Advertiser - [More jobs by this advertiser](#)

Graduate Social Media (WeChat) Internship - Mandarin Speaking

We are an Australian education company seeking a switched on Digital, Media, Marketing or Communications student who can read and write in Mandarin to assist in the social media strategy via Wechat. This is a great opportunity for somebody to work on an exciting project and gain vital work experience.

You will need to have a passion for all things digital, whilst being a creative thinker and be able to engage with our audience to provide effective and meaningful communication. **You will need to be able to work independently, be a self starter and manage your time effectively to meet agreed deadlines, be confident with your ideas and capability and work well with other people to share ideas and approaches.**

This is a part time role (circa 2 days per week) - depending on your timetable and workflows. If you are wanting to be a part of working on a new and exciting project ,have great ideas in social media to share, have a passion for digital marketing and can engage with our audience then we want to hear from you!

APPLY TODAY!!

Sample of a student's self-description at interview (see the comparison with the job ad).

...and I have studied Marketing and Communications at UTS. I also thrive when asked to work independently and I feel that I manage my time very well and can prioritise tasks. People also say I'm an 'ideas person' and I love to work in a team environment and collaborate together on exciting ideas and projects. Of course I'm a Mandarin speaker too but I also speak intermediate Japanese and some basic French....

Source: Seek.com 2015

From these key words that each employer has written into the published ad, include them, yet again, in your spoken interview (you've already outlined them in your resume, cover letter and written application form/selection criteria) and now, again, reinforcing them at the interview!

Video watching

Watch the following video about describing oneself, and make notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OjDRKguXj8>

Practise describing yourself

This table should give you a great innovative way to help craft a provoking and engaging self-description. Go on, have a go communicating about yourself!

MUST DO	TOPIC	OPTIONS TO TALK ABOUT	YOUR CHOICE: choose the best 3 (select 3 green ticks)
✓	Talk about your background qualifications and brief experience		
	Talk about your university skills set	✓	
	Talk about your area of expertise	✓	
	Say something positive about your experience with teamwork	✓	
	Say something great about your communication skills	✓	
	Say something great about how you love challenges related to your work experience	✓	
	State something positive about what you've learnt from your university studies	✓	
	Talk about your professional strong points	✓	
	Talk about what you can bring to the company	✓	
	Talk about how you can add value to the organisation	✓	
	Talk about any awards or prizes you may have won	✓	
	Talk about challenges you have overcome	✓	
	Talk about what you love about this job opportunity	✓	
	Talk about your future goals	✓	
	Talk about a fun and interesting thing about yourself	✓	
✓	Finish with an overall summary of what a great candidate you are.		

- > Tick the areas you'd like to talk about
- > Prepare a bullet list plan – fleshing out the ideas a bit more.
- > Practise and talk it aloud – how does it sound?
- > Now, video yourself and critique. Also, get some feedback from a friend or family member.

See our model here of how this works

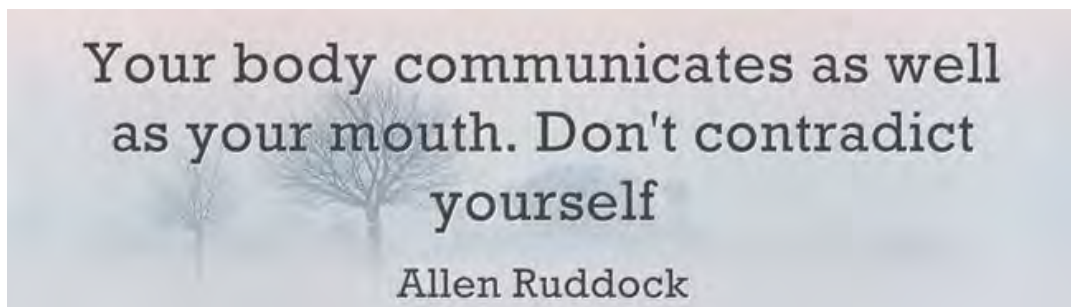
Well, my name is Eun-Hee. I'm studying Design and Media Production at UTS. I will graduate in a few months' time. My background has been in the hospitality industry, where I've been working part-time for 3 years whilst at university. I loved working in a team, offering first-class customer service and building my supervisory skills because I was the floor manager at a local Korean Restaurant for a while. These were really useful skills to have which I have transferred to my other roles. For example, during my internship at Videoanimate Corp (where I loved the hands-on nature of my role) I was able to get involved with the production and design teams and use my skills in animation and concept design/storyboarding in a really hands-on way. So, I saw this graduate role advertised online and it really jumped out at me. It seems to be asking for all my skills, as well as the chance to work with a really creative and visual team. I'm so excited to have the chance to meet with you all today.

Questions

- > What does Eun-Hee do really well?
- > What could she improve on?

Quick statistics

- > **10 seconds** = the average amount of time it takes for someone to make an assessment either good or bad of you when they first meet you.
- > **0%** = you never get the chance to make a second good first impression.
- > **100%** = the amount of time you need to dedicate to improving your communication skills for interviews/networking.
- > **2 mins** = the average amount of time you should dedicate to being able to describe all the best things about yourself when asked the question, 'So, tell me about yourself'.



Good first impressions

Task: Who is making the best first impression on you?

These three candidates were asked the question: please describe yourself. Who do you think gives the best response? Why and how is it better than the other two?



Huong	Christie	Muhammad
<p>Well, I've always wanted to work for your company and the job looked great, so that's why I made my application. I work really hard, and I think I have good skills. I'd like to be part of your team in the future and be part of something really big. I am a hard worker, and with my degree in chemistry, I think I'd be a great fit in your company and I'd suit the culture here. I like lab work and that is something I'd like to continue to do above all else.</p>	<p>I'm a self-oriented sort of person who can work well in a team, as well as work autonomously too. I love the thought of a challenge and I would always bring my positive can-do attitude and lots of hard work to your organisation. I really loved uni and got good grades. It also taught me a lot about myself and helped me develop my skills. I'd love to work for this organisation.</p>	<p>I have a background in chemistry and during my final year I worked at a company helping them design chemical compounds related to agriculture. I've been told I'm a fast learner and I definitely enjoy being part of a team. I also feel have great communication skills and I enjoy the challenge of new projects and initiatives to sink my teeth into. As such, I'm really excited by what your company is doing and I'd love to be a part of it.</p>

Task

Talk for 2 minutes (set a timer please!) in answer to the question 'please describe yourself'. Use either of the models we have presented to you in this unit to help you craft your self-description. Video yourself and self-review using the criteria below.

	Excellent	good	fair	Needs improving
I look confident				
I speak clearly				
I give good answers				
My body language is confident				
My eye contact is good				
I smile occasionally when I speak				
My pronunciation is clear				
I'm giving a good communicative impression				
I would hire me				

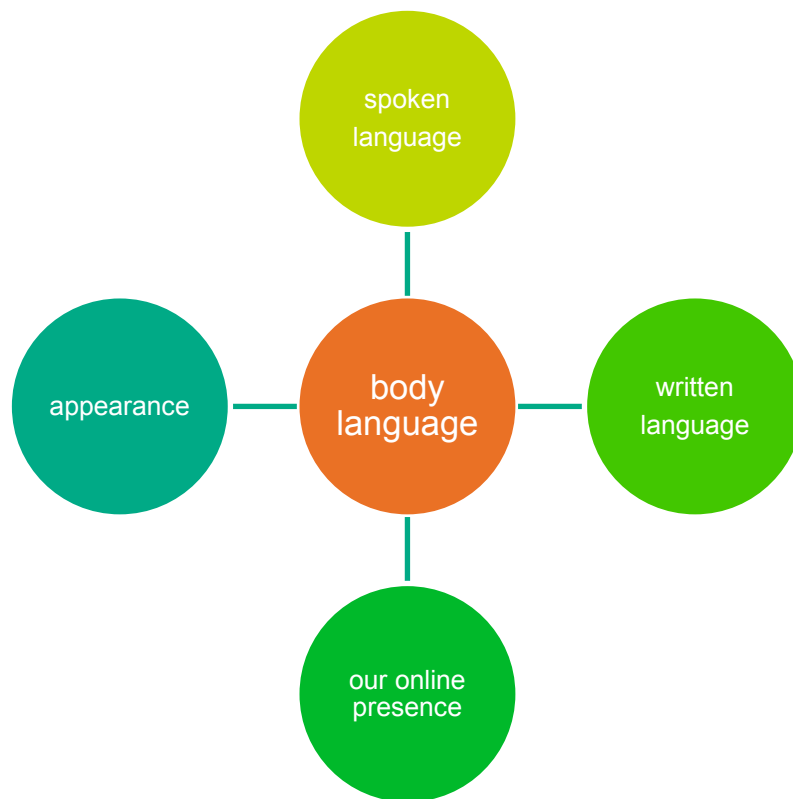
How did you go? Get a friend or family member to assess you. Are their marks the same as yours?

Answer these questions

- > What did you do really well?
- > What things can you improve?

Positive body language

Of course, you know we don't only just communicate with our words and sentences. We communicate in far more sophisticated ways than just language. Take a look at this model.



Communicate right

Giving the right impression through your words and language is essential, and so is your body language.

As university students, we're often so used to a relatively casual atmosphere that we sometimes forget what impression we're giving when we are in a more professional environment. As this section is all about communicating positive body language, let's look at how we can get it right most of the time with a quick 'must do' section.

DO's & DON'TS of effective body Language

Effective body language at the interview.



Before arrival at your interview

- Be appropriately dressed for that company.
- Do not smoke beforehand.
- Ensure you have fresh clean breath.
- Ensure you are well groomed.

Upon arrival at your interview

- Project confidence with head held high and shoulders back (in a relaxed way).
- Have a firm handshake that shows confidence.
- Have good eye contact with all people you meet.
- Smile in a relaxed and genuine way.
- Be nice and friendly to everyone you meet.
- Walk with confidence.



During your interview



- Try and own the space you're sitting in - try to project quiet confidence.
- Be careful not to 'um, er, like, but' too much in your responses.
- Don't fiddle with hair, clothes or jewellery - it can make you look nervous.
- Smile often (in a relaxed way) and maintain good eye contact with 'all people' interviewing you.
- Sit straight with your shoulders back and in a relaxed and confident way. Be relaxed - not rigid.

After your interview

- Thank the interviewer (and panel) for their time and make good eye contact with all.
- Do give a firm handshake to all interviewers/panel if you wish - it is a nice gesture.
- A warm smile and eye contact is essential as you get ready to leave the room.
- Walk confidently out, shoulders back, body relaxed, head held high - own the space you walk in.
- Give a final thank you and handshake as you leave the building.
- Follow up with a thank you email within 24 hours to the main interviewer.



Industry says

“Students who can make a great first impression along with a coherent self-description make a really good start to the interview process”
UTS recruiter

“Practise and role-play as much as you can so that you can talk about yourself at relative ease. No one knows ‘you’ like yourself. So start to get comfortable talking about yourself, your strengths, your motivations and that process often begins with a strong ‘self-description”.
UTS Careers Service

Video watching

Watch the following video on a common interview question – tell me about yourself, and make notes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20LfN8ENbhM>

Role play

Imagine that you are applying for a job and have been invited to an interview. Use the cues to help you.

Student A (Interviewer)	Student B (Interviewee)
1. Greet and welcome the candidate.	2. Briefly make small talk with the interviewer.
3. Respond and then explain the details of the job	4. Express the reason you're interested in the position.
5. Ask the candidate to describe him/herself.	6. Describe yourself and also give the positive aspects of your personality as they relate to this job.
7. Ask the candidate what some of his/her strengths are.	8. Explain some of your strengths, and provide examples to justify your answer.

Student A (Interviewer)	Student B (Interviewee)
9. Ask the candidate to provide a specific example of when they performed well in their previous job/university studies.	10. Provide an example of when you performed well in your job/university, and explain the result that you achieved.
11. Respond politely and offer words of encouragement.	

OUR GOLDEN TIPS/TAKEAWAYS

- > Don't be shy or modest about yourself – you need to be confident and think of all your achievements when describing yourself.
- > Practise makes perfect. Plan first (use our models to guide you), and then regularly speak them and see how they sound.
- > Get feedback from friends and family on your self-description. Is it accurate? Is it a good portrayal of you?
- > Starting off an interview in a great way often helps to set the scene for the rest of the interview. If you start right, chances are, the rest will go well too!

5. DO'S AND DON'TS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

WELL, HELLO THERE

Effective communication in the workplace is an essential thing; I think we'd all agree on that, right? But to be fair, it just doesn't take place everywhere, but as university students it's good to know what to expect, and how we can better our communication so that when we are 'on the job', we give our all, show motivation, enthusiasm and communicate to the best of our ability.

“Communication works for those who work at it”
John Powell – Composer

Communication Stats



100+

Number of emails that are replied to per day by the average office worker



25

Number of different social groups the average person communicates with each day (colleagues, family, friends, shop staff etc).



50

number of text messages read and responded to by average 18-25 year old per day



5+

Average number of different modes of communication used to communicate with in the average day (twitter, SMS, , email, facebook and phone).

adapted from Communication Trends 2015

INSIDER KNOW-HOW

The communication style will obviously vary from company to company and industry to industry, but in order for us to be successful, we need to ensure that we have effective skills for the professional environment.

Video watching

Watch the following video on better communication skills, and make notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kyvjEpXuPg>

OUR BEST TIP

Let us share our golden nugget of advice with you. When you're first on the job or you're new in any workplace, spend the first few days/weeks **observing, observing, observing**. So let's unpack this.

Essentially, when we're new to a workplace, we're usually eager to show enthusiasm, motivation and our willingness to work.

We're also pretty much focused on trying to fit in, assimilate to a new culture and ultimately, to make friends with our new colleagues.

All of this is good and positive, of course; however, it could be said that to adopt more of a 'softly, softly approach' rather than an aggressive 'befriend-everyone-fit-in-quickly' strategy is more appropriate.

INDUSTRY SAYS

"Look around you when you're new to the place you work. Take time to take stock. How do the people interact? Ask yourself what's the general vibe? What are you picking up on? What does the culture seem like? What are your first impressions and how is the behaviour of your colleagues and superiors? Take time in those initial days and weeks to be on your best behaviour and just passively OBSERVE the communicative landscape".

"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said."

Peter Drucker – Management Consultant

Task

Here are some words and phrases that are associated with good communication in the workplace. Match the words with an appropriate explanation, and also whether the word is a noun, adjective or verb (or both).

Word		Meaning	Word form: noun/verb/adjective/ noun phrase
A	Empathy	1	Where a more experienced person teaches or coaches someone less experienced or shares knowledge with them.
B	Active listening	2	Being able to understand what another person may be feeling inside.
C	Respect	3	Enjoying working with a group of people in a team.
D	Open communication	4	Careful listening to others and repeating what they have said or paraphrasing it back to the speaker.
E	Appropriate feedback	5	Being polite and well-mannered with people
F	Egalitarian	6	Giving helpful and not negative advice on how to improve an aspect of someone's work.
G	Mentoring	7	Treating people's wishes, thoughts and behaviours with good judgement.
H	Courtesy	8	Encouraging people to speak and say what's on their minds.
I	Team player	9	Giving people advice or suggestions in a helpful way about their work
G	Positive criticism	10	A feeling where everyone in a team is on the same level or of equal importance.

Choose 5 of these words and try to use them in a sentence (in proper context).

Task

Read each mini case study about bad workplace communication. Identify what's wrong, and suggest ways to improve the situation. In making your suggestions, use the words from the task above in your responses.

Mini Case 1

Several members of the Accounting Team in a busy office feel very demotivated. Their boss does not encourage them to speak up about issues. The boss also tries to make it seem like 'everything is OK in the office' when many of the office staff feel that technology is old and outdated, and that improvements to the office environment never happen.

What's wrong?	What do you suggest to do to improve?

Mini Case 2

James is an UTS Nursing graduate who is now working in a local hospital. He has noticed that senior management and the older nurses have a habit of giving very tough, and sometimes rude, criticism about the younger nurse's work. He finds this rather disturbing and demoralising.

What's wrong?	What do you suggest to do to improve?

Mini Case 3

Charlotte is a senior leader in the office. Though she's been there for a while, she can be very rude to other staff members. Sometimes, she talks over people, occasionally shouts at younger junior members of staff, and has even insulted the new secretary. Charlotte's boss seems to ignore this problem.

What's wrong?	What do you suggest to do to improve?

Task

If you had your own company and you could make your own rules about good effective communication, what would they be? Write your top ten here.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

THE DO'S AND DON'TS

ACE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

OUR STRATEGIES FOR BEST COMMUNICATIONS ON THE JOB



TOTALLY COMMUNICATE & DO THESE THINGS



Do - be the star of your own story. Always try to be pleasant, honest, cooperative and generally nice to deal with.

Do - focus on the small things that make the world go round. Say 'good mornings', 'how are you's?', 'Are you OK?' etc. Show you care and that you're part of the team.

Do - show your enthusiasm and motivation at work, and not only when you're new. Show that you're engaged and a positive member of the team.

Do - focus on the small things that make the world go round. Say 'good mornings', 'how are you's?', 'Are you OK?' etc. Show you care and that you're part of the team.

Do - adjust your behaviour for different people in the organisation depending on their role, position, authority, culture or personality. In that way you're showing you a flexible and adaptive communicator!

COMMUNICATION TRAPS TO AVOID



Do - police your own behaviour. Keep your communications at all times, polite, professional, non-emotional and as objective as you can.

Avoid harsh judgement, assigning blame or denial of responsibility of others in your workplace- all of these things make you look like a poor communicator and often portray you in bad light at work.

Don't make assumptions about people, issues or problems. Look for the facts of the issue and communicate about them and/or go to the source directly to clarify.

Don't let your emotions override your good judgement. Never act in haste. If need be- take a time out, a day off, or a deep breather!



Avoid harsh judgement, assigning blame or denial of responsibility - all of these things make you look like a poor communicator and portray you in bad light at work.



This isn't an exhaustive list, but is compiled from the many responses we got from recruiters, employers and staff on the do's and don'ts of effective communication. Good luck!

We've put together our hot list of do's and don'ts of effective workplace communication. Take a look here:

- > Observe how others communicate at your workplace; imitate the best behaviour you see, and ignore the worst.
- > Always be at your best. Always ensure you behave professionally at work and that you're portraying the best version of you every day.
- > Watch your words. Don't trade in gossip or bad mouthing fellow staff. Stay away from negative or toxic characters in the workplace who are not a good influence.
- > Talk more. Yes, we know it's easy to send an email and it's often quicker, but do you really need to send an email to the person next to you or across the room? Ditch the technology if you can, and go and talk to them.
- > Phone time. Use your mobile phone with discretion, particularly when you're new. Constantly checking for messages or responding to every bleep or ping makes you look unprofessional, inattentive and that you'd rather be 'elsewhere'. It's the one thing many employers we spoke to commented upon. Simple answer – turn it to silent, put it away, check it when the boss isn't looking or every hour or so. You'll get a lot more done that way too!
- > Do always be respectful, courteous and true to your professional brand and image. Treat others how you would like to be treated, and you hopefully won't go too far wrong.

Task

The following sentences all contain idioms about communication. Can you guess their meaning?

	Idiomatic sentence	Meaning?
1	Let's kick off now	
2	We don't see eye to eye.	
3	Let me put you in the picture.	
4	You've got the wrong end of the stick.	
5	We're not on the same wavelength.	
6	In a nutshell, this is a great idea!	
7	Don't beat about the bush! What's wrong?	
8	Sorry, have I put my foot in my mouth?	
9	Can you please get right to the point?	
10	OK, drop me a line later. Thanks.	

Now check their meaning here. Match them to the idioms above.

We do not understand one another.	Shall we start now? (Usually used at a meeting.)	You have misunderstood what is happening or being talked about.	In summary...	We disagree with one another's opinion.
Can you please say clearly what you have to say?	I'll tell you what has been happening recently.	Perhaps I have said something I was supposed not to have.	Can you please make your argument obvious and clear?	Call or email me after this.

Continuous learning

Investing in improving your communication is a lifelong thing – not something that you do once and then forget. Take every opportunity to upskill your written, oral and communicative skills – both for formal and informal ways of communicating.

Never shoot off emails or written correspondence in anger or frustration. This is one sure-fire way to get you into trouble. Instead, draft your response and wait 24 hours before you send it. Review it and, perhaps, change the tone or sound if you feel it to be more appropriate.

Get to the point! Don't be too long winded about what you want to say! We're all time poor. Make sure your communication is at all times polite, courteous, yet to the point and efficient. If you can layer a tone of friendliness on top, that can only be a good thing, right?

What other bit of advice or suggestion do you have?

Video watching

Watch the following video on how to avoid arguments and confrontation in the workplace, and make notes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Hj_AnsUoH4

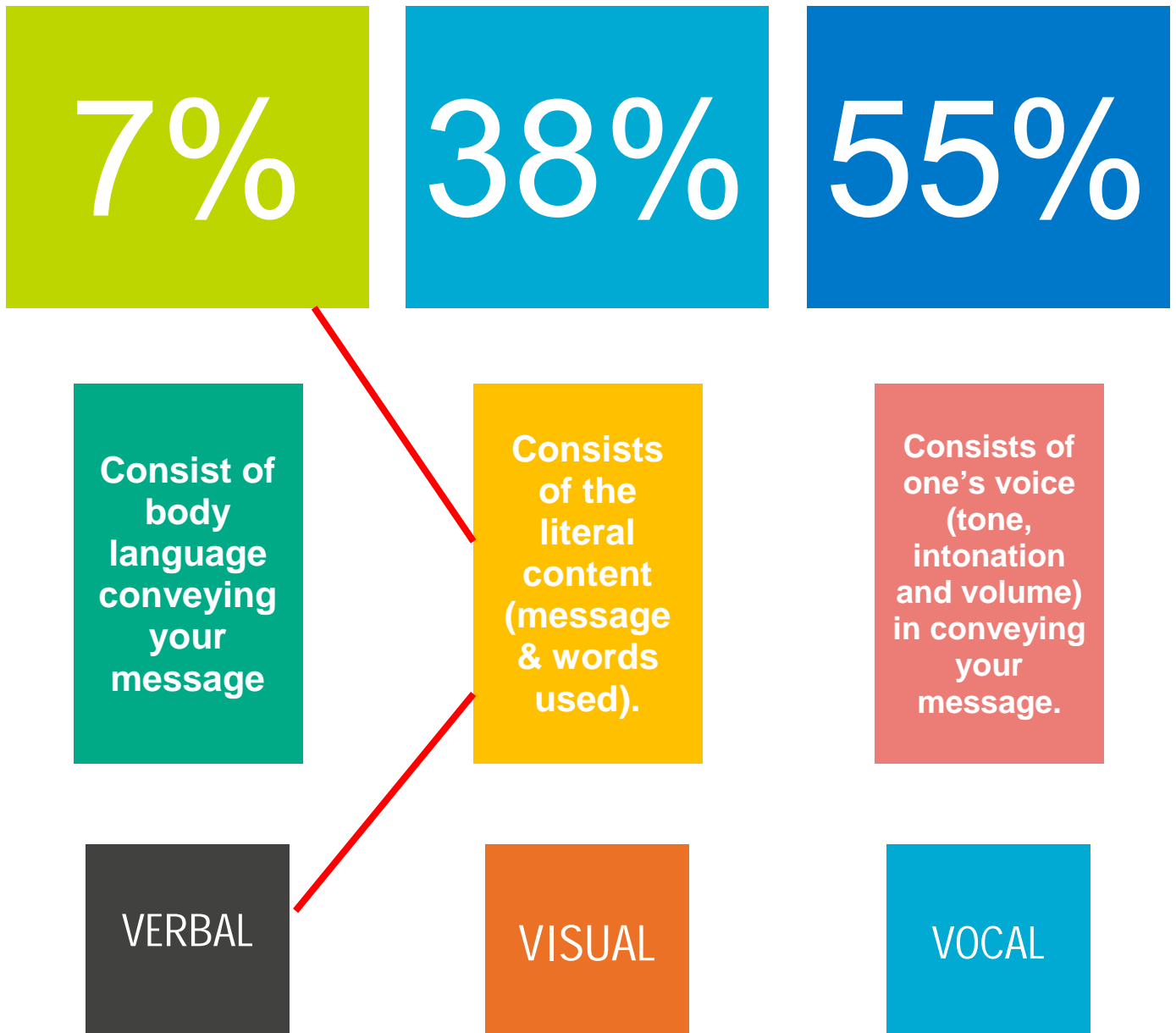
“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou – Author and Civil Rights Activist

Task

Albert Mehrabian developed a model of effective communication called 7-38-55 (Mehrabian 1981) which we'd like to share with you all (thanks, Albert!)

See IF you can work out Mehrabian's model of communication as we've mixed it up for you. Draw a line between each layer to connect the correct elements together. The first one has been done for you (in red).



Task

True or False

- > It's often not what you say, but the way you say it that has the most impact.
- > Generally, try to listen to others more than talk and try not to talk over people.
- > Keep inappropriate behaviour, jokes or comments to yourself. If you're unsure, better to just keep silent.
- > Observe how others behave in your workspace. Always try to mimic the good behaviours you witness and disregard all of the bad.
- > Don't be afraid to seek help and assistance if you need to develop your communication skills.

Case study

What's going wrong here?

Anne Marie works in a busy city-based graphic design studio. She can be a bit of difficult personality at times and has caused some issues in the past with other staff members lower than her. Today, Anne Marie is angry with Louise (the part-time receptionist) who has forgotten to schedule something into Anne Marie's diary. Anne Marie is now (in front of most of the office) screaming and swearing at Louise for making this mistake. Alerted by the noise, Jane the H.R Director has stepped in to cool the situation and has stopped the argument and then asked them not to speak to one another again and only communicate by email for the foreseeable future.

- > What's your assessment of this situation?
- > Is this effective communication?
- > Is Jane's resolution going to be effective?

COMMUNICATION BANK: LANGUAGE TO EMPLOY

To ensure you're a star in the workplace, we've put together a quick list of some great phrases to use 'on the job'. Some you'll know, some maybe not, and can you spot the one that just doesn't fit in that category (psst – we've done the first one for you). The symbol after each statement will help you at the end of this section and give you the answers.

Language to show you're a team player

It'd be great to work on this together; this is a really great initiative. Ω

This is something that would be great for us to work into our team. π

Love your teeshirt, blue really offsets your eyes.

Language to show you respect others

Thanks for doing that, I really appreciate you helping me out. β

I'd respect and value your opinion on this please. Σ

Roses are red, violets are blue, if you respect me, I'll respect you. £

Language to show you're responsible

Leave it to me, I'll totally see to it. π

Meh, I don't know who's supposed to be doing that. It's not in my job description. €

Sure, I'm happy to take that on and see that it gets done. μ

Language to give positive criticism

I can see where you're going with this and I like the idea . I wonder if you've also thought about incorporating... μ

Um, this is not what I asked for, is it? €

What a good idea and I agree with the points you're making overall, would it be possible to alter the Σ

Language to motivate others

What a great job you're doing there. I'd love to know how you did that. Good job! β

That's such a great idea, totally awesome. Well done you! Σ

You think that's pretty good huh? Well, I've seen a lot better. ¥

Language to show empathy

Let's rock and roll folks. Time is money and money is time! €

How are you doing? I hope everything's OK. I'm always here if you need any help or support. Ω

Hope everything is alright. Don't hesitate to ask if you need to. My door is always open – hope you know that. π

GOLDEN TIP

Need to communicate and portray more confidence?

Our quick tip is this. Try to stand, sit or walk with more confidence by putting your shoulders back, hold your head up straight and eyes forward. Hold a gentle warm smile on your face and also speak with a smile and good eye contact. To everyone you meet (whether you're nervous or not) you'll appear confident, professional and composed. Cool, huh?

SUMMARY/TAKE AWAY

Our golden takeaways to remember for excellent communication skills are these:

- > Be open to always improving your communication skills, particularly around speaking and writing every chance you get. You can never stop learning these essential skills.
- > Ensure, more often than not, that you're a positive force in the workplace who shows and communicates enthusiasm, good will, respect, motivation and professionalism.
- > Remember, we are all different; so, be open to changing your communication style with different personalities you meet on a daily basis.
- > Employers value most 'staff with great communication skills'; so, do pay attention to ensuring yours are in their best possible shape and continually develop your expertise.
- > Remember from Mehrabian's model that you communicate visually, vocally and verbally. So, pay attention to what your body, words and non-verbal visual clues are giving off.
- > Wherever you can in this age of technology, take every chance to communicate in person whenever appropriate. Instead of sending an email, have a quick chat instead, and make the human connection.
- > And finally, our watch words are: Courtesy, Professionalism, Composure, Enthusiasm and Communication.

Role play

Imagine that this is the first day on your new job, and your boss has approached you. Use the cues to help you in this role play.

Student A (Boss)	Student B (New employee; first day on the job)
1. Use the idiom 'to start a meeting'. Ask if this is OK with him/her.	2. Reply positively and agree.
3. Welcome him/her and say how happy you are for him/her to be in the team.	4. Reply positively and say how happy you are to be in this organisation/unit.
5. Ask him/her how his/her first day is going.	6. Reply positively. Say how friendly the team is, and how people have been kind and helpful to you so far.
7. Respond positively, and ask him/her if there's anything that s/he needs in terms of office supplies, technology or future training.	8. Respond politely. Say you need someone to connect your laptop for you. Also your desk is missing an office lamp (say you need one urgently), and that you will discuss future training with him/her at a later date.
9. Respond and say you will organise this for him/her. Say to him/her that you value open communication and that 'your door is always open' to him/her.	10. Respond positively and thank him/her for this, and say that you appreciate that type of communication style in the office.