

Communications for Professionals

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Mechanical Inspectors Association of Michigan

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Agenda

- Humor in the Workplace
- The Importance of Effective Communications
- Barriers to Effective Communications
- Communication Planning
- Verbal and Nonverbal Communications
- Written Communications

Humor in the Workplace


- Serious business
- Humor can lighten the mood and make work life more enjoyable
- Know your audience
- Avoid inappropriate humor
 - Sex
 - Gender
 - Religion
 - Politics
 - Race
 - Ethnicity

Humor in the Workplace

- Inoffensive humor
 - Don't make anyone else feel uncomfortable
 - Poke fun at things not individuals
 - Laugh at yourself
 - Avoid practical jokes
- Safe vs. Hostile Work Environment
 - Human Resources
 - Employee Concerns Program
 - Legal Department

Communication

The American Management Association defines communication as “...a complex activity involving words, body language, voice tone and volume, the topic under discussion, the prejudgments that people bring to the topic, and the “communication history” between participants in the discussion.”



“The single biggest problem
in communication
is the illusion
that it has taken place.”

- George Bernard Shaw

Importance of Effective Communications

- Effective communications improve:
 - Trust
 - Productivity
 - Morale
 - Your value

Importance of Effective Communications

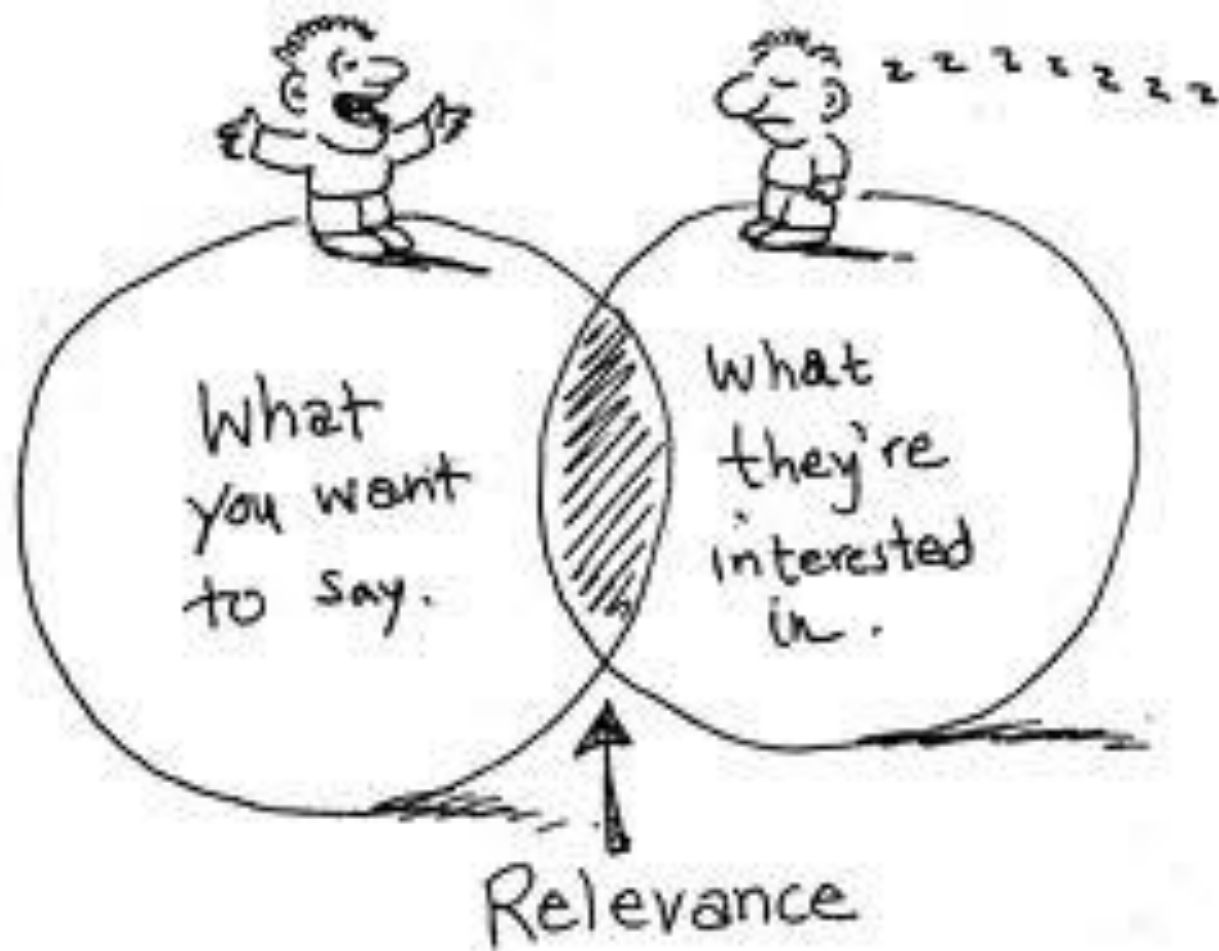
- Ineffective communication results in:
 - Lost time and effort
 - Stress
 - Friction
 - Missed opportunities

Barriers to Effective Communications

- Change
- Time Pressure
- Conflict
- Past experiences with the speaker or the message
- Psychological state (worry, fear, anger, grief, depression, etc.)

Barriers to Effective Communications

- Individual bias and prejudice
- Semantics and language differences
- Noise and verbal "clutter"
- Preoccupation, boredom and shrinking attention spans



Communication Planning

- Information
- Stakeholders
- Messages
- Medium
- Frequency
- Schedule
- Communicators

Communication Plans

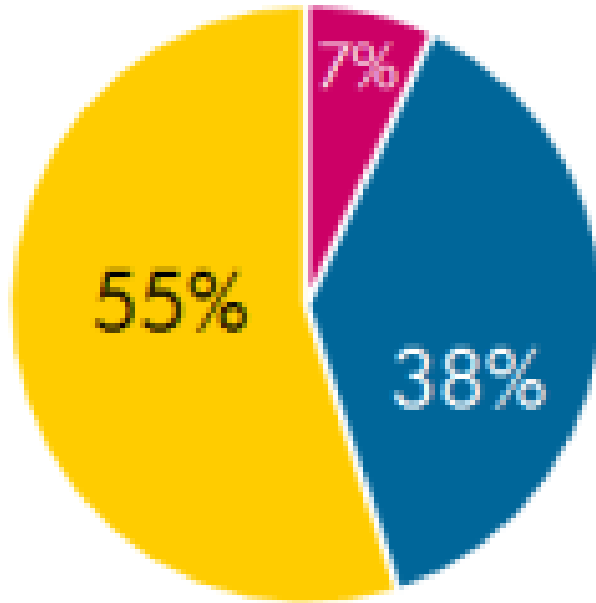
Stakeholder	Message	Medium	Frequency	Schedule	Communicator

Communication Plans

Implementation of Revised Municipal Mechanical Building Code

Stakeholder	Message	Medium	Frequency	Schedule	Communicator
City Council	Substance of Code Changes	Council Meeting	One Time	10/28/15	Chief Mech Inspector (CMI)
Mechanical and Plumbing Inspectors	Specifics of Code Changes	Briefing	Weekly for 2 months	11/01/15 11/08/15	CMI
		Newsletter	Two times	October November	Piper Round
Contractors	Specifics of Code Changes	Letter	One time	11/01/15	Billie Clubb
General Public	Summary of Code Changes	Newspaper	Weekly for one month	November	CMI
		Local TV	One Time	11/15/15	City PR
		Radio	Daily for one week	11/1-8/15	City PR

Seek First to Understand



Elements of Personal Communication

- 7% spoken words
- 38% voice, tone
- 55% body language

“Active listening” is required to understand the message.

Active Listening

1. What key points is the speaker making?
2. How does this fit with what I know from experience?
3. How can this information benefit me?

I'VE DECIDED TO
ESCALATE MY ANTI-
SOCIAL BEHAVIOR FROM
NOT LISTENING, TO
ACTIVELY TALKING
OVER OTHER
PEOPLE.



Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com

HOW CAN YOU ENJOY
THE CONVERSATION
OF OTHERS IF YOU'RE
DON'T LISTEN?
THIS COULD BE
ONE OF THE BEST
IDEAS I'VE EVER
HAD.

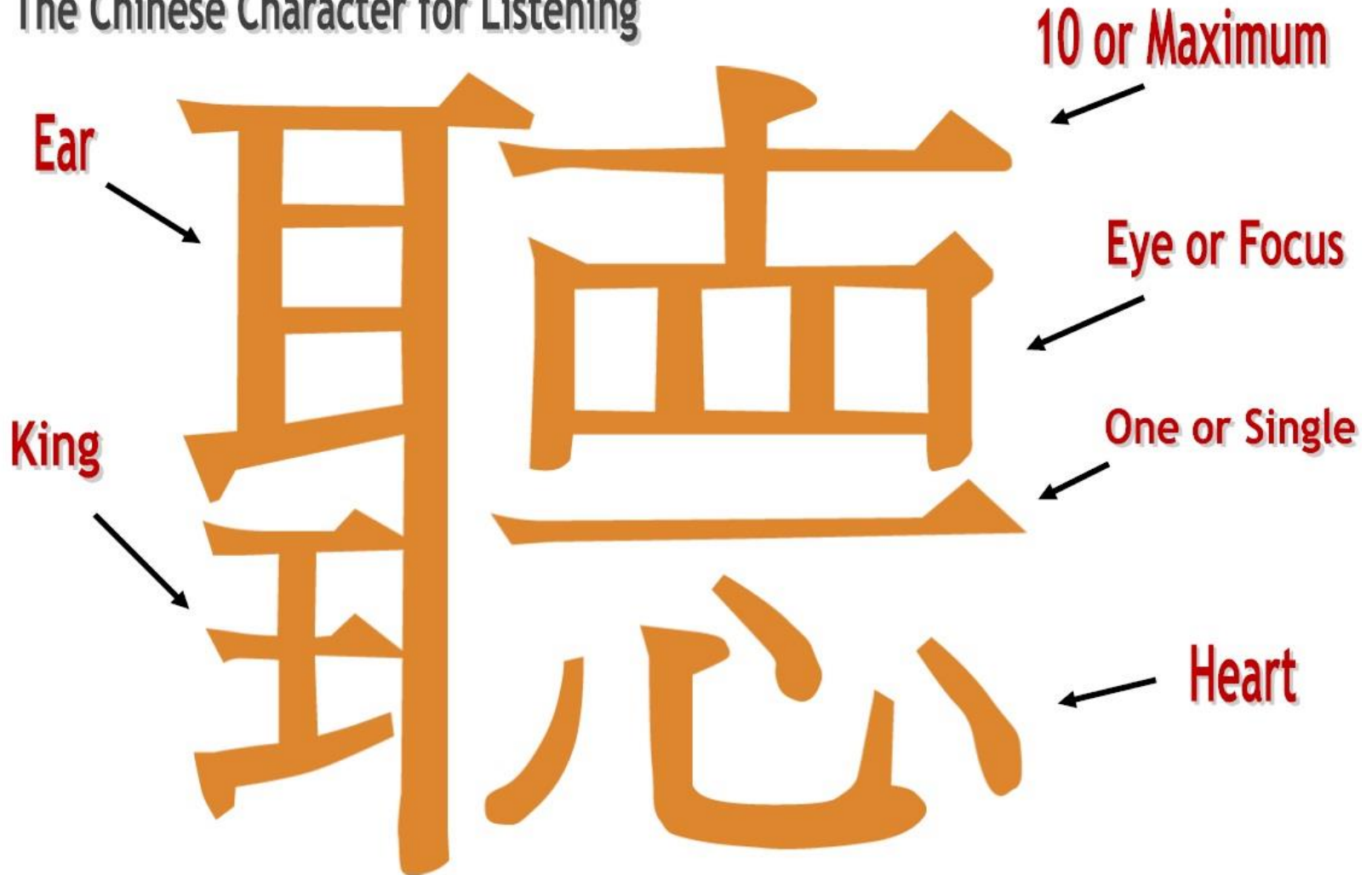


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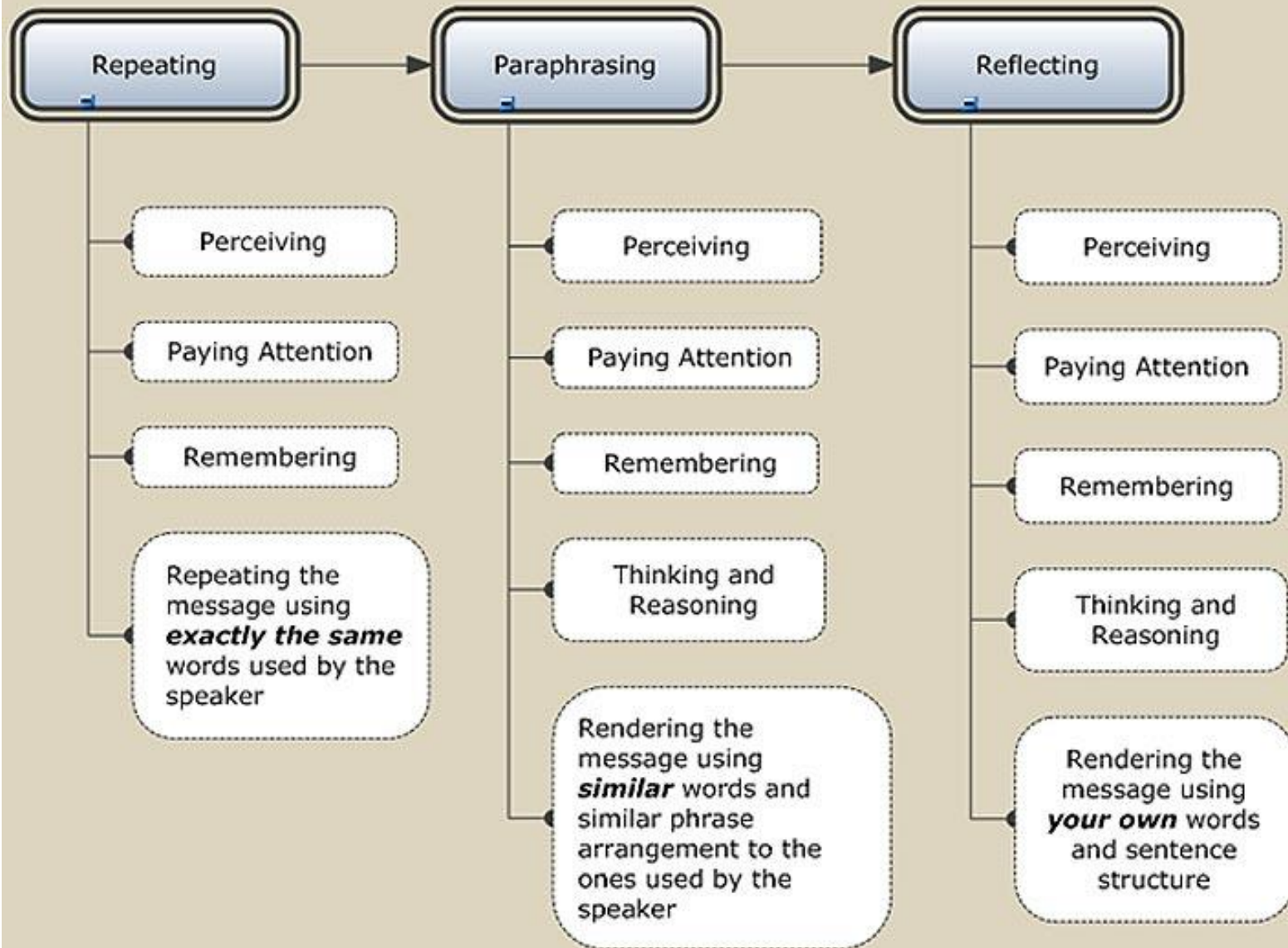
IT ALL CAME
TOGETHER WHEN
I REALIZED THAT
LISTENING ISN'T
THE FUN PART.



The Chinese Character for Listening



Degrees of Active Listening



Top 10 Active Listening Skills

1

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Acknowledge	Provide verbal and nonverbal cues that you're listening.	Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.	Fidget and look around the room.

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

2

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Restate	Respond to the message.	Repeat phrases you would like clarified.	Change the subject.

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

3

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Reflect	Confirm perceptions of vague or perceived messages.	Listen for what is not said. Respond with phrases such as "So you feel that..."	Discount or downplay the speaker's feelings.

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

4

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Interpret	Offer your interpretation of the person's desires or meaning.	Keep an open mind. Try to visualize what the speaker is saying.	Assume you know what the speaker is trying to communicate.

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

5

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Summarize	Bring together feelings and experiences to provide a focus.	Paraphrase	Elaborate

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

6

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Probe	Request more information or clear up confusion.	Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.	Interrogate or challenge

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

7

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Feedback	Share perception of the person's ideas.	Wait 2-3 seconds and respond with phrases such as "So you feel that..."	Interrupt, offer solutions, preach, or teach

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

8

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Support	Show warmth and caring.	Pay attention to what isn't said, to feelings and nonverbal cues.	Judge the speaker or rehearse your response

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

9

Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Check perceptions	Find out if interpretations and perception are valid and accurate.	Confirm accuracy with phrases such as "I think you are trying to say...".	Make assumptions or jump to conclusions

Top 10 Active Listening Skills

10			
Skill	Behavior	Do	Don't
Be quiet	Give the person time to think as well as talk.	Try to understand what the speaker is feeling and have empathy.	Fill in pauses

Nonverbal Communications

BODY LANGUAGE

INTERPRETATION

Head resting in hand, eyes downcast

Boredom

Sitting with hands clasped behind head, legs crossed

Confidence, superiority

Open palm

Sincerity, openness, innocence

Pinching bridge of nose, eyes closed

Negative evaluation

Tapping or drumming fingers

Impatience

Steepled fingers

Authoritative

Tilted head

Interest

Nonverbal Communications

BODY LANGUAGE

INTERPRETATION

Sitting with legs crossed, foot kicking slightly

Boredom

Sitting, legs apart

Open, relaxed

Arms crossed on chest

Defensiveness

Touching, slightly rubbing nose

Rejection, doubt, lying

Rubbing the eye

Doubt, disbelief

Hands clasped behind back

Anger, frustration,
apprehension

Locked ankles

Apprehension

Pulling or tugging at ear

Indecision

Expressing Yourself

Communicating Long or Emotional Messages

- Briefly explain the intention of your conversation.
- The other person(s) will attend better if they have a basic understanding of the time and effort they will be bringing to the conversation.
- Use “I” statements to communicate your feelings, and what you have personally seen, heard, need, or expect.
- Do not engage in verbal attacks on the other person. If you need to criticize, describe the behavior or actions of the other person that bother you.
- State what you need or expect in positive terms.

Manage Your Emotions

- Recognize what you are feeling. Are you angry, embarrassed, or hurt?
- Simplify your feelings. Select one or two words to describe how you feel. Be specific.
- Do not act on your feelings right away. Don't make a decision, enter into a discussion, or send an email in anger or frustration.
- Choose an appropriate time and place to communicate.

Expressing Yourself

Use "I" Statements

- Accept responsibility for your emotions
- Use "I" statements. Say "I feel angry when..." rather than "You make me mad..."

Change the following statements into "I" statements

1. You make me so mad when you don't complete your work on time.
2. My supervisor frustrates me when she doesn't communicate her expectations.
3. My employee aggravates me when she comes in late.
4. My boss made me happy when he complimented my financial report.
5. Those students make me sad when they don't study and fail their tests.

Telephones

- Answer = salutation, introduction, offer of service
- Return calls as soon as you reasonably can. Apologize if delayed.
- Be cheerful and considerate.
- Smile when you talk – it shows on the other end of the line.
- Don't keep people holding for more than 30 seconds.
- If voicemail, leave a message with brief topic summary and your number.
- Don't answer the phone when you are meeting with someone.

Cell Phones

- Keep at least 10 feet away from others.
- Do not answer the phone when talking to others unless it's an emergency.
- If you must answer a cell phone in a public setting, answer and tell the person to hold a minute while you remove yourself from the room.
- Don't use loud or annoying ring tones.
- Place phone in silent mode when in a meeting.

Netiquette = E-mail & Internet Etiquette


- No nonverbal expression to supplement what we are saying
- Be brief and to the point
- Readers should not have to scroll
- Never use ALL CAPS
- Watch for typos
- Use normal capitalization and punctuation
- Use correct grammar and spelling
- Avoid long sentences
- Return emails the same day if possible/reasonable





Netiquette = E-mail & Internet Etiquette

- Salutation, at least the receiver's name
- Closing
- Include your name and phone number
- Always use a subject line
 - Make the subject line meaningful
 - Example: "April 22 production team meeting agenda" instead of "meeting"
- No flaming
- Avoid sensitive subjects
- Avoid "Reply All"
- Avoid large attachments
- Use Bcc for long distribution lists

Netiquette = E-mail & Internet Etiquette

- Using Bcc:


 Rich Higgins
rlhigginsjr@yahoo.com

To

Cc

Bcc

Priority Low 

[Draft] Add a subject

Sent from Windows Mail

Compact Writing

- Open with your main point – in the first sentence of the first paragraph
- Use short sentences in short paragraphs
- Use plain words
 - *Issue* directives, don't *promulgate* them
 - *Start* things, don't *initiate* them
 - *Use*, not *utilize*
- Use personal pronouns
 - “I understand”, rather than “it is understood”
 - “You should”, rather than “all attendees should”

Things to Avoid

- Doubling
 - “The project’s significance and importance require ...” – Pick one
- “There is/are”
 - Change “There are two alternatives mentioned in the report.” to “The report includes two alternatives.”
- Legalese
 - Avoid words such as therein, heretofore, herewith, the undersigned, etc.
- Smothered verbs
 - “The committee members held a meeting (met) to give consideration to (consider) the plan.”
- That and Which
 - Eliminate if possible
- Wordy Expressions
 - In order to (to); for the purpose of (to); in the near future (soon); in the event of (if)

Active Writing

- **Doers before verbs**

- **Active:** *The inspector completed the report.*
- **Passive:** *The report was completed by the inspector.*

- **Passive verbs = muddy sentences**

- **Passive:** *Nominations must be approved in advance. **By whom?***
- **Passive:** *You will be notified. **By whom?***

- **Be direct**

- **Active:** *You must complete the form.*
- **Passive:** *The form must be completed.*

Report Writing

- **Executive Summary**

- 1ST paragraph
- Explain the purpose of the report
- Tell them what you're going to tell them
- Tell them the conclusion(s) you reached, if any
- Tell them what you need from the reader

- **Body**

- Keep your promise
- Tell them what you told them you were going to tell them

- **Conclusion**

- Summarize what you told them
- Repeat your conclusions and request for action