

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communications is an important tool to have when representing Teamster members. Union leaders and activists should possess such skills to ensure success in a variety of endeavors including organizing, collective bargaining, and grievance handling. Below are some guidelines to consider:

- ❑ Effective communications requires effective listening. Practice active listening. Repeat, paraphrase, and then ask questions for clarification.
- ❑ Communication is about perception. Be assertive in your tone and in your message. Always end on a positive note.
- ❑ Your message must be accessible. Convey it honestly and clearly. Be specific and direct. Avoid “beating around the bush.”
- ❑ Be open-minded: avoid common stereotypes and basic assumptions.
- ❑ Use non-verbal communication, such as body language and direct eye contact, to enhance your delivery.
- ❑ Understand, and emphasize with, your audience. Be able to weigh the effect of the message.
- ❑ Communicate with your mind – not your emotions. Offer a response instead of reaction.
- ❑ Be a credible communicator and not part of the “rumor mill.”
- ❑ Be flexible. Prepare to communicate with different forms and in different forums. Be able to deliver the same message either one-on-one or in groups.
- ❑ Understand that effective communication is a two-way street.
- ❑ Prepare for distractions and communication barriers and learn to work around them.
- ❑ Remember that the goal is to use effective communications to address your fellow members, protect workplace rights, build solidarity and support the union.