

Student name: _____ Date: _____

MODULE 22

Define the elements of communicating with a supervisor.

Objectives:

A. Define communication.

B. List six (6) rules of communicating with a supervisor.

MODULE 22: INFORMATION SHEET

TO THE STUDENT: Read and study this information sheet and then complete the student activities at the end of this module.

What is communication?

Communication is an exchange of information, ideas and feelings. Communication can be verbal, but it can also be written or merely symbols and graphs.

Communicating with your employer

"Communicating" with your employer is an interesting and perhaps frightening thought. It is essential that you understand your supervisor's expectations of you and your work.

Do not break the cardinal rule of dealing with your boss: Don't start a fight you can't win! Does this mean you should avoid all conflict with superiors? Absolutely not! Your effectiveness in disagreeing with your employer can be critical to your career.

Who hasn't had words with his/her supervisor at one time or another? Avoiding disagreements can be helpful in the short term, but over the years you may lose sleep and have a lower self-image. Your employer will be deprived of information that might help improve his/her own job performance. Here are the rules to remember when communicating with your employer.

Watch your timing

Before a confrontation, try to determine your employer's mood. If he/she is in a bad mood or very busy, it is not a good idea to ask for something.

There are other keys to timing. Do not approach your employer when he/she is on deadline. Do not initiate a conversation right before lunch when everyone is apt to be distracted and rushed. Right before or after a vacation may not be the best time.

Don't go in angry

If you are angry, you may make your employer angry. Calm down first. Don't let a particular concern open the floodgates for all of your accumulated frustration.

If an employee sounds negative about the company, the employer may get the idea that discussion is hopeless and the employee should find another job.

Clarify the issues

Terrible disputes can result when neither the employer nor his subordinates know what is on the other person's mind. Sometimes a problem will go away when the issues are made clear. As the employee, you must get your point across clearly. When you disagree with your supervisor, share your ideas in writing. This helps to focus the issue.

Propose solutions

If you cannot propose an immediate solution, at least suggest how to approach the problem. If you are a person who frequently presents problems without solutions to your supervisor, you may find that you cannot get past the secretary.

Put yourself in the boss's shoes

To deal effectively with an employer, it is important to consider his/her goals and pressures. If you can put yourself in the position of being a partner to your employer, then the employer will naturally be more inclined to work with you to achieve your goals.

Use common sense

Remember that your supervisor holds all the cards and pushing a dispute too far may cause problems far beyond the subject at hand. Be sensible. Remember: You can always be fired!

MODULE 22: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TO THE STUDENT: After you have read and studied the Information sheet, answer the following questions.

1. Define communication.
2. List the six (6) rules of communicating with your employer.
3. Choose one of the six rules and write a brief essay describing a situation where you followed the rule and communicated appropriately with your employer. (Use additional sheets for your essay.)

TRUE OR FALSE

4. ___ a. You can barge into your supervisor's office whenever you have a real problem.
- ___ b. Your supervisor's secretary is a good judge of his/her moods.
- ___ c. It is a good idea to write down your thoughts before you confront your employer.
- ___ d. Just before lunch is a good time to talk to your employer about your problems.
- ___ e. The employer holds all the cards.

MODULE 22: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE**Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Career Education and Work****13.3.11. Career Retention (Keeping a Job)**

- A. Analyze work habits needed to advance within a career.
- B. Evaluate conflict resolution skills:
 - Constructive criticism
 - Group dynamics
 - Managing
 - Mediation
 - Negotiation
 - Problem solving

Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)**1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.4.11. Types of Writing

- C. Write persuasive pieces.
 - Include a clearly stated position or opinion.
 - Include convincing, elaborated and properly cited evidence.
 - Develop reader interest.
 - Anticipate and counter reader concerns and arguments.
 - Include a variety of methods to advance the argument or position.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
 - Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish and maintain a single point of view.

- B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
- Gather, determine validity and reliability of, analyze and organize information.
 - Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
 - Write fully developed paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.
- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
- Spell all words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Sociability: Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in new and ongoing group settings.

COMPETENCIES

Interpersonal: Works well with others, including being skilled team members and negotiating with others to solve problems or reach decisions.