



FY22 Quarter 4

Encouraging Communication Through Mutual Respect ADR also means “A Dialogue Resource”

NM Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Bureau

We are a state Risk Management program that works with state employees and their agencies to access workplace mediation, communication-based training and alternative resources to workplace conflict. Our goal is to provide state employees an early resource to resolve conflicts in the workplace.

Visit our website at:
<https://adr.gsd.state.nm.us>

Contact us at:
adr.bureau@state.nm.us

Mary Jo Lujan
Bureau Chief

(505) 827-0444

maryjo.lujan@state.nm.us

Abril Trujillo

Mediation Coordinator
(505) 827-0421

april.mcclellan@state.nm.us

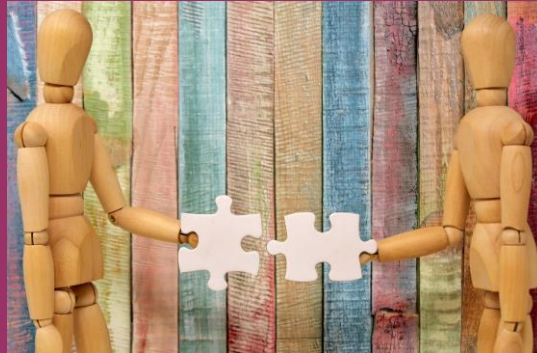
Stefanie Ortega

Outreach & Training
Coordinator
(505) 827-0576

stefanie.ortega2@state.nm.us



NEW MEXICO
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT



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



The ADR Bureau is now offering online mediation! [Click here](#) for a recorded Program Overview to learn about the free services we offer state employees.

Curious about whether mediation can improve your communication and workplace relationships?

Mediation through the ADR Bureau is likely appropriate when:

- There is a clear understanding of the mediation process through our program including expectations, any agreements made, what mediation can offer and its limitations
- The issue is relationship-based or a breakdown in communication; our program cannot mediate compensation, disciplinary actions, policies/procedures, etc.
- The parties are NOT already in a formal process (such as a grievance, investigation, EEOC Charge, lawsuit, etc.)
- The issues are not repetitive violations of policies/procedures that should be addressed by management and/or HR
- There is no history of violence, threats of harm or substance abuse

Interested? Please contact us at ADR.Bureau@state.nm.us



Communication is Key in the Workplace - Here's How to Improve

by Allaya Cooks-Campbell

Why is effective communication so important?

Few things impact workplace culture, productivity, and morale more than communication.

As a manager, building good communication skills has profound short- and long-term benefits for your organization. [An effective communicator](#) is able to motivate their team to get more done with better results and fewer misunderstandings. And who doesn't want fewer misunderstandings?

All of those things can contribute to the company's success — and to your own personal success.

Let's take a look at why communication skills are so important in the workplace (for your organization and your own career) and strategies for developing better skills.

How your organization benefits from better communication

When employees are directly involved in work products and initiatives, it helps to foster a sense of ownership in the company's future. It also makes them want to work to improve things like the company's profitability, customer satisfaction, and brand.

Employees who feel personally connected to the company's mission tend to care more about other details, like whether the brand has a reputation as a great place to work, which in the long term can affect your ability to attract and retain the best talent.

Let's take a look at some ways that building your communication skills cascades down through your organization — and directly impacts its bottom line.

9 reasons to work on your communication skills

Better engagement

[Better communication results in greater employee engagement](#), which is a key metric of employee productivity and potential retention. It reinforces that your people are key contributors and people who the company values for their unique skills and experience. In other words, their contribution — and input — truly makes a difference.

Increased morale

Unhappy team members take more time off of work, are less productive when in-office, and often [negatively impact the productivity](#) of other employees when they are present. However, when an employee has an [understanding of the work that they have to do](#) and how it connects to the overall success of the team, they bring more energy and pride to their work. Ideas flow more readily, enthusiasm catches, and the quality of the work produced increases dramatically. Effective communication by managers and among team members also encourages the flow of new ideas.

Improved productivity

Better communication techniques help employees to better comprehend their roles, which in turn reduces thrash and miscues and helps employees perform their assigned duties better. Resources and time can be saved through these techniques, therefore getting more work done and reducing stress.



Less ambiguity

Few things cause more frustration and anxiety in the workplace than employees [not knowing what is expected](#) of them. Worse still is not clearly understanding assigned roles — and ensuring other members of the team understand that as well. Not [knowing who is in charge](#) can create confusion, often resulting in work that needs to be done — and redone — because of unclear expectations.

Reduced churn

From customer support representatives to senior technical staff, experience equals value to customers and to the company. And no organization wants to waste the huge costs of recruiting and training good employees by having them leave quickly. As a key factor in employee engagement and satisfaction, communication adds value to the organization by reducing the turnover of skilled and seasoned staff members.

Greater loyalty

Longer-term, keeping these employees for many years can add strength to the company and impact the bottom line. Many jobs require years of experience before an employee has sufficient expertise to drive innovation, [solve critical problems](#), and lead others. How an employee feels toward the company — based on how they feel they are treated and valued as individuals — impacts how loyal they will be. You don't want these key players leaving out of frustration or burnout, or jumping ship to a competitor.

Complete article can be found at:
[Communication Is Key in the Workplace. Here's How to Improve \(betterup.com\)](#)

Better collaboration

Many of today's knowledge workers often collaborate in teams. They also tend to use technologies that don't require team members to be in the same room, the same building, or even the same country, as people increasingly rely on team collaboration software, cloud-based file sharing, and audio/video conferencing. This shift presents new communication challenges, which means managers can facilitate collaboration by helping groups communicate effectively when using the latest technologies.

Fewer workplace conflicts

Many conflicts originate with miscommunication. Poor communication can create poor relationships or even toxic or hostile work environments. Building clear communication can prevent [misunderstandings between managers and employees](#). This includes honing and refining communication styles that focus on listening to others, having empathy, and considering individual differences.

Greater motivation

Psychologists have found that unless people understand the “why” of a concept, they will be less likely to understand or remember it. The same goes for many aspects of people's work lives. As a manager one key communications skill is hearing the “why” and following up with a “because.” This approach can help you not only [motivate employees but also avoid resistance](#) to implementing or adhering to policies that were put into place for complex or non-intuitive reasons.

NM ADR NEWS

What are the threats of poor communication?

Poor communication comes at a cost

While the value of effective communication skills might seem obvious, they aren't necessarily pervasive. That poses a threat to companies' ability to profitably operate, execute on strategy, or be agile in the face of changing customer needs.

According to [Gallup](#), only 17% of employees strongly agree their company has open communication. It's no surprise then that 70% of employees describe themselves as being "disengaged" at work. When communication fails, your staff won't know how to set priorities — ultimately lowering satisfaction and morale.

8 ways poor communication threatens your business

1. Low engagement
2. Low trust
3. Reduced profitability and wasted resources
4. Frustration/reduced job satisfaction
5. Inability to move quickly/missed opportunities
6. Misalignment
7. Slow growth
8. Reduced customer loyalty/customer churn

Want to develop communication skills? Start with respect

What does good work communication look like? It's clear and succinct. The recipient understands what is important, why, and what action they need to take. But the fundamental principle of all communication should be: *respect the other party*.

What does that mean in workplace communication? Communicating, whether with a colleague, a boss, or a customer, is not an opportunity to show how smart or superior you

are — but it's easy to leave others with the impression that's all you care about. Effective communication is about the needs of the listener. While it may seem counter-intuitive, a "listener-first" approach will often help you structure the delivery of your message.

Here are 8 tips for developing your communication skills.

1. Think it through. There are many communications frameworks, but if you want to improve your communication skills, start by getting in the habit of thinking through these 5 questions for any communication you create:

- a. Why are you communicating?
- b. Who is the receiver, audience, or participant?
- c. What is your goal or objective? Common objectives of work communications include: to request (resources, participation, permission), to inform, to persuade, to connect.
- d. What do you want the recipient to do as a result of the communication? Common work actions include: send an email to approve or authorize; complete a task in a system; provide comments or data for a shared work product; sign up for an event; download a tool or resource; confirm or correct. Note: Even if your goal is to inform, try to think of a relevant and unobtrusive way for the other party to engage.
- e. What format will best accomplish your goal?

If you struggle to answer these five questions, it's a clear sign that your communication effectiveness will benefit from putting in additional time thinking about how and why you communicate. Test your understanding with co-workers or your manager.

NM ADR NEWS

2. Give it time. Great communication benefits from having enough time to think it through. Plan what you want to say and review your communication to make sure it is actually doing the job you need it to. For written communications, especially, this means: revise, revise, revise. Remember, great communication might seem effortless, but it rarely is.

3. Make it easy. In the workplace, communication almost always has a larger goal. People are busy. Don't make them work too hard to understand what you are saying and what you need them to do. In both written and spoken communications, this often means leading with your main point or objective. State your objective and main point in the first paragraph or in the beginning of a presentation so your audience knows where you're going. Then fill in the details and complications.

4. Simplify. Focus on what is important. Trim away whatever does not serve. Eliminate jargon. While you don't want to condescend or "dumb it down," in everyday work communications, be mindful of not making the other party work too hard to understand. Give more attention to the one or two messages you want to convey. Plan for how you will get the message across and [strip all other distractions away](#). Find a clear, simple phrasing to encapsulate your point. Repeat it at the beginning, middle, and end, and consider using a simple visual or metaphor to make your point clear and memorable.

5. Experiment and diversify. Work on developing different tactics for different communication needs. Focus on experimenting with one aspect of your communication at a time. For example, spend a week paying extra attention to how you structure informal communications. Then spend a week trying different structures for formal meetings or updates.

6. Practice and reflect. Be deliberate about reflecting on what goes well and what doesn't in your day-to-day communications. Maybe an email to your manager didn't go well: read it again. Can you see how it might have been misinterpreted? What would you do differently next time? Similarly, if a conversation with a co-worker didn't yield the expected results, try to identify whether you clearly communicated what you needed.

7. Consider the full package. Consider recording yourself through a few interactions to gain insight into what your full package is communicating in your daily interactions with your team. Do you make eye contact? Is your facial expression relaxed and confident, or tense? As a leader, do you invite participation from others? Do you leave space for questions and clarification?

8. Seek feedback. [Ask a few trusted co-workers](#) and your manager to rate your communication skills. Start by asking them to rate (i.e., on a scale of 1-10) your written and spoken communication separately. Then ask these 3 questions:

- a. What one thing should I start doing to communicate better with you?
- b. What one thing should I stop doing in my communications with you?
- c. What one area or skill should I work on to improve how I communicate in this organization?

Start communicating better today

Every year communication tops the list of skills in demand by employers. There's a reason. Communication is what makes our professional and personal relationships go smoothly. It's how we show care, catalyze change, and get things done.

That's reason enough to improve — and keep improving — these important skills. Luckily, we can all learn to communicate better.