

# Working with Different Communication Styles

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LINEAR</b></p> <p>Communication is conducted in a straight line, moving in a linear way toward the main point. "Getting to the point" is very important and the point is stated explicitly. Not getting to the point quickly is seen as a time waster.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be Brief</li> <li>• Preface your remarks with "the point is..."</li> <li>• Provide only as much explanation as the other person needs</li> <li>• Be explicit about the main point</li> <li>• Do not deviate from the main point</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CIRCULAR</b></p> <p>Communication is conducted in a circular manner around the main point. The point may be left unstated because the verbal and nonverbal information provided is sufficient for understanding. Stating the point explicitly is seen as insulting the other person.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never preface a comment with, "the point is..."</li> <li>• Embellish your remarks with stories and anecdotes. Let the story make the point.</li> <li>• Let the other person infer the meaning of your comments from the story</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DIRECT</b></p> <p>What one means is stated in a very straightforward and direct manner. There is no "beating around the bush." Directness is equated with honesty and respect for the other person.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the other person's time</li> <li>• Don't create ambiguity or uncertainty by avoiding the issue</li> <li>• Be straightforward</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INDIRECT</b></p> <p>Meaning is conveyed by subtle means such as nonverbal behavior, parables and stories, suggestions and implication. Indirectness is equated with politeness and respect for the other person.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the other person's feelings</li> <li>• Don't put the other person on the spot by being too direct</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FORMAL</b></p> <p>Communication is governed by strict rules regarding such things as: forms of address, ways to address persons of different ages and statuses, topics which can and cannot be discussed, etc. Communication in many respects is highly ritualized.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study the rules of communication in the target society / group and follow them.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFORMAL</b></p> <p>Communication is less bound to specific conventions. Persons have more flexibility in what they say, to whom they say it, and under what circumstances. Informal communication might also be demonstrated by the use of the first name, for example.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to find out what is allowable in the host society / group and follow the conventions.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LOW CONTEXT</b></p> <p>The context of the communication is not assumed to be known. Things must be explained clearly and unambiguously. Meaning must be expressed precisely.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always communicate clearly, completely, and unambiguously.</li> <li>• Don't leave understanding to chance.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGH CONTEXT</b></p> <p>The context for communication is assumed to be known. Hence it is unnecessary, even insulting to explain things and state meaning precisely. Meaning is taken from context.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always respect the other person's understanding of the situation.</li> <li>• Leave understanding to the other person.</li> </ul>

<p><b>ATTACHED (Emotive)</b></p> <p>Communication is carried out with feeling and emotion. Issues are discussed with a degree of passion and commitment. Communication is very expressive. Sharing one's values and feelings about the issues is highly valued.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your views with passion and conviction</li> <li>• If you care about an idea, show it.</li> <li>• Bring yourself as a person into the discussion and show who you are.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DETACHED (non-Emotive)</b></p> <p>Communication is carried out in a calm and impersonal manner. This is equated with objectivity, which is valued. Highly expressive, emotive, and engaged communication is inappropriate because this is seen as personalizing the issues and as biased.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your views dispassionately</li> <li>• Avoid being overly emotional</li> <li>• Avoid personalizing the discussion - keep yourself out of it.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>IDEA-FOCUSED</b></p> <p>The emphasis is on ideas which are seen as separate from the person. Thus, disagreement with another person's ideas is acceptable and even valued. It is not seen as a personal attack.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen carefully to the ideas being discussed.</li> <li>• If you disagree with someone's ideas, say so.</li> <li>• Because a person's ideas are wrong, doesn't mean there is something wrong with the person.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERSON-FOCUSED</b></p> <p>The emphasis is on the person, hence great importance is attached to the feelings of the other person. Issues and ideas are not separated from the person. Thus, disagreement with someone's ideas must be handled very carefully.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to the person. Be attentive to feelings.</li> <li>• In your communication, be careful not to hurt the other person's feelings.</li> <li>• Understand that an attack on someone's idea is an attack on that person.</li> </ul>
<p><b>TASK-FOCUSED</b></p> <p>Communication focuses on the task at hand and getting it done. The other person's feelings are secondary. Group harmony is secondary to task completion.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep focusing on the task at hand</li> <li>• Don't allow too much small talk to sidetrack the task</li> <li>• Clarify the task</li> <li>• Publicly sanction slackards</li> </ul>	<p><b>RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED</b></p> <p>Communication is focused on relationships. Maintaining group harmony is central. The task is secondary. Task completion must not come at the expense of the group or person.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make certain that your concern with the task doesn't come at the expense of someone's feelings and the well-being of the group.</li> <li>• Praise the participants for their good work.</li> <li>• Never publicly call down a colleague.</li> </ul>