



# Strictly Classified

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## How to Effectively Communicate with Your Supervisor

One of the essential factors to a positive work environment is establishing good working relationships with your co-workers and your supervisor. According to a recent workforce study, 84% of employees rated their relationship with their supervisor as good or excellent. The study also found that these strong relationships are based on trust from both employees and supervisors, and that it takes an open line of communication from both parties to create this type of environment. With that said, successful relationships are built upon the practice of effective communication skills. Effective communication with your supervisor is a key element of your eventual success in the workplace. Therefore, it is important that you feel comfortable and prepared to approach your supervisor in a timely manner to discuss concerns, request assistance, or report work progress.

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### TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

- ❖ **Know what you want to achieve.** Before talking to your supervisor, make sure that you are clear about the goal of your conversation, whether it's to request guidance or assistance on something you are working on, or report your progress on a project. It is helpful to write down all the topics you hope to discuss and communicate before the conversation.
- ❖ **Choose a preferred method of communication.** Some people are more effective communicating via email while some others prefer to have face-to-face time or a quick conversation. Tailor the communication method to the one your supervisor prefers.
- ❖ **Schedule your conversation.** Be considerate of your supervisor's time and schedule when you approach him/her. Don't try to communicate or pressure for an answer when he or she is under a deadline or resolving an urgent issue. If your supervisor prefers face-to-face meetings, schedule your conversation ahead of time so that you can prepare accordingly. Try not to wait until the last minute to ask for instructions and/or assistance on projects you are working on.
- ❖ **Be concise and straightforward.** When speaking with your supervisor, you should concisely intro-

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David Iwata, Chair ■ Henry Jones, Vice Chair ■ Ann Young-Havens ■ Karen Martin, Personnel Director ■ (213) 891-2333

duce your concerns or requests and explain why you are bringing them to his/her attention. It is also important to focus the communication on the issues at hand and how to find solutions to move forward.

- ✦ **Practice active listening.** During a meeting with your supervisor, you should engage to be an active listener instead of worrying about what you are going to say. Practicing active listening skills will help you understand and anticipate your supervisor's needs and what actions need to be taken. Take notes as needed so that you will remember more of the conversation and action items.
- ✦ **Have a positive attitude and be open to feedback.** The rule of thumb in effective communication and a successful relationship is to exhibit a positive attitude. It is also crucial to keep an open mind and be receptive to feedback that your supervisor may provide you.
- ✦ **Communicate regularly with your supervisor to develop and maintain a successful professional relationship.** Establishing an effective communication channel with your supervisor on a regular basis when things are going smoothly will make it easier to approach him/her when a problem arises.

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