Communication Skills

A Curriculum for Members of The International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades

International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades
Joint Apprenticeship and Training Fund
1-800-276-7289
A Curriculum for the
members of the
International Brotherhood
of Painters and Allied Trades AFL-CIO

The IBPAT JATF Educational Program, which involves this series of Textbooks in conjunction with classroom or correspondence-type instruction and on-the-job training, is provided to help maintain a constant supply of qualified workers for the industry. Everyone who enters the trade makes a definite commitment to themselves as well as to the employer. This includes a commitment to work diligently, to learn new techniques as well as improve on those already learned, to maintain an attitude which promotes learning, and to exercise a high degree of maturity in all matters related to the job.

These Textbooks are provided as a supplement to the on-the-job training everyone receives while performing their job. Every journeyman and apprentice must seek to learn from any source at their disposal in a continuing effort to enhance and upgrade their skills. The Industry is in a constant state of change and only through efficient and continued education will our trades remain state-of-the-art.

Copyright 1997

by

The International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades
Joint Apprenticeship and Training Fund
1750 New York Avenue NW, 8th Floor
United Unions Building
Washington, DC 20006

All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced without written permission of the publisher.

Printed in U.S.A.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are extremely grateful to the following manufacturers and organizations for providing time, photographs, illustrations, and other materials for this book.

IBPAT JATF GLAZIER CRAFT COMMITTEE
Richard Mauro, President, Tower Glass Co., Inc.
Charles Boniols, Model Glass, Inc.
William Minderman, Vice-President of Administration, VVP America, Inc.
John Frye, Vice President W.S.A., Inc.
David Ottesen, Business Manager, Local Union #188
Patrick Dalton, Business Manager, Local Union #1165
Joe Ashdale, Business Manager, Local Union #252
Yves Tessier, Business Manager, Local Union #200

IBPAT JATF GLAZIER CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
Harry F. Schurr, Secretary, Apprentice Coordinator, Local Union #252
George Sandell, Training Coordinator, Local Union #1621
Douglas Melphy, Financial Secretary, Local Union #930
Mike Schuler, Training Coordinator, Local Union #188
Rudy Tasic, Apprentice Coordinator, Local Union #27
Richard Mauro, President, Tower Glass Co., Inc.
Skipper Jordan, General Superintendent Glass, Masonary Arts
David Whitfield, Apprenticeship Instructor, Local Union #1044
Gilbert C. Humann, Business Manager, Local Union #188
Debi L. Humann, Technical Writer, Puget Sound Technical Writers
Michael Metz, Instructor, Local Union #252

IBPAT JOINT APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING FUND
A.L. “Mike” Monroe, General President
Richard Hackney, Administrator
Brian Gustine, Technical Assistance Coordinator

GEORGE MEANY CENTER FOR LABOR STUDIES INC.
Sue Schurman, Executive Director, George Meany Center
Chuck Hodell, Director, George Meany Center, Educational Design Unit
Julie Ann Mendez, Instructional Designer
OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this module each student should be able to:

- Be able to identify the elements of verbal and non verbal communication (outlined in this manual) and describe their importance in the communication process.

- Define the basic communication process and identify common barriers to effective communication.

- Identify the four personality types and describe ways to productively work with each.

- Identify good listening skills and explain their importance.

- Identify strategies for resolving conflicts in a positive manner.

- Explain the serious nature of sexual harassment and the importance of supporting a “no harassment” work environment.
It can be said that almost every problem, every conflict, every mistake, or every misunderstanding is based on a communication problem. We are constantly communicating both in our personal lives and on-the-job.

Communication is defined as the interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, through writing, or through signs. In general terms, communication is 10% words, 40% tone and 50% body language.

**TYPES OF COMMUNICATION**

There are two general types of communication; verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication involves not just the specific words used but also the vocal tone and the speed with which we talk. To go one step further, verbal communication involves everything we, as a listener, hear when talking to another person or persons. All aspects of the speaker's vocal qualities contribute to the message that we receive.

Nonverbal communication, on the other hand, involves everything that the listener or receiver sees during a conversation. Body language, facial expressions, nervousness, physical grooming, personal mannerisms and other idiosyncrasies are all components of nonverbal communication.

Verbal and nonverbal communication work together to give us the complete communication picture. If they match and are consistent with each other, they strengthen and underscore the meaning of the speaker’s message. If they are inconsistent, for example, the speaker verbally says that they are “fine” yet their body language is one of nervousness. We disregard the words and will believe the body language. Verbal and nonverbal communication occur simultaneously.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Verbal communication is the exchange of information using words. Reading and writing are also forms of verbal communication but, for this topic, the emphasis will be placed on the spoken word.

The basis of verbal communication is language. Language is using words in a way that allows people to share information effectively. Whatever language is being used, whether it is language from another country or specialized phrases used in your specific occupation, there must be a common understanding of the definitions in order to convey a clear message.
NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Nonverbal communication is the exchange of information without the use of words. Nonverbal communication is often defined as “what we don’t say.”

Nonverbal body language is spontaneous, and, in many instances, will more accurately reflect the person’s state of mind (whether it is the listener or the speaker). Posture, gestures, and physical movement are all unconscious indicators of how we feel about what is being said and how we feel about the person saying it. Body language is our barometer about what is really happening and what the true meaning of any communicated message is. The basic types of nonverbal communication include:

❖ **EYE CONTACT**

Eye contact is a powerful communication tool. A glance, for example, is often an attention getting method to open a conversation. Eye contact also suggests respect and a willingness to listen. On the other hand, a lack of eye contact often indicates that a person is avoiding communication. It may indicate anxiety or a sense of defenselessness. The eyes also carry many nonverbal messages such as fixing in a stare when angry, narrowing in disgust, and opening wide in fear or surprise.

❖ **FACIAL EXPRESSIONS**

The face is the most expressive part of the body. A few examples of the various messages facial expressions convey are anger, joy, suspicion, sadness, fear and contempt.

❖ **POSTURE**

The manner in which a person holds their body carries nonverbal messages. A person in good health and with a positive attitude usually holds their body in good alignment. A depressed or weary person is more likely to slouch. A person’s posture can also provide nonverbal clues concerning pain and physical limitations.

❖ **GAIT**

A bouncy, purposeful walk usually carries a message of well-being. A less purposeful, shuffling gait can mean that the person is sad, discouraged, fatigued or is just not clear as to their next action.
GESTURES

Physical gestures can convey many different messages. For example, some common gestures include thumbs up for victory, thumbs down meaning a negative feeling or viewpoint, kicking an object or having clenched fists often expresses anger, wringing of the hands or tapping the foot usually means anxiety, tension, or nervousness, a wave of the hand serves to beckon someone to come, or, if waved in another way, signifies that someone is leaving. Gestures are also used extensively when two persons speaking different languages attempt to communicate with each other.

GENERAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND GROOMING

The type of clothing worn and the person’s grooming practices also carry significant nonverbal messages. Generally, for example, healthy persons with good self-esteem tend to pay attention to details of dress and grooming while persons with low self-esteem show much less interest.

SILENCE

Periods of silence during communication also carry important nonverbal messages. The silence between two persons may indicate either a complete understanding of each other, or, a lack of agreement with each other’s actions or viewpoints.

TOUCH

The use of touch can be a valuable communication tool. Touching someone in sympathy or compassion often says more than words can. Teachers can motivate or empower students simply with a pat on the shoulder. Casual touching can also draw the listener’s attention to a point being made by the speaker.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Generally speaking, the communication process has five basic elements; two people (the sender and the receiver), two processes (sending and receiving), and one message. The problem, of course, is finding the best way to get the communication or message from one person to another.

The speaker says what they want to say to the receiver by selecting words that will best convey their meaning and by using a variety of gestures, facial expressions, or other personal mannerisms that will help transmit
that message. The message is composed of three elements, verbal, vocal and visual. Words are used to make up the verbal element while intonation and stress make up the vocal element. The visual element includes everything the listener sees while the message is being conveyed.

The listener “receives” the message through a series of “filters.” These filters may include their past experiences, their perception of the speaker, their emotional involvement with the message, their understanding of the message’s content, and their level of attention. In a sense, as the speaker speaks the listener translates the message into their own words, creating their own version of what they think the speaker has just said.

Unless both the sender and the receiver have identical past experiences, effective communication may be difficult. Without clear and concise communication skills misunderstandings can frequently occur. Communication is influenced by the way people feel about a subject, a task or a person. For example, in order for students to learn from a teacher they need to feel that what is being taught is of value. In the same sense, taking instruction from a supervisor who does not have the worker’s respect may also be difficult. Each of us must realize that our feelings and emotions play a significant role in effective communication.

Truly, effective communication can not be a one-sided monologue. To persuade, inform, or change the listener, both the sender and the receiver must be actively involved. Communication is continuous and reciprocal. Both persons mutually and continuously send and receive messages.

When people communicate they must also offer “feedback” about the message. To give feedback is to respond to the message or the speaker in such a way that the speaker knows that the message has been heard and understood. Communication is not complete until the message has been understood. Feedback can include asking questions, nodding the head in affirmation or in a negative manner, or a verbal reply.

**COMMUNICATION BARRIERS**

Communication barriers are generally found in three areas; the way a message is sent, environmental interruptions, and how a message is received. While communication can break down in other ways, people who understand these problem areas have better control of the communication process and have fewer misunderstandings as a result.
**SENDING MESSAGES**

As speakers, the messages we send, whether verbal or written, seem perfectly understandable. From our own point of view, our messages are very clear and concise. To the listener, however, the words may be confusing or unclear, our tone of voice may be misleading, or our body language may not accurately convey the meaning or the importance of the message.

Messages should be formed based on the listener’s level of understanding. Think through the message and try to predict how it will be received.

The responsibility of determining whether effective communication has occurred lies with the sender. To make certain that the message was understood, the speaker should get some type of feedback from the listener. As previously stated, this feedback could include a nod of the head, a restating of the message by the listener or some other response.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

The environment may also have a tremendous impact on communications especially in the construction trade. Many conditions exist, both in the shop and on-the-job, that can make communicating complex ideas or instructions almost impossible. Environmental factors such as: noise, extreme temperatures, and distracting activities can all interfere with the communication process. You can make your on-the-job communications more accurate and effective by trying to find a location that is more quiet or a less noisy time of the day to talk.

**RECEIVING A MESSAGE**

It is believed by many that the biggest single communication problem is the lack of ability to effectively listen. Most people seem to assume that what they understood to be the message is what the speaker intended. Frequently the two are not the same.

A word or a facial expression can change the meaning of a message. Likewise, a previous experience by the listener can interpret a conversation differently from what was intended. Another common problem arises when the listener starts planning a response to what is being said instead of actively listening. As a result, the listener does not hear the entire message.

As the sender, asking for feedback from the listener is the best way to insure that the intended meaning of your idea or message was clear.
PERSONALITY TYPES

Misunderstandings are caused by the basic differences in people and their communication styles. The earliest recorded effort to understand these differences was developed when astrologers defined the twelve astrological signs or types of people according to the four elements of earth, air, fire and water. It is believed that people actually fall into types; in other words, that their behavior is definable and reasonably predictable.

The value in understanding the basic personality types is that it can help you predict behavior and better understand your fellow workers, supervisors, family members, and friends.

Understanding these basic personality types can make a positive difference on the job. Recognizing and understanding how people act can make “running” a job easier, can make meeting deadlines more likely, and can improve morale as well as productivity and profits.

As you read this topic, you may identify yourself or others with several behaviors from each grouping. We can all find traces or even large doses of each personality type in our make up and behavior. Today there are more than a dozen different models of personality groupings. For our example, we will call the four groupings Movers, Opposers, Followers, and Bystanders.

❖ MOVERS

A mover is the one person in the work group who will usually initiate whatever action is needed. The mover will also try to determine where you’re heading and will suggest and develop ideas for how to get there.

Movers are usually called “natural leaders.” A mover’s value on the job is obvious. Having good ideas and the energy to back them up is a most useful and constructive trait.

Movers, in general, enjoy power and enjoy being in charge, however, they also have a strong need for approval and for others to agree with them. They are also frequently unaccepting of other people’s ideas. Mover’s generally see their own ideas as the only and best way of accomplishing a task or settling an issue.

❖ OPPOSITION

The opposer generally pushes against whatever is being discussed or considered. The opposer creates a challenge by blocking the direction or intended destination of any idea. Opposers get their attention and sense of importance by taking a contrary position.
In a group, opposers can serve a useful purpose. Foremen and other leaders can use an opposer to test ideas or scrutinize plans. By redirecting the opposer’s negative viewpoint, their ideas may be used to stimulate further thought or discussion which could result in improving the original suggestion.

❖ FOLLOWER

The follower is the person in the group who generally “goes along.” Followers will support someone or someone else’s idea, however, they most likely will not initiate ideas of their own. Followers are not uncreative but may have a greater need to play it safe, to keep a lower profile, or to wait until they see the general opinion of the group as a whole before they take a stand. Followers are very good implementors once they commit themselves to an idea. Followers have their own level of power in any group. By being supportive, the follower empowers others to take whatever action is necessary.

❖ BYSTANDER

The bystander is quite different from the follower. While the follower agrees with ideas and viewpoints that they personally relate to, the bystander stays out of direct action altogether. The bystander makes no alliances with any of the other three personality types. Bystanders observe and keep opinions to themselves. This may create a level of uneasiness on the job because no one really knows what the bystander is thinking.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE FOUR PERSONALITY TYPES

Whether you are a foreman or a co-worker, learning how to adapt your skills to each of the four personality types will improve your ability to communicate your ideas and feelings.

Here are some tips that will help you communicate with the four personality types:

❖ MOVER

As foreman, supervising a “mover” type personality may seem like a challenge. The foreman must be able to anticipate the mover and create a situation where they can contribute without dominating the work situation.

Often foremen, themselves, are mover personalities and must be aware of their own tendency to “take over” to the exclusion of all other ideas.
❖ **OPPOSER**

If you know a co-worker has an “opposer” type of personality you can use it to your advantage. People have a tendency to want to ignore or put down objections from an opposer when, in fact, they actually serve a useful purpose. As previously stated, an opposer’s negative viewpoints may actually be very insightful if looked at in a positive manner. When this personality type is used effectively, an opposer’s comments can be constructive and useful to the work effort instead of simply an opposition.

Foremen should also pay particular attention to their own need to oppose when in a leadership role. Constantly playing the devil’s advocate, finding fault and critiquing the ideas of others can, often, be perceived as negative and unproductive.

❖ **FOLLOWER**

In general, the foreman should allow the follower to find their own level and not put them on the spot too early. Followers are very good implementors once they commit to an idea. The smart foreman uses this to their advantage.

❖ **Bystander**

As a foreman or leader, it is important to know that bystanders may not want to be bystanders. Some people become bystanders because they are not given encouragement, confidence, or training to try any other role. One good way of dealing with a bystander is to try giving that person a specific role or job instead of waiting for them to volunteer or asking them for some type of commitment.

---

**LISTENING**

Throughout our educational process we have been taught how to put our thoughts and feelings into words. Unfortunately, very little of our educational experience has been devoted to improving our ability to receive messages. Listening is far more than merely hearing.

Receiving is about the message (both the words and the intent) being transmitted accurately from the sender to the receiver. Receiving is about asking questions and providing feedback to the sender so that the sender knows that the message has been accurately transmitted.

Effective listening is hard work. To turn off our personal “self-talk” about how we feel, what we think, what we want, and who we are is difficult. It takes
a conscious effort to listen to another person’s ideas and viewpoints.

Actively listening to another person increases their feeling of trust and cooperation. On the job, this generally means a reduction in turnover, more of a commitment to company goals, higher profits and productivity due to fewer misunderstandings, improved morale, and an improved sense of teamwork.

**THE FOUR LEVELS OF LISTENING**

Like personality types, listeners can also be thought of in four general categories: the non-listener, the marginal listener, the evaluative listener, and the active listener. As with personality types, these categories, depending on the situation or circumstance, may overlap.

- **THE NON-LISTENER**

The non-listener, generally, makes no effort to hear what is being said or will pretend to listen while thinking of something else. You can recognize the non-listener by the blank stare and possibly nervous mannerisms and gestures. Frequently the non-listener wants to do all (or most) of the speaking. The non-listener constantly interrupts and has to have the last word. The non-listener is perceived as insensitive and irritating.

- **THE MARGINAL LISTENER**

The marginal listener is a superficial listener. Generally this listener is too busy preparing a reply to what is being said to really pay attention to the meaning or intent of the message. The marginal listener is easily distracted by environmental noises, movements, or his own train of thought. It is common for many marginal listeners to selectively look for outside disturbances to use as an excuse for not paying attention to the conversation.

The main problem with marginal listening is that there is enormous potential for misunderstanding since the listener is only superficially concentrating on the message.

With a non-listener, the speaker can pick up on fairly obvious clues that the listener is not listening. With the marginal listener, however, the speaker may think that they have the attention of the listener but, in fact, the listener is not paying attention at all.
THE EVALUATIVE LISTENER

The evaluative listener actively tries to hear what the speaker is saying but doesn’t make an effort to understand the speaker’s intent. The evaluative listener tends to be logical and unemotional. The evaluative listener evaluates the message strictly on the basis of the words delivered, totally disregarding the vocal tone, body language and facial expressions. This listener is accomplished at deciphering the words, statistics, and facts of the message but lacks the sensitivity to “read” the rest of the message.

In many cases the evaluative listener believes that they understand the speaker and yet the speaker does not feel understood.

THE ACTIVE LISTENER

Active listening is the most comprehensive and the most powerful level of listening. This is also the most demanding because it requires the deepest level of concentration and attention.

The active listener does not judge the speaker’s message but instead focuses on understanding the speaker’s point of view. The active listener focuses attention on understanding the thoughts and feelings of the other person as well as the spoken word. Active listening involves suspending our own thoughts and feelings in order to give attention solely to the message and the intent of the speaker.

Active listening also requires that the listener send verbal and nonverbal feedback to the speaker indicating that what is being said is really being understood.
1. What three factors are involved in verbal communication?

2. What is the basis of verbal communication?

3. What are the basic elements to the communication process?

4. Name three examples of “feedback.”

5. To what level of understanding should messages be based?

6. Who has the responsibility for determining whether communication has occurred?

7. What causes misunderstandings?

8. What are the four basic personality types?
9. *Which personality type generally “goes along?”*

10. What is the “power” of the “follower?”

11. What are the four levels of listening?

---

**INEFFECTIVE LISTENING**

Ineffective listening is one of the most frequent causes of miscommunication. The results of ineffective listening include lower worker productivity, missed sales, unhappy customers, and an increased margin of costs and lost profits.

Poor listening is recognized as being one of the primary contributors to divorce and the inability of a parent and child to openly communicate.

We all know how it feels to be talking to a poor listener. The listener listens only to the beginning of the message and then their mind goes to work imagining where you are going with your idea and how they feel about it.

Often the listener interrupts to give their thoughts before the speaker is even finished. The result of this non-communication is that vital information is lost and issues are not explored properly.

There are some basic reasons for ineffective listening. If we are aware of them, they can be avoided and we can improve our listening skills.

- **SPEED DIFFERENCE**

  The difference between speech speed and listening speed creates a listening gap. For example, the average person speaks at about 135-175 words a minute while the average person can listen to 400-500 words a minute.
For poor listeners, the difference between listening speed and speaking speed is time spent jumping to conclusions, daydreaming, planning a reply or mentally arguing with the speaker instead of evaluating body language and really listening to what is being said.

❖ **LACK OF TRAINING**

We do more listening than speaking, reading, or writing, yet we receive almost no formal training in listening. Many people assume that they are good listeners when, in truth, few people really are. The normal, untrained listener is likely to understand and retain only about 50 percent of a conversation. This 50 percent retention rate drops to an even less impressive 25 percent after 48 hours.

❖ **LANGUAGE**

Words can mean instant understanding if they are used well and are within the listener’s vocabulary. If we use words or phrases not generally understood, our messages will not be received as we intended. Again, the message should be based on the listener’s level of understanding.

### TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE LISTENING

Practicing the following suggestions deliberately and actively will greatly improve your communication skills both as a listener and as a sender:

❖ **EXAMINE YOUR OWN ATTITUDE**

Remember that your feelings about the person to whom you are talking with, or listening to, have a great influence on your ability to communicate effectively with that person. The value you place on the message itself will also influence what you hear or what you say.

❖ **CONCENTRATE**

Remember that good listening is active, not passive. This means that you must focus your attention on the speaker and decide to listen. By focusing, you will also eliminate all noises and distractions allowing the message to be received clearly.

Remember, be alert, and allow sufficient time for the other person to share their point of view.
BODY LANGUAGE

Body language will show the speaker that you are interested in what is being said with a nod of the head, a smile, leaning forward with interest, or using appropriate facial expressions. All of these gestures tell the speaker that you are paying attention and are interested in their message.

ORGANIZE THE INFORMATION

By structuring or organizing the information as you receive it, you will improve your retention and understanding of the message.

LISTEN OPENLY

Suspend your personal judgments about what is being said until you have heard the whole idea. Try to listen wholeheartedly from the speaker’s point of view and not your own.

LISTEN TO ALL OF IT

Wait until the speaker has finished before commenting. As you listen try to figure out the relevant points and what the conclusion will be, but wait for that conclusion before you speak.

FEEDBACK

When appropriate, give verbal responses to let the speaker know that you are following their train of thought. Clarifying points with questions may be necessary but do not sidetrack the speaker or their point. Restating the point to make sure it was received accurately lets the speaker know that the message was understood and that you are interested in what is being said.

IT’S MY TURN TO TALK

Think before responding. Responding impulsively can disrupt communications. When its your turn to reply to what was said, hook into what was just said as a point of reference for your statement. This not only tells everyone you were listening but is a sign of respect to the previous speaker.

To keep the conversation positive and productive, try to avoid the following:

• Try not to interpret the speaker’s words or feelings. You cannot be certain how they feel. All you can do is tell them what you think they have told you.
Try not to indicate disapproval. Obviously, this will hamper normal conversation and lead to disputes or arguments.

Avoid belittling, making fun of the speaker, or arguing. Nothing is gained by ridicule or unnecessary conflict.

EMOTIONAL CONFLICTS

There is a real difference between a healthy disagreement and an emotionally charged, negative conflict. It is natural for people to have disagreements about how things should be done. A healthy disagreement can spark new ideas and lead to better solutions or plans of action. When the differences are combined with too much emotion, however, the results can be damaging and extremely unproductive.

Occasionally you will have to deal with emotional conflicts on the job. Your ability to resolve these situations in a positive way is important for yourself, other workers and your employer.

Dealing With Emotional Situations

Dealing with highly charged comments or messages in a thoughtful manner is difficult for most of us. With a little practice, however, an emotional situation or conflict can be de-fused.

It’s important for a good listener to recognize an emotional reaction from the beginning. An increased heartbeat, increased respiration, or a facial flush may all be signs that someone is getting upset.

When an emotional reaction begins, there is an almost irresistible urge to interrupt and argue with the speaker. Instead of interrupting, you should allow the speaker to finish talking before making a reply or a comment. Regardless of how provocative the message is, you must concentrate on understanding the point that the speaker is trying to make. If you continually interrupt, you most likely will lose your train of thought and objectivity.

Here are several strategies that can be used to effectively resolve an emotional conflict. The situation will determine which method should be used:
AVOIDANCE

Avoidance is an instinctive response to conflict. You can recognize avoidance when someone changes the subject, tries to redefine a conflict so that it no longer seems to exist, abruptly leaves the scene of the conflict or mentally tunes out. By avoiding the problem neither party is labelled a winner or a loser. Avoidance, however, rarely works because it does nothing to resolve the conflict.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation occurs when someone “gives in” without actually working through the conflict itself. Accommodation provides a quick, but frequently temporary, solution because the base issues are left unresolved. Frequently, the power of the conflicting parties influences the outcome more than the legitimacy of the complaint or the wisdom of the solution. For example, a supervisor wants an employee to do something a new way. The employee feels that it is fine the way it is being done, but agrees anyway. The employee has accommodated the supervisor but there is no real resolution. There is a good possibility that the problem will eventually resurface.

DOMINATION

Domination is a win-lose method that involves a struggle for power and domination over someone else. The most powerful person, in some cases the supervisor or foreman, will determine the final solution. In some cases this strategy can be beneficial. It can resolve a conflict quickly and can be effective when all parties recognize and accept the power relationship.

Unfortunately, this method can create resentment if it is overused since the final outcome does not take other people’s thoughts and feelings into consideration.

The domination strategy, like the other strategies mentioned, may be a temporary “fix” since it does not treat the real source of the conflict.

NEGOTIATION

Negotiation is when both sides state their positions and try to reach an acceptable compromise. Most negotiation situations create a situation where everyone partially wins and partially loses. Depending upon the specific situation, this can either be positive or lead to a situation where no one is completely satisfied.
COLLABORATION

Collaboration involves a face to face confrontation with the involved parties to work through the conflict cooperatively. This strategy relies on creative problem solving to identify a solution that will meet the needs of everyone involved. Collaboration takes more time and effort but it addresses the underlying issues of the situation or conflict. As a result, collaboration is generally the most long lasting and productive strategy for resolving conflict.

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVE CONFLICT

There are four basic behaviors that will help you successfully resolve any conflict. By using these behaviors you can turn a negative conflict into a positive disagreement:

OPENNESS

When dealing with any conflict, always state your feelings and thoughts openly, directly and honestly. Don’t quote other people’s negative statements about the person or situation. Talk about how you feel and about what you want while focusing on current specifics and problems.

EMPATHY

Try to understand what the other person is feeling and try to see the situation from their point of view. Demonstrate your understanding with comments such as “I appreciate how you feel,” or “I can understand your getting that impression” expressed in a sincere manner.

BEING POSITIVE

Try to use the conflict as a way to better understand the entire situation and as a means of finding a better solution.

EQUALITY

Treat the person and their ideas with respect. Give the person the necessary time to completely express their ideas.
THE "DO NOT'S" OF EMOTIONAL CONFLICT

Sometimes it's not enough to know what we should do, we also need to be aware of what we should not do when dealing with an emotional situation or conflict. The following approaches to conflict should be avoided since they will generally cause more problems in a conflict situation:

❖ **MINIMIZATION**

We do not always recognize just how seriously another person may have taken a comment or a particular action. Often we make light of these situations by using humor or sarcasm. The end result is that the person feels unvalued and belittled. When someone brings a problem to your attention, the best thing to do is to simply acknowledge it.

❖ **BLAME**

Because most problems are too complex to be totally caused soley by one person or one situation, the focus should be on preventing future problems rather than finding someone or something to blame.

❖ **UNLOADING**

When people have worked together for a length of time there are frequently small grievances that are simply ignored. When a larger problem arises there is a temptation to dredge up all these small grievances and include them with the current problem. Although the person "unloading" these issues may feel better, this seldom helps to resolve the larger conflict.

❖ **LOW BLOWS**

When working closely with people, over time we begin to understand their sensitivities. "Pushing these buttons" or taking advantage of these emotionally touchy areas in a disagreement can cause a conflict to escalate making it more difficult to resolve.

❖ **MANIPULATION**

Manipulation involves withholding approval or rewards or using personal charm to get someone to do something regardless of that person's needs or objectives.
FORCE

Using force involves the “I don’t care what you want, do it my way NOW,” approach of conflict management. It may get an immediate action but it’s also demoralizing to the other person because it does not acknowledge their worth or ideas.

PERSONAL CRITICISM

It is not pleasant but from time-to-time we all receive complaints or criticism. It may come from your boss, a co-worker, or even a customer. As long as the complaint is work related and not personal, you owe them the courtesy of listening.

If the criticism becomes personal, insulting or abusive the best course of action is to terminate the conversation by walking away or delaying the discussion until all parties can discuss the subject calmly.

When listening to a complaint, the following pointers may help:

- Don’t be defensive. Accept what is being said without making excuses.

- Wait until the person is finished to give your side of the story. This will not only allow you time to think but it shows that you take their point of view seriously.

- If there is some truth to what is being said, acknowledge it. This is especially true for someone who reports to you so that they know that they are free to complain if the situation warrants it.

- Beware of subtle threats or intimidation. If you see them, point them out as a way of saying that they won’t be tolerated.

- Try to come to a resolution that you both can agree with. Even if a problem hasn’t been solved, you can at least agree on the points that need work.

- Apologize if you feel it is appropriate.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Regardless of your personal attitudes concerning various sexual harassment situations, one thing is certain - sexual harassment in the workplace is against the law. Employees are entitled by law to a work environment that is not sexually offensive.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) amended its Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex to define harassing conduct and to reaffirm that sexual harassment is an unlawful employment practice.

It is not unusual for courts to impose stiff penalties on employers and individuals for sexual harassment. Employers and supervisors can no longer ignore the seriousness of sexual harassment in the work place.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment is defined by the EEOC as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when it takes place under any of the following circumstances:

1. When conduct is a condition of employment either stated explicitly or implied in some way.

2. When employment decisions are based on whether the employee submits to or rejects the harassing actions.

3. When the conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee’s on-the-job performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Generally speaking, a sexual harassment situation should include the following to constitute a chargeable action:

1. There must be some kind of sexual advance.

2. If the victim refuses, there must then be some kind of retaliation by the person who made the advance.

3. The threat of retaliation is enough to make a case, even if the threat cannot be carried out.
4. It must be demonstrated that an agent of the employer assisted the offender in some way such as by ignoring the victim’s complaint.

- **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Mere physical contact is not sexual harassment. Physical contact done in a sexually suggestive way, however, in an atmosphere of sexual innuendo may be a different matter.

- **COURSE LANGUAGE**

Using “foul” language does not necessarily constitute a sexual harassment situation. If the language is not of a sexual nature and is not directed to or about a specific person, it may not be interpreted as sexual harassment.

- **WHAT IS NOT SEXUAL HARASSMENT?**

Many incidents are subject to the EEOC policy but many others are not. There’s a difference between one employee being attracted to another and showing it in some way and an employee who forces his/her attentions repeatedly on an unwilling victim. Personal relationships that do not have a discriminatory employment effect do not generally fall under the EEOC guidelines.

Common sense should play a factor in determining sexual harassment. Whether an activity establishes a personal relationship or has a discriminatory effect on employment is determined on a case-by-case basis. Conduct that may be sexual harassment in one setting may not be in another.

- **THE EMPLOYER’S LIABILITY**

The following general situations define when an employer may be potentially liable for an act of sexual harassment:

1. When a sexual harassment offense is committed by a supervisor or other agent of the company. It is inconsequential as to whether or not the employer had any knowledge of the situation or even whether the company has a policy against sexual harassment. If the offense takes place under these circumstances, the company is responsible.

2. The employer can also be held responsible if ordinary employees, or even outsiders such as customers, feel that their positions or business entitle them to make passes at company employees. In this instance, however, the employer must have known or should have known about the situation. Also, to the degree to which an employer could have
prevented the situation and the firmness of the employer’s response will be factors in how the EEOC looks at the case.

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Prevention is the best tool for eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace. The employer must take all necessary steps to protect their employees from sexual harassment. The following points will help achieve a no-harassment environment:

1. Have a firm, clear no-harassment policy.
2. Establish a means to investigate complaints.
3. Provide a full and fair investigation.
4. Give out swift and appropriate discipline.
5. Protect the victim from reprisals.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The foundation of any no-harassment plan is a firm policy against harassment for any reason. The policy must make it clear that the entire company, from top level management on down, condemns sexual harassment. The policy must be publicized by posting notices, publishing bulletins, or stating the policy to all employees. Sexual harassment awareness should be part of every employee’s training, especially supervisory and management staff.

If any company policy is to be effective it must be supported by everyone especially supervisors or foremen. Supervisors must demonstrate by their own actions that they support and enforce the no-harassment policy. They must be alert to possible incidents of harassment and they must take firm action should a problem become evident.

DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Making judgments about people because of race, sex, age, handicaps, nationality or ethnic groups will only lead to trouble. Individuals differ in mechanical skills, communication skills, speed and quality of work, as well as how well they work in various situations. These differences can have a positive effect on-the-job. Every person should be given a fair opportunity for employment.
12. What is a “listening gap”?

13. What are some common signs that a person is becoming upset?

14. Why does avoiding a conflict rarely work?

15. What is considered the most long lasting of the conflict resolution strategies?

16. What are the four basic behaviors for resolving conflicts?

17. By law, what type of work environment are employees entitled to?

18. Does mere physical contact constitute sexual harassment?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the two general types of communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Will nonverbal or verbal communications more accurately reflect a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person’s state of mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. For communications to be truly effective, who must be involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How does the sender know that communication has occurred?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is the value of understanding the basic personality types?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Which personality type is usually called a “natural leader”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Which personality type generally pushes against whatever is being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Why is effective listening such hard work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. What is the main problem of marginal listening?

10. What is the most powerful level of listening?

11. What communication problem is one of the primary contributors to divorce?

12. What percentage of a conversation does the normal listener retain?

13. Why does the domination method of settling conflict often result in resentment?

14. What is meant by “negotiation?”

15. If a criticism becomes abusive, what is the best course of action?

16. What should you do if someone makes subtle threats in a conflict situation?