**6 Ways to Spark Verbal Communication Skills**

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As an electrician, you may frequently work alone. But for those times when you need to connect with customers, co-workers, and suppliers, good conversational skills are important. Each time you engage in a person-to-person discussion, you create the opportunity to improve relationships, enhance how others feel about you, and potentially generate more business. In this article, we will consider six ways to improve verbal communication skills. After all, developing personal bonds is key to success.

1. Be professional
   * When you are on the job, using language that is free of profanity is smart and makes you sound intelligent. Avoiding words and topics that could be perceived as offensive is the right thing to do in all settings - it conveys respect. Also, it minimizes conflict.
   * When others on your work team are cursing in front of customers, you can set a positive example by using appropriate language.
   * The words you choose and the way you deliver them permanently impacts message recipients, no matter the audience. Without question, leading with respect is always the correct approach, no matter the situation.
2. Listen intently
   * Everyone wants to be heard and understood. Be patient with speakers, allowing them time to express their messages.
   * Concentrate on that which is being said and provide feedback through body language such as facial expressions and nodding - show speakers that you are receiving and understanding their message.
   * Bring up topics that speakers shared at a later time to further cement personal bonds. People will be impressed that you heard and remembered their stories.
   * When a customer is talking about an electrical situation, and you are tempted to jump in as the subject matter expert, resist doing so until the speaker has finished communicating his or her thoughts.
   * Clarify that you received and understood the speaker’s message by paraphrasing - sharing the message as you heard it - in your words.
   * Reflecting the meaning of the content will lead to increased job safety and accuracy and solidify your connection with the speaker.
3. Balance speaking and listening
   * Conversations are like alternating current - the difference being that conversations reverse direction more slowly.
   * When you share roles as evenly as possible, both parties participate in and mutually benefit from the discourse. You’ll both learn more - and possibly laugh more.
4. Build rapport
   * Making people feel at ease and comfortable builds rapport. Being kind, open, and actively listening encourages others to share information that identifies commonalities in your interests and experiences.
   * Small talk may seem like a waste of time, but it leads to deeper conversations and connections.
   * Once you have established rapport, more informal conversations happen with ease. You may find that you have had similar experiences on jobs, like the same sports teams, and have similar hobbies. New friendships and business referrals are in your future.
5. Demonstrate empathy
   * When communicating, take care to consider how others will feel as a result of your message. How will your words be interpreted? Everything you communicate - and the way in which you communicate - impacts the emotional state of others both on the job site and at home.
   * When people with whom you are speaking are going through a difficult time, let them know that you feel for them and hope that their load will be lightened soon. Demonstrating empathy helps support others at a time during which they appreciate a kind word and may not be seeking advice.
6. Connect genuinely and disconnect politely
   * When you dedicate generous time and attention to your discussion, you may find that you can connect with everyone on some level, no matter how their viewpoints, positions, and background differ from yours.
   * It’s a good idea to be mindful of your tone of voice when conversing - it conveys meaning about your true emotional state when combined with your words.
   * When you need or want to end a conversation, politely ask to be excused and tell the person that it has been good speaking with him or her. If you wish to continue the conversation later, promise to schedule the follow-up discussion and follow through with that commitment.

Before wrapping up, let’s consider situations when verbal communication is challenging: when someone is difficult or belligerent. You should keep your cool and remain appropriate. Your classy behavior will prevail.

You may already be practicing effective verbal communication skills, but it’s good to be reminded that you can receive a return on your investment that leads to better relationships - and more electrical projects. Making time to engage with and show true interest in another person is one of the greatest gifts you can give.