



Using Positive Communication Techniques with Your Boss

Communicating with your boss can be stressful. Preparation, practice and positive communication techniques can help you get your ideas across in an effective way.

1. Before you meet with your boss to discuss your concerns, make a list of the issues that you hope to communicate.
2. In private, rehearse what you want to say to your boss.
3. When presenting your ideas, use qualifying words, such as “perhaps” and “maybe” rather than absolute words, such as “always”, “never”, “every”. Using absolutes can sound negative and raise a person’s defenses.
4. Make “I” statements such as “I need guidance” instead of “you” statements, such as “You haven’t given me guidance”.
5. Give yourself time to cool off, to collect your thoughts, and compose yourself before going to your boss. It is difficult to communicate effectively when you are emotional.
6. Give concrete examples when discussing a difficulty. Using objective examples will help to clarify your concerns.
7. Speak for yourself when stating concerns. Trying to include others not present may weaken your case rather than strengthen it. Avoid spreading gossip or rumors.
8. Listen carefully to what your boss says during the meeting. If you missed something or didn’t understand it, ask your boss to repeat or clarify it.
9. During your conversation with your boss, try to repeat and rephrase the points he or she makes to show that you are listening and understanding.
10. During your conversation, maintain good eye contact with your boss and lean into the conversation.
11. Keep an open mind and be open to compromise.
12. Have a positive attitude.
13. Bosses appreciate good feedback too. Offer praise and recognition when it is due.
14. Communicate regularly with your boss. Remember to acknowledge positive examples of work issues as well as your concerns.