

Verbal and nonverbal communication essay



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Running head: VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Shanena R. Jacobs University of Phoenix SOC/110

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Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Small group communication is a combination of verbal and nonverbal communication.

Verbal communication begins with task ordering, process orientation and narrative or fantasy. Nonverbal communication is always occurring whether or not anyone is speaking. When a person finds meaning in an action or statement, whether accurate or misinterpreted this means communication has taken place. In this paper, the writer will discuss the differences between verbal and nonverbal communication. The writer will provide examples on how verbal and nonverbal communication is used in a small group or team setting for effective group or team results. The functions of verbal communication begin with task ordering, process orientation and narrative or fantasy. Task ordering involves cognitive meaning that focuses on either/or choices and creates an understanding about the group's purposes and processes.

Task ordering permits one to judge whether or not the group has been a success or a failure. Process orientation is how one says something and is as important as what one says. Process orientation allows one to gently and diplomatically address issues that can create great difficulties if left to a no-holds-barred task orientation. One of the best ways to differentiate between task and process orientation is to examine the concept of leadership. For example, at the task level, someone is a successful leader if the goal is accomplished. At the process level, the group looks at how the leader

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accomplishes the goal, whether he or she was successful as a coach, as a participant and motivator (DuBrin, 2000).

The third function in verbal communication is narrative or fantasy. Narrative combines both myth and reality, utilized to motivate the team and build confidence. For example, a team leader may tell her team that she chose the best and brightest members to work with. Even though this may be considered wishful thinking, this statement gives the group a sense of confidence and motivation to succeed. Fantasy is the creative and imaginative shared interpretation of events that fulfills a group's psychological or rhetorical need to make sense of one's experience and to anticipate one's future (Bormann and Bormann, 1992, p. 110). Fantasies indicate the willingness of the group members to see events in a new or unique manner that has developed through the group's interactions.

Nonverbal communication complements the use of language and is made up of deeply ingrained response patterns. Often subtle and multidimensional and may take the form of body or facial gestures, tone of voice, use of time or habits of dress or hairstyle (Remland, 2000). Although facial expression for example, may express the same emotions across cultures, the appropriateness of expressing those emotions changes depending on culture and the context of the communication. All behaviors that are not consciously verbal and that are assigned, meaning one or both of the parties in a communication interaction, are nonverbal communication. Within a small group, every teammate depends on one another for the success and productivity of those endeavors each member share. Diverse backgrounds and relationships lead to different experiences and expectations within

groups and organizations, as well as within the culture at large. Personal experiences produce multiple and diverse opinions that can enhance the decision-making process and can lead to higher-quality decisions (Jackson, May, & Whitney, 1995).

Diversity in a small group is valuable. Diversity adds vital perspectives and insights when solving difficult or complex problems. The strength of diversity is in the creative problem solving that comes from including different perspectives; perspectives not formed by the same background and context. Groups are dynamic interactive systems, depending on the experience and abilities of the group or team members. The more diverse the members of the group, the more potential for varieties of interaction and therefore, the more potential for arriving at new and creative solutions.

In conclusion, verbal and nonverbal communication has many differences and both are very effective. Verbal communication allows group members to order the task, understand the process and develop symbolic meaning through a group narrative. With nonverbal communication one is allowed use of facial expressions, body language and paralanguage to name a few. Effective group members striving for success understand the importance of both verbal and nonverbal communication.

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