

## COMMUNICATION

Communicating is not only about what we say but it is also about the way we say it.

The three components of communication are:

- Verbal (what we say - 7% of any message is communicated through words)
- Vocal (how we say it)- 38% of a message is communicated by our voice
- Visual (what our body says)- 55% is conveyed by non-verbal body language

## ROLE OF LANGUAGE

With the **verbal component** of communication at only 7%, every word you use in a speech is important and you need to make the best use of words for the most impact.

The following hints need to be considered when making any presentation:

- Consider your audience when preparing your speech
  - Will they understand any technical terms you have included?
  - What is their standard of education?
- Use only words that are familiar to you and easy to use.

The **vocal component** of communication is that part which uses voice or vocal variety, to add emphasis, colour and meaning to your speech.

- Use pitch and inflection to convey emotion (high pitch for excitement, lower pitch for sombre moments), and different inflexions on the same words to convey several different meanings.
- Articulation is the ability to say words correctly. Practise by saying tongue twisters. Use a tape recorder to listen to your pronunciation.
- Use resonance for quality. Relax your throat (the feeling as you yawn) and open your mouth to allow the sounds to flow.
- The rate of your speech can be varied to give different effects. Excitement is enhanced by a fast speaking rate. A slow deliberate speech rate gives a feeling of sincerity.
- Plan how you want to say each sentence, underlying or highlighting words you particularly want to emphasise. Practise the speech, tape it and hear if you are achieving the effect you want.

The third component is body language:

## **BODY LANGUAGE**

The largest component of communication is the **visual component**, the body language. This means that the audience believes what they see rather than what they hear.

Even before you speak the audience will be making a judgement of you, therefore approach the lectern with confidence.

Reinforce your confidence and knowledge by STANCE and POSTURE.

- Stand erect.
- Keep feet approximately shoulder width apart and ensure good balance.
- Try to relax (your audience will then relax with you).
- Establish EYE CONTACT with the audience. You are talking to them, not to the floor or the ceiling. If possible settle your eye contact on one person for about 4-5 seconds then move to another person for the same length of time.
- Enhance the presentation with appropriate hand gestures. Use large hand and arm gestures for a landscape, elephant, or tree. Use small gestures for a flower or an insect.
- When using hand gestures also take into account the size of your audience and the size of the room. Small gestures will not be seen in a large auditorium.
- An expressionless face is like an expressionless voice. It says you are boring. Show enthusiasm, joy, sadness, excitement, or confusion in your facial gestures.
- Be sincere.
- Notes tend to make your message LESS sincere, as you lose a certain amount of eye contact and gestures can be restricted. You appear to be less confident.
- In some presentations, notes are necessary, as in a lecture, but practise at using them correctly. Pause, read ahead, look up and deliver the words.
- Practise makes perfect.