# Verbal Communication Skills

What you say and how you say it affects your relationship with colleagues and employees. One disastrous encounter can change your image for years to come. Often, time is a constraint in business situations and we tend to talk before we think.

Effective verbal communication is a skill that can be learned. Even if you have made blunders in the past, you can improve your image by following the list of things to do and to avoid in the table below.

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| **Do** | **Don’t** |
| Stay on track | Waste time with extra information not needed |
| Speak clearly and use inflection or pause for emphasis | Speak in a tentative way as if you are not sure of yourself |
| Be aware of audience reaction to what you are saying | Ignore body language cues that something is wrong |
| Start when you say you will start and end when you say you will end | Use time for idle chit chat |
| Be prepared for questions | Put off questions for another time |

Oral business communication is more formal than sitting around at home and chatting with friends and family. It is a skill that constantly requires thought and practice.

If you follow the guidelines above, you should see an improvement in how your messages are received and responded to immediately.