**Team Communications; The key to all success**

Rebecca Rose, CVT

CATALYST Veterinary Practice Consultants

Littleton, CO

The key to success is communication. 25% of veterinary team members surveyed said that a lack of communication is negatively impacting their job. Even if you think you are a great communicator, you can always be better. People that are constantly trying to improve their communication skills are successful not only in the workplace, but in every aspect of their life.

**Body Language:** You don’t have to be using your words to be sending a message to someone. In fact, Dr. Albert Mehrabian says that 93% of communication is nonverbal. This is just one example of how important communication is. Actions do speak louder than words. Make sure that you are conscious of your facial expressions, gestures, eye contact and the way you stand. All of these are noticed by the listener and are all an important part of conveying your message. If your words are saying one thing, but your body is showing another, this will be contradicting each other and can be extremely obvious to the listener.

**Active Listening:** Listening is such an important part of communication. Think about it, how many ears do you have? How many mouths do you have? This means that we are meant to listen twice as much as we talk. You can be a better listener by having strong eye contact, nodding your head, avoiding distractions, and making sure that you are facing the person that you are talking to. Don’t think that this is just important at work, this will also help you at home with your children too.

**The three components to active listening are:**

1. Receive the message
2. Process the message
3. Respond to the message

**Showing Appreciation:** Showing appreciation can be extremely easy, inexpensive, and quick. People can be hungry for a sincere “thank you” or a simple “well done!” These are all ways to improve your communication. Appreciation goes a LONG WAY!

**Write it:** Writing down what others are saying is a great way to show that you are listening. Not only are you less likely to make a mistake later on, but it shows respect to the person that is speaking. If you are on the phone, let the person know you are writing what they are saying down. You have to communicate even more when you are on the phone because the other person is not able to see everything that you are doing.

Some of these tips are simple and easy to do. If you remember to do each one of these, your life will be better and the other people that are in contact with you will enjoy your company even more! Remember that communication is not only about what you are saying, it is about your gestures as well. Great communication takes practice so keep working at these tips daily.

**Further Reading**

**8 ways to improve your communication, RIGHT NOW**, Kevin Daum, Inc. <http://www.inc.com/kevin-daum/8-ways-to-improve-your-communication-right-now.html>

**9 Tips to Improve Communication Skills** <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/9-tips-to-improve-communication-skills.html>

## **Nonverbal Communication**, Improving Your Nonverbal Skills and Reading Body Language, http://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/nonverbal-communication.htm

**7 ways to show appreciation,** PsychCentral, <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/relationships-balance/2012/10/10/7-ways-to-show-appreciation/>

**How much of communication is REALLY non-verbal?** The non-verbal group, <http://www.nonverbalgroup.com/2011/08/how-much-of-communication-is-really-nonverbal>

**Why you should show appreciation**, Personal Development, http://www.whatithinkabout.com/why-you-should-show-appreciation/