

Experiential Exercise

An Absence of Nonverbal Communication

This exercise will help you to see the value of nonverbal communication to interpersonal relations.

1. The class is to split up into pairs (Party A and Party B).
2. Party A is to select a topic from the following list:
 - a. Managing in the Middle East is significantly different from managing in North America.
 - b. Employee turnover in an organization can be functional.
 - c. Some conflict in an organization is good.
 - d. Whistle-blowers do more harm than good for an organization.
 - e. An employer has a responsibility to provide every employee with an interesting and challenging job.
 - f. Everyone should register to vote.
 - g. Organizations should require all employees to undergo regular drug tests.
 - h. Individuals who have majored in business or economics make better employees than those who have majored in history or English.
 - i. The place where you get your college degree is more important in determining your career success than what you learn while you're there.
 - j. It's unethical for a manager to purposely distort communications to get a favorable outcome.
3. Party B is to choose a position on this topic (for example, arguing against the view that "some conflict in an organization is good"). Party A now must automatically take the opposite position.
4. The two parties have 10 minutes in which to debate their topic. The catch is that the individuals can only communicate verbally. They may not use gestures, facial movements, body movements, or any other nonverbal communication. It may help for each party to sit on his or her hands to remind them of their restrictions and to maintain an expressionless look.
5. After the debate is over, form groups of six to eight and spend 15 minutes discussing the following:
 - a. How effective was communication during these debates?
 - b. What barriers to communication existed?
 - c. What purposes does nonverbal communication serve?
 - d. Relate the lessons learned in this exercise to problems that might occur when communicating on the telephone or through e-mail.

Ethical Dilemma

Defining the Boundaries of Technology

You work for a company that has no specific policies regarding non-work-related uses of computers and the Internet. They also have no electronic monitoring devices to determine what employees are doing on their computers. Are any of the following actions unethical? Explain your position on each:

1. Using the company's e-mail system for personal reasons during the workday
2. Playing computer games during the workday
3. Using your office computer for personal use (to check ESPN.com, shop online) during the workday
4. Looking for a mate on an Internet dating-service Web site during the workday
5. Visiting "adult" Web sites on your office computer during the workday
6. Using your employer's portable communication device (Blackberry) for personal use
7. Conducting any of the above activities at work but before or after normal work hours
8. For telecommuters working from home, using a computer and Internet access line paid for by your employer to visit online shopping or dating-service sites during normal working hours

Class Exercise

1. Ask the students to defend their opinions on each of the items.
2. Ask students to analyze their answers using ethical criteria.
3. Discuss student responses and invite students to comment and to ask questions.