

Scoring your Communication Skills Questionnaire

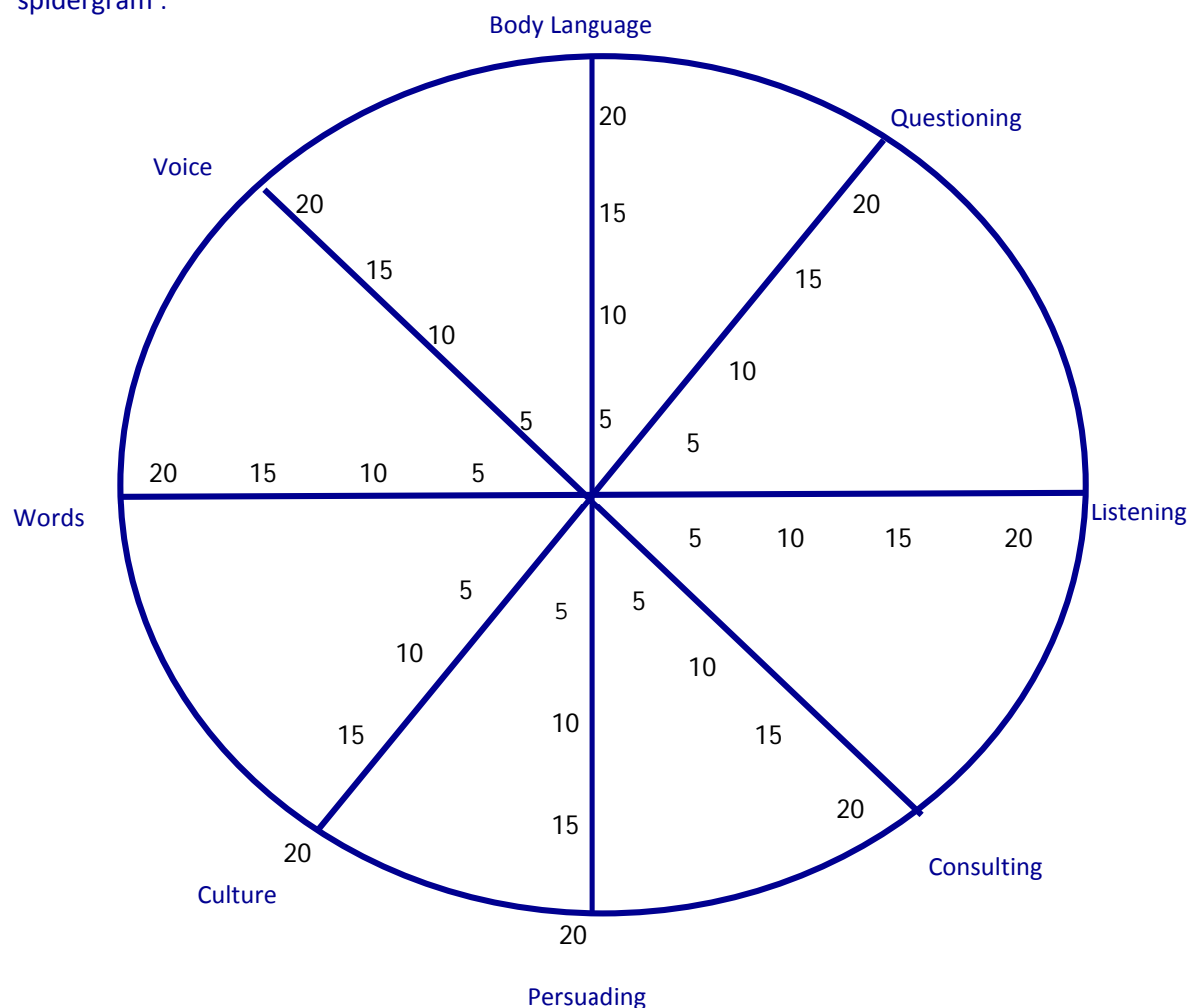
Fill in the score from each statement alongside the statement number below then total each column of scores.

WORDS	VOICE	BODY LANGUAGE	QUESTIONING	LISTENING	CONSULTING	PERSUADING	CULTURE
1 =	2 =	3 =	4 =	5 =	6 =	7 =	8 =
9 =	10 =	11 =	12 =	13 =	14 =	15 =	16 =
17 =	18 =	19 =	20 =	21 =	22 =	23 =	24 =
25 =	26 =	27 =	28 =	29 =	30 =	31 =	32 =
33 =	34 =	35 =	36 =	37 =	38 =	39 =	40 =
Total =	Total =	Total =	Total =	Total =	Total =	Total =	Total =

Now transfer your scores to the chart on the next page.

Interpreting Your Scores

Plot your scores on the correct axis of the diagram below. Then join up your plots to form a 'spidergram'.



- Words** - How you use words to express yourself.
- Voice** - How you use your voice when speaking to people.
- Body Language** - How you use non-verbals, e.g. eye contact, hands, body movement etc.
- Questioning** - How you use different types of questions to gain a full understanding of people's situation and needs.
- Listening** - How you actively listen to people to ensure you fully understand them.
- Consulting** - How you work with people to solve their problems and meet their needs.
- Persuading** - How you sell your ideas to others.
- Culture** - How you vary your behaviour to fit in with different cultural norms.

Interpretive Notes

There are eight contributing factors to consider when assessing your face to face communication skills. To enable you to identify your personal development needs there is a description of each factor below.

Words

By this we mean the content of your communication. People who communicate their thoughts and ideas use words and phrases that are easily understood. They avoid the use of abbreviations, jargon and technical language which may be unfamiliar to their audience. They express themselves concisely avoiding too much detail and repeating themselves.

They are easily understood.

Voice

By this we mean how you put your message across in a way which people find interesting and engaging. Good communicators vary the pitch and tone of their voice to bring variety of expression to what they are saying. They speak at a measured pace but can speed up or slow down as required to put their points across. They speak at an appropriate level of volume for their audience so that they can be easily heard and can emphasise key points. They use pauses effectively to give their audience thinking time and to bring emphasis to what they are going to say next.

They are easily heard.

Body Language

By this we mean all the non-verbals we use to communicate with people. These include:

- Facial expression
- Eye contact
- Use of hands and gestures
- Body posture and movement
- Physical appearance

Research has shown that 50% of the message in a face to face communication is imparted by body language which is why good communicators pay a great deal of attention when it comes to smiling, nodding, using direct eye contact, using hand movements and gestures to explain/reinforce points, using positive body language, and ensuring that their overall appearance is a turn on and not a turn off for their audience.

They engage with people visually.

Questioning

Good face to face communicators are expert questioners. They understand that by using appropriate open questions starting with Tell me..., What, Which, When, Who, Why and How they can discover important facts, thoughts, views and feelings from others. They know how to use closed questions to confirm information gained and to get commitments. They structure their questions in a logical sequence to get the full picture. Using a mixture of single open and closed questions they get people to open up and to talk freely.

They converse easily with people.

Listening

Listening is not just something you do whilst others are talking. Effective listening is not just physically hearing what people are saying it is understanding the meaning of what they are saying which is completely different. Here is a formula to remember in order to be an effective listener.

Look at the person speaking; have good eye contact.

Inquire with questions; use questions to show you really want to understand what they are saying.

Summarise what the other person has said to ensure you have a full understanding.

Take notes in appropriate detail.

Encourage the speaker; smile, nod, say things like “I see..., Aha..., Go on....Use empathy to show understanding.

Neutralise your feelings. The person’s delivery might not be engaging but do not make the mistake of thinking that what they have to say isn’t either! Listen with an open mind.

Consulting

The difference between selling and consulting is that consulting is all about questioning to help the person understand the reality of their current situation, clearly see what they are wanting to achieve and helping them create and deliver the required solution. Good consultants effectively use the STRIPE process.

Situation now. What is the situation at present? What problems does it create? What risks currently exist?

Target situation. What is the desired future situation? What will be different? How will it be different? Over what time-frame?

Restraints. What are the obstacles in the way of moving from the current to the future situation?

Issues. What key issues need to be addressed to remove the obstacles and to drive the change.

Plan. What is the plan of action to implement the changes required.

Evidence of success. What will success look like and feel like?

Using this process they enable people to design their own solutions to problems. They see their jobs as being able to offer their help in the delivery of these solutions.

They problem solve easily with people.

Persuading

If you think about it most face-to-face communication contains an element of persuading. It might be that the communicator wants to:

- convince people of their personal credibility
- influence people to take a course of action
- sell their thoughts and ideas
- obtain a commitment to a proposed action
- move the other party in a negotiation.

Whatever the intent good persuaders always make sure that they spell out the BENEFITS of their ideas to others. They do this using the SPACER formula.

S afe	The idea/proposal is risk free. It's a safe bet. Others have gained success with it.
P erformance	The idea/proposal will improve the use of resources – people, money, premises, equipment, and time. It will utilise resources more efficiently.
A ppearance	The idea/proposal will enhance the person's standing. It will improve their reputation. It will make them look good. It will do this for their organisation as well.
C onvenience	The idea/proposal is easy to implement. It is easy to use. It won't go wrong
E conomic	The idea/proposal will increase sales, reduce costs or both. It will increase profit margins, surplus etc.
R elationship	The idea/proposal will provide an ongoing relationship e.g. after sales service, advice, help desk etc. The person is not alone in the implementation of the ideas.

They influence others effectively.

Culture

Being aware of how to behave with people from different cultural backgrounds is an important contributor to the success of effective face-to-face communicators. This involves giving thought to the following key questions before meeting with people from different cultural backgrounds.

1. The history of the person, group or country?
2. What are the cultural norms in society, in business, in politics, in the family and between members of a specific group?
3. Why do these cultural norms exist? How have they come about?
4. How different are they to yours?
5. What change in beliefs, behaviours, and appearance will you need to pay attention to in order to fit in and not cause offence?
6. Who can guide me on these issues?
7. What specific language or jargon do I need to use?
8. Who can I practise these on?
9. What situations might I face? How should I handle them?
10. Finally what must I avoid at all costs so as not to give offence?

If you can answer 'yes' to these questions you are well prepared to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. It is of course also important to live out your organisation's culture and values in all your communications.

It is easy for you to adapt to people from different cultural backgrounds.

Personal Development Planning

1. What are your strengths as a face-to-face communicator (Scores over 15)?
2. What can you do to build on these strengths?
3. Where do you need to make improvements (Scores of 10 to 15)?
4. What can you do to make these improvements?
5. Where must you now focus attention to gain the necessary skills (Scores of below 10)?
6. What can you do to gain the necessary knowledge and experience?