

Tips for Communicating with Employees who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



FACT:

There are many effective strategies that can facilitate communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing employees.



One-to-One Communication Strategies

Ask your deaf or hard-of-hearing employee how he or she prefers to communicate.

Get the employee's attention before speaking.

Call his or her name—or a tap on the shoulder, a wave or other visual signal will get the employee's attention.

Look directly at the employee when communicating.

Avoid looking down at papers, looking at a computer screen or writing on a board. A deaf or hard-of-hearing employee benefits from facial cues.

Facilitate speechreading.

State the topic of discussion and speak slowly and clearly.

Make eye contact.

Eye contact makes communication direct. Even if an interpreter is present, talk directly to the deaf or hard-of-hearing employee.

Speak slowly and clearly.

No need to raise your voice or exaggerate. Try to enunciate each word. Short sentences are easier to understand than long ones.

Non-verbal ways to help communication.

Use gestures, body language and facial expression to help communication.

Choose an environment that is conducive to communication.

Use a quiet place with minimal interruptions.

Tips for working with an interpreter.

When using an interpreter, make eye contact with, look at and speak directly to the deaf person. Ask the deaf employee where is the best place for the interpreter to sit.

Take advantage of current technology.

Use email, instant messaging, texting, and apps on your computer or smart phone. These are easy and inexpensive to use.

Use hands-on demonstration for training and assignment of tasks.

Hands-on demonstrations and showing examples can clarify instructions.

Group Situations and Meeting Communication Strategies

Ask the employee to choose the best seating for his or her communication needs.

The employee may need to sit next to or across from the speaker so he or she can see the speaker's face. Consider the layout of the room to provide good communication.

Make sure only one person talks at a time.

Indicate to the employee which person is speaking.

Provide an agenda and use visual aids.

Vision is the primary method for receiving information for a deaf or hard-of-hearing employee. PowerPoint® presentations and captioned video programs are useful. Allow time to read the visual information before speaking.

Work with a sign language interpreter.

Ask the employee where he or she would prefer to have the interpreter stand or sit.

Assign a notetaker.

It's also a good idea to assign a notetaker to record and distribute the information discussed. Have minutes or notes taken during the meeting for future reference.

Take advantage of current technology.

Use email, instant messaging, texting, and apps on your computer or smart phone, videophone and online relay services. For small group situations, apps like ASR (Automatic speech Recognition), group chat or video communication can be used.

Use technology for remote conferencing.

Videoconferencing software is available and enables the deaf or hard-of-hearing employee to fully participate in meetings.

Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf

is the world's first and largest technological college for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. It represents the first concerted effort to educate large numbers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students within a university planned principally for hearing students.

- Among RIT's more than 18,000 full- and part-time students are nearly 1,200 deaf and hard-of-hearing students from the United States and other countries.
- Students are enrolled in more than 200 technical and professional programs offered through RIT's nine colleges:
 - College of Applied Science and Technology
 - Saunders College of Business
 - B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences
 - Kate Gleason College of Engineering
 - College of Health Sciences and Technology
 - College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
 - College of Liberal Arts
 - National Technical Institute for the Deaf
 - College of Science
- RIT is known worldwide for its superior cooperative work experience program, which gives students practical on-the-job experience before they graduate.
- For more information about hiring co-op students or graduates, contact the NTID Center on Employment.

R·I·T

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