Video Transcript

Positive Body Language by Kristen Ober

Welcome to training about positive body language. At the end of our training session you should be able to identify three elements of body language that enhance team communication. The elements being covered include eye contact, facial expressions, and posture. In business, body language or nonverbal behavior plays an important role to ensure effective communication. Only some of what you mean to communicate is done by words. On this example you can probably guess how each person is feeling by looking at their eyes, facial expressions, and how they stand or move. As a team leader you don't want to send a message to team members that you're not interested, that you're bored, or they're you're resisting suggestions or ideas, when in fact you're not. You also don't want to seem as if you're unapproachable. Conveying interest, showing that you're open and instilling trust can all be done by practicing positive body language.

Eye contact: Making eye contact with the team member while they are speaking can indicate to them that you're interested in what they have to say. You don't want to make eye contact constantly as someone might think you're staring and find it offensive. Instead, look people in the eyes but look away now and then, like when you nod or when you begin talking or maybe when you laugh. Try not to stare downward, don't look around the room very often, and don't glance at your watch as the speaker will think that you are not paying attention any longer.

Facial Expressions: Your team members will watch your face as they talk with you and sometimes even before they will approach you. If you're frowning they'll think that you're frustrated or angry. If you have one corner of your mouth up in kind of a half-smile you'll be showing contempt and maybe even hatred. If you're smiling they'll think you're happy or content. When you smile you use muscles around the mouth and eyes but if your fake smiling at someone most of the time the muscles around the mouth are used, but the muscles around the eyes aren't used, and the lack of motion can be easily detected; they will know you're faking. Using a neutral expression may mean that you lack an understanding of the message, but keeping a positive, pleasant facial expression lends to approachability. Concentrate on not tightening your face muscles, open your eyes fully, and relax your mouth to the point that your lips part slightly.

Posture: A team member could be put off by you or they could think that you're really receptive to their ideas or suggestions solely by reading your posture. On teams it's extremely important to communicate openness in order to get people to talk, share, and work with you. Having an open posture will increase your approachability. Keeping your arms out and not crossed, standing or sitting up straight and pointing your body directly at the person who is speaking or toward the group can tell your team members that you are ready and willing to work with them. Avoid closed postures that include hunched shoulders, folded arms, crossed legs, and inward pointing feet.

So there you have it, three elements of positive body language that will help you be a more effective team leader: eye contact, facial expressions, and posture.

Thanks for joining me today.