



Communication Etiquette and Guidelines for all ATCCC Staff and Directors

(as approved by ATCCC Board of Directors – BoD Meeting # 09 on 14th June 2020)

Introduction

Communication etiquette in any organisation is an important skill to master. Whether you're writing to people in your organisation, talking to stakeholders such as members, potential donors, community groups/people or dealing with other fellow directors, it is critical to remain professional in your communication and follow the social norms that are usually expected. In an organisation, communication can happen via face to face, email, audio/video conferencing, newsletters and/or social media platforms. However, it is important to select a medium that best suits the message that is being conveyed.

Depending on the type of organisation and mode of communication, the rules may change and, hence, it is important to familiarise oneself with the best way to communicate in a given setting. Below is a list of communication etiquette standards that are recommended for a community organisation like ATCCC.

Show respect and gratitude

Everyone gets frustrated from time to time at work. Regardless of how you are feeling, it is important to stay attentive and respectful. This is critical whether you are dealing with organisational members, potential donors or people in the community. Keep your voice calm and be patient. Listen to what the other person is saying and respond appropriately.

If it is a heated situation, see if you can step away for a moment to gather your thoughts. In the case of an angry or upset colleague or member, give them a chance to vent and let them know you have heard and understood their concerns.

With people that you work with, you can show respect by contributing to your team. If the person that you are working with seems overwhelmed, offer to help. Do your best to avoid conversational topics that might make your co-workers uncomfortable, such as politics or religion. It is also best to avoid gossiping about people that you work with. Sometimes, it can be tempting, but you don't want to end up in the middle of other people's dramas.

Keep it professional while being personable

Communication etiquette requires that all conversation, whether written or verbal, should be professional. Among other things, what this means is to value other persons' time during a verbal communication. While it is cordial to ask how a colleague's day is going, it can be an inconvenience for them to spend 30 minutes listening to your personal matter.

However, always be personable and polite, and take the time to remember personal details about your colleagues such as their birthdays or their children's names. This shows your peers how much they are valued within the organisation and leads to effective communication.

Always be on time

Organisations value punctuality. Everyone is busy and if you are late or absent, it can impact people that you are working with or collaborating. If there is an emergency, call and let the appropriate person know as soon as possible. If you have a meeting with someone, try to arrive about five minutes early. If you're running the meeting, try to arrive even earlier so you can prepare. If you are unable to attend a meeting, ensure you send apologies beforehand. In addition, be mindful of the below meeting rules that are universal:

- Come to the meeting prepared and to add value
- Keep the phone on silent and out of sight
- Try not to indulge in cross talk as much as possible
- Avoid distractions where possible
- Respect the meeting flow
- Say relevant or stay silent





Communicate clearly and professionally

Once again, strive to keep your communication professional. This is especially important with email. In a professional setting, use complete sentences and punctuation when you are composing an email. Avoid using all caps, as this can come across as shouting. Always keep in mind that organisational emails are not private.

Make a positive difference

Sometimes even voluntary work can be a grind. Even on those tough days, it is important to stay positive. Jump in to help your team whenever you can. Express appreciation to people who help you and/or the organisation. If you are having a difficult time personally, try not to bring that with you into work, voluntary or otherwise. Use your work as an opportunity to re-focus and improve someone's day. It will improve yours too!

