

Curriculum Resource

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail & Food Services – Communication

OALCF Alignment

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A -Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	1
Competency F - Engage with Others	N/A	1
Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School Credit | |

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability | <input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity and innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital | |

Notes: Part 6 of Series

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail

NOTE FOR PRACTITIONERS:

This series of **Skills for Success Curriculum Resources** can be used as a supplement to the [“Retail Curriculum package”](#) developed by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and produced by Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) in 2019. It is not an adaptation of that material but an addendum focusing on five newly identified Skills for Success competencies—**Problem Solving, Adaptability, Creativity & Innovation, Collaboration, and Communication**—as well as updates to the retail sector itself.

These resources are learner-based and activity-focused, moving the learner through on-the-job “scenarios” which they will have to respond to. In participating in the activities, the learner will gain an understanding of the workplace challenges that might require them to use a given competency and its associated strategies.

The series is divided into six sections that can be used separately or in tandem:

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Finding a Job**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Problem Solving**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Adaptability**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Creativity & Innovation**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Collaboration**

Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Communication**

*This is section six, Skills for Success in the Workplace: Retail – **Communication***

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE: RETAIL Communication

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1. What is a “Retail” Job?

A job in retail means:

- Selling products to customers, or
- Doing **other jobs** at a place that sells products to customers—a retail store.

This work is best for:

- People with good customer service skills.
- People who like to interact with others.
- People who like to try do different tasks.

2. What Sorts of Jobs are in Retail?

There are retail jobs at many types of stores and businesses. You could work at:

- A convenience store as a cashier
- A grocery store stocking shelves
- A Walmart as a greeter
- A hair salon scheduling appointments.
- A car dealership selling cars
- A Tim Hortons' drive-thru
- A restaurant as a dishwasher or server

3. What Skills and Habits Do You Need to Work in Retail?

To succeed in a retail job you need some key **skills**:

- Basic math skills.
- Basic digital skills
- Good customer service skills.
- Problem-solving skills.
- Adaptability.
- Time-management skills.
- Multitasking.
- Collaboration skills like teamwork.
- Creativity and innovation skills like trying tasks in new ways.
- Strong **communication** skills.

To succeed in a retail job you need also some key **habits**:

- Tidy appearance.
- Politeness.
- Being on time for work.



4. What is “Communication”?

Communication has two main parts. It means one person **sharing information** and the other person **listening carefully**.

It works when both people **understand** each other.

Communication works best when you express yourself clearly and politely.

Why is Good Communication Important at Work?

Retail jobs can move very fast. They involve serving customers with needs.

Clear communication is required to be sure **the job gets done** with **few mistakes**.

Employees with strong communication skills:

- Get help when they need it.
- **Share their ideas** with co-workers and bosses.
- **Listen** to customers.
- Help the team avoid mistakes on the job.



They **get better** at their job because they listen to how to improve.

5. Communication at Your Retail Job

There are many ways to practice good communication at a retail job:

a. Communicating with Customers

At a retail job, the number one goal of staff is to keep customers happy. Paying close attention to customers, you might:

- Help them get a product they can't find.
- Help resolve a complaint they have.
- Avoid mistakes and confusion.



When customers feel like they have been **listened to**, they will be happy.

b. Communicating with Co-workers

One of the most important things to do at work is communicate clearly with your co-workers. **Pay attention. Express yourself clearly.** You might:



- Learn from people who are very good at their job.
- Help new co-workers get better.
- Avoid confusion.
- Avoid conflict.

Good communication makes for a better workspace.

c. Communicating with Bosses

It is very important to communicate well with your boss or manager. Communicating poorly with your boss or manager could:



- Leave you confused about your duties.
- Cause the boss to have a bad impression of you.
- Even get you fired.

Your boss is a source of ideas. They are an expert at the job. **Learn** from them and **ask for help!**

d. Communicating Problems on the Job

It will be hardest to communicate clearly when you are having a **problem** on the job. But this is the most important time to reach out to others. Reach out if you:

- Are confused about what your duties are.
- Are making mistakes on the job.
- Are having problems with co-workers.
- Are finding certain tasks challenging.



It's also important to communicate when things are **going well**. Bosses love to hear that you are happy on the job. They love to hear great ideas!

Start Developing Your Communication Skills for the Workplace

To practice good communication in the workplace, you will need to learn to improve your communication skills.

Here are some steps you can take to do so:

- ✓ Listen carefully.
- ✓ Pay attention.
- ✓ Be sure you understand.
- ✓ Share what you know.
- ✓ Be polite.
- ✓ Express yourself clearly.
- ✓ Be patient with other ideas.
- ✓ Be generous with other ideas.



Activities

We will now do some activities that will give you a good sense of how to use **problem-solving skills** at work. These activities will provide examples of:

- ✓ The types of jobs you might have in retail.
- ✓ The daily tasks you might do.
- ✓ On-the-job challenges.
- ✓ Other key skills for success in retail.
- ✓ Dos and don'ts.



In each case you will **read a scenario**, **think** about it, and **respond** to some questions. Then we will review.

Activity #1

Ishana has just started working at a Walmart stocking shelves. The store is so big that she keeps forgetting where everything goes.

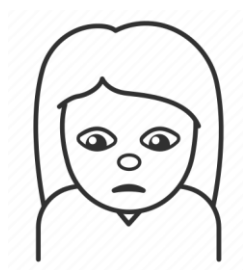
Her co-workers have told her to **ask for help** if she has any problems.



Let us know if you need
anything!

But Ishana doesn't want to seem like she doesn't know what she is doing.

So she says:



I know what I'm doing.
I don't need any help.

Since she **didn't ask her co-workers for help**, she is always falling behind!



Questions:

1. Did Ishana use good communication skills? Circle one: **Yes** **No** **Not sure**
2. How could Ishana have done a better job using her communication skills? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.
3. What would be the benefit of Ishana using her communication skills? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

Answers #1

- Ishana **did not** use her communication skills because she did not ask for help.
- She should have **listened carefully** to her co-workers' offers for help.
- She might have understood that listening will make her work better.
- She should have **shared** with them her need for help.
- She should have **been clear** about what she needed help with.
- Her boss will be disappointed that she wasn't a good communicator.

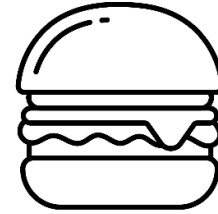


Activity #2

Jasmine has been hired to work as a cook at a Wendy's, and this is her first shift.

She has done the training session. She has studied the training manual. But when her shift begins things go too fast. She **panics**.

She tries to remember how to do all the parts of her job correctly. But she finds that she is getting **confused under pressure**.



Her co-workers in the kitchen seem busy with their own work. Jasmine doesn't want them to think she doesn't know what she is doing.

But she is making a lot of **mistakes**. So she:

- Admits that she is struggling.
- Asks one co-worker for help catching up.
- Asks another for advice.

Questions:

1. List one way Jasmine uses communication skills.
2. Why does Jasmine not remember how to do parts of her job correctly? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.
3. Why is it a good idea to ask your co-workers for help? **Discuss** with your teacher or partner.

Answers #2

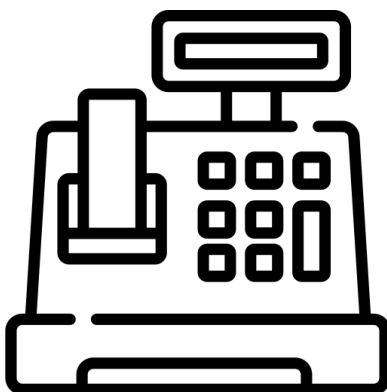
- Jasmine used her communication skills when she asked for help.
- She doesn't remember how to do parts of her job because she is feeling stressed under pressure.
- She shared what she was feeling with her co-workers.
- She was polite.
- She expressed herself clearly.
- Her boss will be very pleased at how well Jasmine communicated.



Activity #3

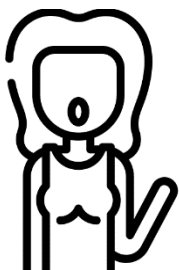
Cass has been working as a cashier at a Canadian Tire for two years.

She is **very good at her job**. She is fast at ringing things through the cash register. She is very nice to customers.



One day a new person, Georgina, is hired as a cashier too.

Cass notices that Georgina is **very slow** ringing things through the cash register. She is also **too quiet** with customers. She tells Georgina:



You're way too slow.

And you need to speak up when you're talking to customers.

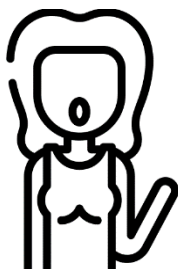
Activity #3 (Continued)

Georgina looks hurt and says:



I'm still learning.
And I'm a bit shy.

Cass says to Georgina:



Well, you need to
do better!

Questions:

1. Do you think Cass used good communication skills? Circle one: **Yes** **No** **Not sure**
2. **Discuss** with your teacher or partner some ways she could have used good communication skills.

Answers #3

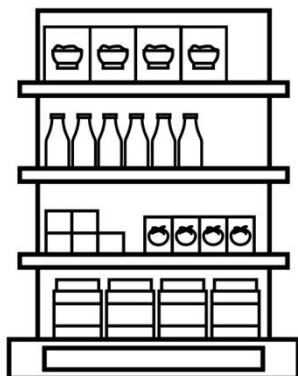
- Cass did not use good communication skills.
- She should have been more **patient** with Georgina.
- She should have been more **polite** with Georgina.
- She should have asked how she could help Georgina.
- She should have **listened carefully**.
- She should have **paid attention** to what Georgina needs.
- She should have **shared** what she knows with Georgina to help her.
- Her boss will be disappointed that she wasn't a good communicator.



Activity #4

Sven has been working at big grocery for eight months stocking shelves.

The store is very big. But Sven has learned where everything goes. He also has good **strategies** for working quickly.



One day, a new employee is hired to stock shelves too.

Sven doesn't want to seem pushy. But he has a lot of **tips and ideas** that could help his co-worker do his job better.

Question:

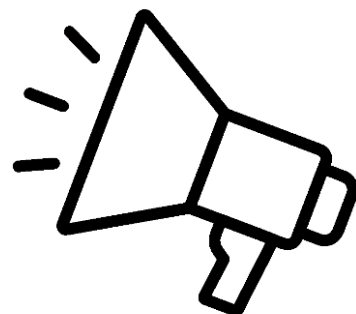
How could Sven use good communication to help his co-worker?

Discuss with your teacher or partner.



Answers #4

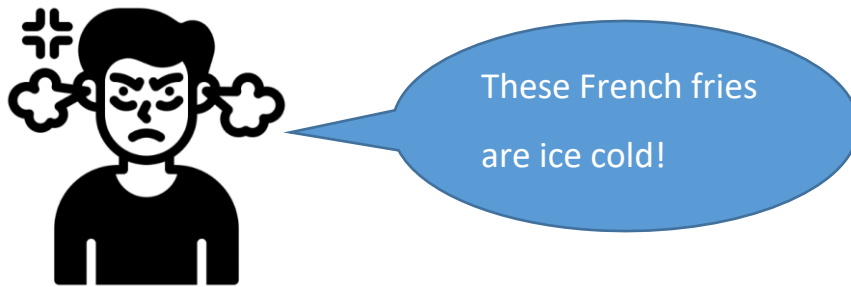
- Sven should **introduce** himself to his co-worker.
- He should **listen carefully** to what his co-worker needs.
- Sven should **share** his ideas with his new co-worker.
- He should be sure the co-worker **understands**.
- Sven should be **polite**.
- He should be **patient**.
- He should express himself **clearly**.
- The boss will be very pleased if he communicates well with his new co-worker.



Activity #5

Irina works as a hostess at a restaurant. Her job is to seat customers when they come into the restaurant.

After she has seated some customers, another customer complains to her about his meal:



Irina is not his waiter, so she says to him: "You'll have to tell your **waiter**. I'm just a hostess."

The customer says: "My waiter is very busy! I haven't seen him for fifteen minutes!"

Irina says:



Questions:

1. Do you think Irina used good communication skills? Circle one: **Yes** **No** **Not sure**
2. **Discuss** with your teacher or partner one way she could have used good communication skills.

Answers #5

- Irina did not use good communication skills.
- She should have been more **patient** with the customer.
- She should have been more **polite** with the customer.
- She should have asked how she could help the customer.
- She should have **listened carefully**.
- She should have **paid attention** to what the customer needs.
- She should have **shared** what she knows with co-workers who could help the customer.
- His boss will be disappointed that she wasn't a good communicator.



Review

- ✓ Now you have learned some **strategies** to use communication on the job.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of **listening carefully** on the job.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of **sharing information** with others.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **polite**.
- ✓ You have learned the importance of being **patient** and **generous** with other ideas.
- ✓ You can go back to this guide to review the strategies for problem solving at your job.



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