

Communicate With Clarity and Confidence

Let's make your emails, requests, and conversations easier to act on.

You can sound professional and still sound like yourself. Let's make the purpose clear, give the other person useful context, and leave them knowing what happens next.

What you will take away: You will leave with one message you can use and a repeatable way to prepare a difficult conversation.

1. Start with what you need the person to do

Think of a message you need to send. Finish this sentence: "After reading this, the other person should know, decide, or do ____." If you cannot finish it, you may be trying to solve several problems in one message. Choose the main purpose first.

Now choose the channel. A brief coordination question may fit chat. An agreement may need an email record. An ambiguous or emotionally charged issue may benefit from a conversation, followed by a written summary of the decision. Use your organization's approved channels for sensitive information. More formality does not automatically create more clarity.

Your turn: Write the purpose in one sentence, then name the channel that makes it easiest to respond.

2. Give the reader a clear path through the message

Use four parts: purpose, essential context, specific request, and next step. Put the purpose near the beginning. Add only the background the person needs to understand the request. Name a real deadline when one exists and explain what depends on it. If the timing is flexible, say so.

In chat, include your question with the context instead of stopping at "Can I ask something?" For example: "I am updating the event page. Is the registration link final, or should I wait for approval?" In a meeting, tell people whether you are sharing information, exploring options, or asking for a decision. Close by confirming who will do what.

Your turn: Check whether someone can find your request without reading the message twice.

Communicate With Clarity and Confidence

3. Let's rewrite a request together

A worked example · illustrative

Starting point: "Hey, any thoughts on this?" The reader has to guess what "this" means, what kind of feedback you need, and when.

Clearer version: "Hi Morgan, could you review the orientation outline in the shared folder? The topics are agreed; I need your decision on whether the resource demonstration should come before or after discussion. Could you confirm by Thursday so I can prepare the participant materials? If that is not workable, let me know and we can adjust the sequence."

Why it works: The reader knows where to look, what decision to make, and why the date matters.

A useful email subject could be "Decision requested: orientation sequence." Adjust the greeting and detail to your relationship. Keep the clarity even when the tone is more casual.

4. Use clear language at any career stage

Make it fit your situation

Starting out: "Before I begin, should I finish the customer summary or update the inventory record first?" Clarifying priorities is part of doing the work.

Changing careers: "I have used a similar process in another industry. Could you explain the approval step that is specific to this team?" You can name your experience and still ask to learn.

Leading others: "I can support the new request. It changes our capacity for the current work. Which deliverable should move, and who needs to approve that change?"

If you need to disagree, connect the concern to the work: "I see a risk in that approach because _____. Could we consider _____?" Clear communication does not require agreeing to every request.

Communicate With Clarity and Confidence

5. Address the problem without guessing the motive

When a conversation is difficult, separate what you observed from the story you are telling yourself. "The file arrived after the review meeting" is an observation. "You do not care about the project" is an assumption about intent. Start with the observation, explain its effect, and invite the other person's perspective.

Try: "When updates arrive after the meeting, I cannot include them in the decision brief. What would help us have a current version beforehand?" Listen for an unclear assignment, a different understanding of the deadline, or competing work. Then agree on a feasible next step. For safety concerns, harassment, or formal workplace issues, use the established reporting and support channels rather than treating a script as a substitute.

6. Review, send, and close the loop

Before sending, read from the recipient's perspective. Can they tell what you need, why it matters, and how to respond? Check names, attachments, links, recipients, and commitments. If you used AI, ask it to identify ambiguity without inventing context or promises. Review every change yourself. Follow organizational rules for recordings and AI meeting summaries, and confirm decisions with the people involved.

After a conversation, a short record can prevent confusion: "We agreed that I will update the outline, and you will confirm the demonstration sequence." Keep shared expectations for response times and channels explicit instead of assuming everyone works the same way.

Check your progress: Does the other person have enough information to take the next step without guessing?

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE / COMMUNICATION

Your practice worksheet

Use a notebook or a copy of this page. Work with one real situation, then keep your answers for the next time you need them.

Purpose: After this exchange, the person should know, decide, or do ____.

Channel and context: I will use ____ because _____. The essential background is _____.

Request: My specific question or request is _____.

Next step: The owner is _____. The deadline, if needed, is ____ because _____.

Final read: One assumption or unnecessary detail I can remove is _____.

Before you put it to use

- My purpose appears early.
- The channel fits the issue and its sensitivity.
- The request or decision is easy to find.
- Any deadline has a clear reason.
- I describe observations without assuming intent.
- Names, links, commitments, and AI edits are checked.

Selected references

NACE: Career Readiness and Communication

Make your next move clearer.

For more practical guides and tools, come back to eriii.com. Want feedback on your own situation? [Let us work through it together.](#)