



MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS SERIES

Communicating at Work

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Introduction

“We are committed to an environment of trust, teamwork, challenge and development. We therefore treat one another with respect. We recognize the dignity and contributions of each individual and the creativity that results from the diversity of individuals and ideas. We strive to speak clearly and honestly to one another and to listen in ways that seek understanding. On a foundation of fairness, efficiency and communication we will realize our mission.”

Steve Samek, CEO, UHY-US

Our Firm’s Commitment to Great Workplace Communication

Our Firm is committed to excellent workplace communication. We understand that great work, individually and in teams, depends on developing this foundational competency in all our employees.

- In an important survey of 1000 human resources managers, the top three competencies identified for effective job performance all involved communication skills: oral speaking (presentation), listening ability, written communication skills (Curtis, Winsor and Stephens, *Communication Education*).
- The *Harvard Business Review* recently rated “the ability to communicate” as the most important factor in executive “promotability.”

The Costs of Poor Communication

The costs of poor communication are high. Every time we communicate unclearly or can't understand what others are saying, the probability increases that the job won't be done right. Poor communication often leads to undesirable business outcomes:

- **Rework.** When we don't get it right the first time, we have to do it over. Rework wastes time, distracts us from current assignments and thereby increases the likelihood of additional errors.
- **Budget overruns.** Time is money. Doing a job more than once equates to lost productivity and more costly operations.
- **Dissatisfied claimants.** Claimants, attorneys, customers, clients have little tolerance for mistakes and lots of choices. Inaccurate or inconsiderate communication can lead to lost opportunity, lost confidence, lost profits or lawsuits.
- **Dissatisfied employees.** Poor workplace communication can breed misunderstandings, mistrust and mistakes. Morale plummets, productivity plummets and employees end up hating to come to work.

ACTIVITY:

Think of a situation in your work experience in which poor communication had a negative affect on productivity, efficiency or moral. What were some of the undesirable business outcomes you experienced?

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Communicating at Work: Objectives

To further develop workplace communication skills as a foundational competency for all employees, UHY commits to the following performance and learning objectives. We encourage the development of these skills through on-going training and coaching and we encourage all employees to set their own personal objectives in this area:

Performance Objectives

We encourage all employees to:

- Be clear and accurate in the way you speak and listen.
- Listen actively to better understand what others say.
- Understand and address others' interests during conversations.
- Manage the internal and external barriers to effective communication ("noise")
- Understand and manage the nonverbal cues that you send and receive.
- Choose an appropriate communication style to match the context in which you are speaking or listening.
- Know and choose appropriate communication methods
- Constructively give and receive criticism and confrontive messages.
- Communicate in meetings in a way that builds consensus and solves problems.

Learning Objectives

We encourage all employees to:

- Understand that it's your responsibility to improve your communication skills.
- Learn that communicating is a two-way process that involves you as both a sender and receiver.
- Practice active listening techniques.
- Recognize and learn to overcome the barriers that can block the communication process.
- Understand that how you communicate is as important as what you communicate.
- Realize that you and the people you communicate with have personal interests that you should consider and address.

Personal Development Objectives

When communicating with others, I want to be able to:

- _____
- _____

Great Communication Begins with Trust

All effective communication begins with trust. In Peter Drucker's words, we must "be believed to be heard." Competent employees zealously protect their personal credibility. They understand the importance of trust. They build trust in every workplace encounter because they understand that communication is not a "one-shot" deal, that there will be an on-going relationship. They balance well the substantive and relational aspects of the process. They adhere to a personal code of ethics and if they make a promise or state a consequence, they back it up. Their behavior encourages cooperative, integrative problem-solving.

Trusted employees . . .

- Are honest and fair. They do not misrepresent assets, lie about past results or about what they can supply.
- Build rapport through courteous expression of friendly concern for their colleagues' health, family and business.
- Initiate reciprocating exchanges of information which add features and benefits to agreements.
- Are consistently good listeners; they are considerate in listening to the thoughts, feelings and interests of others.
- Are consistently able to maintain objectivity; they are able to recognize the validity of the interests on all sides of an issue.
- Are aware of their own biases and prejudices; they admit to conflicts of interest that might make them biased in a particular conversation.
- Prize the emotional side of life; they are not threatened by the strong expression of feeling and therefore provide contexts in which emotion can be expressed.
- Understand their own limitations; they recognize when a problem is too complex for them to solve without help; they are in touch with outside resources that they call to work through difficult issues.
- Are good communicators; they know how clearly to express their own thoughts and concerns, and they are able to help others do the same.

Communication Basics 101: Know the Law

Workplace communication is governed by minimum legal requirements. These are dictated by employment laws enacted by the federal government. To ensure that your communication is not violating the law, rid it of any discrimination, intimidation, or harassment toward people on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Our goal is not just to obey the law but to maintain a communication environment that exceeds its demands; we don't want just to meet minimum legal requirements, we want to strive for excellence.

Not only can violations of employment laws cost the organization large sums of money, but also, in some states, lawsuits have been filed and won against individuals themselves. Individual behavior jeopardizes the organization. *More importantly, inappropriate comments are unprofessional and indicate a lack of respect for what the organization stands for no matter how harmless or humorous they may seem to the perpetrators.*

While most people are astute enough not to do things that are blatantly discriminatory, the courts are now making awards for cases in which the overall "environment" indicates discrimination. This means that small, seemingly insignificant incidents, when combined together, constitute an atmosphere of discrimination.

Words, expressions, phrases, or behaviors that are judgmental, outdated, inaccurate, or inappropriate in the business environment should be eliminated from common use. Why use a word or behavior that is potentially offensive, when we have alternatives that are "safe" and "kind?"

This Manual

In response to the communication and performance objectives set out above (p. 2), this manual discusses seven (7) communication competencies for UHY employees. The chapters of the manual follow this order:

1. **The ability to understand the basic communication process and overcome communication barriers.** Great communication is like a friendly game of tennis. Tennis involves give-and-take between participants, who are simultaneously attentive to the skills, abilities and preferences of the person they're playing with and their own. Much like tennis, communication is a dynamic two-way process. The sender and receiver "bounce" thoughts off one another in a great game of give and take. In tennis, outside distractions, like the wind or an unruly spectator can keep players from playing their best. Similarly, effective communicators must focus in the midst of many distractions to be effective. They are aware of communication pitfalls and know how to overcome them to ensure that they understand and are understood.
2. **The ability to be clear and accurate in one's statements.** Employees who are good communicators are clear and accurate in their statements. Clear communication means that when you speak, write, or otherwise communicate, your listener understands your intended message. Clear communication is listener-focused, presented in a way (language, order, level) that the listener can understand. Clear communication leads the listener from point A to point B. Clear communication requires that the speaker be explicit about her/his purpose and goals. Clear communication involves avoiding jargon, using visual aids, using short sentences and short words and having a beginning, middle and end to the overall message. When employees are unclear, others may feel insecure and begin responding by obfuscation or by a lack of specificity about what they want.
3. **The ability to understand, to listen accurately and empathically.** Active listening involves providing some form of feedback to a speaker that informs her/him that the message sent has been received. Feedback may simply consist of a nod of the head or a two-word acknowledgment, "I see," that lets the speaker know that their message has been heard. At higher levels of active listening (interactive listening), the amount of information that goes back to the sender is increased. Techniques may include brief restatements or parroting, summations, reflecting, reframing and paraphrasing. Asking follow-up questions to gain clarity is an extension of this process. Active listening is important for employees because the people they work with and for are interested in being heard. Moreover, to work effectively, the employee needs accurate information and instruction. Good listening skills encourage employees to provide clear, accurate information.
4. **The ability to use and read non-verbal cues.** Good communicators pay attention to the non-verbal cues coming from the speaker and their own. These involve proxemics (the spatial relationships between the parties); kinesics (the body language inherent in

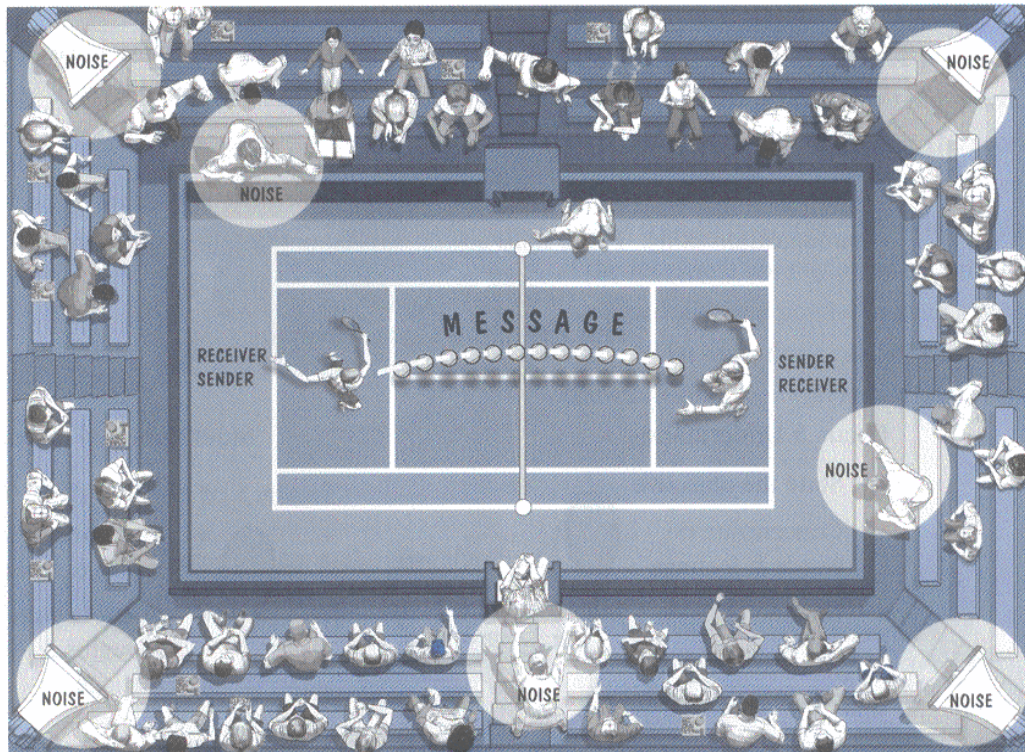
physical movement) and paralinguistics (the vocal portion of the message other than words—pitch, tone, pace, volume). By observing such non-verbal cues, you can gain a clearer understanding of the message, of what issues are more or less important to your communication partner, of what issues cause stress, of when they are losing interest, need a break or are turning off to your arguments. Effective communicators are also aware of their own body language, of how to use it to emphasize their points and how to avoid signals that unintentionally communicate disinterest or judgment about the other person's comments or positions.

5. **The ability to choose from among several communication methods, the method most appropriate for a given context.** With modern advances in communication technology, we have a number of ways to communicate our messages: speaking directly, writing a letter, note or memo, phone, fax, email, etc. Effective communicators are able to match the right method to their message and to their listeners.
6. **The ability to choose among several effective communication styles, the style most appropriate for a given context.** Each of us has a style of communication that we prefer: persuading, compelling, avoiding, negotiating, collaborating or supporting. Effective communicators are experts at using all styles and they also understand when a particular style will be most effective.
7. **The ability to apply communication competencies in business situations.** How we communicate effectively in the variety of business situations that employees encounter will be covered in depth in other manuals in this series. Here, we introduce employees to communication strategies in four critical areas:
 - Providing employee feedback, praise and criticism
 - Communication for confrontations: giving orders
 - Teambuilding and meetings

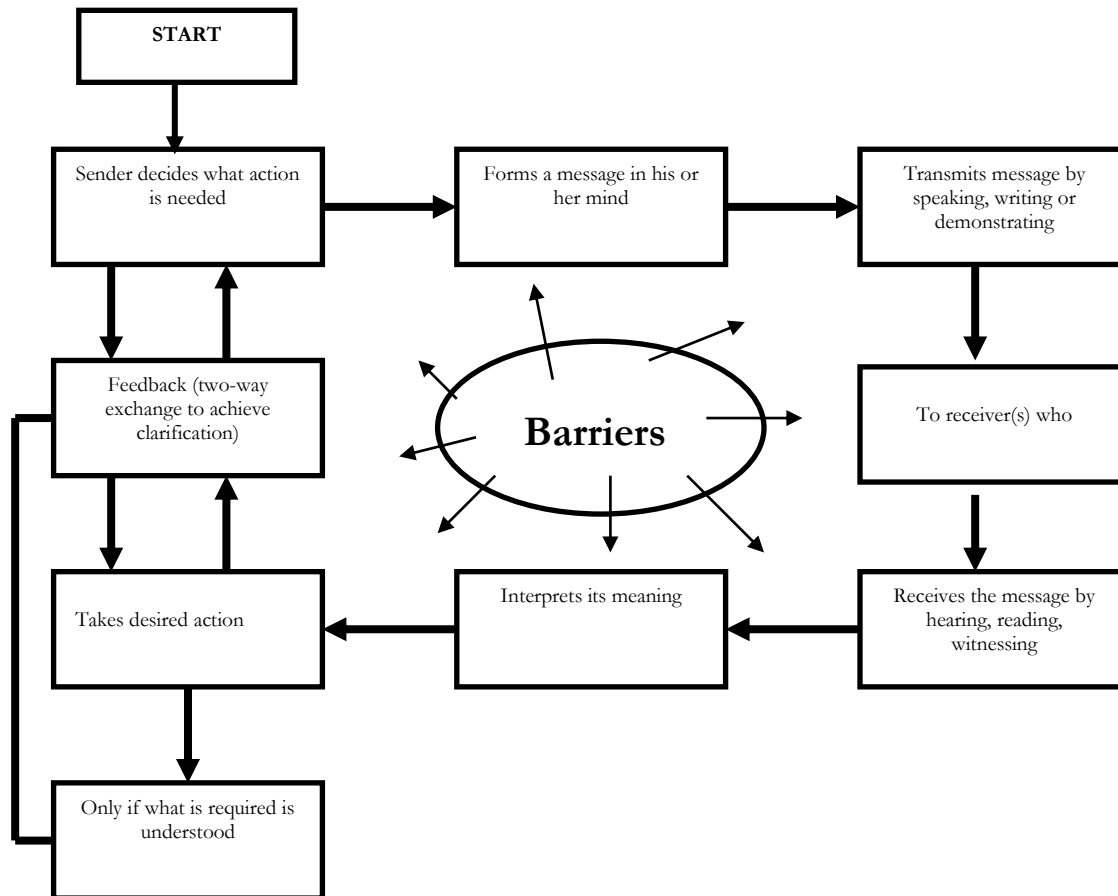
Chapter 1

Overcoming Communication Barriers

Great communication is like a friendly game of tennis. Tennis involves give-and-take between participants, who are simultaneously attentive to the skills, abilities and preferences of the person they're playing with and their own. Much like tennis, communication is a dynamic two-way process. The sender and receiver "bounce" thoughts off one another in a great game of give-and-take. In tennis, outside distractions, like the wind or an unruly spectator can keep players from playing their best. Similarly, effective communicators must focus in the midst of many distractions to be effective. They are aware of communication barriers and know how to overcome them to ensure that they understand and are understood.



To Achieve Precise and Effective Communication, Follow the Process



Remember: To achieve *precision* and *effectiveness* in communication:

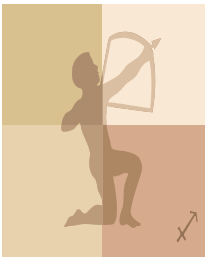
A message must be *conveyed*
The message must be *received*
There must be a *response*
Each message must be *understood*

Types and Purposes of Workplace Communication

In the workplace the communication process takes place in three different contexts:

Downward Communication: From Management down the Chain of Command to Employees

- Instructions
- Rationale
- Procedures and practices
- Feedback
- Indoctrination

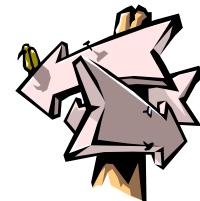


Upward Communication: From Employees up the Chain of Command to Management

- Suggestions for improvement
- Complaints
- Comments about work problems

Horizontal Communication: Among Colleagues at the Same Level

- Task Coordination: “Let’s get together and talk about a production schedule.”
- Problem Solving: “How can we find more trained personnel for the maintenance department?”
- Sharing Information: “Look’s like we’re going to get this new account. Better start preparing for more business.”
- Conflict Resolution: “We’ve got a problem here. Let’s get together and talk it through.”
- Building Rapport/Team: “I appreciate the way you got that job done on time.”



Overcoming Communication Barriers

Communication barriers are the obstacles that get in the way of a message being heard or understood. No matter how hard we focus, communication can still be difficult. Both *internal distractions*, like personal problems, biases, or boredom, and *external distractions*, like noise, interruptions, or language, can affect our ability to communicate effectively. Below is a description of several communication barriers, with some best practices for managing, minimizing or eliminating them. What can you add to the suggestions given here that will keep your conversations from turning into disasters?

Internal Barriers



Personal Problems/Psychological Issues

Personal, physical, or emotional problems can affect our ability to communicate effectively (poor hearing, emotionality, gender issues, mood, fear, incompatibility).

Signs:

- Attacking one another verbally
- You often say, “Speak up!”
- Resisting the other person’s ideas
- Ignoring the other person
- Trying to provoke the other person
- Arguing for no clear reason
- Non-verbal that indicate, “I don’t care” or “I don’t agree”

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Take a deep breath and think about what you’re going to say before you say it
- Take a time out
-
-
-
-

Boredom/Preoccupation

While the average person can assimilate meaning at a rate of about 500 words per minute, average human speech varies from about 150 to 175 words per minute. This variance creates a “listening gap.” When our mind is working faster than the other person can speak, sometimes we lose focus; we begin to think about or do things that don’t relate to the discussion.

Signs:

- Daydreaming
- Getting lost in the discussion
- Not contributing to the discussion
- Doodling or doing work not related to the discussion
- Nonverbals that indicate distraction or boredom

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Try to find something to get interested in
- Write down what you’re thinking about and vow to think about it only after the current discussion is over
-
-

Assumptions/Bias/Perceptual Distortions

Sometimes our ability to understand a message accurately is inhibited by an earlier judgment we’ve made about the sender or the message. Sometimes we hear what we expect to hear. Sometimes our ability to get the message is affected by assumptions we make about the meaning of words—our assumptions may not match those of the sender.

Signs:

- Tuning the other person out
- Giving unrealistic praise
- Agreeing or disagreeing for no logical reason
- Wondering if the other person could possibly mean what you think they meant

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Clarify, “What did you mean when you said . . .?”
- If you dislike the person sending the message, try to imagine that it’s your best friend saying the same thing. Would you react differently?

Weakness of the Communicator

Sometimes our own weaknesses as a communicator (internal pitfall) or the weaknesses of the person we're conversing with (external pitfall) will interfere with effective communication. Communication weaknesses include: poorly chosen words and phrases; careless omissions; incoherence; awkward sentence structure; speaking too quickly, slowly or loudly; mumbling; lack of knowledge; lack of preparation).

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Become more aware of your tone, grammar and rate of speech
- Identify as speech pet peeve: "um," "you know," "and, er." Listen to yourself to hear if you're a culprit.
-
-
-

External Communication Barriers

Interruptions

Interruptions seems to happen at the most inopportune moments, like just when the discussion is getting personal or emotional or when you're finally making progress on an important project. Common interrupters include: people, pagers, telephone (both ringing and call waiting).

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Close the door
- Program the phone to take messages without ringing
-
-
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-

Noise

Our ears don't discriminate. They take in everything. The brain has to process it, distracting us from making sense of the conversation. Examples include: noisy restaurants; heavy construction just outside your window; traffic (sirens, honking); loud radios, TV's, or stereos).

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Move to another place
- Choose a quieter restaurant
- Fight irritating noise with less offensive noise (a fan or a radio playing quietly in the background)
-
-
-
-

Language

Most words have more than one meaning. In fact for the 500 most commonly used English words, there are 14,000 definitions. To make matters worse words often mean different things to people in different times, places and cultures (semantics). Some companies or groups have their own special in-group language (argot) or use acronyms unknown to people outside the group.

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- For people new on the job, use full names of departments, teams and products
- Don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions
-
-
-
-

Visual Distractions

No matter how interesting the discussion is, people will tend to look out the window, especially if there's something going on out there to pay attention to. Also, items on the walls or flip charts that have nothing to do with your discussion can be a distraction.

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Reposition your chair so that the distraction is behind you or directly opposite you.
- Prior to a meeting, check walls, blackboards and flipcharts to ensure that information from yesterday's meeting isn't a distraction.
-
-
-
-
-

Structural Barriers

Structural pitfalls, such as the way a room is set up, your distance from the listener, or a room that is too cold, hot or stuffy can interfere with effective communication. A person can't understand if they can hear you. Keep a room too cold and listeners won't hear over the rattling of their teeth. Keep it too hot and they'll fall asleep. Deprive them of oxygen and they'll pass out.

To Manage (What can you add to this list?):

- Keep a sweater nearby
- Ask for a break
-
-
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-

Analyzing Our Perceptions

At any given moment, hundreds of stimuli are entering our brain through the neural passageways that lead from our five senses. How the brain sorts these stimuli and then makes sense of them is called “perception.”



What Do You See?

How We Form Perceptions

We sort out and make sense of the stimuli we perceive through three processes: (1) figure and background; (2) closure; and (3) clustering. Each of these processes can initially leave us with a biased or incomplete understanding of what has occurred or what has been said. Understanding these processes reinforces the need for us to check for understanding in order to ensure effective communication.



Figure and Background

We perceive stimuli as figures standing out against a background. We can miss out on a lot that's there by assuming that we've seen or heard everything:

- Stimuli that are larger, more intense, in motion, repetitive, novel or very familiar, or in contrast with their background are likely to be selected. We've all heard the expression "she stands out in a crowd," or "he sticks out like a sore thumb." We tend to notice things or people that are different or novel.
- Stimuli that are small, less intense, stationary, or that blend in well with their background are less likely to be selected. We are less likely to identify things that are unfamiliar or quiet.



Closure

We tend to form a complete image out of incomplete data.

Exercise: Read the story below and then answer the questions on the following page.

What Really Happened?

A businessman had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened a cash register. The contents of the cash register were scooped up and the man sped away. A member of the police force was notified promptly.

Exercise:

Answer the following questions about the story (True-False-Questionable).

1. A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights. T F ?
2. The robber was a man. T F ?
3. The man who appeared did not demand money. T F ?
4. The man who opened the cash register was the owner. T F ?
5. The owner scooped up the contents of the cash register and ran away. T F ?
6. Someone opened a cash register. T F ?
7. After the man who demanded money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away. T F ?
8. While the cash register contained money, the story does not say how much. T F ?
9. The robber demanded money of the owner. T F ?
10. The story concerns a series of events in which only three persons are referred to: the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and a member of the police force. T F ?
11. The following events in the story are true: someone demanded money, a cash register was opened, its contents were scooped up, and a man dashed out of the store. T F ?



Clustering/Representativeness

From the time we're born, on the basis of each experience, we assign stimuli to categories (schema). We continue to expand our understanding of these categories as we assign new experiences/understandings to them based on simple resemblance or fit. The internal state and cultural background of perceiver therefore affect which stimuli are selected. Our families, friends, schools and communities have a tremendous impact on who we become as adults and how we perceive reality. We are often unaware of the perceptions we adopt. Often we accept our perceptions as "facts" without ever questioning them.

Unchecked initial perceptions of others (assumptions, stereotypes) can therefore often be inaccurate. Our judgments are pre-judgments based on our own experience, not necessarily on the true realities of the new situation or person we're speaking with.

Stereotyping

A Story about Stereotypes

A woman was playing the slot machines in Las Vegas when she hit the jackpot. Silver Dollars poured out of the machine, filling a bucket a casino assistant had given her. The woman wanted to bring her winnings to her room to show her husband who was taking a nap. When the elevator doors opened, she saw two huge black men in long leather coats. Immediately she hesitated, fearing that she was going to be robbed. She pushed down her fear and entered the elevator; but when door closed, her worst fears appeared to come true. One of the men said, "Lady, hit the floor!" Immediately, the woman dropped to the floor, spilling out all the coins. She then began to scream, "Please don't take my money! Please don't take my money." The two men began to laugh. "Lady, when we said 'Hit the floor,' we meant, 'Hit the elevator button for the floor you're going to.'" The two men then reached down and helped her put the coins back in the bucket. The woman apologized profusely; the men escorted her to her room and left.

Later that evening, after the woman and her husband had returned from dinner, they found on a table in their room two dozen roses. To each rose was tied a hundred dollar bill. There was a note, which read, "Lady, thanks for the best laugh we've had in months. Signed: Michael Jordan and Eddie Murphy."

Exercise: Society's Stereotypes

Around the room are sheets of newsprint with these words written on top:

"Society's Stereotypes of . . ."

- **New Yorkers**
- **Car Dealers**
- **Working Mothers**
- **People over 50 years old**
- **Texans**
- **Hispanics**
- **People with a military background**
- **Lawyers**

Take a magic marker and write the stereotypes you've heard about the people in these groups.

Stereotyping is Risky Business

The generalizations we form growing up are often referred to as stereotypes. Generalizing is a useful and unavoidable mental process. We have so much information coming at us all the time that we need methods of simplifying. Our brains substitute a few categorical labels for complex masses of data.

Unfortunately, stereotyping can block accurate perception of a person or event. We see someone who fits a “category” and, no matter what information is available to our senses, contradictory evidence is screened out. A stereotype, then, is defined as:

“A fixed and distorted generalization made about all members of a particular group; a rigid judgment which doesn’t take into account the here and now.”

Questions about Stereotyping:

1. What percent of these stereotypes is negative? Why so many negative?
2. Is anyone exempt from being stereotyped?
3. How does it feel to know that people may be stereotyping you in these ways?
4. What impact does it have on a person when they are perceived in these stereotypical ways?
5. Do you know of someone who doesn’t fit one of these stereotypes?
6. Do you think that stereotypes like these ever creep into this organization?
7. What would happen to communication/teamwork in an organization if we viewed people in this way?

Prejudice is Risky Business

In its most unproductive form, stereotyping can lead to prejudice, which we will define as: ***“Making pre-judgments about someone, without having all the facts. The tendency to see differences as weaknesses.”***

Often, prejudice takes the form of **ethnocentrism**--the belief that one's own group is inherently superior to all others. Although America was founded on the principle of “liberty and justice for all” and most people want to believe in equal rights, current studies show that 10 to 20 percent of Americans still express bigotry. However, there is a trend toward not openly expressing prejudice, but ***subliminally still viewing nontraditional employees as less competent.*** (Dovidio, The Subtlety of Racism, 1993).

Studies show that even people who want to avoid bias are conditioned for a biased response. In one experiment, executives were given resumes and photos of job applicants and asked to describe jobs they might offer the people. All the resumes were identical, but the pictures were different: a white man, a black man, an Hispanic man, a black woman, and an Hispanic woman. White executives typically assigned administrative tasks to the women of color and line tasks to the men of color. Yet prejudice is so pervasive, that when women of color were given the same resumes and photos, they made the same job assignments. (Morrison, The New Leaders, 1992)

We are all raised with biases. One study identified that biased behavior is largely unconscious. People who display negative non-verbal reactions to others are usually unaware they are doing so. (Bass, “Bias Below the Surface,” The Washington Post, 1990). ***One of the most devastating aspects of prejudice is that people deny they have biases. Denying it only perpetuates the problem.***

People who are effective communicators check their biases in every conversation. They hit their own mental “pause button” and ask themselves, “Is there any baggage I’m bringing to this conversation that keeps me from really understanding what this person is saying.”

Removing Communication Barriers

- Keep emotions in check
- Approach with positive attitude
- Maintain concentration
- Find something to get interested in
- Relax
- Pause and check for inaccurate perceptions, biases, or prejudice
- Change perspectives or reverse roles: “I can see how it might be difficult for you.”
- Use active listening techniques
- Use effective questions

Be Clear and Accurate

Employees who are good communicators are clear and accurate in their statements. Clear communication means that when you speak, write, or otherwise communicate, your listener understands your intended message. Clear communication is listener-focused, presented in a way (language, order, level) that the listener can understand. Clear communication leads the listener from point A to point B. Clear communication requires that the speaker be explicit about her/his purpose and goals. Clear communication involves avoiding jargon, using visual aids, using short sentences and short words and having a beginning, middle and end to the overall message. When employees are unclear, others may feel insecure and begin responding by obfuscation or by a lack of specificity about what they want.

Best Practices

- KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid)
- Use simple words without any jargon. Choose the most familiar words.
- Stick to the point. Keep focused on the problem and the solution.
- Be honest. It's dangerous to over promise and under perform.
- Try to eliminate unnecessary words:

Instead of . . .	Use . . .
We make a recommendation	We recommend
We entered into a discussion	We discussed
We made an inspection	We inspected
We performed a study	We studied
Assemble together	Assemble
General consensus of opinion	Consensus
Due to the fact that	Because
In the event that	If
I am in receipt of	I received
Red in color	Red

Best Practices (Continued)

- Build a foundation of key words.
- Trim your sentences. Try to average about 15-18 words per sentence.
- When giving unwelcome information . . .
 - Accept responsibility
 - Be direct

Words and Phrases to Avoid

1. **“I can’t, I won’t, I shouldn’t.”** Colleagues and complainants want to hear how you can solve their problem. Talk about what you can do for them. Instead use: “Let’s see what we can do.” “This is what I can do for you.” “I would be happy to do the following for you.”
2. **“I don’t think I can do this.”** Keep the conversation positive. Use: “This is what I can do for you.”
3. **“Not.”** Never tell someone that what they are reporting to you could not, did not, would not, or simply did not happen. Instead use: “I have not come across this problem very often, please tell me more so that I can help you.”
4. **“But.”** When you use the word “but,” every positive thing you’ve said before you used it is negated. How do you feel when you hear the phrase, “Darling, you know I love you very much, but . . .”? The word “and” is usually a good substitute for “but” and does not immediately raise the red flags.
5. Never use words that focus on negative energy or on what you cannot do. Emphasize what you can do. Encourage your colleague to join you in moving to a solution.
6. Subordinates will usually comply with what you say as long as they understand why you are asking them to do it. Help them buy into your justifications.
7. Never promise something that you can’t deliver and always follow-up.

Be Open about Thoughts and Feelings

Disclosing Builds Trust

Think about your role models, people who have made a significant impact on your life over the years, people you came to know, understand, and trust. Chances are that they all share a common trait: They were willing to give you information you needed to understand a situation or issue, including revealing their thoughts and feelings.

People who disclose what they're thinking and feeling:

- Provide a more complete understanding of their positions and opinions.
- Provide an open door for the listener to agree, disagree, ask questions, or share their thoughts and feelings.
- Build trust by letting the listener inside.

Be Selective

Be selective about what you share and whom you share with. Make sure your disclosures relate to the situation at hand. Don't overdo it. Too much of "you" can overwhelm a listener and cause him or her to question your motives or tune you out.

Disclosing Thoughts and Feelings--Examples

On the next two pages are two examples of how to share thoughts, feelings, and rationale. The first focuses more on sharing thoughts, the second focuses on sharing feelings.

The Voice of Reason—Sharing Thoughts

Jeff and Beth are sitting in Beth's office listening to a phone message from Maggie. She is giving Beth her usual excuse for depending on Beth to revise a report that Maggie is responsible for completing. As the message ends, an angry Beth, with the report in hand, gets up to leave.

Maggie: (telephone message) OK, well, I think that's it. Oh, oh, wait a minute ...the report, I almost forgot. Sorry I couldn't put the finishing touches on it, but it's in fairly good shape. I know you can take over from here. But let me know if you have any questions, all right? Thanks, Beth.

Beth: Can you believe this? "Fairly good shape?" She knows this needs more work before I can turn it in. But she just dumps it on me and expects me to fix it. Well, I'm sorry, this is the last time she pulls this on me. Not today, Maggie!

Jeff: Where are you going?

Beth: To talk to Ken. I'm not putting up with this anymore.

Jeff: Hold on ...wait a second.

Beth: What?

Jeff: Listen... You've got every right to be mad. You know it, and I know it. All this extra work.

Beth: ...At the last minute.

Jeff: Right, it's not fair. Think about this, though. Is going to Ken the best way to handle this?

Beth: If it gets results!

Jeff: Will it? You go to Ken, he'll go to Susan, then she'll go to Maggie. And after the dust settles, you'll still have to work with Maggie, but now she's as angry with you as you are at her.

Beth: Fine with me. She needs to know that I'm not going to take this anymore.

Jeff: I agree she needs to know. She needs to know from you. I've been down this road before, and I think going directly to Maggie might be better. You can air this with her. ..give her a chance to fix it, without escalating the problem. What good will it do to jeopardize your working relationship?

Clearing the Air—Sharing Feelings

Beth takes Jeff's advice and discusses her concerns directly with Maggie. She's open and honest in sharing her feelings about being expected to revise Maggie's report.

Beth: You had to know this needs more work before I can turn it in, Maggie.

Maggie: Just some fine-tuning, maybe.

Beth: It needs more than fine-tuning. You know, this isn't very easy for me to say, but this is the third time you've expected me to finish your report.

Maggie: Don't you think I'd put more time into it if I could?

Beth: I don't know. Honestly, I think you're so busy you spend only as much time on this as you think you have to. Then you say to yourself, "Here's a place I can cut corners because I know Beth will fix it." I want us to work together on this. So you need to understand that I feel like I'm being taken advantage of. .. Because I was willing to do this in the past, you just expect it now. And that makes me angry. And I have a hard time working with someone when I'm angry with them.

Maggie: I'm sorry. I really am. I had no idea you felt like that. I guess I just thought you understood.

Beth: I do understand you're busy. We both are. And now that we've had a chance to talk, maybe we can find a way to handle this that works for both of us.

Activity-What Would You Share?

Instructions

This activity will give you practice in disclosing your thoughts, feelings, and rationale. To complete the activity:

1. Read each situation individually.
2. As a team, answer the Discussion Questions and develop a response in which you share information, how you're feeling, and/or what you're thinking.

Situation 1-I'm Out!

A month ago your team set up an in/out board--a large board on which team members note whether they are in or out of the department, where they are, and when they will return.

Paul, a team member, has resisted the idea from the start. He says that the department is becoming too formal and that the board is just the latest example. You disagree--you've used the board several times to locate team members quickly, and they've used it to find you in an emergency.

Paul is still not using the system; that concerns the team. Team members are becoming annoyed and see this as a form of protest. As part of the team, you volunteered to discuss this with Paul. As you begin the discussion, he says:

"I don't want to hear about that stupid board. There was a time when you could walk away from your work for two minutes and not have to document your whereabouts. I guess those days are long gone."

Discussion Questions

What is your "sharing strategy?" Will you share the rationale for the board, how you and the team are feeling, or what you're thinking?

Situation 2-No Good Deed Goes Noticed

It's been three months since your former boss, Janet, left the company and you began to report to Melissa. Janet and Melissa have very different styles; frankly, you preferred Janet's. She was a "people person"; Melissa doesn't seem to be.

Janet recognized a job well done; Melissa rarely does--she seems to expect superior performance.

On two occasions when you made a significant extra effort, you didn't even receive a thank-you. That hurt, and it was demoralizing. Other teammates have said they feel the same way.

In many other ways Melissa is trying hard to be a good leader, and you want her to succeed. So you've decided to talk to her about her "people skills."

Discussion Questions

What is your "sharing strategy"?

Will you share thoughts, feelings, or rationale?

What won't you share with Melissa?

What exactly will you say to Melissa?

Focus, and then Speak!

In tennis, it's the server's responsibility to set the ball in play. This is done by purposefully sending the ball over the net, within the boundaries of the court, and toward the other player—using an appropriate amount of strength, spin, and speed.

When communicating with others, it's your responsibility to ensure that the message you send is received and clearly understood. Take a look below at the skills that all effective communicators need. Think about how these skills apply to sending messages.

Effective Communicators . . .

Focus & Understand

- State the objective
- Concentrate on words and feelings
- Use the right questions

Meet Personal Needs

- Listen actively
- Paraphrase words and feelings
- Disclose your own thoughts and feelings

Manage Nonverbals and Noise

- Be aware of nonverbals
- Clarify others' nonverbals
- Minimize internal and external noise

Seek to Understand

The ability to understand, to listen accurately and empathically is one of the most important competencies of effective communicators.

Active Listening

Active listening involves providing some form of feedback to a speaker that informs her/him that the message sent has been received. Feedback may simply consist of a nod of the head or a two-word acknowledgment, “I see,” that lets the speaker know that their message has been heard. At higher levels of active listening (interactive listening), the amount of information that goes back to the sender is increased. Techniques may include brief restatements or parroting, summations, reflecting, reframing and paraphrasing. Asking follow-up questions to gain clarity is an extension of this process. Active listening is important for employees because the people they work with and for are interested in being heard. Moreover, to work effectively, the employee needs accurate information and instruction. Good listening skills encourage employees to provide clear, accurate information.

The Purposes of Active Listening

- To demonstrate to the speaker that her/his message has been heard
- To demonstrates that listener understands
- To legitimize the speaker. “I understand that you are feeling upset and it’s O.K.”
- To encourage the speaker to share more
- To build trust and empathy with the speaker

Active Listening: The Method

- Minimize distractions; face speaker, use eye contact, model effective communication
- Build Rapport
- Analyze what is being said: “What has this person told me? Is there anything vague or confusing about the message?”
- Separate relevant from irrelevant
- Test understanding of what has been said: seek clarification, “It sounds like you are feeling confused about this assignment. Is that right?”
- Consider the implication of what has been said
- Anticipate, but do not prejudge the speaker
- Watch body language
- Seek feedback
- Demonstrate listener etiquette:
 - Don’t monopolize the conversation
 - Don’t change the subject prematurely
 - Be careful about stepping on another person’s sentences
 - Check temper: outbursts are rarely useful
 - Silence is powerful
 - Ask good questions
 - Allow the other party a method to save face

Activity--Are You Listening?

Circle the number that best describes how often you demonstrate the following behaviors. Be honest with yourself. Your totals will remain confidential.

1-Rarely 2-Sometimes 3-Often

Focus & Understand

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. While listening to phone messages, I avoid doing other things. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. If I don't understand a discussion's objective, I ask about it or try to clarify it. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. When listening, I focus on what's being said, not on what I'll say next. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. I am able to ignore annoying speech habits such as "you know" or "and, um" and focus more on the substance and overall feeling of the message. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. When I don't understand what someone is saying, I ask clarifying questions. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. After a meeting I summarize agreed-upon actions to confirm what I've heard. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Total _____ — — —

Meet Personal Needs

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7. I'm careful not to interrupt when others are speaking. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. When someone seems hesitant to talk, I ask open-ended questions. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. When someone is having a difficult time telling me something, I share a relevant story, thought, or emotion to help put that person at ease. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. When people express emotion, I acknowledge how they're feeling. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. I wait to respond until after the other person has finished speaking. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. I try not to judge or make assumptions until I've heard the whole message. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Total _____ — — —

Manage Nonverbals & Noise

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 13. I notice if people's gestures and expressions don't seem to match their words. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. I encourage or acknowledge what people are saying with my own nonverbals. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. I nod my head to show understanding or agreement when others are talking. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. I pay attention to nonverbal cues to understand how people feel. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. I try to maintain comfortable eye contact so people will know I'm listening. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. I sit or stand calmly while someone is speaking and do not fidget. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Total _____ — — —

Interpreting Your Score

Step One: Add each column and determine a total for each skill set.

Step Two: After you have found the total for each area:

- Look at the area with the highest total. This is a strength area, even though you may have several low ratings within it.
- Focus on the area with the lowest score. This area may contain skills that you'll want to improve.
- Choose one or two skills in the lowest scored area to focus on during the remainder of this workshop. Think about practicing in this area during the workshop and in conversations you have over the next month.
- Continue to master these behaviors in your workplace. When you feel that you've improved in one area, try focusing on another.
- Make improving your communication skill a lifelong process.

The Tools of Active Listening

Summarizing

- Pull together important facts and issues to establish a common ground
- Examples:
 - “It sounds like the three main issues you are concerned with are . . .”
 - “Let’s see if I have this straight; you experienced _____ and feel _____.”
 - “It looks like you’ve both gotten a lot of new information on this issue.”
 - “You’ve decided that _____ and _____ are not huge problem areas, so let’s move on to _____.”

Clarifying

- Statements and questions are used to get more information from participants.
- Examples:
 - “I’d like more information about what happened after the incident.”
 - “John, how do you respond to Jane’s statement that you . . .?”

Reframing

- By reframing a statement, situation or idea, a listener helps a speaker view it from a different perspective, one which might be less intimidating, discouraging or more hopeful. This process of reconceptualization allows a listener to check on the intended meaning of the speaker’s message or to put an idea into easier-to-understand language.
- Examples:
 - Identify commonalities: “I see you are both interested in security.”
 - An employee is discouraged that his has error upset a customer. His manager says, “Hey, look at it this way, we now have an opportunity to make it up to her and make her a customer for life. Let’s see what we can do.”

- **Increase or decrease the level of emotion:** “It looks like you have some extremely strong feelings about dishonesty.”
- **Bring out interests:** “I recognize that you want to make money and secure your reputation.”

Reflecting

- Summarize feelings that underlie the content of a person’s position or statement.
- Examples:
 - “It sounds like you are frustrated with your son’s behavior.”
 - “You seem to be feeling miserable because . . .”
 - “It sounds like you are puzzled by . . .”

Acknowledging

- The manager validates or commends the parties by affirming their efforts or confirming that what was said was heard.
- Examples:
 - “Thank you for participating in the mediation process.”
 - “This is hard work . . . you’re doing great.”

EXERCISE: PROVIDING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

USING THE ACTIVE LISTENING TOOLS DESCRIBED ABOVE (SUMMARIZING, CLARIFYING, REFRAMING, REFLECTING, ACKNOWLEDGING), WRITE A RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS THAT WOULD HELP GAIN CLARITY OR ELICIT HELPFUL INFORMATION. IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC TOOL USED FOR EACH RESPONSE.

- Around here, if you do a good job, people look down on you..
- The whole group is irresponsible and I'm tired of it.
- She's the most uncooperative employee I've ever had.
- Since I've started working here, no one's spoken to me. People here are cold and unfriendly.
- Everyone in the office has trouble with him.
- That's just the way men are.
- If he'd just start acting responsibly, I would help him with his report.
- It is absolutely untrue that we're trying to create a fuss and make trouble for you.
- I'm trying to do my best, but how can I get all this work done when three different people are telling me what to do?
- This whole situation has been a royal pain from start to finish.
- I hate this kind of bickering. If you'd just act reasonably we could solve this mess.
- If you had done what I'd asked six months ago, this never would have happened.

Listen and Respond with Empathy

Here are two examples of how to listen and respond with empathy. The first example shows Louise responds to Ken's negative emotion. In the second scenario she responds to a positive emotion.

Example 1- The Dreaded Presentation

Next week Ken has to make a big presentation and he's been dreading it. He walks into the room and Mary, a coworker, senses that something is wrong.

Louise: What's wrong, Ken? Didn't you have your coffee yet?

Ken: That would help. It's this open house next week.

Louise: You nervous about it?

Ken: Actually, I've passed nervous and moved on to panic.

Louise: You know that's really common. Most people are nervous speaking in public, even if they do it all the time.

Ken: But I've got to get up there and present to a whole roomful of people.

Louise: I know it's not easy--especially if you're not used to that kind of thing. I'd be nervous too.

Ken: Well, I guess I've got to take a deep breath and just do it.

Louise: And you will. Is there anything that would make you feel better about doing this?

Example 2-Ken Did It!

Ken summoned his courage and made the presentation. He's just completed it; Louise congratulates him on a job well done, knowing that he must feel pleased.

Ken: Did I look nervous? Did you see my knees knocking?

Louise: Not from where I was standing. You looked like you do this kind of thing everyday.

Ken: Not too bad, then?

Louise: Are you kidding? You did great and you know it. Hey, I know how you felt about doing this. But you pulled it together and got up there and did a great job. Bask in the glory. You've got every right to be proud of yourself.

Activity—Empathize!

Instructions

1. Read each case individually.
2. Work together to answer the Discussion Questions. Identify how you would respond with empathy by stating the facts and feelings being expressed.

Case 1—Her Mind’s on Something Else

For two weeks in a row, Debbie has missed her deadline for giving you information that you need for updating the production schedule.

She's been only a few hours late each time, but this forced you to rush to submit the final schedule to meet your deadline. Last week you had to stay an extra hour to complete it.

You've said nothing to Debbie. She's a good friend who has helped you out in the past. You also suspect she's having problems at home—she's been making a lot of personal calls. In fact, that's one reason she's falling behind. She was on the phone for two hours yesterday.

Just as you're thinking of talking with her about the situation, Debbie approaches you looking tired and worried. She says:

I hate to burden you with my problems, but I have to talk to somebody. You might not have noticed, but these last two weeks have been rough for me. I'm having serious problems at home that I'm still trying to work out. Hopefully, things will get better in a week or two, but in the meantime, I have to admit that my attention hasn't exactly been on my work lately.

Discussion Questions

How might Debbie be feeling at this point?

What would be the benefits of listening and responding with empathy to her?

Using this skill, what would you say to Debbie?

Case 2-Chip's got a Chip

You were recently assigned to work with Chip, a new supplier. The first time you called Chip to check an order, he seemed rushed, short tempered, and slightly sarcastic.

You quickly checked the order and completed your call. You weren't sure whether Chip was serious or just joking.

Since then, you've called Chip twice and received the same kind of treatment. You're beginning to wonder: Is Chip always in a bad mood? Or is he just one of those people who like to complain?

To meet a large customer request, you need to call Chip again to increase supplies that you ordered yesterday. Once again, you expect him to be abrupt and rude. You're not looking forward to this call. Talking with him always makes you uncomfortable. You'd like to have a better relationship with him.

As you explain the change in your order, Chip replies in a gruff tone:

“What's with you people? You're always changing your orders. You ordered 16 cases yesterday. Now you want 20. All right, what's the right order, now, huh? 16 or 20? Come on, I don't have all day.”

Discussion Questions

Why might it be difficult for you to respond to Chip with empathy?

Chip seems to be displaying strong emotion. What might you accomplish by listening and responding with empathy to him?

Using this skill, what would you say to Chip?

What might be your next step in communicating with Chip about this issue?

Active Listening—Best Practices

To Focus and Understand

Keep Your Focus, Patience and Interest

It's Your Turn to Listen

Tips

- Remember, conversation means talking with--not at--someone.
 - ✓ If you're being talked at, ask clarifying questions.
 - ✓ Comment occasionally to show you're interested and listening.
- Try to keep yourself fully engaged by:
 - ✓ Moving physically (e.g., raising eyebrows, nodding).
 - ✓ Verbally acknowledging what's being said or felt.
- Mentally connect what you hear with your past experiences or thoughts about the same topic.
- Ask yourself, "Have I ever felt this way too? Did someone listen to me?"
- If you're being distracted or having difficulty focusing on what the person is saying:
 - ✓ Explain that you're very interested.
 - ✓ Arrange a better time to discuss the issue.
- Keep in mind that most people are poised to speak, not to listen.
- When someone finishes talking, wait a few seconds before speaking. Your silence could:
 - ✓ Encourage the person to share comments or feelings that might not have surfaced if you had responded too quickly.
- Focus more on what's being said than on what you're about to say.
- Value listening more highly than speaking. This will help you to see listening as essential to good communication.

To Meet Personal Needs

Empathize

“Listen” for feelings as well as ideas

To Manage Nonverbals and Noise

Watch for Nonverbals

Use the Right Nonverbals Yourself

Tips

- If you don't understand or agree:
 - ✓ Let the speaker know why.
 - ✓ Be open to discussing differences.
- Show your concern for others' feelings.
Example:
"You seem worried about the way projects have been assigned. Can you help me understand why?"
- Try to "follow" what someone feels as well as says.
- Concentrate more on the person's emotions than on every word.
- Clarify feelings, especially when you notice strong nonverbals.

Tips

- Remember, people can say more with tone of voice, facial expressions, or postures than with words.
- Be alert when a coworker insists, "Everything is just fine," but indicates the opposite with strident tones, raised eyebrows, or agitated movements.
- Try, "You seem a little stressed. Want to talk about it?" It could open the door to honest conversation.
- Don't sit on the edge of your seat and wait to speak at the slightest pause. That makes it hard to listen.
- Avoid yawning, checking the time, or edging toward the door—they show that you're not interested.
- Consider the signals you send when you listen.
- Let the speaker know you are listening by:
 - ✓ Smiling, frowning, or nodding.
 - ✓ Leaning slightly forward.
 - ✓ Keeping eye contact direct and interested, but comfortable. Don't stare.

Active Listening:

Ask Effective Questions

Questions can be one of your most useful communication tools for clarifying, acknowledging, gathering information or feedback, or checking understanding. The type of question you use-- depends on what you want to accomplish by asking it.

Open-Ended Questions: Allow for the broadest possible answer. The question may be completely unfocused (“What do you think about . . .?”) or focused on a more specific topic. If you want someone’s opinion, thoughts, or feelings about a subject, use an open question. Open questions usually begin with who, what, when, why, or how. They are used to uncover facts, stimulate thinking, encourage multiple perspectives, and examine feelings. Examples of open questions are:

- Who would be a good addition to the team?
- What do you think about this new process?
- When will you present the strategy to our group, and how?
- Why did you approach the project this way?
- How are you feeling about the direction our group is taking?
- Tell me more about . . .?
- Could you explain . . .?
- How did you feel when . . .?
- What happened . . .?
- Is there anything else that you feel is pertinent to . . .?

Open-Focused Questions. A request for information similar to general open questions, but more directed or focused.

- “Between the time when the cast was put on and it was taken off, did anything else related to this situation happen?”
- “How did you feel when you first learned that . . .?”
- “Why do you want to continue a business relationship with X?”

Requests for Clarification. More focused than open questions.

- “Could you explain to me how your product is not similar to product A?”
- “Help me understand why the lawnmower is not worth \$100?”
- “What specifically about your health is your major concern?”

Leading Questions. Questions that suggest the answer, often in one or two words.

- “You’ve had back trouble in the past, haven’t you?”
- “What type of traumatic experience has the accident caused your family?”

Closed Questions. Closed-ended questions ask for very short, specific answers. Do you want a brief response? Are you checking for understanding? Do you expect only a yes or no answer? If so, then a closed question is the type to ask. Closed questions would include:

- Did you get the report?
- Do you agree with my recommendation?
- Will you be able to meet this deadline?
- Can I expect to see you at tomorrow's meeting?
- When you left the house was it one or two o'clock?
- Were the headlights too bright or too dim?
- Tell me, yes or no, do you want to be friends with Karen?

Why/Why Not Questions. Useful in uncovering a party's underlying interests.

Compound Questions. Avoid questions that consist of more than one request for information.

- What type of party was it, social, professional, or was it just people from the neighborhood, and how did everyone know each other?"

Ask Effective Questions--Best Practices

Keep It Simple

- Ask clear and direct questions if you want to get clear and direct responses.
- Don't ask confusing two- or three-part questions like, "Are you willing to accept this new assignment, and if so, how would you approach it, or if not, why not?"
- Realize that people tend to answer only what they hear last or the part that's most interesting or safe for them.

Start Broad, Move toward Details

- Learn the "funneling" technique, which will help you gather both broad and specific information.
- Start funneling with broad questions that are easier to answer. You build rapport and trust as you continue to ask more specific questions.
- Begin by asking overall questions such as:
 - "How does this process work?"
 - "What can you tell me about how your team operates?"
- Funnel down to specific questions like:
 - "What can we do to fix the problem you're having in this part of your process?"
 - "How does your team handle disputes?"

Be Specific

- Remember that vague questions usually elicit vague responses. A nonspecific question might sound like, “Could you support this schedule?”
- Instead, ask a more specific question, like, “Will you support this schedule?” The first question doesn’t really tell you if the person will support the schedule- only if he or she might.

Clarify to Be Sure

- When you’re unsure about what’s being discussed, use questions to clarify. Examples:
 - “Did you say the deadline was changed to next week?”
 - “Have all your concerns been discussed?”
 - “Did we agree to move forward?”

Be Honest and Straightforward

- Don’t phrase questions to manipulate people into giving you the answer you want to hear.
 - “Would you like to begin the project now or wait until tomorrow?” doesn’t give a person a chance to say if he or she even accepts the project. It only asks when the person can start it.
 - A better approach might be, “We need to start this project soon, today if possible. Would you be available and willing to take it on?”

Use Nonthreatening Questions

- Don’t ask the wrong way. That can damage people’s trust, and they’ll be less likely to answer your questions.
- Don’t ask questions that can make others defensive:
 - “How could you be so ...?”
 - “Why did you do it that way?”
 - “Aren’t you going to ...?”
- If you find yourself asking questions like these and you sense that the person is becoming defensive, pause, apologize, explain your intent, and begin fresh.

Be Sensitive

- If you need to ask a personal question or inquire about feelings or thoughts on an issue, begin with a good lead-in, like, “I know this is a difficult issue to discuss. Do you mind if I ask you how you feel about it?”
- Ask permission before you ask the question, which:
 - Lets the person make a choice about answering.
 - Shows that you are caring and sensitive to others.

Listening with Your Eyes: The Power of Nonverbals

“Bursting with pride.” “Filled with joy.” “Petrified, frozen, paralyzed, scared stiff.” “Trembling with rage.” “Ready to explode.” “Biting his lip.”

Effective communicators pay attention to the non-verbal cues coming from the speaker; they are also keenly aware of their own. Nonverbal cues involve proxemics (the spatial relationships between the parties); kinesics (the body language inherent in physical movement) and paralinguistics (the vocal portion of the message other than words—pitch, tone, pace, volume).

By observing such non-verbal cues, you can gain a clearer understanding of the message, of what issues are more or less important to your communication partner, of what issues cause stress, of when they are losing interest, need a break or are turning off to your arguments.

Effective communicators are also aware of their own body language, of how to use it to emphasize their points and how to avoid signals that unintentionally communicate disinterest or judgment about the other person’s comments or positions.

What Just Happened?

You’re walking down the hall and you see Doug coming around the corner. Last week in the staff meeting you had a big argument with him. You want to duck into the next doorway, but it’s too late; he’s already seen you. You can’t avoid him. Your teeth start to clench. You get red in the face. Your palms get sweaty. As you get near him, you see that he’s looking away so you do too! As he passes by he mumbles, “Hello.” You nod and move on as quickly as possible.

Only one word was spoken between you, but a lot has been communicated through your body language. Doug probably thought you were still angry with him or trying to ignore him. You indicated that you weren’t ready to speak to him yet and maybe never will be. On the other hand, he might have interpreted your behavior as embarrassment. Maybe he thinks you’re ready to apologize! Both of you read each other’s nonverbals from your own perspective. There’s only one way for you and Doug to know what the other really meant by your facial expressions, tone of voice, and overall body language. You need to ask!

Nonverbal Basics

Warnings:

- Not all non-verbal expressions have universal meanings.
- Body language must be evaluated against the particular situation as well as the individual's social and cultural background.
- Decoding body language is a learned activity—needs practice.

Watch the Tone of Your Voice:

- **Pace.** Speaking too fast may indicate to the listener that you want to end the conversation, get off the phone or that you really don't care about their problem. Geographic or regional preferences play a role here too. People from different parts of the country or the world speak at different rates. Match your pace to that of your listener.
- **Volume.** Make your volume adequate for you to be clearly heard. Yelling can indicate anger or frustration, and for the person on the other end, it can be perceived as an assault.
- **Inflection.** Inflection is the highs and lows in your voice. Vary your inflection to paint the picture you want your listener to see.
- **Levels of Intensity.** Different situations call for different levels of emotion. Match the emotion in your voice to the concerns of the listener.

Signals—Be Careful, Some Have Multiple Meanings

Yawning/cupping chin in hand

- **Meaning:** person is tired or bored; meeting is going on too long without participation.
- **Response:** invite people to participate; keep meetings on course; direct questions to particular individuals.

Scowling

- **Meaning:** annoyed, disagree, confused, don't understand; don't share opinion.
- **Response:** clarify message; acknowledge disagreement

Continued straight gaze/no head movement

- **Meaning:** don't like what's being said; lack of cooperation
- **Response:** "What suggestions do you have to address the problem?"

Hand on back of neck

- **Meaning:** Disagreement; annoyed
- **Response:** Allow for expression of views

Drumming fingers/Tapping foot

- **Meaning:** hidden anger; impatience; boredom; sensing irrelevance
- **Response:** Keep comments concise and to the point

Looks over glasses/Narrows eyes

- **Meaning:** Disapproval; dislike; expectation of challenge
- **Response:** Give reasons

Removes Glasses

- **Meaning:** Made decision; it's over; heard all I need to know
- **Response:** Ask for conclusion; summarize; keep comments brief

Shifting in chair/Avoiding eye contact

- **Meaning:** I disagree with you.
- **Response:** Encourage verbal participation

Touching nose/Blinking

- **Meaning:** Lying, exaggeration, defensiveness

Leaning forward

- **Meaning:** positive; focusing; paying attention

Leaning back

- **Meaning:** thinking about it; considering it
- **Response:** allow some silence

Steeping fingers/Clasping hands behind back or head

- **Meaning:** confident

Stroking chin

- **Meaning:** great interest and concentration

Tilting head

- **Meaning:** showing interest; paying attention

Signs of Deception

You're in a conversation and suddenly you get a strange feeling that the person you're speaking with might not be telling the truth. Below are listed some subtle signs of deception. Again, be careful, all nonverbals can have multiple meanings.

1. Body Language indicating lying. Four clues:

- Eyes:
 - No or little direct eye contact.
 - People look down or glance side to side
- Body:
 - Less expressive with hand or arms.
 - Full extension of fingers is an expression of openness
 - Legs and arms close to body, not outstretched: Keeping something in
 - Gestures seem stiff and artificial, no fluidity in movement, movement contrived
- Unconscious Cover Up
 - Hand straight to face, covers mouth, touches face
 - Touching nose, scratching behind rubbing ears
- Partial Shrug
 - A fleeting shrug, tries to demonstrate that she is casual and relaxed about an answer when she really isn't.
 - Similar to a lips only smile at a joke, pretending that she thinks it's funny

2. Emotional States: Consistency and Contradiction

Initial Reaction Expression: an expression of true feelings that lasts for less than a second

- Timing is Everything
 - Shaking head after point is made indicates deceit. Shaking head before point is made indicates truth
 - Hand and arm movements after a point has been made
 - Showing an expression of emotion after statement
- Contradiction and Consistency
 - Obvious incongruence between gestures and speech: Frowning while saying "I love you."
 - Gesture needs to fit the speech.
- The Emotion Commotion
 - A response that is not genuine is not spontaneous
 - Slight delay in the onset of false emotion
 - Duration of emotion: the emotion is delayed in coming out, stays longer than it should and ends abruptly.
- The Expression Zone: the Smile that doesn't seem happy
 - A smile that does not light up the whole face is a sign of deception

- Expression will be limited to the mouth area when the person is feigning certain emotions like happiness, surprise, and awe.

3. Interpersonal Interactions. Posture in and of itself and in relationship to surroundings. Only a guilty person gets defensive. An innocent person usually goes on the offensive.

- The Head Shift.
 - When the head moves away from speaker, there is an attempt to move away from the source of distraction.
 - When the head moves toward the speaker, person is secure in actions and wants to get closer to source of information
 - Tilt of head would not be adopted by someone with something to hide.
- The Posture of a Liar
 - Stand erect, sitting up straight shows confidence
 - Insecure, unsure, hunched over, hands in pockets
- Headed for the Door
 - Persons at a psychological disadvantage will move away from their accusers
 - When we feel passionate about something we tend to move toward someone
 - Liar is reluctant to move toward or even face the source of threat.
 - Rarely stands squared off
 - Face to Face demeanor is reserved for someone who seeks to refute a slanderous statement
 - Movement in direction of the exit signal deceit; someone who is confident and comfortable doesn't mind taking center stage.
- If He's Not Touching, He's Bluffing
 - Persons who are deceitful have little or no physical contact
 - Liars will rarely touch the other person
- The Finger that never points
 - Someone who is lying rarely points a finger either at someone or in the air
- Roadblocks, barriers and obstacles
 - Placing a physical barrier between means "I don't want to talk about it." Placing a physical barrier between accuser and self indicates deceit.

4. Actual Verbal Content: What is Said

Subtle differences between what the truth sounds like and what a lie dressed up as the truth sounds like.

- Using your words to make his point.
 - A liar doesn't have time to think. Any delay makes him feel like he is guiltier.
 - Making a positive statement negative. "Did you ever cheat on me?" "No I never cheated on you."
 - Guilty people tend not to use contractions. It was not me.
 - Innocent people use contractions. It wasn't me.
- The More He Tries, The More You Should Worry
 - Adamantly expressed opinions suggest deceit

- People who are confident in their thinking feel no need to compensate
- The Good Old Freudian Slip
 - Saying one thing when we mean another.
 - A man told his friend that he made a terrible Freudian slip the other night when he went to his parents' house for dinner. He meant to say to his mother, "Could you please pass the salt," but it came out, "I had a terrible childhood and you ruined my life, you horrible woman."
- I'm about that sort of thing
 - Depersonalizes or globalizes answer indicates deceit
 - A liar offers abstract assurances as evidence of his innocence
- Silence is Gold-plated
 - The guilty are uncomfortable with silence
 - Adding more information without being prodded
 - The guilty tells his story in dribs and drabs until he gets verbal confirmation to stop
- An Implied answer is no answer
 - A person who doesn't want to answer a question will imply an answer
 - An implied answer circumvents the question

5. How Something Is Said. A speaker's subtle thoughts are always hinged to the expression of his words.

- Speed (Pace)
 - When asking about attitudes and beliefs, an honest answer will be given immediately, one that takes longer is "coming up with the answer."
 - In a truthful response a fast yes or no is followed quickly by an explanation
 - In a deceitful answer the rest of the sentence may come out slower
- Compensation
 - Be suspicious of someone whose reaction is all out of proportion to the question or comment
 - "The lady doth protest too much."
 - Liars are reluctant to convey attachment or ownership: "That car" or "the car" rather than "my car" or "our car."
- Emphasis makes the meaning
 - For liars, the pronouns I, we and us are underused or absent
 - The liars doesn't want to own his words
 - Truth, one word answer elongated "Noooo." This emphasis is absent in deception
 - Liars: no highs, no lows: varied voice inflection may be missing
 - A deceitful statement may be delivered in a flat voice devoid of any real nuance.
- The Mumbler
 - For liars words themselves may not be clear.
 - People passionate about what they are saying are more likely to be telling the truth
- Questions and Statements shouldn't sound alike
 - When voice, head and eyes lift at the end of the statement conviction is not as strong as he is leading you to believe.
 - When statements sound like questions, the speaker is seeking reassurance.

6. Psychological Profile. How does a liar think and what elements are usually missing from a story that is fictitious.

- He's Got Cheating on his mind.
 - How people see the world is often a reflection on themselves. If they think that the world is a cesspool of lies and deceit, they themselves may be full of lies and deceit. "It takes one to know one."
 - Projection: If you are constantly being accused about your motives and activities, this should send off warning bells. What's going on in the life of the accuser.
 - Most people who tell the truth expect to be believed.
- The Single Guy
 - When a person is confident in his words he is more interested in your understanding him and less interested in how he appears to you.
 - When you are lying you are conscious of every word and action
- Another Dimension in Lying
 - The liar often leaves out one crucial element in the telling of the story—the point of view or opinion of someone else
 - The inclusion of another person's point of view will usually indicate that what is being said is true.
- Everything went perfectly
 - Events that are not true rarely include any negative details
 - A person who is lying is usually concerned with getting her story straight. Thoughts are essentially one dimensional
 - Is there anything *you* would like to know?
- A good liar has difficulty asking the right questions. Willing to answer your questions, but asks none of his own.
 - Coming across as truthful means both answering and asking questions

7. General Indications of Deceit. Mixed bag of clues

- "I'm sure glad that's over."
- Watch what happens when the subject is changed, does the liar become happier, does he seem more relaxed.
- Notice posture: more relaxed, less defensive
- He does not become indignant when falsely accused
- He uses phrases such as "To tell the truth . . ." "To be perfectly honest . . ." "Would I lie to you?"
- He has an answer to your question down pat
- He stalls by asking you to repeat the question or by answering your question with a question
- What he is saying sounds implausible
- He offers a preamble to his statement starting with "I don't want you to think that . . ." Often that's exactly what he wants you to think.
- She uses humor or sarcasm to defuse your concerns
- He offers you a better alternative to your request when he is unable to give you what you originally asked for

- All of the facts relating to numbers are the same or are multiple of the same number.
- There is evidence of involuntary responses that are anxiety based
- He uses an obvious fact to support a dubious action
- She casually tells you something that deserves more attention
- He exclaims his displeasure at the action of another who has done something similar so that you will not suspect him.
- If he lies about one thing everything he says is questionable
- His story is so wild that you almost don't believe it, but you do, because if he wanted to lie, you think that he would have come up with something more plausible.

Source: David J. Lieberman, *Never Be Lied to Again*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Nonverbals--Best Practices

Avoid the Temptation to Interpret

- Clarify what a person's body language seems to say by asking, "What's on your mind?" or "How do you feel about this?"
- Don't assume a frown means someone disagrees with you or is upset with you. It could mean that they're just thinking really hard.
- Don't assume a friendly face means someone agrees. Always be sure to gain verbal or written agreement.

The Eyes Have It

- Keep in mind that people naturally look to the eyes for a glimpse of what others really think and feel.
- Use eye contact to acknowledge, encourage, and empathize. It shows that you are listening closely and sincerely interested.
- Realize that maintaining eye contact might seem odd or even uncomfortable at first. In time it will become second nature.

It's Written All Over Your Face

- Remember that the face is one of the most obvious and dependable indicators of a person's attitudes and feelings.
- Animate your discussions by using facial expressions
- Don't interpret feelings based just on someone's expression. Ask questions to confirm.

Put Your Best Nonverbals Forward

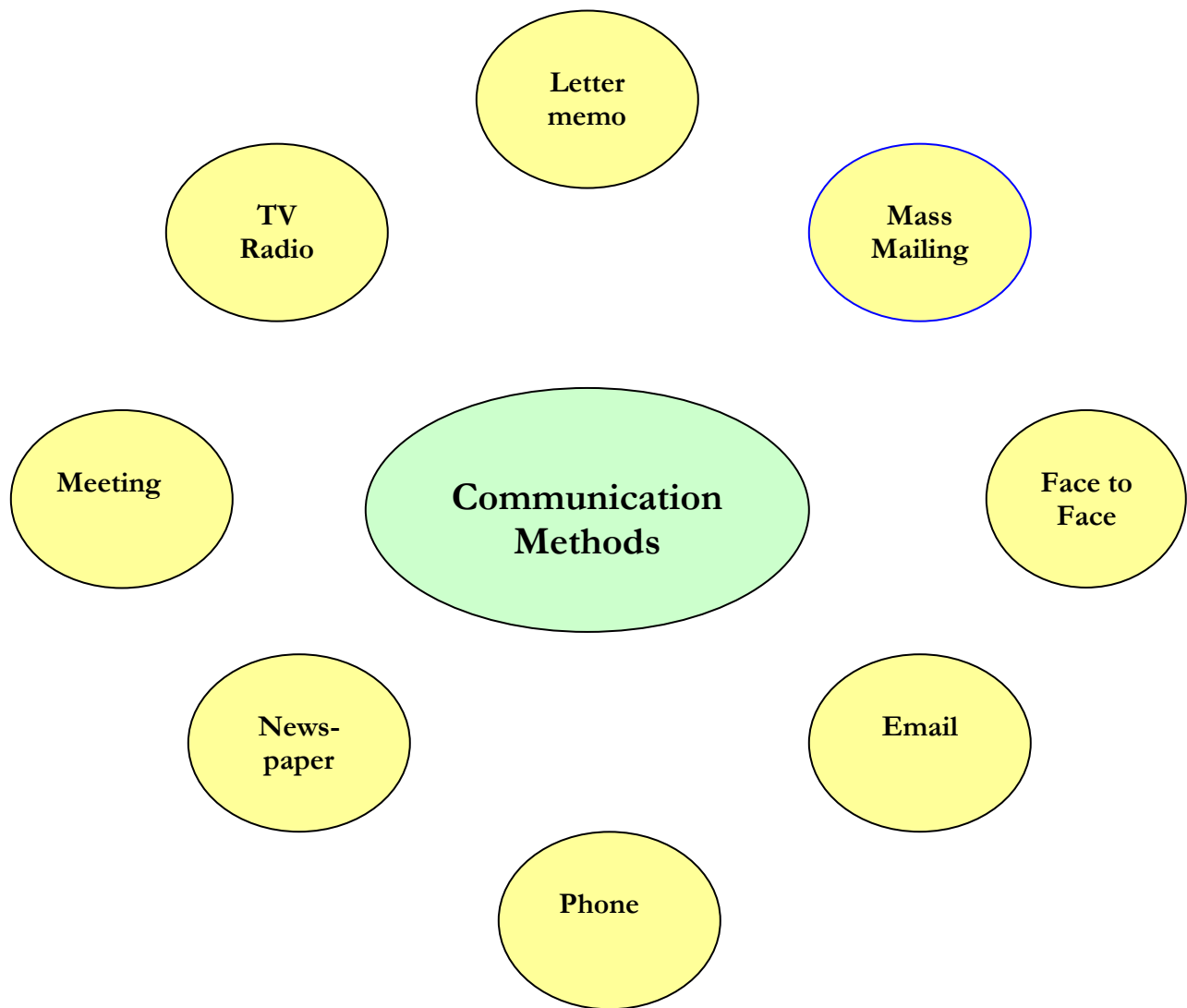
- As you speak, note what your body says and try to align your nonverbal actions with your words.
- Don't assume that crossed arms and legs are "defensive" body language signaling disagreement or discord. What appear to be defensive nonverbals might really signal boredom, relaxation, or that the person is simply cold.
- When you see body language that is negative or seems to go against what someone is saying, ask questions to find out what the person is really thinking or feeling.

Use Your Voice

- Remember, the most effective communicators are skilled in what they say and how they say it. Your voice and speech can either support your message or detract from it.
- The next time you communicate something important, focus on one or more of these aspects of your voice and speech:
 - Intensity
 - Rhythm (flow and pace)

- Pitch (highness or lowness of sound)
- Speed
- Volume
- Inflection (changes in pitch or volume)
- Clarity (articulation and enunciation)
- Avoid sending mixed messages by matching your tone of voice to your true feelings.

Communication Methods: How to Select the Best



What Other Communication Methods Can You Name?

A New World of Choices

One hundred years ago, for most people, the methods available to communicate with a friend, family member or business associate, were limited. You could speak directly or write a note or a letter. Today with advances in technology, our choices have increased dramatically. Today, in addition to traditional methods, phone, fax, email, teleconferencing, radio, TV and numerous other methods are available. One important competency of skilled communicators is the ability to match the method of communication to the message.

In this chapter, we look at ways that effective communicators match the method of communication to the nature of the message being delivered. As in many areas of communication, method-message matching is not an exact science. Often decisions will be made on the basis of the skills of the sender and/or the preferences of the receiver.

What communication methods are most often used in this organization?

How do you most often find out about changes?

How do you and your boss most effectively communicate?

What is your preferred method of communication?

Through the cases presented below, we develop the criteria and best practices set out at the end of the chapter.

Situation 1: Thanks, You Saved the Day

John, the manager of the claims department, recently received a call from an irate claimant. Since he was heading into an important meeting, he handed the call off to Joan, who actually knew more about the particulars of the case than he did. Joan did such a great job handling the complaint that John decided to recognize her efforts by writing the following memo:

MEMORANDUM

To: Joan Brockstein (cc: Aaron Block, Director)

From: John Skou

Re: Meriwether complaint

Joan, I heard from Sylvia Meriwether today. She was very pleased with the way you handled her complaint last week. When I spoke with her earlier, she was sure that we had blown it and wouldn't be able to fix her problem. The paperwork appeared to be lost, deadlines were apparently missed, and she was very confused. I gave this problem to you and you saved the day. I don't know how you did it, but you led her out of the woods out into the light of day. Sylvia also said that not only did you solve her problem, but that you treated her with concern and creativity. You listened, you understood, and you took immediate action to rectify the situation. What more could anyone want? Thanks so much for handling this emergency for me.

Discussion Questions

Why do you think John used a written form of communication to reinforce Joan's performance?

Was it the best method? Why? Why not?

Written communication is most effective when:

Situation 2: Steve, We Have a Problem

Sam and Pam have been working on a big project, a brochure that's supposed to be sent out to all claimants by the end of the month. Until now, Wendy, their boss, has been very happy with their work. It's Friday afternoon. Sam is in a meeting until 5 o'clock. Pam has just gotten a memo from Wendy with new feedback on the brochure. There are some big problems. Significant revisions are needed before it can be sent out. Pam assumes that Wendy is very upset with both Sam and her.

It's late Friday afternoon. Pam is anxious to leave because she and her family are going away for the weekend. She leaves a hasty phone message for Sam, thinking that she'll talk with him as soon as possible on Monday.

Pam's Phone Message:

"Sam, we have a big problem. Wendy called me and she hates the brochure. She doesn't seem too happy with us either. We've got to make a ton of revisions. I'm sorry I had to tell you this right before the weekend, but I thought you'd like to know. Let's get together as soon as possible on Monday. OK? Have a good weekend!"

Discussion Questions

If you were Sam, returning to your desk at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and got this message, how would you feel? How would you react? What, if anything, can you do about the message?

If you were Pam, how would you communicate with Eustis about this situation?

Situation 3—I Need Help!

The settlement facility is hosting a tour for lead judge and several of her associates. The claims administrator has asked all department heads to prepare a brief show-and-tell about their team and area responsibilities for the tour. The tour is now three days away and Bill, the manager of the largest department is just getting around to preparing his presentation. Short on ideas Bill decides that he needs to look for people to help him pull together the right information, displays, and demonstrations. To get volunteers-he actually needs only about three or four--and ideas for the show-and-tell, Bill sends the following email message to his entire department of 500 employees. He needs to get enough volunteers by tomorrow.

Author: Bill Fredericks
Subject: Need Your Help
Priority: Urgent, Reply Requested
Date October 29, 2002

On November 2, our facility will be hosting an tour for Judge Krypton and some of her associates. As part of the tour, they'll be stopping in our department to learn more about my team and our processes and outputs. I'm leading the charge on pulling together a 10-minute show-and-tell and need some help. If you have any ideas for the presentation or can spend a few hours helping me tomorrow, please call me at ext. 3345 or respond to this message. Thanks!

Discussion Questions

Of the 500 people who received this message from Bill, how many volunteers do you think he got? Would you have replied? Why or why not?

What potential problems could arise for Bill by using this method to communicate his need?

Was this the most effective method to gain the support of his coworkers? If not, why not?

Which method(s) might have been more effective?

Situation 4--I Hate Working with Him

The working relationship between Judy and Jack has been pretty stormy. Although neither one openly admits there's a problem, they have both confessed their dislike for each other to close friends. Recently they have had some public disagreements in team meetings. Just yesterday, they had their most serious argument yet, making the other team members very uncomfortable. Judy left the meeting vowing to avoid contact with Jack. She hoped to communicate with him through others or by sending him email messages. The next day, she was surprised when Jack stopped by her office and asked if she would be willing to speak with him directly about their differences. Jack and Judy met in a quiet conference room. Over a cup of coffee, they began to list their individual issues and address them one by one. By the end of the meeting, they were not exactly friends, but at least they understood a little more about why they disagreed and how they could handle differences in the future. It was the first step toward a better partnership and more open dialog.

Discussion Questions

How would you describe the situation between Jack and Judy before Jack suggested they meet?

Given the nature of their relationship, did Jack choose the right method to communicate with Judy? Why? Why not? Was it a risky choice?

What might have happened if Jack and Judy had tried to communicate through others or use other methods?

Why do we sometimes avoid face-to-face communication when there's a problem or disagreement?

MATCH Methods to Message

The following questions can help you choose the most effective method for sending your message.

M

Methods Available?

Do you communicate mostly by electronic means because you work at home or off site? Do your coworkers check messages regularly or infrequently? What has worked best in the past?

A

Audience?

Who will be receiving the information? How would this person or group normally receive information? What is the person's preferred form of communication?

T

Two-Way?

Will the recipient(s) of your message need to reply to you? Will they have questions? Will they need to clarify your message? If so, will they be able to reach you?

C

Content?

What is the message? Is it common information? Is it feedback on someone's performance? Is it sensitive or confidential, good news or bad? Is the information full of details?

H

How Fast?

Is the message urgent or time sensitive? Does it need to be received immediately, or is time not a factor? Do you need a quick response?

Choosing Methods—Best Practices

1. When the message is confidential or sensitive, deliver it personally.

- Confidential or sensitive messages are best given face to face or by phone.
- Deliver the message directly to give people the other person a chance to ask questions, discuss issues, or raise concerns.
- A person-to-person dialog allows you to honor the person’s possible need for privacy.

2. To share common information with a large group, efficiency and mass distribution are important.

- “Informational” messages affecting many people (company policies, announcements, changes to the phone system, etc.) can be sent effectively by electronic mail or memos.
- Memos or electronic mail messages are well suited if a reply is not needed.

3. To solve problems, discussion options or brainstorm, get all the “brains” together

- Call a meeting of key people. If they’re at different locations, try video- or phone-conferencing.
- Use an approach that allows everyone to hear and comment on one another’s ideas.
- Group discussions can help build consensus.

4. Delivering bad news warrants a person-to person conversation

- Imagine that your project has been axed; you’re over budget; your team is being disbanded. How would you like to hear it? Would you have questions or concerns? You’d probably like to talk directly to the person delivering the news.
- A conversation face to face, or at least by phone, is appropriate for delivering-and receiving-bad news.

5. When details are important, put it in writing

- People remember written details better.
- If your message has many details that are important for the receiver(s) to remember or act on, write a memo, letter, or electronic mail.

6. Giving feedback on job performance depends on the receiver of the feedback

- Feedback on job performance is meant to reinforce what’s effective and improve what’s not.
- How you deliver the feedback depends on the person and the situation.

- When giving either positive or developmental feedback, ask yourself:
 - Is it important to have a record of it?
 - How would the person want to receive it?
- To compliment someone on a good job, a memo can be the most solid and sincere form of appreciation-maybe with a copy to the boss.
- Some people have difficulty receiving feedback, even if it's totally positive! One person might prefer a phone message; another, being mentioned at a team meeting.
- If the feedback is for improvement, the best way is usually face to face-remembering to use empathy and share thoughts, feelings, and rationale as needed.

7. Urgent is spelled e-f-f-i-c-i-e-n-t

- Use the most reliable, quickest method if:
 - You're answering a critical customer request.
 - Someone can't do a job until you make a decision.
 - Your message is urgent or time sensitive.
- The best method might be face to face, over the phone, or via the paging system.
- Be sure the information given is clear and confirm that the person has received it.

Avoiding E-Pitfalls

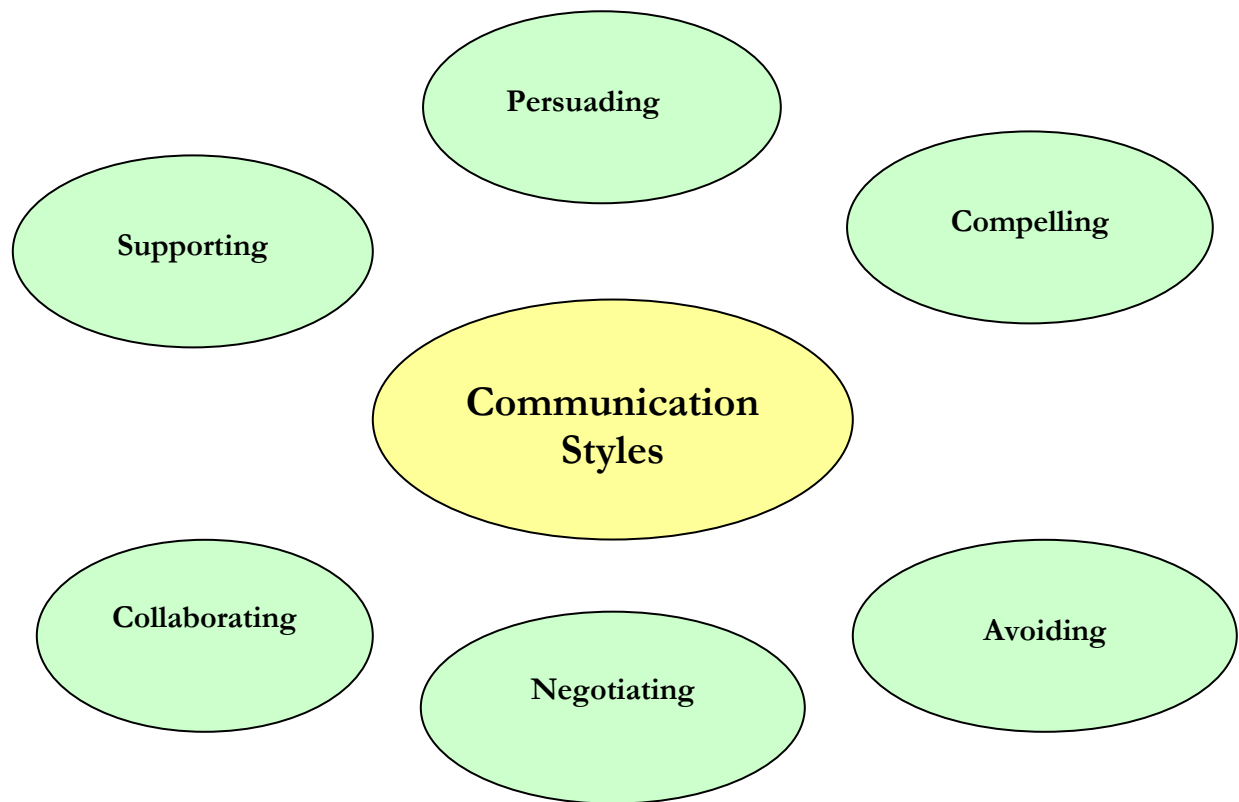
Here are some tips to keep you from getting in trouble over your office e-mails:

- **Remember who owns your e-mail:** Always remember that when your company allows use of its intranet program for personal and personal/business usage, it is extending you a privilege that should be appreciated and not abused. The company also reserves the right to monitor all e-mail messages.
- **Protect your password:** Never give out your password. Any message that emanates from your mailbox is a message for which you are responsible and liable. A printout of such a document will record the date and time of the message and will attribute you as the originator or forwarder.
- **Fraud is a no-no:** Sending an e-mail from another's system, invoking another person's password, and writing a message using his/her electronic identity without identifying yourself as the author could be considered fraud or misrepresentation.
- **Make it a harassment-free zone:** Never send rude or harassing messages. One or several messages of this nature can make you liable for investigation or discipline, even if you were "just joking."
- **It's no laughing matter:** The following behaviors will not be taken lightly when they are reported to company management:
 - ✓ Sending a large number of consecutive messages to an individual or group, which can crash an e-mail server.
 - ✓ Blocking entry to an individual chat room or bulletin board.
 - ✓ Sending unsolicited or "junk" e-mail messages.
- **Ignorance is no excuse:** Don't get yourself into trouble by resorting to illegal, destructive, harassing or threatening messaging. When a bad joke backfires, you will be unable to explain your intentions to authorities or management.
- **Avoid copyright infringement:** Extend to your e-mail the same courtesies of ownership that you would to other forms of communication. Request permission before adapting, quoting or forwarding from works including software, audio, written materials, etc.

Source: "E-Speak-Everything You Need to Know Before You Hit the Send Button," courtesy New York-based global human resources consulting firm DBM

Matching Style to Situation

Most people have a favorite and a least favorite communication style. An effective communicator will be able to choose from among several styles depending on the dictates of the situation. In this chapter we outline six communication styles. The Communication Styles Inventory found in the appendix of this manual will help you determine which of these styles is your most and least preferred. Here, in this chapter, each style is defined; information is provided about how, when and when not to use the style, and on what the possible outcomes of using the style might be.



Persuading

Strategies in which a person or a group attempts to change another's point of view, way of thinking or feeling through argument. Assumes that the other is incorrect or ignorant or needs to change in order to improve the situation.

How to persuade:

- Meet the needs of the other person or persons who are the target of your persuasive activities.
- Present both sides.
- Present your favored viewpoint last.
- Be for, not against.
- Don't interrupt.
- Don't hurry to make your points.
- Cover one point at a time.
- Know your key points and keep coming back to them.

When to persuade:

- In situations of low conflict. The higher the conflict, the lower the trust, the less likely people are going to listen or be persuaded.
- When the other is unclear about what he or she wants.
- When the other trusts your motives.
- When you have prestige or competence in the other's eyes.
- When the other perceives your goals and his/hers to be compatible.
- When the other perceives him/herself to be appreciated or respected by you.
- When the other does not have strong opinions on the subject

Outcomes of persuasive strategies:

- Persuasion does not work:
 - When the person you're trying to persuade has already made up their mind (prejudice).
 - When the other is afraid they're going to lose, if you win.
 - If the other person doesn't think you're knowledgeable.
 - When the other person is between the ages of 12-19 (When one has a high need to be independent).
- Persuasion is more likely to be effective with people who are already on your side, it is not useful until significant work has been done on relationships.
- Persuasion is the preferred style for North American-European culture.

Compelling

The use of physical or emotional force or authority to pressure or constrain another to do something.

You cannot compel people to think a certain way.

You can compel people to act a certain way.

Authority is the right we give to someone else to make decisions for us, through explicit or tacit contracts (rules).

- Policies and Procedures
- Police
- Doctor
- Arbiter
- A parent telling a child to pick up his/her room

How to compel:

- Increase your authority, both tacit and explicit
- Change the rules
- Increase your knowledge about a certain subject
- Get those who are already authorities to agree with you
- Be clear about what you want, your goals, your standards, your values, your expectations
- Keep control of the conversation, keep the initiative in the argument
- Develop a compelling style
- Be clear about consequences
- Bring sanctions upon non-compliant behavior
- Avoid qualifying words such as “I hope,” “I wish,” “perhaps,” “wouldn’t it be a good idea if . . .”

Compelling (Continued):

When to compel:

- Infrequently. People respond better when these strategies are used sparingly
- When you or others are being threatened or are under attack
- When rights are being violated.
- When you have tacit or explicit authority to demand compliance
- When you can call in authority
- When the other believes you will use your authority
- When there is inadequate time to work through differences
- When all other means have failed
- When one is able to monitor performance
- On important, unpopular courses of action

Outcomes of compelling:

- Compliance will occur only under direct supervision and regular inspection.
- Morale will be low in organizations that continually use compelling.
- Compelled individuals will tend to seek independence through sabotage or revenge.

Avoiding/Accommodating

Four ideas in one category:

- *Avoidance: one evades conflict or stays away from it.*
- *Ignoring: one acts as if a conflict were not going on.*
- *Fleeing: one actively removes her/himself from the arena in which the conflict is taking place.*
- *Accommodation: one goes along with the opposition, the relationship is more important than the issue.*

How to avoid, ignore, flee or accommodate:

- Procrastinate, put it off, don't deal with it.
- Say "yes" and then don't do it.
- Use support strategies: focus on the feelings of the other without addressing the problem.
- Submitting your resignation is fleeing. Threatening to submit your resignation is compelling.
- Study the problem--no intention of doing anything about it.

When to use avoidance, ignoring, fleeing or accommodation:

- When the cost of working through a problem is greater than the value of having worked through it.
- When individuals are particularly fragile or insecure.
- When people need time or space to cool down.
- When there is a conflict on many fronts, you may wish to avoid conflict on certain fronts.
- When the differences are trivial.
- When parties are unwilling or unable to reconcile differences.
- When you don't care about the relationship.
- When you are powerless to affect change.
- When you feel that the relationship has no future.

Avoiding (Continued)

Probable outcomes of Avoidance:

- These strategies usually do not change or help anything.
- There is an element of disrespect involved in these strategies: we do not respect another enough to believe that they are strong enough to stand up to and grow from a civil confrontation.
- Organizations and individuals who use these strategies are chronically depressed and remain depressed. People use much of their energy restraining themselves.

Collaborating

Collaboration occurs when one co-labors, works together with others on the resolution of the difficulties that are being experienced (joint problem-solving: you work together with the people with whom you disagree).

How to collaborate: The following steps must be carried out by all parties:

- jointly acknowledge that there is a problem;
- jointly agree on ground rules;
- jointly agree on a process for dealing with a problem;
- jointly define the problem;
- jointly identify shared interests (no secrets);
- jointly invent options for mutual gain;
- jointly agree on criteria for choosing among the options;
- jointly choose an option or options.
- Reshape the issue in such a way that everyone gets their needs met (win-win).

When to collaborate:

- Not many issues have collaborative possibilities, most must be negotiated (sort of win-sort of lose).
- When you and the others are willing to play by collaborative rules, to stick with the problem-solving process.
- All parties must be willing and able to come to sessions where the issues will be discussed.
- There must be a good deal of motivation to stick with the process: when the stakes are high and the costs of not collaborating are high.
- When there is plenty of time.
- When there are unlimited resources, where every person's needs can be met.
- Not possible in high conflict situations, where fear and distrust are high.

Likely outcomes of collaboration:

- People have a high motivation to comply with decisions.
- The quality of decision is usually significantly increased.
- People's problem-solving abilities are usually strengthened.
- All the parties involved in the conflict walk away with a sense of satisfaction and success: "We did it."

Negotiating or Bargaining

Same as collaboration except that the expectations are lower as people enter the conflict arena. Instead of seeking solutions that are mutually fulfilling, the parties will try to get as much as they can, assuming that they will not get everything that they want (sort of win, sort of lose).

How to bargain:

- Bargaining is the art of backing off, a process of making demands that you do not expect to get fulfilled, to get some of your needs met, while satisfying some of the needs that the other brings to the table. The goal is progress.
- There must be shared information between the parties involved; but whereas in collaboration there are no secrets, in bargaining, we do not share everything, nor do we expect that the other will share everything. We share things that are helpful to our case. Trust is reduced but this is understood as one of the givens of this style.
- Start with the easy issues; getting some issues out of the way first can increase trust so that we might be less defensive for more difficult issues.
- Start by stressing similarities of positions rather than differences.
- Stress the desirability of a negotiated agreement (better than going to court).
- Bargainers who present positive points about the other's position before he or she does are more likely to be influential. Be ready to present both sides.
- Present your best points last.
- Don't rely on innuendo or unspecified implications to get your point across. Use facts and be clear in your argument.

When to use bargaining:

- Bargaining can be used at all levels of conflict, but many problems are not negotiable, e.g., when parties have mutually exclusive goals (binary problems).
- When the prize is something divisible (baby brought to Solomon is not a bargaining situation).
- Where compelling is not appropriate and collaboration has failed.
- When all the parties are willing to bargain.
- When there is not a great power disparity between the parties.
- When the level of fear and perceptual distortion is low.

Probable outcomes of bargaining:

- Similar to collaboration.
- Commitment to the decision is not quite as strong.
- Solutions suffice, but do not fully satisfy.
- Parties might have to be reminded of their agreements.
- Parties may look for ways to revise agreements later.

Supporting

The major strategy of the helping professional: communication skills and active listening. Assumes that you do not share the problem with the other. It is not your responsibility to fix it, but to help the other deal with it. A strengthening, encouraging, empowering strategy.

How to support:

- Give the other person an immediate opportunity to expend some of his or her energy (talk, be angry, cry).
- Make short neutral statement or questions that acknowledge the other person's feelings.
- Reflect the feeling content of a person's words, "You sound angry . . ."
- Explore whether other issues are bothering the person in addition to the "presenting problem."
- Ask open-ended questions that get the other to talk.
- Help the other adapt to the situation described, if possible.
- To the extent that we admonish, judge, warn, order or bargain with the other, we undermine our support strategy.

When to support:

- If it is not your problem, it is not your responsibility to deal with it, and it is the responsibility of the other person to deal with it.
- When the other person is bringing to your relationship troubles and dissatisfactions outside of your relationship with them (spouse with a problem at work).
- When you are in a situation where you don't believe the tension is motivated by the issues with which you are dealing (an unrealistic conflict).
- When those on the other side are not willing to come to the table and work issues that are important to you both.
- When you want to help the other feel safe.

Probable outcomes of support.

- Support elicits good feelings. We like to be listened to.
- Others may be disappointed that you did not take their side.
- The supported people are encouraged to be responsible for themselves; people empowered.

Workplace Communication

- **Criticism**
- **Giving Orders and Assignments**
- **Encouraging Participation**

The ability to apply communication skills to specific business situations is a core employee competency. There are numerous business settings that require their own set of specific communication skills. For example, how do we communicate when we are responsible for:

- + Managing change
- + Negotiating a sale
- + Conducting a performance review
- + Disciplining or praising an employee
- + Making a presentation
- + Writing a report
- + Counseling or coaching an employee
- + Visionary leadership
- + Dealing with the media about a crisis
- + Marketing a new product
- + Handling an irate customer
- + Mediating a conflict

Each of these situations requires its own specific set of skills. Some of these will be covered in other SFDCT manuals and workshop.

In this chapter, we introduce employees to communication strategies in three critical areas:

- + Providing employee feedback, praise and criticism
- + Communication for confrontations: giving orders
- + Teambuilding and meetings: tools for generating discussion

1. Giving and Taking Criticism

Self-Analysis

1. What mistakes are sometimes made in confronting others with criticism?
2. What mistakes are sometimes made when being confronted by criticism?

A Framework for Sharing Critical Information

1. Dealing with Error, Mistakes and Restrictions

Effective

Attack problem
Avoid labels
Provide analysis
Be helpful: "I would like you to..."

Ineffective

Attack person
Label the person
Provide threats
Punish

2. How to Say What You Mean

Effective

Be Specific
Describe what they do
Make observations
Describe
Shed light

Ineffective

Be General
Describe who you think they are
Render opinions
Judge
Create Heat

How to Give Criticism without Arguing

1. Don't disagree
2. Accept their reality
3. Make it easy for the other person to change
4. Danger of "You're wrong." Creates defensiveness.
5. Avoid win-lose arguments: winners never learn; losers never forget.

A Model for Initiating a Confrontation

1. “I have a problem and I need your help.”
2. “Right now the situation is that . . .” (then describe what is actually going on).
3. “The behavior (or lack of behavior) that causes the problem is . . .”
 - Describe a tangible effect on either your body, time, possessions, objectives, responsibilities
 - Describe a value effect: how it makes you feel about them and your relationship with them.
4. “The concern I have about this is . . .”
5. “I’d like to see . . .” or “I’d like to suggest . . .”
6. My understanding is that we’ve agreed to . . .”

How to Take Criticism and Profit from It.

1. Three typical reasons for criticism
 - The other person sees something they envy
 - The other person doesn’t understand you
 - The other person does understand you, but doesn’t like what you’re doing
2. The real meaning of most criticism: when people criticize, 100% of the time it’s information about the person who is giving the criticism—sometimes it’s information about you.
3. Try to minimize the hurt of criticism so that you can get the benefit of the information.
4. There is a danger in seeking too much approval. The more flattery you need from another person, the more you set yourself up for manipulation—be in control.
5. Seek criticism under controlled circumstances.

Guidelines for Receiving a Confrontive Message

1. First words out of your mouth: “Thank you.” Why? First, they’ve just revealed something of themselves to you. Second, they didn’t go to someone else with it.
2. Watch for the deny-defend reaction: “No way, you don’t know what you’re talking about.” Don’t deny. Don’t defend. Don’t blame. Don’t counter-attack.

3. Understanding their position needs to occur before you evaluate their position: “Hmmm, please go on . . .” “I’d like to hear more about that.”
4. Interrupt only to clarify their point and confirm your understanding of it: “Let’s make sure I understand this point.”
5. Give their point validity: “I can see that’s a real concern.”
6. State your objection so that it can be countered. Ask for examples. Ask whether it happens a lot: “Let’s say we follow this suggestion and (your objection) happens, how could that be dealt with?”
7. Be clear about what you’ve agreed to do. Let them know whether you are going to change or not: “If that can happen, then I am willing to . . .”
8. Be clear about the next step. You may want to get a second-fifth opinion: “The next thing we need to do is . . .” “I will . . . and I understand that you are going to . . .”

Possible Approaches to a Fact Difference

1. Continue as-is
2. Do it their way
3. Do it your way
4. Find a compromise position
5. Do each, separately
6. Abandon the issue
7. Third-party intervention

Be in Control

1. What do I do well and should continue?
2. What do I do poorly and should stop?
3. What do I do poorly and should change?
4. What do I do OK and could do better?
5. What do I do not at all and should start doing?

2. Communication for Confrontations: Giving an Order

Strong Behavior (Confrontation) Is Appropriate

1. Output is critical
2. There can be no debate as to how things should be done
3. A non-negotiable deadline exists
4. Ethical, legal, moral or spiritual values are at stake
5. A decision has been made and must be carried out
6. Someone needs to take charge
7. Success has been pre-determined
8. When tender has been the norm too long
9. Competition is keen
10. There is a risk of danger to person or property

When You Are the Giver of a Confrontive Message Avoid These Patterns

1. Evaluation
 - You can't do it that way
 - Would you just listen to me?
 - Where did you come up with this half-baked idea?
2. Control
 - Don't do it that way.
 - You have to follow the procedure.
 - Do it your way, I'll just send it back
 - One of these days, you're going to learn.
3. Indifference
 - I don't really care what you do.

- Go ahead, do it your way, who cares?
- It's obvious you don't want my input.
- You're on your own on this one.

4. Superiority

- You won't see any of the really good people here doing it that way.
- See, that's what I told you would happen.
- When I was down at your level.

5. Over-Generalizations

- You always . . .
- You never . . .
- Just once, could you . . .

Non-Defensive Responses that Can Keep a Discussion Going

1. Acknowledgement

- I wasn't aware of that
- I can see that
- I can see there's a problem
- I'm aware that you are concerned

2. Regret

- I'm sorry that happened
- I'm sorry you're having a tough time
- I'm sorry you feel that way
- That's a rotten break

3. Empathy

- I can understand why you're upset
- I can tell that you've had a tough time
- I can see why you're discouraged
- I can tell that you're disappointed
- I understand

4. Agreement

- That shouldn't have happened
- You're right, this is a real problem
- I need to do something about that
- We can't let it go on like this

- I don't blame you
5. Alternatives, Suggestions, Solutions
 - Here's a possibility
 - One of the things you could try is
 - Why don't you/we/I
 - Here's how to handle it
 - I'll take care of it

How to Give an Order

1. Don't make it a power struggle. Try to focus the worker's attention on the goal to be met. It's the situation that demands the order, not the supervisor.
2. Avoid an offhand manner. When you want employees to take instructions seriously, deliver them that way.
3. Watch your words and tone of voice. Most employees understand that it's a supervisor's responsibility to give orders. When they don't like it, it's because of the way the order was delivered.
4. Don't assume that the worker understands. Encourage employee feedback. Ask for questions and potential problems. Have employees confirm that they understand by demonstrating what you've asked them to do.
5. Seek feedback right away. Resistance and misunderstandings discovered at the beginning can save a lot of time and aggravation later on.
6. Don't give too many orders. Be selective. Be brief and to the point. Wait until an employee has finished one job before giving her/him another.
7. Provide just enough detail. Old hands may get bored with too much instruction. Know your employees well enough so that you can give them just the information they need.
8. Watch out for conflicting instructions. Be consistent from day to day. Make sure that you're not telling your workers something, while another supervisor is telling his people something else.
9. Don't just choose the willing worker. Spread your order around to everyone, even the hard-to-handle employee.
10. Try not to pick on anyone. Distribute work fairly, try not to punish a problem employee by handing them an unpleasant assignment.

3. Communication for Meetings: Tools for Generating Discussion

What Makes Meeting Ineffective?

- No goals or agendas
- No pre-meeting orientation
- Starting late
- Poor or inadequate preparation
- Getting off the subject
- Too long
- Disorganized
- Inconclusive
- Ineffective leadership
- Irrelevant information discussed
- Time wasted
- Interruptions
- Ineffective at making decisions
- Rambling, redundant, digressive discussions
- Individuals dominate discussions
- No published results or follow-up discussions

Typical Meetings

A Typical Meeting . . .

- Lasts one and one half hours
- Is attended by nine people
- Is called on two hours' notice
- Has written agenda less than half the time
- Cover the agenda only half the time.

Major topics:

- Organizational updates
- Project management
- Product or service issues

Major purposes:

- Resolve conflicts
- Reach group decision
- Communicate information

Satisfaction is correlated with:

- Leadership
- Who attends meeting
- The agenda
- The outcome

To Conduct an Effective Meeting

- Set an agenda: Time, Length and Location
- Identify the participants: Seven or fewer
- Provide background information
- Identify goals of the meeting
- Begin the meeting on time
- Identify time constraints
- Encourage participation
- Keep discussions on track
- Keep a positive tone
- Conclude meeting on time
- Give warning shortly before conclusion to wrap up
- Summarize results and future action items
- Acknowledge contributions of group participants
- Build agenda for next meeting based on results or action items of previous meeting
- Follow-up on assignments with groups members

Tools for Generating Discussion

The role of facilitator is critical to the success of a meeting. A skilled facilitator has the ability to ask just the right question to open discussion and keep the team moving. The following examples provide the facilitator with some useful tools for generating discussion.'

1. Get the meeting started.

- “Let’s review the agenda, get team assignments, and add or delete any items we need to.”
- “I suggest that we deal with the short items first and then do the project item after a short break. Is that all right?”
- “Our goal for the meeting today is.... Does anyone see it differently?”

2. Encourage communication and involvement of all members.

- “Let’s go around the room and get everyone’s opinion about . . .?”
- “How do you feel about this?”
- “How would you answer that question?”
- “We haven’t heard from you yet. How do you feel about this?”

3. Ask team members for opinions and feelings to encourage discussion.

- “Do you agree with...?”
- “What is your reaction to...?”
- “How do you feel about . . .?”
- “Would you say that...?”
- “We’ve heard from you already on this topic. Sherri hasn’t spoken yet and may want to add something.”

4. Ask for a summary of the discussion.

- “A lot of good ideas have been presented in the last half hour. Will someone summarize the major points before we go on?”
- “I have heard a number of suggestions. Will someone summarize what has been agreed to?”
- “I think we have gotten off course. Will someone summarize what has been said so far?”

5. Paraphrase what someone has said to help members understand each other.

- “I’m not sure I understand. Are you saying that...?”
- “What I’m hearing is.... Is that right?”
- “It sounds as if you’re asking me to ...”

6. Ask for specific examples to improve understanding.

- “Will you give some examples of what you mean?”
- “Can you expand on that? I’m not sure I understand.”

7. Clarify assumptions.

- “Your idea assumes that she will participate.”
- “Your proposal assumes that unless we use threats, they won’t cooperate. Is that right?”
- “Your suggestion assumes that we cannot meet the deadline. Is that right?”

8. Ask for explanation in order to eliminate confusion and repetition.

- “We have been everywhere with this issue. Can someone suggest how we might proceed?”
- “I didn’t understand what you were saying. What would you do if...?”
- “The examples you gave apply to.... Do they also apply to...?”
- “It’s still not clear to me. What do I do when...?”

9. Probe an idea in greater depth.

- “How about a totally different opinion?”
- “What are some other ways to approach this problem?”
- “Are there other things we should consider?”
- “What would you add to what has already been said?”

10. Suggest a break or rest.

- “We have been working on this problem for about an hour. I suggest we take a ten-minute break.”

11. Move the team toward action.

- “What would you do first?”
- “How would you suggest that we proceed on this?”
- “I’d like some suggestions on possible ways to get started.”
- “How would you propose we get started?”

12. Poll members.

- “How does everybody feel about this?”
- “How many believe this is an idea worth pursuing?”
- “Let’s ask everyone how they feel about the proposal.”

13. Encourage open-mindedness.

“I don’t think you heard what he was trying to say. It might help if you tell us what you heard him say before you state your objections.”

“Let’s go around the table so everyone gets a chance to comment on this.”

14. Recommend a process.

“I suggest we go around the table to see how everyone feels about this issue.”

“Would it help if we put the agenda items in priority order before we start?”

“Let’s try brainstorming to get some new ideas on the table.”

15. Step out of the facilitator role.

“I’d like to make a comment—would someone serve as facilitator for a few minutes so I can state my opinion?”

“I have strong feelings about this topic and would like to have someone else facilitate.”

16. Stop discussion to focus on team feelings.

“Let’s take a break from the tasks for a few minutes and have each of us talk about what he or she is feeling right now.”

“I’m frustrated. I think we should take this problem up next week when we have more facts. How do the rest of you feel?”

17. Encourage greater participation.

“Let’s give him a chance to tell it the way he sees it.”

“I believe you’ve had a chance to speak on this topic already. Some others need a turn.”

18. Reflect for the team what someone else is feeling.

“I get the impression that you are not satisfied with my answer. Is that right?”

“Her comments tell me that she needs to ask some questions on this. Is that right?”

“It sounds to me as if ...?”

19. Get back on track.

“I think we’ve lost our focus.”

“How does what we’re talking about relate to our agenda item?”

“I need help finding a common thread here.”

20. *Surface differences of opinion.*

“You haven’t said so, but it’s clear to me that you don’t agree. Is that right?”
“I’m afraid people are saying what they think others want to hear. What do you think about this?” “You seem to be holding back on this. Is there something here you disagree with?”
“I think we’re trying to avoid disagreeing with each other. Who would be willing to voice a different opinion?”

21. *Check team progress.*

“Are we asking the right question?”
“Are these the most important goals?”
“Is this the best way to get your support?”

22. *Encourage new thinking.*

“Why don’t you take the role of a customer for a few minutes? Now, as a customer, how would you react to this proposal?”
“Pretend you are the department head for a moment. How would you react to this proposal?”
“How would you feel if you were treated this way?”

23. *Explore potential results.*

“If we did it this way, what is the worst thing that could happen?”
“If it doesn’t work, what have we lost?”
“If it works, how will it affect our goal?”

24. *Test for consensus of the team.*

“Can we identify any areas we still disagree on?”
“It seems that we have come to agreement on this issue. Does everyone accept the idea that... ?”
“Do we have consensus that the best approach is...?”
“I sense that we are in agreement. Does anyone see it differently?”
“Is this something we can all live with?”

25. *Handle consensus blockers.*

“We would like to hear your reasons for blocking the decision. Would you please explain?”
“Is there a compromise you would like to offer?”
“Would you be willing to stand aside if we did this for a trial period?”

26. *Move toward decision.*

“We have considered every possibility; now we must choose from these three alternatives...?”
“We have discussed both sides carefully. It’s time we made a choice.”

Problem-Solving Communication: Whose Responsibility?

Whose job is it to make sure that the problem-solving sequence is adequately handled? Too often it is seen as solely the leader's responsibility. But teams tend to be more successful when all members feel that obligation. Taking the problem-solving sequence as an example, can't the members do as much as the leader to make sure the steps are adequately handled? Following are examples of comments that any member can make to help the group deal with the various steps.

1. Defining the Problem

- "I think we are discussing more the symptom than the real problem. Isn't the core problem...?"
- "Have we really diagnosed what caused this difficulty? I think there are some other causes we need to look at."
- "I think that the two of you have defined the problem differently: Joe, it sounds as if you see it as X, while Mary, it seems that you are defining it in terms of Y."

2. Generating Alternatives

- "We seem to be debating the pros and cons of only two options. Could we hold off evaluating them and continue brainstorming more possibilities?"
- "Three of us have been doing most of the talking; before moving on to the evaluating stage, let's bear from the other members to make sure we have all ideas out."

3. Evaluating Options

- "Let's list on the board the pros and cons of each of the options; I think we are starting to argue the two sides of just one alternative and we need to evaluate all of them objectively."
- "I am hearing a lot of opinions; what we need are facts. Could we list the evidence needed to assess these options?"

4. Making a Decision

- "Seems to me that we are getting close to a decision; could we check to see if we have agreement?"
- "I am not sure that all of us really buy in to this decision. I think you, Harry, and Jane, have some qualms. What would have to change in order for you really to support this decision?"

5. Implementing the Decision

- "I don't know if we have agreed who is going to carry this out. And what specifically do we expect that person to do?"

"Jim, in taking responsibility for this, what do you need from the rest of us to make our decision fly?"

Appendix: Exercises, Tests, Activities

Translate these poorly expressed proverbs

- An ignoramus and his/her lucre are readily disjoined.
- In the absence of the feline race, certain small rodents will give themselves up to various pleasurable pastimes.
- A plethora of culinary specialists vitiate the liquid in which a variety of nutritional substances have been simmered.
- Impetuous celerity engenders purposeless spoilage.
- Illegal transgression has no remuneration for its perpetrators.
- A winged and feathered animal in the digital limb is as valuable as a duet in the shrubbery.
- The warm blooded class avis who is governed by preemptitude can apprehend the small elongated and slender creeping animal.
- Provide the privilege of enfranchisement or I will feel that life is not worth living.
- A condition characterized by tardiness is more desirable than one that is systematically marked by eternal absenteeism.

Use with “Be Clear and Accurate,” p. 23

What Happened?

A businessman had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened a cash register. The contents of the cash register were scooped up, and the man sped away. A member of the police force was notified promptly.

Answer the following questions about the story (True-False-Questionable).

1. A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights. T F ?
2. The robber was a man. T F ?
3. The man who appeared did not demand money. T F ?
4. The man who opened the cash register was the owner. T F ?
5. The owner scooped up the contents of the cash register and ran away. T F ?
6. Someone opened a cash register. T F ?
7. After the man who demanded money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away. T F ?
8. While the cash register contained money, the story does not say how much. T F ?
9. The robber demanded money of the owner. T F ?
10. The story concerns a series of events in which only three persons are referred to: the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and a member of the police force. T F ?
11. The following events in the story are true: someone demanded money, a cash register was opened, its contents were scooped up, and a man dashed out of the store. T F ?

Answer the questions individually, then answer the questions in groups of 4-5. Rules for groups decision-making are as follows:

- Group decisions should be made by consensus. It is illegal to vote, trade, average or flip a coin.
- No group member should give in to individual or group pressure only to reach an agreement.
- No individual should be argumentative or hard-nosed for his or her arguments. Instead, approach the task using logic and reason.
- Every group member should be aware that most disagreements can be resolved by the use of logic and facts. Conflict can lead to understanding and creativity if group members are encouraged to look at problems from many points of view.

Individual Score (number correct before working with the group) _____

Group Score (number correct on which the group had consensus) _____

Average Individual Score (average individual's scores before group) _____

Use with Barriers: Assumptions (p. 12) or Perceptions: Closure (p.17)

The Island Story

Two islands are separated by 100 yards of shark-infested water. On these islands live two communities of people. Until the present, there has been no way for the people on one island to travel to the other island.

One day while walking on the beach, Bob looked across the water to the other island and saw Alice, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. They began talking across the water, repeated this day after day and soon fell in love. They longed to be able to see each other face to face.

One evening, after weeks of pining for Bob, Alice learned of a man named Carl who had built a small boat that could take her over to Bob's island. Carl's was the only boat on the island. Alice went and told Carl of her predicament. Carl offered a deal. If she would sleep with him for one evening, he would take her to the other island. Alice went to her mother Debbie to ask her for advice. Debbie told Alice that she was a grown woman, that she needed to make this decision herself, and that she would support her whatever she did.

Alice decided to sleep with Carl. True to his word, the next day Carl took Alice to Bob's island. When Alice met Bob there was a joyful and tearful embrace. Bob wondered how Alice had crossed the shark-infested water. Alice told Bob the whole story, including the fact that she had had to have sex with Carl for him to take her in his boat. Bob was horrified and disgusted and told Alice that he never wanted to see her again.

Despondent, Alice walked alone to the other side of Bob's island. There on the beach she met Eric. Eric saw her crying, took her home and comforted her. After dinner, Alice told Eric her terrible tale. Eric's heart went out to her. He offered to take care of her forever and asked her to marry him. Alice accepted.

Rank from 1 to 5 the five characters in this story (Alice, Bob, Carl, Debbie, Eric), from 1, the character you like, respect, admire the most, to 5 the character you like, admire, respect the least.

Use with Barriers: Assumptions, p.12

How Often???

These terms were taken from employee performance reviews: individually assign a percentage value to these terms. In groups assign a percentage value.

- always
- almost always
- nearly always
- often
- never
- sometimes
- occasionally
- rarely
- usually
- most of the time
- seldom
- a lot
- quite often
- regularly
- frequently

Use with **Barrier**, p. 12 or **Language**, p. 14

Communication Climate Questionnaire

1. It's easy to find out what's going on. There are few secrets around here.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
2. People feel free to say what's on their minds when they're talking to their bosses.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
3. You can count on the truth and accuracy of what company management says about such matters as profits and losses, long range plans and impending changes in policy.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
4. Other managers at my level in the company are people with whom I can easily and frankly discuss mutual problems.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
5. My superiors keep me informed on what's expected of me—of what I must do to get ahead.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
6. Managers encourage subordinates to come up with new ideas and they protect them when they stick their necks out by making suggestions.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
7. Company statements are noted for their clarity and freedom from bureaucratic prose.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
8. Management treats everyone with respect—as mature adults rather than children.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
9. Management is candid in disclosing bad news; the rule is "We tell it like it is."
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
10. Performance appraisals are conducted in such a way that the subordinate knows where he or she stands and participates in setting his or her own goals for continued progress.
Always True Usually True Usually False Always False

11. The underlying assumption in the company is that just about everyone has good ideas, and that these ideas should contribute to all decisions made
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
12. When you send messages to higher management, you get a prompt and honest response.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
13. When you see a crisis building up, it's easy to alert higher management about it.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
14. I receive all the information I need to perform my job effectively.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
15. People representing different departments and different specialties have ample opportunity to consult with each other.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
16. This company plays down status differences between superiors and subordinates.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
17. Managers at all levels are encouraged to be their own bosses, hence, to take risks.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
18. In this company we stress that managers should act more as counselors and helpers than as order givers and watchmen.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
19. Although I am treated with consideration at all times, I am "stretched" to achieve high performance goals.
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
20. The general spirit around here is: "We're all in this boat together, and we sink or swim together (rather than, "The way to get ahead is to outmaneuver your rivals").
- Always True Usually True Usually False Always False
21. I find it relatively easy to get feedback from my subordinates about their problems, feelings and accomplishments.

- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
22. I find it relatively easy to get feedback from my superiors when I send messages asking for information, answers to questions and so on.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
23. Our publications, for both managers and employees are known for candor, for completeness and for providing gutsy information.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
24. Higher management is willing to listen to criticism; it approaches new ideas with an open mind even when these ideas imply criticism.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
25. The company provides a systematic and safe means for anyone to raise questions or criticisms; appropriate line managers answer questions promptly, fully and accurately.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
26. When someone offers an idea or makes a proposal in decision-making conferences, my approach is: "Let's see why this might be a good idea" rather than: "What's wrong with it."
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
27. In this company people feel that managers are sincerely interested in their welfare and progress.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
28. If I am making a proposal to higher management, I know that I'll get a fair hearing; I'll be subjected to searching questions, but I can talk back without fear of the consequences.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
29. When one of my own subordinates is making a major proposal, I give him or her a fair hearing; I subject the proposal to searching questions, but I encourage the subordinate to talk back without fear of the consequences.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
30. When important news about the company is announced, both managers and employees hear it first before it is released to the public.
- | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Always True | Usually True | Usually False | Always False |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|

Communication Styles Inventory (Chapter 6)

Instructions

Choose a “setting” in which you regularly find yourself communicating at work. You should not attempt to think of yourself “in general” or in a variety of settings, but in one particular environment. A “setting” is an environment, organization or relationship that has significance for you as distinct from other settings or relationships. For example, a setting might be your relationship with your spouse as distinct from your relationship with your children; it might be your relationships with your co-workers or with your boss; it might be your relationships at church, or on a particular community board.

We have found that people tend to get different scores as they think of themselves in each setting. So, if you want to reflect on your communication style at work, and you have filled out this instrument using your understanding of yourself at home, you’ll need to do it a second time to discover whether you read yourself differently in the two environments.

It is not a good idea to choose one particular situation that may have occurred in a setting. Rather, let yourself be reminded of several situations that may have occurred in that setting. Moreover, don’t choose the worst conflicts that you may have experienced in this setting. Try to reflect on yourself in the usual and regular situations that you get into, as well as those that may have been particularly tough or easy.

Answer each question with a response that is as close to how you usually respond in this setting. Each question contains a pair of statements describing possible behavior responses. For each pair, circle the “A” or “B” statement that is most characteristic of your own behavior.

In many cases, neither “A” nor “B” may be very typical of your behavior; nonetheless, please select the response which you would be more likely to make.

1. A. Using logic, I try to convince the other of the value of my position.
B. I use whatever authority I have to convince the other of my position.
2. A. I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
B. I seek the other’s help in working out a solution.
3. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
B. I actively listen to the other.
4. A. I make an effort to get my way.
B. I will make an effort to go along with what the other wants.
5. A. I don’t let others abuse my rights.
B. I show empathy about his/her plight.

6. A. I try to surface all of his/ her concerns.
B. If I give up something, I expect the other to give up something.
7. A. I press my argument to get points made.
B. I attempt to work on all concerns and issues in the open.
8. A. I assert my rights.
B. I will give up some points in exchange for others.
9. A. I might try to soothe the other's feelings to preserve our relationship.
B. I encourage the other to act for himself/herself.
10. A. I tell him/her my ideas.
B. I propose a middle ground.
11. A. I remind the other I am an authority on the subject we are dealing with.
B. In order to keep the peace, I might sacrifice my own wishes for those of the other.
12. A. I invite the other to join with me to deal with the differences between us.
B. I assume that giving advice creates dependence on me.
13. A. I try to show him/her the logic of my position.
B. I usually repeat back or paraphrase what the other has said.
14. A. I use the constitution or policy manual as a backup for my position.
B. I encourage the other to stay with me in the conflict.
15. A. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
B. If it makes the other happy, I might let him/her retain some of his/her views.
16. A. I subtly threaten our relationship if I don't get my way.
B. I am firm in pursuing my argument.
17. A. I am concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
B. I try to avoid unpleasantness for myself.
18. A. I don't try to persuade another about what should be done. I help him/her find his/her own way.
B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.
19. A. I try to postpone the issue until a later time.
B. I try to show the logic and benefits of my position.
20. A. I am non-judgmental about what the other says or does.
B. I call in an authority who will support me.
21. A. I try to find an intermediate position.

- B. I usually seek the other's help in working out a solution.
22. A. I tell the other about the problem so we can work it out.
B. I propose solutions to our problems.
23. A. I usually ask for more than I expect to get.
B. I offer rewards so the other will comply with my point of view.
24. A. I try not to give advice, only to help the other find his/her own way.
B. Differences are not always worth worrying about.
25. A. I calculate about how to get as much as I can, knowing I won't get everything.
B. I try to gain the other's trust in order to get him/her on my side.
26. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create unpleasantness.
B. I pout or withdraw when I don't get my way.
27. A. I help the other take care of his/her own problems.
B. When someone avoids conflict with me, I invite him/her to work it out with me.
28. A. I try to put as little of myself forward as possible, attempting to utilize the strengths of the other.
B. I point out the faults in the other's arguments.
29. A. When someone threatens me, I assume we have a problem and invite him/her to work it out with me.
B. When I am right, I don't argue much; I just state my position and stand firm.
30. A. I will give in a little so everybody gets something he/she wants.
B. I try not to hurt the other's feelings.
31. A. I carefully prepare my case before joining the argument.
B. I admonish the other to do as I say.
32. A. I try to be considerate of the other's wishes.
B. If we are at a loss as to how to work an issue through, we ask for a third party.
33. A. In order to succeed, one needs to be flexible.
B. In a conflict, one should focus on fact-finding.
34. A. I evaluate the positives and negatives of the other's argument.
B. If the other's position is important to him/her, I would try to meet those wishes.
35. A. It is more important to be right than to be friendly.
B. I try to help the other feel courage and power to manage his/her own problems.
36. A. I assume that in a conflict we will all be able to come out winners.

- B. I assume conflict management is the art of attaining the possible.
- 37. A. When opposed, I can usually come up with a counter argument.
B. I assume we can work a conflict through.
- 38. A. I clearly prescribe my goals and expectations.
B. In a conflict, everybody should come out with something though not everything that was expected.
- 39. A. I prefer to postpone unpleasant situations.
B. I support the other in trying to find his/her way.
- 40. A. I defend my ideas energetically.
B. I only share that which is helpful to my case.
- 41. A. I let others know whether my requirements are being met.
B. I try not to hurt the other's feelings.
- 42. A. I attempt to define our mutual problems jointly.
B. I sympathize with the other's difficulties, but don't take responsibility for them.
- 43. A. I put together a logical argument.
B. I express a lot of caring toward the other.
- 44. A. If it is important, I will put pressure on the other to get what is needed.
B. I join with the other to gather data about our problems.
- 45. A. I assume relationships are more important than issues.
B. I assume that each of us must give up something for the good of the whole.

	Persuade	Compel	Avoid/ Accommodate	Collaborate	Negotiate	Support
1.	A	B				
2.			A	B		
3.					A	B
4.	A		B			
5.		A				B
6.				A	B	
7.	A			B		
8.		A			B	
9.			A			B
10.	A				B	
11.		A	B			
12.				A		B
13.	A					B
14.		A		B		
15.			A		B	
16.	B	A				
17.			B	A		
18.					B	A
19.	B		A			
20.		B				A
21.				B	A	
22.	B			A		
23.		B			A	
24.			B			A
25.	B				A	
26.		B	A			
27.				B		A
28.	B					A
29.		B		A		
30.			B		A	
31.	A	B				
32.			A	B		
33.					A	B
34.	A		B			
35.		A				B
36.				A	B	
37.	A			B		
38.		A			B	
39.			A			B
40.	A				B	
41.		A	B			
42.				A		B
43.	A					B
44.		A		B		
45.			A		B	

Circle the letters that you circled on each item of the questionnaire. Total number of items circled in each column:

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The material in this manual was developed from what I learned from numerous books, workshops and classes. My introduction to this material came from E. Wendy Trachte-Huber and her Mediation and Negotiation classes at the University of Houston. Some of the material in this manual is taken from her class notes. Other references were cited in the text of this manual. In addition, the following books were particularly helpful.

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Paul has served as the Chief Operating Officer and Divisional President of a large US business advisory firm (UHY, now BDO TX) and as an interim President and CEO for public and private companies. Recently he led the global strategy practice for BRG, a leading global consulting firm. He possesses an outstanding track record of developing leaders who, individually and with their teams, solve complex problems, lead transformational change, create value, and inspire and motivate followers. He has provided advisory services to corporate boards and executive coaching to C-Suite executives and their teams in over 75 organizations. He is an expert in the design and execution of strategy with large organizations, nonprofits, and closely-held businesses and has successfully led large, global, strategy and organizational change projects for multinational corporations. He is a skilled negotiator and mediator in business ecosystem, M&A integration and dispute resolution contexts and has served as the VP of the Texas Association of Mediators and on other Boards. He has authored numerous articles and over 20 manuals related to stress management, change, leadership, strategy and a variety of personal and business topics.

Paul earned his PhD. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He graduated from the Harvard Business School Graduate Leadership Program, completed his MDiv at Bethel University, MN, and completed his undergraduate degree at Wheaton College, IL. He has completed over 20 graduate courses in Psychology, Counseling, Neuroscience, and Organizational Development and is currently completing a thesis for the Master of Science in Psychology at the University of Houston, Clear Lake. Paul served as a professor in the EMBA Program at the University of Houston and as a lecturer at Rice University.

Paul offices in Fredericksburg, Houston, TX, and Spirit Lake, Iowa and serves business clients in their offices throughout the country or on Zoom. He and his wife have five grown and married sons and two grandsons! Paul enjoys fishing, golf, baseball, music (trumpet) and building things.