



Think About Your Business Interactions

1. With whom do you communicate?
2. What kinds of conversations/communications do you have?
3. What is the intent/purpose of your communication?
4. What are some recent examples and was it effective?
5. How do people typically react or respond? Do you find yourself explaining a point over and over, or do others just not understand? Is there follow-through?
6. Are you satisfied with your communications, and are you achieving your objectives?



Effective Business Communication

Lee Silvestre
Veterans Internship Program Manager
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Communication is a skill that you can learn. It is like riding a bicycle or typing. If you're willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life.

Brian Tracy (American Author)

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

- 1. Have a clear purpose. Why are you communicating? What is your intended outcome? What is your message? How will you deliver it?**
- 2. Understand your audience. What is their purpose for communication with you? What is likely their preferred communication style?**
- 3. Identify relevant information and communication points; then prioritize, rearrange, refine, and clarify.**
- 4. Plan your communication exchange – either written or spoken – and know what you expect to achieve.**
- 5. Communicate with purpose, focus, professionalism, and confidence.**
- 6. Keep communication as simplified and direct as possible.**

Timeliness, clarity, courtesy always matter, whether you are on the phone, behind a computer, or face-to-face

INTRODUCTION

I have made this letter longer than usual because I lack the time to make it shorter.

Blaise Pascal (Mathematician)

If you can't explain something simply, you don't understand it well.

Albert Einstein (Physicist)

We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.

Epictetus (Greek Philosopher)

It takes time, planning and conscious intent to produce a clear, precise and thoughtful message.

Effective communication can help avoid misunderstanding, misperceptions, mistakes, and confusion.

WHY SOME COMMUNICATIONS FAIL

- 1. Errors - style, usage, format, content, English language**
- 2. Confusing, haphazard - too much or too little**
- 3. Trying to impress vs. simply conveying information**
- 4. Distractions and mixed messages**
- 5. Lack of clarity or precision**
- 6. Jargon, big words, and acronyms**
- 7. Too much repetition**
- 8. Not respectful or polite**
- 9. Informal and/or too familiar**
- 10. Interpreted in a ways never intended**
- 11. Not addressing the topic of the exchange**
- 12. Too complex**
- 13. Information or communication points are omitted**



Basic Principles For Clear Communication

Principle 1 - Think About What You Are Going to Communicate

- **State your purpose and desired outcome**
- **Decide how your communication will address your purpose**
- **Write down and arrange your ideas and points so your purpose and desired outcome are clear.**
- **Use the most efficient and simple way possible to answer a question or explain a point**

Why is Thinking Important?

- It starts with purpose.
 - Why am I writing this or having this conversation?
 - Who am I communicating with?
 - What is my message?
 - What do I want/need to achieve?
- It results in communication that is:
 - More clear and precise.
 - Indicates that you understand who is to receive your communication.

Principle 2 - Know Your Audience

Who you are writing or speaking to?

How do they communicate?

What is their style?

How do they best receive information?

What delivery is appropriate for the topic?

Knowing Your Audience Guides Development of Your Message

Things to consider:

- How do you relate to your audience?
- Who are your readers/listeners?
- Why will they read/listen to you and your communication?
- Where will they read/listen to your message?
- Do they know what you want of them?
- Why is your audience important to you?
- Will they make a decision on what you communicate to them?
- How will they make their decision?
- What is their background, position and responsibilities?
- How will you appear to them?

What does your communication say about you?



Principle 3 - Understand The Purpose Of Your Communication

Reflect on your purpose, and keep your communication aligned with, and supporting the reason you are communicating.

Do people know what you want of them and have you left them with an action or understood path forward?

Why is Understanding Your Purpose Important?

- It helps you achieve or cause a desired outcome.

Some purposes are:

1. Explain, pass along, or protect information
2. To clarify or provide an answer to questions
3. Persuade or convince someone to act
4. Inspire / motivate / compliment / thank / inquire
5. Convince someone to give you an interview or job, or even return a call

Principle 4 - Develop your message.

Identify and arrange your ideas to achieve your purpose for your specific audience.

Why is developing your message important?

- To ensure you clearly, simply and professionally convey your ideas to a specific audience.
- To avoid unintended consequences.
- To achieve the intended outcome for communicating in the first place.
- To avoid or support competing, complementary or alternative agendas and messaging.



Principle 5 - Choose and maintain a “tone” for your communication

Why is Tone Important?

- It conveys your attitude about yourself, the purpose and subject, and the people you are writing or talking to.
- Tone can easily override what you say in words – written or spoken.
- Sometimes the receiver injects tone, especially in written communication.

Tone

- Your character and intentions are revealed by words and their arrangement and delivery.
- Tone, and thus message, can be misunderstood; especially in writing.
- Your words can convey a tone that is:
 - Formal or informal
 - Serious, playful, humorous or sarcastic
 - Respectful or disrespectful
 - Professional or casual
 - Authoritative or passive
 - Thoughtful
 - Positive or negative
 - Inclusive
 - Calm, irritated, or angry

Remember ... it's not only *what* you say, but *how* you say it

Principle 6 - Choose An Appropriate Communication Mode

- Communication is delivered in a mode, or form of communication that has a style and form of delivery.
 - Conversations: Phone, In person, Group
 - Writing: Email, Texts, Resumes, Letters

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

George Bernard Shaw (Irish Dramatist)

Why is Communication Mode Important?

Must be appropriate for audience, purpose and message. Communication modes are:

- Face-to-face conversations
- Phone messages
- Phone conversations
- Email messages
- Text messages
- Formal letters
- Informal, written notes

Know which mode works, given the audience, the objective of your communication, and desired outcome

Face-to-Face Business Conversations

- **Dress appropriately**
- **Arrive on time**
- **Be prepared/practice – do your homework.**
- **Listen; then speak**
- **Do not monopolize the conversation**
- **Stay focused**
- **Use appropriate language**
- **Never speak badly of others; don't be rude or aggressive**
- **Make eye contact**
- **Align body language with your message and demeanor**
- **Be positive; be aware of facial expressions**
- **Make sure your cell phone is off or silenced**



Telephone - Business Conversations

- Do your homework before the conversation
- Create a comfortable environment
- Be positive - "Hello," "Good Morning," or "Good Afternoon,"
- Address by name
- Speak in a deliberately and slowly in a using a moderate voice
- Take notes – Listen first then talk; don't interrupt
- Don't be eating, chewing, or drinking.
- Never say the words, "I don't know"; say "I'll check on that for you."
- Never say anything that can be taken as rudeness; Never use slang
- Don't argue
- Smile as you speak
- Follow-up, if appropriate with actions, closure, thanks and/or acknowledgement
- Always return phone calls, if a call has been promised

Business Email

- **Fast, wide distribution, paperless**
- **Acceptable in business –**
 - With appropriate form, spelling, language, format, and tone**
- **Easily misunderstood; clarity/precision**
- **Can be impersonal or too informal, at times**
- **Permanent electronic trail**
- **Decide if another mode is better, given the objective**
- **Can easily include too many or the wrong recipients**
- **Can be shared and blind-copied**
- **Be aware of style, tone, and content**



Business Email Guidelines

1. Be clear and concise

- Subject should be concise
- Most important information first; be brief
- Spell and grammar check

2. Watch your tone

- Be careful with humor and sarcasm
- Keep it professional
- Avoid sensitive or controversial topics

Business Email Guidelines (Cont'd)

3. Be selective about your messages

- Might another means be better?
- Avoid sensitive and personal topics.

4. Be selective about recipients

- Reply all?

5. Check attachments before you send



Business Text Messages

- **Real-time exchange**
- **Very informal; missing key elements of communication, like subject**
- **Often relies on an cell phone number; your identity can be confusing**
- **Non-standard vocabulary**
- **High risk of misunderstanding and wrong impressions**
- **Easily misunderstood, especially when people add inflection and tone**
- **Avoid, if possible**

Follow These Steps

- **Think – audience, objective, desired outcome**
- **Prepare, analyze, develop your ideas**
- **Organize and outline – make a list, if necessary**
- **Write a first draft of your message**
- **Review**
- **Rewrite, if necessary**
- **If unsure or you are emotionally charged, sleep on it and start again, if necessary**
- **Are you pleased with the result?**

Practice Your Message With an Elevator Speech

Short summary used to quickly and simply tell a story or convey a message in one minute or less. Use it to:

- Drive clarity in your message
- Keep on point, avoiding confusion and misinformation
- Include key information you wish to relay

Use the elevator speech to introduce and to conclude your communication, reinforcing the message, action and expectation.

Top Communication Hints

1. Be professional; be positive and enthusiastic, but *stay genuine*
2. Dress for success whenever face-to-face – clean, neat and appropriate
3. Know that every interaction counts; it takes much longer to correct a negative impression than it does to create it.
4. Properly identify yourself and state your communication objective, up front
5. Focus on your purpose and your desired outcome for the communication
6. Be aware that time is precious; be succinct, to the point, and direct
7. Follow-up and complete all actions
8. Keep a list of contacts for each interaction – names, email addresses, phone numbers
9. Check your email and phone messages regularly and promptly respond
10. Communicate in positive or neutral ways; avoid criticism and negativity
11. Avoid texting, but do it carefully if you must

“The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.”

Hans Hofmann (German Artist)

“The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said.”

Peter Drucker (American Businessman)

“Communication – the human connection – is key to personal and career success.”

Paul Meyer (American Businessman)

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”

Tony Robbins (American Author)

What Will You Do Differently?