

Ten Tips For More Effective Communication

1. Take Responsibility For The Communication You Send And Receive

Double check to assure there is mutual understanding. If not, assume the responsibility for correcting it.

2. Be a Great Listener

Don't let ego or states of denial get in the way of hearing what people are saying. Use active listening by tilting your head slightly, nodding and leaning in to the speaker. Concentrate on their words and their meaning, not what you are going to say next. Have patience and don't interrupt.

3. Develop the Message

A message is a point, a theme or an idea. It should be positive in nature and be meaningful to your audience. Primary messages should be derived from and consistent with the mission and values of an organization.

4. Deliver Effectively

For maximum effect, remember the six Cs of great communication: Clear, concise, correct, concrete, complete and courteous. Don't make it personal. Test for understanding. Where possible, use short stories, images and metaphors to enhance delivery.

5. Promote the Message

Reinforce it often through public speaking, blogs and other Internet communication. Leaders must also act in a way that is consistent with their message, or the communication will have no meaning.

6. Be Proactive

Be a proactive rather than a reactive communicator. Take the initiative to communicate vital information to your stakeholders before they obtain it from others sources that may be less reliable.

7. Be the First and Most Credible Source of Information

Be visible to your employees and listen to specific concerns. Provide factual information and avoid speculation, impromptu and off-the-cuff comments.

8. Be Empathetic

Show empathy in your communications and include it as part of your primary message. Have the ability to see opportunity in every difficulty. Don't spin the facts to make you look better.

9. Use Nonverbal Communication to Reinforce the Message

Your body language should be consistent with your message. (See separate handout on this topic).

10. Be Inspirational

The most inspirational leaders use simple techniques to engage and motivate. These include honesty, challenging an audience to achieve a goal, passion and optimism.

A Great Communicator:

- Prepares and practices
- Establishes rapport with the listener
- Avoids arrogance
- Makes others comfortable
- Is committed to the message
- Uses the body to project
- Involves the audience emotionally
- Uses eye contact and facial expressions
- Uses humor where appropriate
- Is interesting and energetic
- Varies pitch pattern, speech rate and volume
- Brings material to life through engaging stories
- Lives the message

The Likeability Factor

In general, likeability is a factor that enhances communication. Basic traits of a likeable communicator:

- Optimism
- Concern about the welfare of others
- Ability to see the opportunity in every difficulty
- Ability to laugh at oneself
- Ability to perform at one's best in a crisis and one's humblest in prosperity

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