

Business Communications

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"You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your brains won't get you anywhere...I hadn't yet learned what I know now -- that the ability to communicate is everything."

Lee Iacocca, former CEO of Chrysler

- ### Class Topics
- The writing process & audience analysis
 - Memos/Letters
 - Technology

The most commonly accepted and most important principle in all great organizations is that relationships come first.

Basic Principles

1. Believe that relationships are our most important resource.
2. Success of the organization depends on each employee's feeling of self-worth and sense of fulfillment in his or her work.
3. Expect honesty, integrity and diligence from one another.
4. Honor and recognize innovation and creativity.
5. Trust one another.
6. Apologize when we are wrong.

Interpersonal communication between managers and employees is a critical foundation for effective performance in organizations.

Five Keys to Effective Supervisory Communication

- Expressive Speakers
- Empathetic Listeners
- Persuasive Leaders
- Sensitive to Feelings
- Informative Managers

Expressive Speakers

“Better supervisors express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings and speak up in meetings and are comfortable doing so. Supervisors who speak out let the people they work with know where they stand, what they believe, and how they feel.”

Empathetic Listeners

Empathetic listeners are able to hear the feelings and emotional dimensions of the messages people send them, as well as the content of the ideas and issues. Better supervisors are approachable and willing to listen.

Sensitive to Feelings

Better supervisors are sensitive to the self esteem of others and avoid giving critical feedback or reprimanding employees in public.

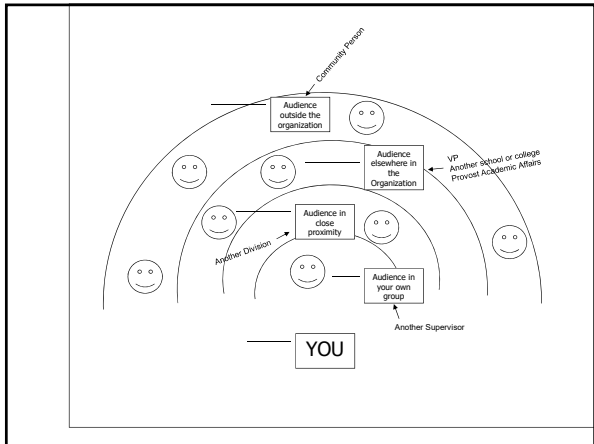
Informative Managers

Keep those who work for them informed and are skilled at appropriately and selectively disseminating information.

Airplanes and Communication

Audience Analysis

- Who will read what you write?
- Consider what your readers need to know
- What they likely already know
- What they will do with the information you provide
- What is the purpose of your communication?

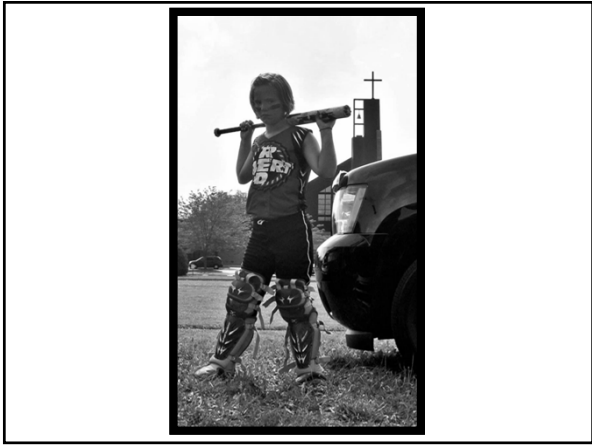


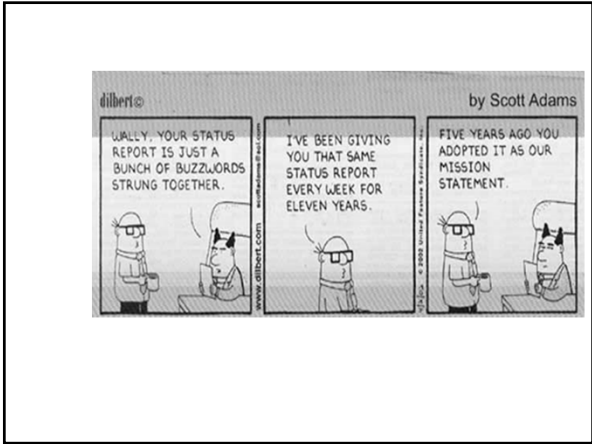
Audience Analysis Matrix

Types of Audiences	GOALS	NEEDS	PERSONAL TRAITS
Primary			
Secondary			
Gatekeeper			

Perceptions & Impressions







Written Communication

Context: How reader will use information. Why is it important to them?

Content: Specific Information

Conclusion: What will they do with the content you have given them?

Letters & Memos

Subject: Need to know vs. Need to tell

Purpose: State this explicitly

Readers: Primary, Secondary, Gatekeepers

Context: How reader will use the information

Objectives: Goals besides the purpose

Communicating through New Technologies

Written Communication – advantage of high to moderate data capacity & disadvantage of moderate to low information richness.

Communication Technologies:

- Email
- Voice mail
- Fax machines
- Cellular phones
- Texting
- Tweeting
- Social Networking (Facebook)

New Technologies

Use more effectively by:

1. Strive for completeness in your message.
2. Build in opportunities for feedback.
3. Do not assume you will get an immediate response.
4. Ask yourself if the communication is really necessary.
5. Disconnect yourself from technology at regular intervals.
6. Provide opportunities for social interaction at work.

Email

Informal or formal in Conversation?

- It is more permanent than paper.
- More easily copied (with or without your knowledge or consent).
- Could be more troublesome.

What do Emails do?

- The important action is not the writing but the reader's reading of it and acting from it.
- Subject lines should be relevant.
- Avoid long distribution lists.
- Know your audience and who else has been involved in your message.
- Avoid emotions, all caps and being overly informal.

How are readers perceiving us in an email?

Formal, curt, abrupt, insistent, contentious,
defensive, demanding, , ,



And ALWAYS
proofread,
read again,
and then "send".

The Good and The Bad

Bad Example:

- Professor "X" is nuts! He wants me to build him a new office for the price of a paint job! We gotta talk!

Good Example:

- I am having a problem satisfying Professor "X" on the budget he has proposed. Please let me know when you are available.

The Good and The Bad

Bad Example:

- If you're late again, I'll dock your pay. I mean it this time!

Good Example:

- (don't use e-mail for this type of message)

The Good and The Bad

Bad Example:

To: Manager A
From: Manager X
cc: Plant Director,
Associate
Director
Sub: Fellow Supervisor

"If Supervisor Y doesn't stop criticizing me and trashing my ideas in meetings, the next time he is going to be picking himself up off the floor."

Good Example:

(Don't use email)

Meet with your supervisor.



Grapevine

(grap vin') n. 1. A vine on which grapes grow.
2 a. The informal transmission of information, gossip, or rumor from person to person. b. A usually unrevealed source of confidential information.

Characteristics of the Grapevine

1. Accurate 75-95% of the time.
2. Very fast.
3. Efficient – it only goes to the person if they are interested.
4. Fulfills the employee's needs.

3 Ways to Deal with Rumors

1. Refute them directly (the downside of this could be the reinforcement of the rumor or spread it further).
2. Ignore them.
3. Refute indirectly by sending true information.

Speaking with the Media

#1 Rule:

"Don't open your mouth unless you expect to read it in the newspaper"

- You want to be quotable because that is what drives the story. Have your own message.
- You have to make your point in 20 seconds or less.
- Look to every interview like you are educating the interviewer.
- Maintain focus and control.

Source: Kathleen Hessert, Communications Concepts

8 Most Common Interview Errors

- Allowing reporter to control content
- Rambling
- Inconsistent Messages
- Using jargon
- Assuming reporters understand
- Make too broad statements
- Not knowing the real audience
- Poor preparation

Source: Kathleen Hessert, Communications Concepts

Are You a Good Listener?

- 1) Stop talking (and do not interrupt)
- 2) Put the speaker at ease
- 3) Show the speaker you want to listen
- 4) Remove distractions
- 5) Empathize with the speaker
- 6) Be patient
- 7) Hold your temper
- 8) Go easy on criticism
- 9) Ask (clarifying) questions
- 10) Stop talking

Source: C. Hamilton and B.H. Kleiner, "Steps to Better Listening" 1987: pg. 262

'You can learn a lot more from listening than you can from talking. Find someone with whom you don't agree in the slightest and ask them to explain themselves at length. Then take a seat and shut your mouth and don't argue back. It is physically impossible to listen with your mouth open.'

John Moe, Radio Host

Having your say vs. Being heard

There's a huge difference between the opportunity to "have your say" and the opportunity to be heard. The good to great leaders understood this distinction, creating a culture wherein people had a tremendous opportunity to be heard and, ultimately for the truth to be heard.

Jim Collins, Author Built to Last,
Good to Great

Creating a climate of thoughtfulness and respect requires effective communication.

- 1) "Lead with questions, not answers.
- 2) Engage in dialogue and debate, not coercion.
- 3) Conduct autopsies without blame.
- 4) Build red flag mechanisms.

Jim Collins, Author

Communication Media:
Information Richness & Data Capacity

Medium	Information Richness	Data Capacity
Face-to-face discussion	Highest	Lowest
Telephone	High	Low
Electronic mail	Moderate	Moderate
Individualized letter	Moderate	Moderate
Personalized note or memo	Moderate	Moderate
Formal written report	Low	High
Flyer or bulletin	Low	High
Formal numeric report	Lowest	Highest

Source: E. A. Gerloff, "Research in Organizational Behavior" 1984: pg.257

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Maya Angelou

It's all about relationships!

