

Effective Communication

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines communication as "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviors." In purely mechanical terms, this "exchange" is a relatively easy task, but there is no guarantee that any or all of the individuals involved will have increased their knowledge or understanding as a result of the communication. This One Page Coach® storyboard looks at the art of talking and listening—how communication can be orchestrated in order to create a genuine two-way experience of mutual value. To help us look at this broad and complex topic, we have used the four-step model of UNDERSTAND, CREATE, ADDRESS, and NAVIGATE, illustrated to the right. The four steps should be easy to remember: The first letters of each word together answer the question: "Who can be a high effective communicator?" U-CAN!

1. UNDERSTAND 2. CREATE 3. ADDRESS 4. NAVIGATE



Understand your style and your goals.



Create the right environment.



Deal with barriers.



Steer your way to mutual understanding.



1.

UNDERSTAND

► Your communication style

- Recognize that the way you communicate is influenced by the way you prefer to engage with other people (introversion versus extroversion).
- Be aware that your values and beliefs and the assumptions you make can act as powerful communication "filters."
- Think about the emotional energy that you can bring to a conversation.
- Understand the need to adopt different communication styles in order to achieve different goals.



► What is "good" communication?

- "Good" communication takes place when you get your ideas across to the other person and they are able to get their ideas across to you (two-way communication—not one-way "telling").
- Focus and concentrate on what you are trying to achieve through communication.
- Be clear and succinct in what you say, but remember to be fully engaged in the act of listening, as well.



► What is "bad" communication?

- "Bad" communication takes place when you focus too much on your own agenda and assume that others feel, hear, and understand as you do.
- Understand that not listening, guessing what is to be said next, and rehearsing what you will say in response while the other person is talking are bad habits that lead to miscommunication.
- Understand that letting your bias or ideas about a person shape the way you communicate with them will inhibit empathy and understanding.



► Your personal values and goals

- Understand that feelings of self esteem/self worth can affect your ability to communicate effectively.
- Try to develop enough self-confidence to accept and respect the opinions and feelings of others.
- Be prepared to open yourself up to others' ideas—value differences and be curious.
- Always know what's in it for you and the other person.



2.

CREATE

► The right conversational climate

- Think about what you are trying to say and the best and most comfortable environment in which to say it—create the right atmosphere.
- Communicate at the right time and in a way that gets the person's attention.
- Plan to allow enough time for the conversation, so each person feels that it has been productive.



► Empathy and warmth

- Be open, honest, and sincere. Don't say anything that you don't mean.
- Make regular use of stories, analogies, and metaphors to illustrate your points.
- Listen with empathy, and check that you are being understood.
- Always put yourself in the other person's shoes. Give them the background and context so they understand where you are coming from.



3.

ADDRESS

► External inhibitors and barriers

- Create a comfortable environment that fits the type of conversation you will be having—formal or informal.
- If there is a possibility that the power or authority of your role might get in the way of good communication, take steps to minimize its effects.
- Eliminate physical distractions such as poor lighting, interruptions, and noise.



4.

NAVIGATE

► Verbal communication clues

- Use the right type of language for the situation and for greatest clarity.
- Don't rush the conversation, and don't go too slow. Maintain an easy pace and make sure the other person can respond.
- Make sure your tone of voice matches what you are saying.
- Ask and listen—don't just talk and tell.



► Non-verbal communication clues

- Remember that we "listen" with our eyes as well as our ears. Our body language and the way we move can make or break a conversation.
- Don't rely on assumptions about what's happening. Read between the lines by watching carefully.
- Develop an understanding of how we can influence others through touch, proximity, stature, and so on.



► Feedback and advice for the future

- On a regular basis, reflect on your successful and less successful communication experiences, and plan to improve.
- Learn about and adopt useful habits by watching other effective communicators practice the art.
- Go out of your way to improve your effectiveness as a communicator by networking and interacting with a broader group of people, and building relationships.



Effective Communication: Template

Clarity
Process
Outputs



The need
The message
The audience



[illegible]

Transfer Understanding Feedback



The content
Style
Delivery



Means
Methods
Message



Final words
Key points
Possible responses


