

Communication – It's a Two-Way Street



Better Communication Means:

- **Messages are reliable, frequent, effective, honest, direct.**
- **Actions and words are in sync**
- **Your agency is represented positively to co-workers, clients, friends, family, neighbors and professional colleagues.**



Improved Communication Means:

- **Decrease in gossip**
- **Fewer misunderstandings**
- **Ideas are expressed freely; free expression is encouraged.**



Definition of Communication

The exchange of a message *with shared meaning* from one person/group to another. The shared meaning is retained by both the sender and receiver for the necessary length of time.



Phrases that Accompany Poor Communication

- **It goes without saying**
- **It's just common sense**
- **He should have known what to do**
- **Why bother**
- **The grapevine knows**
- **But I told him**



Five Principles of Effective Communication

- 1. Listen Effectively**
- 2. Respond Appropriately**
- 3. Read Body Language**
- 4. Ask Questions to Clarify**
- 5. Seek Common Ground**



We Suffer From Info Overload

- We receive as much mail in a day as our parents did in a week.
- Number of daily marketing messages we receive:
 - 1950: 80
 - 1970: 600
 - 2010: 30000



Adapting to Info Overload

- **Allocate less time to each message**
- **We block reception by *installing filters***



Filters

- **Past experience**
- **Present needs/motivations**
 - **Relationships**
- **Emotions**
- **Physical States**
- **Cultural Standards/Values**



Blocks to Communication

Perception

Relationship/Trust

Mood

Personal Agenda

Competition



Blocks to Communication:

- **Belittling/ Criticizing / Arguing**
- **Comparing/Stereotyping / judgemental**
- **Talking down / being negative**
- **Yelling**
- **Insulting**
- **Lack of honesty / false reassurance**



Physical Drivers of Communication

- **Spatial distance**
- **Eye Contact**
- **Rate of Speech**
- **Auditory Ability / external noise**
- **Ability to Retain**
- **Presence of electronics**
- **Facial expression / body movements**



Rate of Speech

- **Average Speaker: 135-175 wpm**
- **hearing Capability: 400-500 wpm**

In the gap your message can get lost.



Non-Verbal Factors

93% of the message is Non-Verbal

**We are Always Communicating
Whether or not it is our Intention**

**Humming, throat clearing, laughing,
checking cell phone, listening**



Good Communicators are...

Listeners

Be a “Ferocious Listener”

- **Decide that you want to listen**
- **Listen...don't just wait to speak**
- **Listen objectively: with an open mind**
- **Listen for common ground**
- **Ask questions to clarify**
- **Be a student of body language**
- **Train yourself: practice; get feedback; read; study to become a professional listener.**



The Difference Between Hearing and Listening

- Hearing is a physical process that allows the body to take in sounds.
- Listening is a perception process with psychological and emotional overtones



Misconceptions About Listening

- **Matter of intelligence**
- **Speaking is more important than listening**
- **Listening is easy and requires little energy**
- **Listening is an automatic reflex**
- **Listeners/Speakers are responsible for communication success**
- **Listening is merely a matter of understanding words.**



Email Communication

Pros

- **Good when people are hard to reach**
- **When information is not time sensitive**
- **When a file needs to accompany message**
- **Message needs to go to large #s quickly**
- **Need record of transaction**



Email Communication

Cons

- Long and complicated
- Highly confidential
- Emotionally charged

(If you are hesitant to say something face to face avoid email)



Four Ways to Improve Communication

1. Learn to manage disagreement in meetings
 - Eliminate personal attacks
 - Rules for handling disagreements
 - Incorporating disagreements
 - Encouraging minority opinion
 - Learning to Listen
 - No one leaves meeting “quiet and head down”



Four Improvements

- 2. Develop positive associations amongst staff**
 - increase level of trust (vulnerability-based)**
 - informal opportunities**
 - ensure follow-thru**
 - deal with discrepancies between words and actions**



Four Improvements

- 3. Establish formal lines of communication within the agency**
 - improving communication between the sites
 - how can central office be more of a resource to the entire organization
- 4. Establish routine communication structures**
 - Meetings
 - Newsletter
 - Move info up and down / in and out
 - Supervision



Practice

Any Task Can Be Mastered by Anyone Willing to Invest 10,000 Hours of Practice.*

- **Focused**
- **Specific**
- **Supervised**

“Practice Does Not Make Perfect it Makes Permanent”

***Malcolm Gladwell , Outliers**

