

# How to Master Effective Communication at Work

Issue 8, Page 1

October, 2010



Hello everyone.  
Welcome to spring!

## *A word from Gloria ...*

In this edition, we will be looking at Communication in the workplace and ways to enhance this. The key to effectiveness with communication is very simple, and it all begins by learning to look at how we – as individuals, do this. Wouldn't it be great to establish better relationships with colleagues and clients at work?

It is interesting to note that how we rate ourselves on communication, is usually not how our peers and clients would. It is therefore quite important to ponder the impact your communication style may be having on others. What is being said about you?

What are you noticing when communicating with others? What types of attitude are you picking up when you expect something from others at work?

So that you may develop more insight into these and other questions around best workplace communication, you may find it helpful to read the article I have written on Effective Communication at Work. This may be enough to generate some willingness to improve the communication you are currently using.

An important thing to remember is that people do not always recall what they said to you – however, they always recall what you said to them!

Hopefully next time we meet the sun will have come out and stayed out for a while. Look after yourselves and each other.

Kind regards  
Gloria

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- Competition

### **Latest Article**

This focuses on Effective Communication at Work. Instead of projecting onto others your displeasure/disapproval – have a look at what you may be unconsciously emanating. How effective your communication is – is easy to determine. Ask other people, but if that's not possible contact me for a self-assessment on this. The results may surprise you. We can always 'lift our game' when communicating with other's at work. No-one is perfect at this, but there are some things you can try that might make colleagues and clients more willing to interact with you. If you proactively work on improving your own communication, you may find it is reflected back to you.

The upshot is a win/win for all concerned. Think about the last time you communicated with someone who was a pleasure to deal with. Ponder as to why – the answer will definitely lie in the way they communicated with you.

If possible, take the time to read this article, as you never know what you may discover about your own communication.

### **Competition**

This month's competition is simple. Email us at [info@mastersofcommunication.co.nz](mailto:info@mastersofcommunication.co.nz), put your name and that of your Company in the subject line with the number of times the article titles of the last 3 newsletters, published by Masters of Communication.

The correct entries will go into a draw for a FREE 'Communication Enhancing' session with me, during the month of November. The winner will be notified on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2010

### **Next Issue**

***The Role of Story Telling in Business***

### **Latest Workshop**

Warning, these skills are able to be transferred and used in a personal capacity!!

The Communication Workshop looks at the significance of i in communication and ways to enhance this. It also introduces methodologies to improve communication at work with focus given to the continuum of communication in any workplace. There are strategies built in to this so that speaking and listening evolve to best workplace effect. The absolute importance of congruence is also assessed and developed with some tools offered to develop yours. The workshop also contains individual assessments of communication styles and how they impact on others at work.

A key focus is how we can grow our personal style so that others are more open to interaction with us. This workshop is by nature highly experiential and through a range of activities and exercises participants develop a far greater understanding of where they sit within the communication framework that exists in every place of work. Participants leave the workshop ready to implement strategies taught.



## Effective Communication at Work

Have you ever wondered how it is that some people attract loyalty and commitment effortlessly? Or that they make time show an interest in people around them? Or how they genuinely never forget to acknowledge or thank others for their work?

If you answered yes, you have just recognised some key attributes effective communicators have, and with a little time and energy spent - you can be one too! There is a misnomer out there that communication is a 'softer' skill and therefore doesn't need attention paying to. In other words, we all communicate and **should** know how to do this easily. Nothing could be further from the truth. If in doubt, consider these questions:

- Who are the people you feel the most uncomfortable with at work?
- Who is well known to you (and others) as difficult to deal with?
- When you consider time of unhappiness at work whose face or faces usually come to mind?

If you found that you had the same name/s for each - that is not a coincidence. This person/s is clearly not a good communicator, and could be the reason you, (and possibly others) would consider leaving your place of work for. This area of workplace effectiveness should not be ignored for any longer – the impact poor communication has on others is immense. Everybody needs to think about what they contribute to their communication at work and each individual needs to consider this: when interacting with others are you leaving them with a brick or a bouquet? If the former is true you need to look at what can be changed so that you are more positive and insightful in your communication.

There are several attributes an effective communicator has – let's see which ones you embody and the ones you feel need your attention: Are you?

Focused	Perceptive
Empathic	Confident
Encouraging	A good Listener
Genuine	Available
Positive	Considerate

The important point is that all of these attributes need to become part of your communication repertoire. For you to succeed in business - realise that 'you do not do business with business you do business with people!' Those same people know what you are like to deal with, so - how do they view you? (Honestly). If that is too hard to answer, then think about aspects of your interactions that you feel good about, and start to recognise the ones you would like to be more effective at. Also

look at the other side of the coin and consider the last time you had an unpleasant interchange with someone, (because of how they communicated with you). Be aware that you will sometimes recall (in the near future) what they said, but what you won't forget is the way they said it, and that is what underpins all communication at work. The impact you have on others!

The way something is stated, a missive is delivered or a change is implemented is exactly what people take on board when next they either discuss the situation, have further meetings or interact with you again. If you are considerate and genuine in your communication – people will not mind meeting with you. If on the other hand you are abrupt, dismissive and 'far too important' to worry about the quality of your interactions, you will struggle to garner loyalty and commitment from others. If in doubt think about the teams in your Company that 'work' – I guarantee they are run by someone who communicates well. This person will be empathic and genuine in all their dealings with others.

Conversely look at the teams within the work place who never quite seem to gel; there is a higher than normal attrition rate and you hear murmurings about **that team leader** being difficult to deal with.

So where do you want to be in your communication? Let's add to what you already know by asking others how they see you! To establish this, it is helpful to get feedback from others whom you trust (not people you pay). This could be colleagues, bosses, external clients or stakeholders. Simply ask them their experience of your communication style. If that feels too difficult or imposing, try family/friends or contact me for a simple test to discover where your skills lie. Another technique is to start today to notice other's body language when you are communicating with them. Recent statistics show, that in any face to face communication, people place 55% importance on body language, 38% on tone of voice and only 7% on the actual words used. Think about that! Be aware that telephone communication is different again, and the rating becomes 82% on tone of voice and only 18% on the actual words used. Astonishing really, when you consider that most of us do not take much notice of others body language! So what should you look for when reading body language?

Body language – is the person turned towards or away from you? This could denote disinterest – no matter what words they may be saying to contradict that.

Voice quality – is there tone of voice abrupt and clipped or considerate and engaging? This shows they are prepared to make the time and want to invest in this discussion with you.

Intention – Are you picking up on good/focused intent or rushed annoyance? This indicates they are too stressed/unwilling to make the situation work – they are leaving it to you.

Manner – is there a directness/sincerity to this or is it more dictatorial/uncompromising? This can show intolerance for any more time spent on this discussion or task.

Eye contact – Do they look away from you/avoid looking at you much, or is there direct eye contact? This can show a willingness to have the best outcome possible with clarity/respect.

Setting – Is this the most inconvenient time/place to do this? Or is the timing and setting appropriate. This can denote commitment and consideration for both you and the project.

Sensitivity – Is this being handled with kindness appropriate to the situation? Or is this just

another 'thing' that needs to be completed within a certain time frame? If left unchecked, this can lead to the attrition rate being added to.

Attitude – Are you picking up on a genuine willingness and healthy respect for your contribution to this? Or is the opposite true? This indicates difficulty/hard work ahead.

Rapport – Do you notice there is no interest in building/maintaining a relationship with you? Or that this person takes time to share stories, laugh and discuss other things with you? This shows a healthy/useful working relationship ahead, with lots of value being placed on you!

These are very general guidelines but may show you some things you had seen but not taken on board previously. The key message through this article is to hold a mirror up to yourself and see (maybe for the first time) just what impact you may be having on others around you. By all means observe other people, but start to notice in yourself when your body language changes and decide to change it for the better. Notice the difference around you when you do. People react to everything whether it is positive or negative. You will begin to get more positive responses from people as you 'lift your game' and be more effective at communicating. Will you always get it right? Will you think you finally have it all conquered? Probably not, but at least you can begin to start thinking more about your impact on others and how they may 'feel' after communicating with you. Keep in mind, 'People sometimes remember what they said to you - but they always remember what you said to them!'



## Course Overview

The “Communication” Workshop explores the role of interacting in the workplace and its direct relevance in fostering the right attitude and reactions essential for successful businesses in NZ.

Beginning with a self-assessment to determine their current level of Communication awareness, participants complete a variety of experiential exercises and design a tailored, individual plan to increase their Communication skills. With understanding and knowledge of how to employ ‘best workplace’ Communication, participants are more able to relate and work more effectively with others. They are also more equipped to handle difficult situations successfully. Consequently they leave the workshop with greater knowledge, insight and commitment to excellent Communication in the working environment.

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## Course Outline

- The significance of **i** in Communication
- The importance of perception in Communication
- 5 Ways to enhance Communication at work
- A focus on the continuum of interchange at work – strategies to develop this
- How to ascertain what people really see in you
- Communication Styles – tools to manage this
- The A in Attitude – why this says it all
- The importance of body language – what you are really saying
- Speaking – how less can be best
- Listening – The skill of silence
- Congruence at Work – 4 Techniques to develop yours