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Top 10 tips for BETTER COMMUNICATION

Communication is crucial across all of our relationships both personal and professional. If you are in business and take a moment to think of how many times you see "Excellent Communication skills" on someone's Resume, but do they really?

In my experience, not many people do, the problem is many people think they have excellent communication skills. The real skill lies in knowing that communication is all about the receiver, do they get your message? If they don't what are you going to do about it.

A great communicator knows how to deliver a message so that it is heard and understood. Simply repeating the message and expecting a different result is not the answer. Becoming short, frustrated, or sarcastic is also not the answer. Avoiding the person all together or being critical will not aid communication.

Communication is so crucial to our connections however where do we learn this skill? During my entire psychology degree I did not learn how to communicate and relate well to others. This is crazy! So where do we learn effective communication skills? Most of us learn it from our parents and families. Now if you are like me; that would make you shudder. My parents were not great communicators. How about yours? If they were, well done, you are one of the lucky ones.

I never learned how to best get my message across, what my strengths and preferences were or to even know that people are different and have different preferences. Not everyone likes the straight down the line approach that I prefer. If I'm in a rush and someone launches into a colourful story that is likely to be long winded I will surely start to experience heart palpitations – just give me the bottom line!

If I approach someone who is more relational and likes time to get to know people, feel supported and heard, they are likely to perceive me as a heartless bully. So I needed to learn how to adapt my message to my listener.

This is a skill we can all benefit from, so please feel free to consider the top 10 tips listed below. Have a go, play with them and see how your communication improves as a result. Happy Communicating!

Top 10 tips for better communication



1. **Aim for great communication**

Aim for great communication! This means putting an emphasis on its importance in all of our interactions. Even difficult conversations can go well if we put the effort into them.

2. **Know your intentions**

Each of us has a purpose; every time we communicate we do so with a purpose, to share a need to understand, to show we care, sometimes to inflict hurt. To most of us most of the time; our purpose is clear. The problem is that usually the receiver is not aware of our purpose and is trying to guess it along with interpreting the message.

3. **Look for common ground**

We humans like other humans the same as us. We don't really like different. Communication involves trust and we are not likely to trust unless we feel there is common ground. Believe me it is there just beneath the surface so become a wonderful asker and listener and find some common ground! You will also then be a master communicator because people love to talk about themselves!!

4. **Avoid misinterpretations**

The moment we begin to fill in the gaps in a message we are in trouble. This is because each message goes through our own unique filter. This is completely different to someone else's filter. It is based on our personality, past experiences and even our emotional state.

5. **Beware of assumption**

Assumption is the best friend of misinterpretation and should be avoided at all costs. You have surely heard the saying that assume makes an Ass out of U and Me? It could not be more true! When you assume you are doing so based on your own interpretation and limited knowledge this is very dangerous. New flash – Your assumptions tend to be negative. For example, someone you know does not respond to your “hello”. You think “Gee what have I done wrong?” They simply did not see you as they had just had really bad news and are still trying to make sense of it. It's not all about you, you know!

6. Know that there are different styles of communication

We all tend to think that everyone sees the world as we see it. But in actual fact we are all unique. In terms of our communications style, depending on which model you use you would find that there are several main types of communication style and we tend to find ourselves as a unique blend of one or more styles. Are you more task or people focused? Are you more outgoing or reserved? That's just for starters. At Teamology we use DISC to demonstrate the differences but there are many tools out there. Check them out to see what you feel sits best with your philosophy and situation. We love DISC because it is simple, easy to use and implement straight away and it is positive.

7. Know your own unique style

Knowing that we are all different is a great start to being an effective communicator however knowing what makes you tick is even more empowering. When you know what works and does not work for you; you can then play to your strengths and then there is no end to your potential to connect!



8. Know your communication strengths

Each of us has preferences for communication, some of us prefer to get straight to the point, and others love a good story. Some like details and facts while others just like to have interpersonal interaction and to feel listened to. When you know what works for you, it is a wonderful thing but then imagine being able to determine what works best for others? Ohh the possibilities.....

9. Don't fear communication

We can sometimes lie to ourselves and think that we can avoid that difficult conversation because it will just go away. Fear does crazy things to our logic and fear is a powerful emotion – it will always trump logic! The sooner you can have the difficult conversation the better. Do it with consideration, warmth and respect and it will truly be a blessing to you both. Anything we avoid grows, so please deal with issues early while they are small and manageable. That way you won't lose great staff or need to bring in the professionals.

10. Disagree but don't disrespect

Communication is sharing information, being heard and being understood. Nowhere in the previous statement does it say and all parties will agree!! The mere fact we are all so different with different perspectives gives the world colour. However, you must never disrespect. To disrespect is to "treat with contempt or rudeness, to show disregard for another." Communication is the foundation of human connection. We need to be thoughtful and wise and allow others to have their own view. Being unable to handle a different view than your own says more about you than you may care to say.

About the Author

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We all communicate on a daily basis but who has ever been taught the most effective way? Effective communication is essential for our survival in business today but how many of us know our communication strengths?

Kylie has over 10 years of training and management experience in public and private business settings. She delivers a variety of training programs to teams and business focusing on Communication. Primarily, on how communication affects leadership, team dynamics, relationships and productivity within a team.

Using a variety of training techniques, the DISC communication tool, Workplace Motivators, games, videos, discussion groups, case studies and role-play activities, Kylie is committed to providing a dynamic, interactive and educational experience. Delegates have a unique experience that helps them to understand their individual strengths as a communicator as well as areas for development both individually and as a team. Training is tailored to your unique team requirements to focus on areas of priority such as team communication, sales, customer service, leadership, or managing conflict.

Kylie has worked most recently with companies such as Univar Australia, Catholic Care, ABC Engineering, BHP Billiton, The Department of Defence and the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Training focused on assisting these businesses develop communication skills to shift their business to a new level of understanding, cohesiveness and productivity. For more information visit www.teamology.com.au or email enquiries@teamology.com.au