



## MDA Resource Book

# Communications & Teams



# COMMUNICATIONS & TEAMS

This booklet is appropriate for any mid-level manager or team leader as a study guide and learning resource for some traditional aspects of communications, language and teams.

Language, communication and team building concepts are not clear cut and the application of communication is not a `pure science.\_ If the topics addressed in this booklet interest you, find out about classes, courses, seminars and workshops in your area or explore online or at your local bookstore.

Communication is an important and commonly used (and misused) skill. Webster's Dictionary defines communication as *`an act or instance of transmitting a message.\_* Yet in today's world, how to transmit a message has become complicated. Electronic communications and printed publications are gradually replacing person-to-person communications. ATM's are replacing the human bank teller. In fact, at some banks you now must pay for the privilege of talking face-to-face with a teller! People talk and communicate over their (smart) phone. People `surf\_ the Internet and dialog through chatrooms. A person can receive and send text messages, tweets and electronic mail (e-mail). Computers can talk to people and even communicate with other computers or phones. DVD video and movies send audio and visual messages. People talk when training other people one-to-one on the job. A machine gets a message from a computer (PLC) that sounds an alarm, which gives you a message that you have to communicate something to others, and so on. Yet effective communication occurs, no matter how the message is being transmitted, only when the receiver understands the message.

When friends talk to each other, they usually communicate easily and naturally. They may use incomplete sentences, slang and gestures. Sometimes a single word or a raised eyebrow tells the meaning of a message or may be the message itself. Friends are able to make themselves understood because they communicate in an atmosphere of shared experience, trust and courtesy and are receptive to each other's thoughts, feelings and opinions.

People take for granted the ability to communicate effectively. Talking is an integral part of life. People probably talk more than they read, sleep, drive, email or watch TV. However, poor communication can cause accidents, bankruptcy, hurt feelings, fights and even war.

Communicating in the workplace is an essential skill. Effective workplace communications can save lives, improve teamwork, increase productivity, raise profits and find better ways of doing things. Yet, when you get work instructions on the job, you may face communication barriers that generally do not exist between old friends. Or, have you ever had a good idea but were unable to interest anyone in it? Maybe the problem wasn't the idea, but how, when, where or to whom you expressed it.

The most common tools of communication are words (written and spoken) and pictures (TV, videos, maps, charts, part drawings, etc.). This resource book will deal mainly with verbal, nonverbal, and written communications. Understanding the communication process between people and things can help you deal with co-workers, supervisors and the machines you use on the job.

You should understand that this module will not teach you everything that you need to know about `language, communications and being a team player.\_ There are special college and online courses that cover the various fields (or disciplines) of language, communications and teamwork. We hope the module will provide you with a general overview of some communication techniques, expose you to some common team building concepts, and give you some motivation to practice these applications.

Have you ever heard the expression, *`Think before you speak\_?* The resource book will explore some of those `thinking\_ avenues and show you certain options about how to `speak.\_ Language is the cornerstone of human civilization, and information is power! Although *`actions speak louder than words,\_* without the words there would be no action.

As you study the information in this the *MDA Communications and Teamwork Resource Book*, you will gain an understanding of:

- Effective methods for person-to-person communication
- The differences between verbal, nonverbal and written communication
- The `communication cycle\_
- Techniques for good listening
- Communication styles
- Teamwork and leadership concepts
- Making a presentation to a small group

# CHAPTER 1-

## PERSON-TO-PERSON COMMUNICATIONS

### SENDING THE MESSAGE

Effective person-to-person communication has three steps:

1. **SEND THE MESSAGE:** The sender transmits a message.
2. **RECEIVE THE MESSAGE:** The listener or reader decodes the message.
3. **CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** The sender makes sure the receiver correctly understands the message.

To send a message, you select symbols or words that tell your message to the receiver. At its basic level, communication is achieved through the use of simple oral and visual codes. The letters of our alphabet, when arranged into words, is one such code. Ideas are communicated only when the words are combined in meaningful sentences and expressions. This code is important to effective communications. You must select your words carefully to give the message(s) accurately so that your listeners (or readers) understand.

Facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements (*`body language`*) form other communication signals. These nonverbal signals can be obvious or very subtle. Nonverbal communication signals often convey more information than the verbal codes (*`A picture tells a thousand words`* and *"Every picture tells a story"*). With nonverbal signals we consciously or unconsciously reveal our emotions, feelings and attitudes.

Sometimes a misunderstanding happens if the communicator fails to see the nonverbal signals being sent to and from the audience. What you mean to say may be different from what the other person hears. Experts maintain that at least six messages are present in the person-to-person communication process:

- What you **MEAN** to say
- What you **ACTUALLY** said
- What the other person **HEARS**
- What the other person **THINKS** they heard
- What the other person **SAYS**
- What you **THINK** the other person said

You can improve the accuracy of your communication if you recognize that six different messages or processes are involved.

## THE LISTENER DECODES THE MESSAGE

A good communicator always remembers a basic rule: communication succeeds only in relation to the reaction of the receiver. Communication takes place when the listener reacts with understanding and changes behavior accordingly (or acts upon something).

The listener decodes (or translates) the message based on their own personal experiences, likes and dislikes, and/or their particular needs (such as "What's in it for me?" scenario). You can help in the accurate translation of your message if you think about the receiver's needs, background, experience, perspectives, bias's and education before you aim your message at them. You then increase your chances of communicating with words and feelings that have meaning to your audience.

## THE SENDER MAKES SURE THE RECEIVER CORRECTLY UNDERSTANDS THE MESSAGE

Checking for understanding completes the `communication cycle. \_ You can determine if the listener understands your message from the information that they give back to you. This *feedback* of information takes many forms. A person may say, `As I understand it, you want me to . . . , \_ or he/she may agree or disagree with what you say. Wandering glances of the listener or checking the time may express impatience or boredom. An affirmative or negative nod of the head also provides meaningful feedback. Dilation of the pupils or the raising of eyebrows may indicate excitement or arousal. Tightly folded arms or the clenching of hands could be a sign of defensiveness or frustration. You learn much about your communications by observing the reactions of others.

Before giving someone directions, know whom you are communicating with, plan what has to be said and the order in which you are going to say it. Plan the task and think through what needs to be done (the goal and objectives). When giving directions, state them clearly (in a way the receiver will understand), state them slowly, maintain eye contact, show examples, and observe the reaction of the person being spoken to. When you finish giving directions, summarize what you just said (using different words) and allow for feedback, ask for questions and check for understanding. When communicating, use this simple rule:

***"Tell me what you're going to tell me.***

***Then TELL ME.***

***Then tell me what you told me."*** Will Rogers

When following directions, learn to listen attentively, ask questions, give feedback and take written notes.



As the sender, your challenge is to be aware enough to detect this feedback. You can then ask yourself:

- Did I get right to the point? (Do they know why they're here?)
- Am I sending my message clearly and accurately?
- Have I put the message into context (e.g., Why the message is important in the first place and how and when does it fit into their job)?
- Do they know what I want them to do (or feel) and if not, how can I adjust my method or content to get the desired result?

### COMMUNICATIONS INFLUENCE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The signals – such as words, feelings or gestures – that we send to another person may help shape, change or even end our relationship with that person. The signals sent back likewise influence our attitude toward the other person, whether it is liking or disliking something, cooperation or noncompliance, trust or suspicion, etc.

We often try to change another person's behavior by the message we send. We may attempt to change another's behavior in terms of our own needs, feelings, values and perceptions. If you train a new worker, you want to meet the objectives of the training. Your communications are meant to change the person's behavior in ways you feel are acceptable.

A receiver's behavior is directed in the same way. When the receiver sends a message back to you, the receiver communicates personal feelings, needs, values and a frame of reference. The response is also meant to change your feelings, ideas and perceptions.

The things we learn from our communications influence our interpersonal relationships. For example, people who understand and willingly accept your message are likely to give you their full cooperation. You build a bridge of mutual understanding when you encourage co-workers to ask questions or make suggestions. Thus, both you and other people gather information about each other that may be beneficial during the next communication cycle.

### WHAT'S IN THE MESSAGE?

*'You're a fine worker.'* It's a compliment, easy for anyone to understand, *unless* it is said in a different way – sarcastically, for example. The meaning is now reversed, from compliment to insult.

Some experts suggest that when a person is receiving a message, the signals they follow are based on the following percentages of importance:

Types of Signals:	Percentage of the message (impact):
Words alone	7%
Tone of voice	38%
Expressions, posture and body gestures	55%

These verbal and nonverbal signals make up the person-to-person message.

## **WORDS**

*'No one means all they say, and yet very few say all they mean. Words are 'slippery' and thoughts can be vicious.'* \_ Henry Adams

Many people believe that words transport meanings from the speaker to the listener in the same way that a delivery truck carries parts from the plant to a customer. Words rarely carry the same meaning from the mind of the sender to the mind of the receiver. The receiver's response is determined by their past experiences. These experiences give the words their meaning. For example, suppose I tell you about my pet German shepherd. If you had a German shepherd that was a loyal and beloved pet in your household for many years, your reaction will likely be positive. You would probably agree with me that a German shepherd makes a fine, trustworthy pet. But if a neighbor's German shepherd bit you when you played with it as a child, your reaction may be negative. You might tell me that German shepherds have nasty tempers and cannot be trusted. You react to my words in terms of your experiences.

Words are simply representations. They represent, or correspond to, anything that exists, that is experienced, or that people talk about. At best, language is a map. Just as a map accurately represents some specified location, language should correspond to the objects or concepts that it represents. Like a map that has errors, a statement that contains errors implies a relationship that does not exist and will cause misunderstanding.

Words and reality can be different; people sometimes fail to see the difference between the two. A person may, for example, lose a job merely because someone calls that person a thief. If co-workers think that being called a thief and being a thief are the same, they are confusing a word with the thing it represents. In marketing, customers 'buy a product label or brand, \_ so manufacturers spend a lot of money in choosing product names that send the right message.

Concrete words refer to specific things that people can relate to. Abstract words stand for ideas that cannot be directly experienced – things that do not have exact mental images in the minds of the receivers. However, abstract words are necessary and useful. They are shorthand symbols that sum up vast areas of experience and information. If communicators were forced to use only concrete words, they would soon get bogged down in details.

Although abstractions are useful, they can be misunderstood. The danger in using them is that they will not present the specifics to a listener's mind and can be subject to misinterpretation. The receiver has no way of knowing what experiences the communicator intends an abstraction to include. When you use abstractions, be sure you link them with reality through examples, experiences and illustrations. As a general rule, try to use concrete words instead of abstract words when conveying technical information. You will increase the accuracy of the image in the mind of your listener.

### FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES

Communication is a *people process* as well as a *language process*. You most likely have heard or may have said yourself, *"It isn't so much what they said, but the way they said it that made me angry!"*

Feelings and attitudes are important parts of the messages we send. Yet, we may concentrate on the words and neglect the nonverbal signals (body language). If we stop and think about the nonverbal actions, we realize that our innermost feelings and attitudes give an extra dimension (or additional outlook) to our communications. The feelings of friendliness, affection, sadness or anger give life and meaning to words.

The feelings and emotions you send help project or convey the intent of your message. They provide clues to the audience about your attitudes. Clear, concrete words forcefully expressed may leave no doubt in the receiver's mind about your intent. If your words are ambiguous (unclear, vague or just 'fishy'), the receiver often must rely on the nonverbal signals to understand your true meaning. If your nonverbal signals are uncertain or inconsistent, understanding is nearly impossible.

Words and the feelings you project determine the message the listener hears. You may make a simple statement to a co-worker, such as *"Take care of this job immediately."* How you say these words will convey different messages. For example, if your tone of voice expresses anxiety, the worker may decode the message, *"Get this done right away because the boss is on my back."* If your voice sounds critical of them, the worker may translate it as *"You've been loafing, so get to work."* If your voice is pleasant, the worker may interpret *"I know you're busy, but give this job your top priority."* The attentive listener receives both the words and tone of message to find out the meaning.



## HOW PEOPLE COMMUNICATE

An important part of the person-to-person communication process is its direction – ‘one-wayness’ or ‘two-wayness’. Communication is a ‘two-way street’. Let's see some differences between these two situations: (1) one person talking to another person with no return talking *versus* (2) conversation from one person to another person with return conversation and discussions. To compare these two situations, the following is an experiment that you and team members may wish to try.

Draw five rectangles in a random fashion on a sheet of paper. Without showing the drawing to your friends, explain to them that you will attempt to communicate with only words what is on the sheet of paper so that they can reproduce it on another piece of paper. In this phase of the experiment you should have no eye contact with your audience, and they are not allowed to ask you any questions. You either turn your back on your friends or stand behind something that obstructs their view. Ask your friends to draw as accurately as possible what you describe. Remember, use words only, no gestures (they cannot see you) and you will not take any questions. Make a note of the time it takes for you to convey the message. It will usually run about three or four minutes.

In the second phase of the experiment, draw five more shapes in a random fashion. This exercise is essentially the same as the first one except for one important difference. This time you face your friends and tell them and they may interrupt you and ask questions. Again, be sure to time it. This phase usually runs about three or four times as long as the first phase.

After each phase, let your friends check their drawings with your test pictures. Thus you can check the accuracy of your communications. From this experiment you will be able to draw several conclusions:

1. One-way communication is faster than two-way.
2. Two-way communication is usually more accurate.
3. The sender may feel mentally under attack in the two-way system because the receivers pick up the sender's mistakes and oversights and let the sender know about them. The receivers may even make snide remarks or joke about the sender's intelligence and skill, and if the receivers are trying hard and are taking the task seriously, they may actually become angry with the sender and the sender angry with them.
4. The two-way method may appear to be noisy and disorderly. Aside from being distracted by questions and comments, the participants usually feel less frustrated because they can interact with the sender and can check the accuracy of their drawings by asking probing questions.

## USE OF THE ONE-WAY METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

The one-way method of communication may be preferable if:

- speed is an important issue,
- orderliness is essential,
- structure is present or
- the message is not too complicated ("*cut and dry*").

If you choose one-way communication, you must spend a great amount of time in planning what you will say, who you're saying it to, when to say it and how it should be said because you have no feedback to correct any misunderstanding.

Using one-way communication, you protect your position of power by avoiding recognition of your mistakes or lack of knowledge. Of course, your co-workers may criticize you in private, but at least in one-way communication you do not have to listen to them.

People who use one-way communication may think that their responsibility is only to send the message and that the listeners are only responsible to receive it. Consequently, the sender can blame the listener if there is a failure to understand. The sender can say, "*I gave you your instructions, but you either weren't listening or you're not smart enough to understand what I said.*"

One-way communication may result in sending words into `air-talk, \_ not communicating. In this sense, one-way communication is not communication at all. Words result in communication only when they reach the feedback, understanding or action stages.

The communicator is largely responsible for the success of the communication. The sender has not only a responsibility to send the message, but the continuing responsibility to make sure the message hit its target. To make sure, the sender needs confirmation and feedback that increases chances of accurately hitting the communication target.

## USE OF THE TWO-WAY METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

From the last discussion of one-way communication, we also learned some features of two-way communication. To summarize, the person who uses two-way communications not only sends the message but also receives feedback that can be used to modify, clarify, verify, or correct the original transmission.

Unlike the sender in one-way communications, the sender in two-way communications accepts risks. The sender's position of authority may be questioned, lack of knowledge may be discovered, and personal inadequacies may be detected.

Less planning is required for the two-way communicator. Feedback is expected to give opportunities for improvement. However, one must listen, acknowledge and understand the feedback when it is given.

The two-way communicator should accept the responsibility for making sure that communication, not just talk. The sender realizes that achieving mutual understanding is the responsibility of both sender and receiver (*'it takes two to tango* \_). Thus, the responsibilities shift from the subordinator to the communicator and vice-versa.

The advantages of two-way communication over one-way communication are:

- greater accuracy
- continuous improvement potential
- open channels that build mutual understanding, trust and sharing
- recognition of a person's need to know what is expected of them.

Most people are aware of many differences between one-way and two-way communication. If a person gets a chance to ask for clearer information, then that person can know with greater certainty what should be done. If the receiver cannot speak back to the sender about questions and uncertainties, the receiver is likely to feel frustrated and apprehensive. Added to this uncertainty is the expectation of blame if the receiver selects the wrong course of action.

### **BARRIERS TO TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION**

'Noise' in the communication process is a barrier that prevents a person from receiving a message from another person. This noise may be compared with the static on a telephone line that makes it hard to receive or give a message.

Noise takes different forms. It may be noise in the physical environment (like machine sounds), or it can be the whisper of boredom or lack of interest in what is being said. Fear can also block the communication cycle. Words themselves can be a problem in communications. Words can mean different things to different people. Similar words in a different language can mean very different things.

For you to practice two-way communication, people must feel free to discuss things with you. Often people are reluctant to discuss problems about difficult situations with their supervisors and co-workers. Afraid of incurring their supervisors' displeasure or looking stupid in front of co-workers or trainers, they may elect to remain silent. Some barriers that inhibit a worker from speaking freely are: fear of looking ignorant, fear of disapproval, fear of rejection, fear of losing status and fear of another's judgment.

### **WHAT IS LISTENING?**

*Learn to Listen.* Hearing is not listening. People often hear without listening. The physical part of hearing is only one step in the listening process. Understanding and remembering are the others. Not until a person comprehends and remembers what was heard can the person be said to listen. Listening is an active process that involves reasoning and thinking abilities. To listen, a person must put energy and effort into the process. One must focus.

Communication is a `message. \_ To communicate is to `make known. \_ Concentration is `close mental application with exclusive attention. \_ From time to time, stories are told about some genius who (all at the same time) can read a book, listen to their spouse, hear the President speak on TV, and understand the important ideas of each. Few people can match this performance; in fact, most people work at focusing their attention on one subject or thing at a time.

The behavior of the mind can be compared to the flow of a river. A river winds around, finding and following the course of least resistance from the mountain to the sea. Every navigable river (one you can take a boat down) has a *safe channel*. The captain who wants to take the ship up and down the river will keep the ship in this channel. Like a river, the human mind tends to wander, but objective listeners keep their attention in this `mental channel, \_ or the channel of concentration. Whenever a listener allows their mind to stray, that person lets the current push them into the riverbank. Re-focusing attention may get you back into the current, but rarely can you catch up with the speaker's flow of ideas. What can a person do to channel this attention? The answer is good listening habits, reducing distractions, maintaining eye contact and being aware of what is going on.

### FORM GOOD LISTENING HABITS

Listening is not a gift; it is acquired through practice and hard work. Anyone who wants to become a better listener can do so by practicing the following rules at every opportunity.

Listening involves both a person's reasoning and thinking.

#### **Rule 1:** *Get Ready to Listen*

Listening requires physical and mental preparation. The physical preparation for listening can be compared to catching a plane. If a person expects to be a passenger on a plane leaving at 8:00 p.m., the baggage must be checked, the gate located, the seat found, electronics stored, and the safety belt fastened before that time. The same is true of the listening situation. First, the listener must check any baggage, be at the right place and time, put away distractions, and prepare for take off. The person should prepare to listen by `tuning out \_ distractions such as noise or minor physical discomforts. The listener(s) should be relaxed but mentally alert.

#### **Rule 2:** *Listen to Understand Instead of Disapprove*

Critical listening is a good practice, but it is not achieved by silently criticizing the speaker's thoughts before the speaker has finished. The good listener will analyze but not argue with the speaker. Unless one tries to get the speaker's message first, the listener cannot be well enough informed to evaluate the ideas. The listener should listen empathetically and wait' try to understand first and judge second. Some or all ideas may deserve to be questioned and tested, but this testing should be done after the speaker finishes or when he/she asks for feedback and input.

**Rule 3: Take Responsibility for Comprehending**

The successful listening and learning situation demands something of the listener as well as the speaker. Speakers may give or show examples or visuals to support key points they wish to stress. Comprehending listeners look for similar examples using their own experiences and apply those experiences to the key points.

**Rule 4: Control Your Emotions**

The listener should not allow emotional blocks or bias to develop with the speaker. How can a listener be fair? If, for example, you are annoyed by a speaker's manner, how can you be objective about the speaker's ideas? By finding out the source of annoyance (such as the speaker's vocabulary, dress or mannerisms) and by studying the reasons for the negative emotional responses, the listener can often reduce their emotional effects. The smart listener does not permit emotional blocks to prevent understanding of a speaker's ideas. Actually, the responsive listener tries to help the speaker instead of reacting unfavorably. The listener can assist the speaker merely by displaying interest. It's not only a good listening practice, it's common courtesy.

**Rule 5: Be Mentally Flexible (Agile)**

People do not think and speak at the same rate of speed. The normal person thinks much faster than a normal speaker can possibly talk. When you are speaking, take time to pause. If you can't remember what to say, say nothing. This allows you to catch up with your thoughts and gives the listener(s) the opportunity to digest what you have just said. Although a 3 to 5 second pause may seem like an eternity to you, it will appear quite natural to your listener(s). However, pausing is not slowing down your rate of speech. In fact most good communicators tend to be fast and organized talkers that use pausing skills very often. Ronald Reagan was called the "Great Communicator." He spoke at a rate of 110 to 120 words per minute (that's pretty fast). However, he was not perceived as a fast talker because he used pausing very effectively.

The good listener can always use no-talk time to review what the speaker has said and to predict what will be said. In doing this, one profits from two practices essential to learning: mental activity and repetition. The mentally agile listener has ample time mentally to repeat, forecast, summarize and reword (or paraphrase) the speaker's remarks. This practice increases comprehension and retention (understanding and remembering).

The *art of listening* rewards the efforts of those who wish to understand and use the ideas vocally expressed by others. The listener cannot listen passively and expect to retain much. Although listening requires effort, it is still one of the best ways to gain knowledge and develop skills. Whether boating down a peaceful river, walking through a noisy plant or flying in an airplane, your opportunities to listen are endless!



## **CHAPTER 2 - COMMUNICATION TIPS, DIFFERENCES & CONSIDERATIONS**

To fry a fish, you must first catch a fish. To communicate smart, you need to become smart about what communication is and what it can do. The goal of business communications is not information for information sake, but actions that result in change, improvement or reinforce a belief. Success is people actually doing something as a result of your communication. Even if agreement is reached but total understanding was not, adults will understand better when they begin doing it.

The following pages present some communication and behavioral issues related to communication. Learn to apply these topics in your day-to-day work activities. Remember that communicating, understanding and learning go hand-in-hand. The topics illustrated in this chapter should provide you with some understanding of how to communicate, how people listen and learn, the differences in styles, and other communication and leadership considerations.

### **An Old Chinese Proverb**



**I Hear and I Forget**

**I See and I Remember**

**I Do and I Understand**

## **What You Should Know About Adults**

1. Adults comprehend best by doing.
2. Good communications broaden experiences.
3. Understanding depends upon existing knowledge and past experiences.
4. Communication moves from the simple to the complicated.
5. Each person digests information at his or her own pace.
6. Acceptance and understanding are voluntary.

## **Differences Between Children & Adults**

<b>Children</b>	<b>Adults</b>
<b>Rely on others to decide what is important.</b>	<b>Decide for themselves what is important.</b>
<b>Accept the information being presented at face value.</b>	<b>Need to validate the information based on their beliefs and experiences.</b>
<b>Expect what they are hearing to be useful in their long-term future.</b>	<b>Expect what they are hearing or reading to be useful immediately.</b>
<b>Have little or no experience upon which to draw—have relatively “clean slates.”</b>	<b>Have much past experience upon which to draw—may have fixed viewpoints.</b>
<b>Have little ability to serve as a knowledgeable feedback resource.</b>	<b>Have significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource for feedback.</b>

## **Three Classifications of Information**

### **MUST KNOW:**

These are items of information that are essential to the understanding of the message.

### **SHOULD KNOW:**

Information that receivers "should know" and includes anything that relates directly to the information in the "must know" category and/or elaborates or expands upon it.

### **COULD KNOW:**

The "could know" information may be useful to the group or individual but is not directly relevant to the message or topic at hand. "Nice to know" information that could prove helpful in a general or abstract way.

## **Individual Differences & Some Important Considerations**

### **AGE:**

- Avoid requirements for memorizing large amounts of information.
- Be sure the receiver has a chance to digest one point before proceeding to another.
- Make sure errors and mistakes are corrected as soon as possible.
- Let the group/individual participate at their own pace.
- Use the cumulative or "piggy-back" method of communication (A, A+B, A+B+C, etc.).

## **Individual Differences & Other Important Considerations**

### **LEVELS OF INTELLIGENCE AND ABILITY:**

- **Communicate in small digestible chunks.**
- **Go from concrete examples to general principles.**
- **Avoid unstructured presentations.**
- **Keep explanations brief and to the point.**
- **Keep it short.**
- **Make sure there is plenty of time for questions and feedback.**

### **EMOTIONAL STATE:**

- **Consider the audience when managing the pace of a presentation or discussion.**
- **Structure the content logically.**
- **Set attainable goals and do not make comparisons to other workers, departments or companies.**
- **Show plenty of passion, patience and emotional support.**

## Individual Differences & More Important Considerations

### COMMUNICATION & FEEDBACK STYLES:

- **Activists:** Enjoy the here and now and are dominated by immediate experience. They tend to thrive on the short-term crisis and to firefight. They thrive on the challenge of new experiences but get bored with implementation, abstractions and long-term considerations.
- **Reflectors:** Like to stand back and reflect on experiences and observe them from different perspectives. They collect/hear data and analyze it before taking any actions. They are cautious and enjoy observing other people in action. They often take a back seat.
- **Theorists:** Are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking. They tend to be detached, analytical and unhappy with subjective or ambiguous messages or experiences. They tend to make things tidy and fit them into rational schemes.
- **Pragmatists:** Positively searching for new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They tend to return from a discussion or team meeting brimming with new ideas to try out. They respond to realistic problems or opportunities as a challenge.



## **Create a Good Communicative Environment**

- Match your words and style to the population.
- Vary the technique and pace of your presentation.
- Avoid using a podium/lectern.
- Encourage interaction and teamwork.
- Relate back to the work environment, when needed.
- Provide examples from “real world” experiences.
- Facilitate discussions.
- Don’t impose artificial barriers to understanding.
- Keep the session moving to avoid distractions.
- Learn to read your audience/listener.

## **Practice Basic Facilitation Skills**

- Adults learn best when they can participate in the communication process.
- When you use facilitation skills, you are encouraging involvement by showing interest in your listeners (Making them feel free to ask questions or make comments).
- Facilitation skills help both the sender and the receiver by getting feedback about how the discussion or talk is being received. This will allow you to respond to the needs of the audience sooner and more appropriately.
- There are four types of facilitation skills:

Attending Skills	Observing Skills
Listening Skills	Questioning Skills

## BE PROFESSIONAL - BE YOURSELF

When speaking to a small group:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position your body so you face all the audience.</li> <li>• Continually scan the group with your eyes.</li> <li>• Make eye contact.</li> <li>• Smile at individuals.</li> <li>• Nod affirmatively if you agree.</li> <li>• Say "<i>That's interesting</i>" if you don't agree.</li> <li>• Keep your hands free and move about naturally.</li> <li>• Use natural facial expressions and gestures when talking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to visual aids (PowerPoint's, flip charts, blackboard, etc.).</li> <li>• Turn your back to part of the group. Talk to one side of the room.</li> <li>• Stare at individuals.</li> <li>• Scan the group too frequently or too rapidly.</li> <li>• Distance yourself from your listener(s). Have a fixed position.</li> <li>• Argue with or embarrass anyone in public.</li> <li>• Stand in fixed positions and put your hands in your pockets.</li> <li>• Shuffle papers or look at your watch while others are talking.</li> <li>• Try to be something that you're not.</li> </ul>

## Nonverbal Behaviors and Their Possible Feelings

Behaviors	Possible Feelings
Smiling Nodding affirmatively Leaning forward Eye contact	Enthusiasm/Understanding
Yawning Vacant stare Shuffling feet Leaning back in chair Looking at the clock	Boredom
Frowning Scratching head Pursing lips Vacant stare and avoiding eye contact	Confusion

## Learn How to Respond to Group Behaviors

If you infer:	and SEVERAL people display the behavior, then:	and ONE person displays behavior, then:
Enthusiasm/ Understanding	Continue and make a mental note that the message is being well received.	Acknowledge and continue making a mental note to check again later.
Boredom	Try taking a break, speeding up, or checking your method to be sure that the listeners are involved in the process.	Ask an open-ended question and continue, but make a mental note to assess later.
Confusion	Ask audience about areas of confusion and provide clarification by giving examples or rephrasing benefits and information.	Ask about areas of confusion and provide clarification. Or if time is limited, talk with the person at the next break.  Put it into a "Parking Lot" for consideration later.

## Choose How to Direct Questions

If you want to:	Then:
<p>Stimulate thinking.</p> <p>Allow people to respond voluntarily.</p> <p>Avoid putting an individual on the spot.</p>	<p>Direct an open-end question to the group.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> “What experiences have you had on this issue?”</p>
<p>Stimulate one key decision-maker to think and respond.</p> <p>Tap the known resources of an “expert” on the team.</p>	<p>Direct the question to that individual.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> “Mary, you have had a lot of experience in applying these OSHA regulations. What would you do in this case?”</p>

## Tips for Handling Answers

If the listener's answer is:		
Correct	Incorrect	Partly Correct
<p>Use positive reinforcement</p>	<p>Acknowledge the effort <i>then</i> Redirect the question to others or answer it yourself.</p>	<p>Reinforce the correct portion <i>then</i> Redirect the question to the same person, to another key person or answer it yourself.</p>
Examples:	Examples:	Examples:
<p>“Yes.”</p> <p>“Good point.”</p> <p>“That’s right.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “That’s interesting, I can see how you might come up with that. Who else has an idea?”</li> <li>• “That’s not exactly what I was looking for. What I was looking for was . . .”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You’re on the right track. What other ideas do you have?”</li> <li>• “That’s one good point, Joe. Who else has some ideas?”</li> </ul>

## Be Skilled When Responding to Questions

Choosing the Following Response:	When:
Provide the answer yourself.	You are the only person who can provide the answer.
Redirect the question to the same person or to another individual.	There is a high probability that the person will be able to come up with the correct answer.
Defer or "Park" the question.	<p>The question is beyond the scope of the talk.</p> <p>The question cannot be handled in the allotted time frame.</p> <p>The answer will be provided by material covered later in the talk.</p> <p>You need to get the correct answer and get back to the person later.</p>

## "Problem Types" & How to Handle Them

Character:	Description:	Responses:
Talking Terror	<u>Constantly Talking</u> "I believe I'm right in saying that . . ." "What I always do is . . ." "Back in my day...."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Look for an opportunity to intervene; thank them for contributing and quickly redirect group's attention.</li> <li>❖ Check understanding and move on.</li> <li>❖ Seek cooperation.</li> <li>❖ Channel energies elsewhere.</li> </ul>
Great Gripper	<u>Negative</u> "The trouble is . . ." "We can't do that" "Well, that's all well and good, but . . ." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Allow opinions to be voiced once and move on.</li> <li>❖ Ask for solutions.</li> <li>❖ Put matter to rest or park it.</li> </ul>
Doubting Thomas	<u>Cynical</u> "That'll never work here. . ." "We tried it before . . ." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Gain some commitment to change.</li> <li>❖ Ask for a logical next-step.</li> </ul>



Potted Plant	<u>Non-contributor</u> "Thanks, but no thanks" "Sorry . . ."	❖ Discover the cause and seek chances for involvement.
Jolly Jester	<u>Joking</u> "Let me tell you a story" "That reminds me . . ." "I knew this man once . . ."	❖ Limit opportunities. ❖ Use peer pressure to inhibit. ❖ Manage time.
Conspirators	<u>Whispering</u> "Here we go again" or "Where are we?" said in a half-whispers.	❖ Check reason and resolve misunderstanding. ❖ Discourage private talking.

## Considerations in Handling Problem Situations

Consideration	Description
1. Eliminate or minimize the problem behavior.	You need to resolve the problem to the extent necessary for clarity to resume unhindered.
2. Maintain the self-esteem of the problem person	You need to take care of the problem in a way that doesn't reduce the self-esteem of the person exhibiting the problem behavior.
3. Avoid further disruption.	You need to preserve a professional climate that is relaxed, comfortable and conducive to effective communications and interaction.

## Coping with Stress

- Everyone suffers from stress.
- Understand what causes stress so you can help to control it.
- Stress is subjective.
- Stress is both physical and mental.
- Stress is the result of anticipation.
- Stress is the result of not being prepared.
- Eat healthy and avoid stimulants (caffeine, sugar, decongestants).
- Take a deep breath, close your eyes, release slowly then breathe naturally.

## Symptoms and Solutions for Stress

Symptom/Problem:	Potential Solution:
Drying Up or Corpsing (mind goes blank)	Use notes on overheads; stay calm and pause often; check your notes; repeat last sentence; ask a question; check for understanding.
Lack of Credibility	Check the person's level of knowledge in advance; anticipate problems and questions; speak to the experts.
Uhmring, Ahhing and "Ya Knowing" <i>"Word Whiskers"</i>	Know your material; use pauses; use breathing as a substitute for the <i>uhmms</i> . Kick the habit!
Switching Off	Think about the group's needs in advance; include breaks and changes in pace or style; add visual stimulation; provide interaction or a role-play.
Fear of Appearing an Idiot	Build confidence; eliminate foreseeable difficulties. Be prepared.
Missing Out Information	Divide complex material; use interim summaries.
New Faces	Meet group or individual beforehand.
Shaking Hands/Knees (Nerves)	Use natural movements to expend energy. Take a deep breath through your nose. Tighten buttock muscles then relax.
Palpitations	Use breathing to slow down.
Dizziness	Sit down and/or breathe deliberately. Keep oxygen going to the brain.
Dry Mouth	Bite edge of tongue. Rub tip of tongue against back wall of lower front teeth.

## Practice Being an Effective Communicator

- Establish and maintain your credibility.
- Know your audience.
- Know your material.
- Manage the environment.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills.
- Use visual aids (overheads, flip charts, black/whiteboard, handouts) with your talk or presentation (I hear - I see).
- Emphasize benefits (over features) and show information that supports those benefits.
- Practice your structured presentation delivery.
- Use effective facilitation or brainstorming skills when needed.
- Demonstrate effective questioning skills and listening techniques.
- Respond appropriately during feedback.
- Provide positive reinforcement and motivation.
- Evaluate your content, performance and delivery style.



# CHAPTER 3-

## INTRODUCTION TO TEAM BUILDING & TEAMWORK

### WORKING WITH OTHERS

People communicate best when they share some "common ground." Common ground determines how we (the team) communicate with others and how we interpret the messages of others.

We communicate best when we share a common frame of reference with another person. You communicate more effectively with someone you know and who knows you. So, the more we know about each other, and ourselves, the better we can communicate as a team.

Team building is a process designed to create a work environment where team members can achieve job satisfaction by directing energy, time, creativity, expertise and imagination toward improving work processes and functions (technical and business). Teamwork is characterized by the team's willingness to examine its processes to continually improve itself as a team. This will increase productivity and efficiency, define business goals and objectives, clarify roles and procedures and provide a mechanism to handle changes as they occur in the workplace.

#### Team Members

- Share common ground and identity through diversity
- Have common goals that support the vision and mission of the company
- Develop objectives that are specific, measurable and attainable
- Share leadership and responsibility
- Share successes and failures
- Gather and share information
- Cooperate and collaborate with each other and with other teams
- Have defined but flexible roles and duties (on full time or rotating basis)
- Communicate effectively with each other and outsiders
- Brainstorm and reach consensus
- Make decisions/recommendations
- Take good written notes
- Grow and mature over time and with practice.

It is through self-disclosure and the giving and receiving of feedback that people expand their common ground. Team members should know a lot about each other. An effective team consists of members who share a well-balanced area of common ground.

## **DEVELOPING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS**

Relationship building is creating a friendly network of contacts with people who are or who may be useful in information gathering/sharing or in the accomplishment of work-related goals, objectives or tasks.

Team players do this by maintaining effective and respectful working relationships with immediate contacts. Actively participating in formal or informal positive conversations and interactions with these people allows you to develop business and interpersonal relationships. Your ability to work with others, as opposed to working separately or competitively defines you as a team player.

When a group of people are first formed into a team, their roles and interactions have not been established. In addition, a new team has very little common ground (members don't know much about each other or may not know why they've been assembled). A team with trust problems might also have a small common ground because members may not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, feelings and expertise openly or giving each other feedback.

To begin the relationship building process, "know thy self" and practice some "self-disclosure." Self-disclosure is the process of sharing information about yourself, as well as your likes/dislikes, thoughts and feelings. It involves allowing others to know more about who and what you are. The more you learn about others (their skills, interests, experiences, values and communication styles) the greater the common ground becomes.

Ask questions that draw out the needs, interests and concerns of others. By attempting to understand others you will demonstrate your interest in them and also gain insight into how best to interact with them. Pay close attention to what is being said and to the emotions that were behind what was said. Through attentive and empathetic listening and a focus on non-verbal signals, you will be able to identify this information and better able to establish a good one-to-one rapport.

Feedback is also part of the relationship building process. Feedback is a playback of information about our behavior and its impact on others. Feedback is important for your growth and the development of your teammates. Soliciting feedback from others is one way to reduce "blind spots" and build common ground with mutual understanding and respect.



To practice some relationship building, during the next week, make a list of your immediate contacts (in-plant). These could include fellow operators, setup personnel, maintenance technicians, engineers, supervisors, suppliers, etc. Beside each name, put a check mark by the individual with whom you might usefully build a relationship through your contact. Pick one or two of these persons, make contact with them by introducing yourself (self-disclosure).

Although we are concentrating on business teamwork, teams are also "social." New and well-developed teams should meet for social events (2 to 3 times a year). Bowling, golf, picnics, volleyball, trade show attendance, theater and sporting events are activities that can be shared by most. Use social activities to expand and refine your contacts. Use these events to get to know your team members and even other teams; do not transact or talk about business. By developing interpersonal relationships outside of work, you will be enhancing your communications and building relationships.



## THE EVOLUTION OF TEAMS

A *team* is two or more people working together through common and combined actions. A team is a group (typically 3 to 12) of willing and trained individuals who are united around a common goal.

Teams can be:

An on-going self-directed *natural work group* - A team of workers representing a specific job title or one functional area. Teams meet on a regularly scheduled basis. Typically these teams are empowered to make technical decisions or recommendations within their job title, functional area or department.

An *ad hoc* meeting of concerned employees - An informal and voluntary group of people from all/any positions in the plant that share a common interest in the topic or issue at hand. A formal sub-group (or team) may evolve from this type group meeting.

A short-term single *project team* or *steering committee* - A special handpicked team delegated to address, analyze or solve one particular problem or issue. Team normally disbands after implementation.

An on-going *cross-functional, self-directed work team* - A group of employees from many areas of the plant (i.e., production, maintenance, supervision, sales, customer service, design, etc.) that meet on a scheduled basis to address technical and business issues that impact the business. May be used in conjunction with self-directed natural work group teams. Typically, this type of team can make both technical and business decisions/recommendations.

In nearly all cases, teams that have success in solving problems are structured to work together, share responsibility for their task(s), depend on each other in some way, and are empowered to implement consensus made decisions.

Again, when a group of people are first assembled into a team, their roles and interactions are not established. Some will be Activists, others Reflectors and Observers, some will be Theorists and others Pragmatists. Some may not want to be there and others will be totally engaged and ready to go. Each team member comes with "baggage" that shapes their perceptions and influences their style of communication.

A new team will go through some predictable developmental stages. Each phase is different and builds upon the preceding one. However, all teams must go through this sequence if they are to become functional.

**Exploration** - Getting to know each other and why you have been assembled. Establishing boundaries (such as level of authority), roles within the team (such as team leader, recorder, skill areas, etc.) and contacts (internal and external resources). Team members are often very guarded, cautious and even suspicious during this phase. An initial orientation and social gathering occurs followed by the development of a team charter that establishes protocol, leadership, objectives, roles, timelines/schedules, and resources. Teamwork training is provided. The team explores to find itself.

**Confrontation** - This phase is characterized by competition and strained relationships among team members. It is a growing stage that challenges individuals to unite under a common cause. Typically conflicts will arise during this phase with of leadership, power, support and decision making. Some conflicts are minor and can be managed easily while others have greater intensity and may require long-term strategies for effective resolution. At its end, leadership arises, alliances are formed, give and take is learned, influence and control is determined, and behavior guidelines are established. Conflict is recognized. Additional team training is provided.

**Affirmation** - Common ground develops within the team. This phase is recognized by the cohesiveness among team members. Team members discover common interests, experiences and shared goals. They learn to appreciate their differences and diversity. They recognize their interaction and interdependency with each other. The team begins to focus and work together using effective communication skills, listening and feedback techniques, conflict resolution and problem solving abilities. The team decides how to get the work done and can delegate team duties appropriately. Mutual respect for each other and other's ideas begin to appear. Relationships and trust begin to develop. A sense of purpose is established.

**Exhilaration** - The performance stage where team members have learned to work and communicate together as a fully functioning team. Teams know their purpose and can define the tasks necessary to complete an assignment. Teams can manage conflicts and resolve them through brainstorming, research and consensus. Team success or failure can be quickly identified. Roles have been established and individual contributions are recognized in front of the team. The team takes on a feeling of less formality. Team members start wanting more responsibility. Futurism appears ("Where can we go from here?"). Commitment builds within the team ("How can we stay together?"). Employees start disengaging from their machines and engage in running a portion of the business. Team pride comes from its successes. Failures are looked upon as opportunities for improvement. A sense of purpose has been validated and the team excels.

## PROBLEM SOLVING

One of the primary reasons that teams are formed in the workplace is to solve problems. Problem solving is very similar to troubleshooting equipment problems. The basic steps of problem solving are:



- ☑ *Recognizing and defining the problem.* Know exactly what you are dealing with (give it a name) and define it in way that everyone can understand.
- ☑ *Locating the problem or impact area.* Is it a manufacturing, quality, shipping, customer, supplier, environmental, safety problem, etc.?
- ☑ *Analyzing the cause and effect of the problem.* What is the impact of the problem? What would happen if we did nothing? Are there inter-relationships that must be considered?
- ☑ *Forming a theory* - Using past experiences and other resources, decide what has caused a similar problem in the past or somewhere else. Form several theories and make a list of probable causes and corrections for each theory.
- ☑ *Exploring solutions* - Problem cause analysis. Diagnose symptoms of the problem and cause and effect relationships. Isolate the cause of the problem. Explore solutions by gathering information and brainstorming. Chart unknowns. Develop optional or contingent solutions. Test your theories.
- ☑ *Making a decision to solve the problem* - Use brainstorming, processes of elimination, data analysis, prioritization and discussions with experts to arrive at a practical and logical solution. Your trainer will go over some techniques for problem solving (Pareto, Nominal Group, Cause & Effect/Fishbone, etc.).
- ☑ *Communicating your findings* - Get feedback and communicate your solutions to experts and management.

- ☑ *Creating and following an action plan to implement the solution* - Write an action plan of what needs to be done, who is going to do it and when it should begin and end. Generate contingency plans if your best plan doesn't work out. Monitor the project to ensure it works. Learn from your mistakes. Develop procedures and operations to prevent it from happening again.

## BRAINSTORMING

Team brainstorming is a creative and free flowing communications where people build on each other's contributions to produce a comprehensive picture of the situation. Planning and facilitation skills are required. Brainstorming must be led and managed to keep the conversation focused. Brainstorming with just team members may be sufficient for problem recognition if the group has enough data or experience. If not, the facilitator may want to consider adding other experts to the group.

The question like "*What do we know about this problem?*" may provide an initial focal point for the group to begin the brainstorming process. Brainstorming is data collection and, if done right, can help create tremendous leaps through joint energy.

The following are some tips to apply when brainstorming. The facilitator's role takes on added importance if this method is to be successful. If team members judge, react negatively or just frown at another's contributions, brainstorming breaks down.

- ☑ **Question** - The facilitator clearly and without bias announces the focus of the session (the key questions or issue the team will be addressing).
- ☑ **Post** - The recorder/scribe writes down and posts this key issue, question or problem.
- ☑ **Express** - All participants toss out and express as many ideas as possible.
- ☑ **Accept** - All ideas, however crazy, are accepted.
- ☑ **Record** - The recorder posts all ideas for everyone to see.
- ☑ **Prompt** - The facilitator keeps posing the key question/issue without variation to keep the process on track.
- ☑ **No Editing** - The facilitator reminds the team, as that no one is allowed to edit, criticize or evaluate any suggestions (overtly or covertly) until the process is done.
- ☑ **Group Dynamics** - Team members build upon the ideas of others (piggyback participation). This triggers new thoughts which snowball the team process and group dynamics.

- ☑ **Prioritize** - Team eliminates or consolidates redundant or repetitive ideas/statements. The team prioritizes ideas and suggestions and determines their strength of relationship to the goal or objective (Question).
- ☑ **Synergy** - By focusing this interaction, the team taps the creative energy of each participant and fuses it into a chain reaction. This is synergy, a combined or cooperative action that is more productive than the sum total of all individual efforts.

## **MAKING DECISIONS**

One of the most important things team members do together is make decisions. Decision-making is also an area for misunderstandings to occur among team members. Statements like *"I thought we were all going to make that decision"* or *"The team decided that, but I think it's a dumb idea"* or *"How could you make a recommendation like that without asking me?"* are common within teams. One way to reduce misunderstandings is to establish some guidelines for how decisions will be made on the team.

There are basically two types of decisions that can be made - individual decisions and group decisions. Both are used in teamwork. An individual decision is used when time is critical or an individual team member has special information, specific knowledge or expertise of the subject/problem. Teams realize the need for occasional quick decisions in certain areas and trust certain team members to make them. These individual decisions may be command decisions or participative decisions. Command decisions are those that are made by a person without consultation with other team members. This is sometimes necessary because of time limits or in a crisis. Participative decisions are still made by a person but with input and feedback from other team members and/or staff resources.

Team decisions can take three forms - majority rules, unanimous decisions, or consensus. Majority vote may be good in government, but it is the least preferred method for team decision making. Since teams need group commitment, voting tends to create "winners" and "losers" and inhibits creativity. Voting can stifle rationale or logic. For example, two members might vote for something for entirely different reasons. In addition, when decisions are made by majority rules it encourages "political" behaviors. Team members seek allies to support their side and then "lobby" or campaign for votes. This works against team cohesion and unity. Teams strive for unanimous or consensus decisions.

Unanimous decisions are where everyone agrees. This is an ideal situation and somewhat rare because people usually have different opinions, perceptions and needs. However, it does happen and should be encouraged and recognized when it occurs.

Consensus decisions means general agreement (may not be total agreement). It is a systematic process that includes brainstorming, facilitation and problem solving that results in everyone agreeing to support and/or work toward the decision of the team. This agreement may vary from *"I'll go along with it and see what happens,"* *"Let's try it and work out the kinks as we go"* to *"I totally agree with the decision and I'm ready to get started!"*

To reach consensus:

1.) Do a "straw poll" to establish the majority position. Once the alternatives have been clarified, see where everyone stands using the *Thumb Sign Method*:

☝ Thumb Up = "*I agree.*"

☞ Thumb Down - "*I disagree.*"

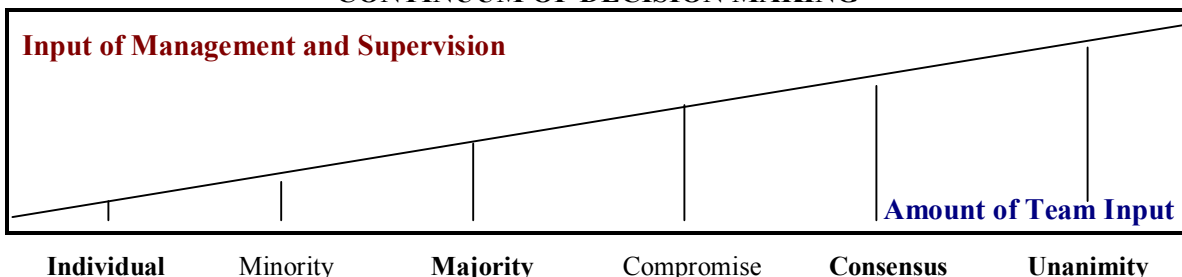
☞ Thumb Sideways - "*I'm unsure or let's discuss.*"

- 2.) Allow minority views to be expressed and check for majority understanding.
- 3.) Explore ideas or options for modifying or combining ideas to get a decision acceptable to all. Brainstorm and record ideas, alternatives, options and concerns.
- 4.) Restate the majority position. *"Do you understand why the majority went this way? Do you feel your objections have been understood? Is there another way to achieve the same results?"* Arrive at a tentative or interim group decision.
- 5.) Poll the minority and undecided for willingness to support the team's interim decision. *"Can you agree to support the team's decision even though your own decision would have been different?"* Do another straw poll, continue to facilitate if needed and arrive at a final group decision.

In consensus making, everyone understands the decision and agrees to at least support and work toward it even though some members may have reservations. A consensus is where each person can say, *"I understand the majority decision. I have voiced my opinions, and the group has heard them. I understand how we got to the final decision that was made by the group. While this would not be my first choice as an individual, I will support it and work with you as a member of the team."*

There are no set ways in which a team should make a decision. What is important is that everyone understands how it gets made. The willingness to make decisive decisions, once a situation or problem has been analyzed, is based on good judgement of the best possible solution to the problem or situation. In addition, another misunderstanding can take place if there is confusion over the role members will play once a decision has been made (*"What am I doing"* and *"Why am I doing it?"*). Chart decision-making responsibilities and develop an action and follow-up plan that capitalizes on individual talents, experiences, personality traits and interests (Process = *"How I'm going to do it"* and *"When does it need to be done"*).

#### CONTINUUM OF DECISION MAKING





## **DEVELOPMENTAL "CHECKSESS" LIST FOR TEAM MEETINGS**

The objectives of this success checklist are 1) to assess if the team is capable of conducting effective meetings and 2) if the team can demonstrate its ability to conduct and sustain a regular pattern of effective meetings using the charter or guidelines they developed. Track and rate your success!

### ***Three Month Check for Success List***

- ☒ Team members have been trained in methods for conducting team meetings.
- ☒ Team members have developed a set of "guidelines" or charter for making meetings organized and productive and they are posted!
- ☒ Team members have defined and participated in several team roles (leader, scribe/recorder, timekeeper, brainstormer, facilitator, SME, etc.).
- ☒ Team members have met regularly for at least three months.
- ☒ Each meeting begins with a clearly stated goal or objective; an agenda has been developed to achieve the goal; and there is clarity around who will play what role.
- ☒ A review of meeting agendas and minutes indicate that meetings include information sharing, discussions, member input on key issues and problem solving. Attendance has been kept.
- ☒ Team members critique their meetings and take action to improve them.

### ***Six Month Check for Success List***

- ☒ Team has sustained regular meetings over a six-month period.
- ☒ A review of agendas and minutes show that the team is able to complete its agenda.
- ☒ Each team member has served in the various team roles and several members are viewed as excellent in those roles.
- ☒ Members feel that team meetings are useful, productive and a good use of time.
- ☒ Feedback is specific, descriptive, timely and on going.
- ☒ Team members have documented and implemented improvements to at least one key process.
- ☒ Team members feel that there is excellent follow-through on action items. There is evidence to verify this follow-up from a review of meeting agendas and/or minutes.

***One Year Check for Success List***

- ☑ The team can demonstrate that it has carried out complex issues/problems to completion across several meetings.
- ☑ Team has sustained a regular pattern of meetings over a one-year period.
- ☑ Observation of meetings indicate that team members can activity facilitate themselves when they get off-track or into conflicts.
- ☑ Outsiders (managers, support people, suppliers, trainers) who have sat in on team meetings describe them as well organized and productive (as opposed to social gatherings and gripe sessions).
- ☑ The team is able to plan and execute a series of meetings with another team to deal with a complex or cross-functional issue.
- ☑ The team understands how to create a written work plan (or action plan) and can provide an example of a plan it has developed for implementing a project, a change, an improvement or for solving a problem.
- ☑ Keeping a written attendance record is no longer needed. Team training has been established for new members/employees.





## CHAPTER 4 - EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

You may be called upon to give a presentation to co-workers, team members or other teams, managers, vendors/suppliers and/or customers. Here are some helpful hints when making a business presentation.

### GET READY

The key to having a successful and meaningful presentation is preparation. What do you want to say and why? What is your perspective or what are your objectives? To whom will you be talking to? What is the point of the talk and how will you structure it so your message comes across clear and convincingly? What should happen after you have finished the presentation and how will you know if you have been successful? As basic as these may sound, preparation is the key to success or failure. When preparing for your presentation, ask yourself the following:

- What is my focus or topic (Give the presentation a name)?
- What is the point of the presentation? If you're not planning to make a point, there's no need in making the presentation!
- What message, idea or suggestion do I want to get across to my audience?
- Who will I be talking to? Who are the key decision-makers in the audience?
  - ⇒ Why are they there?
  - ⇒ How many will be in attendance?
  - ⇒ How much knowledge do they already have about my topic?
  - ⇒ What will interest them the most?
- What do I want the audience (or key decision makers) to do after I'm done (actions, change a feeling or attitude, reinforce a belief, change or improve a process, procedure or policy, start something new, research an approach, etc.)?
- How will I stress the benefits of my idea, product, service or proposal?
- What information or data will I need that supports the benefits and features of my idea or recommendation?
- What makes me the "expert" on the topic?
- How much time will I have?

*Failure to plan is planning for failure*

## GOALS OF THE PRESENTER

What is your reason for doing the presentation? Is it to

- Entertain
- Propose a new idea
- Teach or instruct
- Motivate
- Inform
- Persuade?

To build value and get results, nearly all presentations will include elements of these goals. When getting ready to make your presentation, setup a schedule (or template) that you will follow for your talk. The presentation should be organized with main topics (or key points) and a time to cover each point. Manage your time!

## PRACTICE

*First* - Think of a successful and enjoyable presentation that you recently attended. Give three reasons why you thought it was a valuable presentation.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Second* - Think of an unsuccessful presentation that you attended. List three reasons why you thought it was a poor presentation.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Third* - What were the differences between the two presentations (list four differences)?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

*Fourth* - If you were to do the poor presentation that you thought of in the second step, how could you change it to make it a meaningful and successful presentation?

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### **DEVELOPING, FINE TUNING & PRACTICING YOUR PRESENTATION**

All presentations have a beginning (or opening) that gets the audience's attention and tells them exactly why they are there. All presentations have a middle part (or body) that presents the benefits of your idea or topic and provides supporting data/information that proves that these benefits will occur. All presentations have a conclusion (or closing) that summarizes what was said. It's an invisible template (or structure) that is used to convey a meaningful message with supporting information that results in people doing or changing something. This template contains three major components.

#### **An opening -**

- An introduction or "grabber"
- What you will be talking about (key points) and why they are important
- What in it for them (the audience or company) if they accept your proposal
- Any unique features that distinguish your suggestion or idea from other ideas or current processes.

#### **The body -**

- Explanation of the benefits of your proposal, idea or recommendation
- Provides information, data, specifics and/or details (proof) that will convince the audience that these benefits will occur
- Recaps of each benefit with a review certain critical supportive information.

#### **A closing -**

- A short summary of what was said
- Questions & Answers
- Determine next steps (what will or should happen next?)
- Determine any timelines and responsibilities (by when and who will do what?)

Remember - Get to the point immediately, explain the benefits, provide proof (information, data, history, etc) and close with summary. Avoid abstracts - Be specific! Use simple and short sentences. Explain any unfamiliar terms or jargon. Be yourself!

## NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE AUDIENCE

- Look Good - Dress appropriately and groom yourself.
- Maintain Good Posture - Stand up straight. Move about naturally. Keep your hands out of your pockets. Keep your head up and continuously scan the audience.
- Be Friendly - Shake hands with people. Smile and be expressive. Always face your listeners when talking. Be glad to see people. Treat others the way you would like to be treated!
- Make Eye Contact - Share eye contact with all of your listeners. Look at each listener as you would a friend, but don't stare.
- Watch the Tone of Your Voice - Speak deliberately and clearly. Be loud enough so the person farthest away from you will be able to hear you clearly. Pause frequently to allow you to organize your thoughts and give your listeners time to digest what was just said.
- Gestures - Act naturally and be yourself. Again, keep your hands free so they can move naturally. Don't use telescoping or laser pointers because - they're one more thing to manage during your talk. Avoid "canned" or artificial gestures and movements. Be enthusiastic!

## VERBAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE AUDIENCE

### *Pronunciation - Enunciation*

Words pronounced correctly and distinctly have a much better chance of being understood. Make an effort to maintain good articulation.

### *Pace*

Pace is the speed at which you talk. Gear your pace to the audience. If you go too fast, the audience may miss something. If you go too slowly, listeners may get bored. You may want to slow down when you come to a critical key point or an essential piece of information. Vary your pace and inflection to keep folks interested.

### *Pausing*

A critical skill when talking to people. Take the time to pause. If you get lost or do not know what to say next - stop 🖐 and pause for a few seconds. Use pausing to think about the full impact of the next word or sentence to give extra emphasis. Avoid pausing in the middle of a sentence.

### *Pitch*

Pitch is the highness or lowness of sound. When the voice is high pitched we convey a sense of nervousness or distress. Use a variety of well-modulated voice tones, tempos and sound inflections.

### "Word Whiskers"

Iron out your speech to avoid using meaningless "fillers" between words, sentences and topics. *Uhh's, Ahh's, Ya-know's, and Err's* are verbal crutches called "word whiskers." They provide no value, only distraction. Again, use pausing when you don't know what to say next. Remember that everyone has word whiskers. However, the trick is not to use them over and over again. If you have a word whisker habit, ask a friend, spouse or co-worker to tell you every time use it. Once you become aware of how many times you use it, you can begin a conscience effort to reduce its use. 👉 *Rule of Thumb* - The better prepared you are and the more you know about what you are talking about, the less you will use word whiskers.

## VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids can include PowerPoint presentations (slides), overhead transparencies are still used occasionally, flip charts, black/white boards, story books, or signs/posters. They are used to "highlight" and reinforce key issues, topics or points. They are written large enough for all to see. Visual aids follow the "template" of your talk. Visual aids can improve any presentation. Visuals stimulate good two-way communication.

Presentations often are more interesting when the presenter handles his/her visuals in front of the listeners. This provides an opportunity for some "showmanship." Knowing that the audience is looking at the visuals, at times, takes the pressure off the presenter and helps ease any nervousness.

Here are some tips for designing and using visual aids. These tips are for PowerPoint slides, overhead transparencies, flip charts, and black/story board messages.

- The headline of each visual should be the "message" that you want to get across. Write the headline as a statement of benefit (e.g., Reduce Press Downtime by 50%).
- Each visual should have a headline (or message) at the top. If there is no message, why use a visual?
- Underneath each headline are statements, information or data that directly supports the message as stated in the headline. These statements have "bullets" placed before them.
- Each bullet statement or bit of information should contain no more than 6 to 8 words.
- Select only key words, phrases or data.
- Whenever possible, start lines with *action verbs*.
- There should be no more than 3 to 4 lines (statements) per slide.
- Lettering/font size should be large enough to see at the very back of the room.
- There should be a lot of white or empty space between each statement. Line spacing usually is one-half to two-times the letter height.

- When using an overhead projector, frame your transparencies. Frames are a great place to write some notes or "prompts" to remind you what to say about the slide.

Don't overdo it - You can have too much of a good thing. 👉 *Rule of Thumb* - Generally people only remember about 20% to 25% of what is said. Visuals reinforce certain topics, issues or information that you want the audience to remember. Consequently, 20% to 25% of your talk will be supported by visuals. As Kenny Rogers once said "*Know when to hold'm, know when to fold'm and know when to walk away.*"

## USING VISUALS

Practice using visuals before your talk.

- Check equipment and connections before you start.
- Bring equipment into size and focus.
- Be sure that everyone will be able to see.
- Only have that one visual on the screen while you are discussing it.
- Recite each line (headline and then statements) **verbatim** (word for word).
- After reading each statement, add value by explaining or discussing it. If you have nothing to say about a statement, maybe the statement is not worth putting on the visual.
- Always tell your audience how to read a chart or graph before you begin to discuss the details.
- NEVER talk while you are looking at the computer, projector, screen or chart. Always face your listeners.

### ***Show & Tell Technique:***

- ⇒ Bring up slide on projector - A time to pause! Review what's on the slide and any notes written placed by the projector or showing up on the computer screen.
- ⇒ Turn around and check focus.
- ⇒ Back away and move to the side (everyone can see the slide or chart).
- ⇒ Look back at the headline, memorize it, turn to your listeners, state the headline word-for-word and add some detail if needed.
- ⇒ Half turn back to the slide (time to pause again), digest the first line (the bulleted statement), turn back to your listeners, state the line (word-for-word) and then explain or discuss it and/or add detail (say something about it).
- ⇒ Half turn back to the slide, pause to memorize the next line, face your audience, state the line word-for-word and then discuss it. Repeat this process for each line on every overhead/slide or chart.

- ⇒ Turn off projector if talking for an extended amount of time and before starting any question and answer period.
- ⇒ Try not to walk in front of the projector.
- Avoid using pointers (telescoping, laser beam or baton) - You're probably nervous enough and it's just one more thing to manage while you are giving your talk. These devices will also inhibit the natural movement of your arms and hands.
- Check the screen each time you change a slide or chart to be sure the correct slide or information appears.
- **KEEP VISUALS SIMPLE AND DETAILS TO THE POINT!**
- Rehearse your presentation. Time yourself using the visuals (you will have a lot more pausing going on now).
- Make paper copies of your visuals for listeners to take with them when the presentation is over.

Good design and effective use of visuals will add structure to your talk, keep you on track during your presentation, add value to critical issues or information, and provide some entertainment for your listeners.

## **STRUCTURING YOUR TALK**

The next time you are watching the evening news on TV, notice the structure of how news stories are presented. First there is an opening statement that welcomes you to the program, gives today's date and introduces the news anchor. Second comes the introduction to the "top news stories" of the day (the headlines). Then each news story is visited and explained in detail by the "on the scene reporter." Next, the story goes back to the anchor for a brief recap then on to the next story of the day and the process repeats itself until all of the top stories have been covered. At the end of the broadcast there is typically a short closing summary of the entire program. This invisible template is based on "First telling me what you're going to tell me - Then expanding it by telling me all the details - Then ending with a summary of what you told me."

Professional communicators (like news people, clergy, motivational speakers, instructors and salespeople) use this invisible template to convey messages and provide information that will be understood by the listener or reader. When planning and structuring the flow of your talk, follow these simple guidelines.

***Your Opening*** (5% to 10% of your presentation):

- Introduction or grabber - State your name and title (if the audience doesn't know you) and then state the topic or issue that you will be talking about.
- Overview what you are recommending or proposing and explain any unique features of your idea. Include what you would like to achieve or have done if your suggestion, proposal, idea or topic is accepted.
- Preview the key points (or benefits) that will be addressed during the talk. Do not explain them or go into detail, just list the 2 to 5 key points that will be discussed in the body of your presentation. Then bridge to your first key point.

***The Body*** (80% to 90% of your presentation):

1. *Qualify* - Define your key point using 10 to 15 words ("*What I really mean by this key point is ů ů ů .*").
2. *Expand* - Present all necessary backup information, detail, elaboration, proof or data that supports that key point ("*This will happen because ů ů .*").
3. *Recap* - Briefly re-visit what you have just presented and detailed using different words ("*In other words ů ů .*").  
⇒ Bridge to your next key point and repeat the process until all key points have been defined, detailed and recapped.

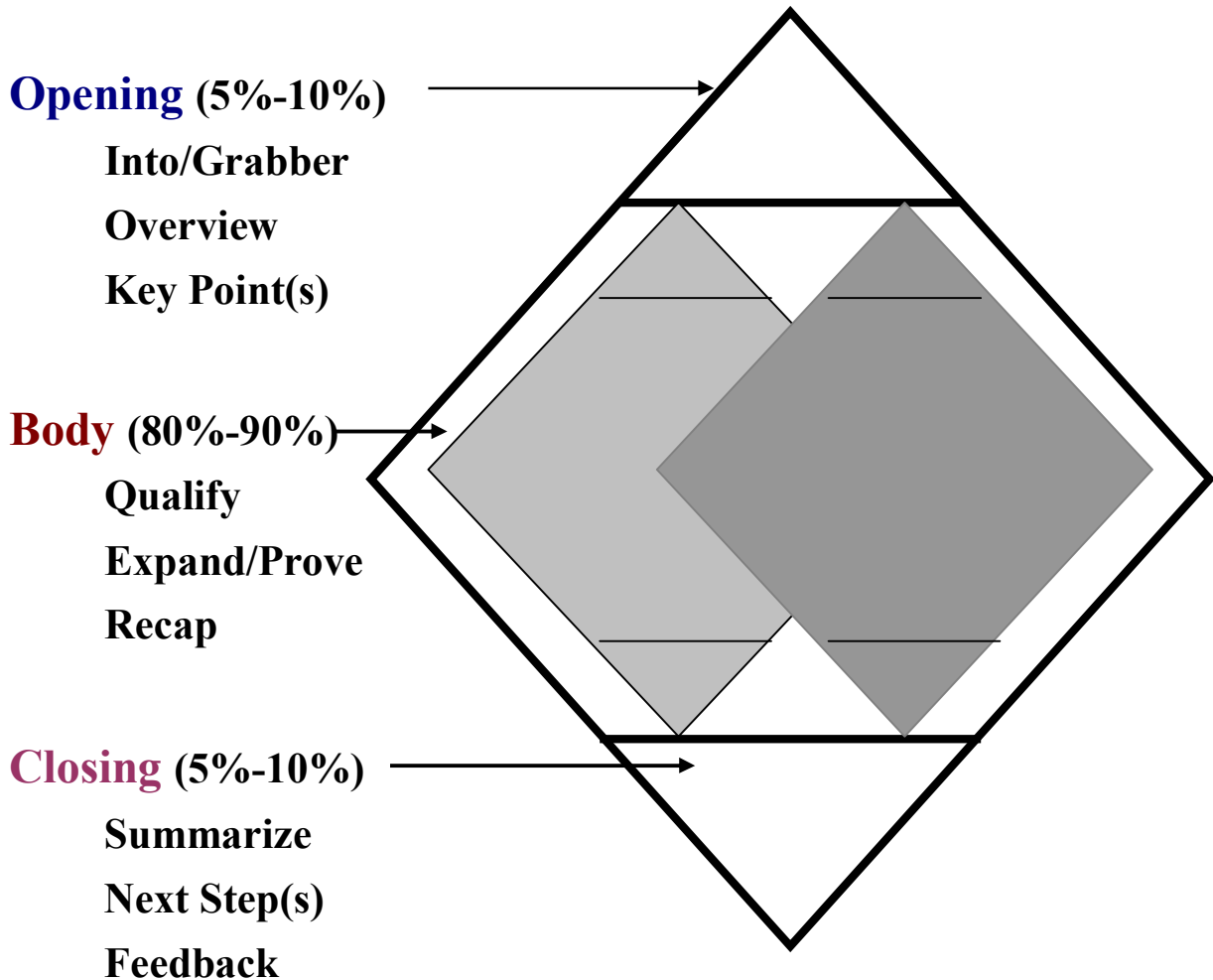
***The Closing*** (5% to 10% of your presentation):

- Summarize your entire talk and restate the conclusion or viewpoint that you hope the audience will reach or accept after listening to your presentation.
- Establish common ground - Determine what the next logical step should be, when it could be done, and who should do it (Action Plan).
- Ask for questions (may include brainstorming, problem solving and decision making).

If appropriate, provide an opportunity to ask questions or brainstorm. Do not become defensive or ridged. Readily admit if you do not know an answer to a question; try to let the group answer it or say that you will get back to them with the answer soon.



# STRUCTURING YOUR TALK



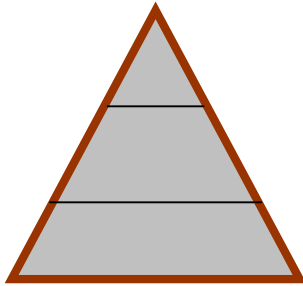
## A 3 Part Invisible Template

*'Tell me what you're going to tell me*

*Then TELL ME*

*Then tell me what you TOLD me \_*

“Tell me what you’re going to tell me”

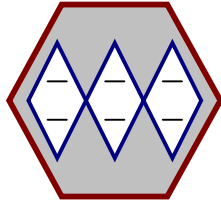


## **THE OPENING**

**Introduction or Grabber** (1-2 minutes)- The warm up (a personal introduction, a joke or story related to the topic, a thank you for coming, a related personal experience).

**Overview** (3 to 5 minutes)- What you will be talking about. A brief background or description of your idea, plan, product or service. The reason why the audience is here. What it is you intend to do. What makes your idea or product unique or different? How long it will take.

**List of Key Points or Benefits** (1-2 minutes) - A simple list of the KEY POINTS that you will be covering. These are the BENEFITS of your idea, plan or recommendation (*WIIFM?*). The reasons why the audience will want to listen to you. These statements of benefit each consist of 3 to 6 words and start with a verb.



“Then *TELL ME*”

## THE BODY

The place you explain each **Key Point** in detail

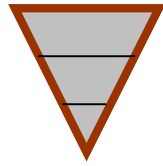
**The Body Has Three Parts: Only one Key Point is discussed at a time.**

**Qualify & Quantify (Q&Q)** - Re-state and define your Key Point in specific terms (*"What I really mean by this Key Point is ....."*). Use 10 to 15 words to do it. Try to show the degree of change or improvement to be expected. Example: **Key Point 1: Reduce Press Downtime.** → **Q&Q:** Installing sensored die protection in the Protos Press will reduce maintenance calls by 50%.

**Back It Up** - Back-up for a Key Point/Q&Q must prove or explain why this change will occur. Back-up is the necessary information or data that will convince the listeners that the "benefit" will actually happen. Back-up supports the action, idea or concept you are trying to implement.

**Recap** - After adding all the back-up information, recap (summarize) the main issue of the Key Point/Q&Q in one or two sentences.

Repeat this process for each **Key Point** in the **Body** of your presentation.



“Then tell me what you told me”

## **THE CLOSE**

Do this after all **Key Points** have been discussed

### **Every Closing Should Have Three Parts:**

**An Overall Summary:** Summarize your entire presentation. Revisit your Key Points and re-state any critical information using different words. Keep it short and to the point (15 to 75 words). Allow for feedback, comments and questions.

**Next Step:** Gain acceptance for your idea/proposal and determine a logical next step that the listeners/decision makers should take. Ask people for commitment if they accept or are interested in your idea, proposal or topic.

**Timing & Responsibility:** State the timetable for the Next Step and identify the person(s) responsible for ensuring the step is properly executed.

**NOTES**