

MASTER THE MESSAGE



Participant Coursebook

EDGETraining
systems inc.

By Tony Iyooob

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800-476-1405, www.edgetraining.com

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introduction

II. Benefits of Effective Communication

III. Stating Clear Expectations

IV. Communication Breakdowns

V. Master the Message

VI. Group Communications

VII. Active Listening

VIII. Putting it all Together

IX. Summary/Debrief

For Preview Purposes Only

STATING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Keep the following guidelines in mind when drafting or giving directions:

1. **Speak With Clarity & Specificity.** Be sure to communicate with clarity & specificity. With clear and concise direction, there is usually little chance for misunderstandings.
2. **Give The Big Picture.** Explain what you are trying to achieve. This should include an end goal and milestones along the way. Provide examples or guidelines.
3. **Explain The Process.** Prepare in advance any steps or processes in a logical order and be prepared to “walk” people through the steps.
4. **Demonstrate The Process.** Be prepared to demonstrate any difficult steps and emphasize the key points in the process.
5. **Confirm All Expectations.** To ensure people understand the directions have them repeat back or paraphrase the expectations or tasks.
6. **Appreciate Questions.** Prepare in advance for any questions you are likely to get. Every question you get now is one less problem you may run into later. Ask if there are any questions and praise those who ask good ones.

Giving complex or brand new directions is not unlike a mini training session. Most people benefit from practicing processes that are new to them. Consider using one or all of the techniques below to help ensure that your directions are better understood and accomplished:

- Ask listeners to recap the directions to make sure they understand them fully. (You may wish to explain to listeners that you are not testing them, but want to make sure that you were communicating clearly.)
 - Give listeners an opportunity to demonstrate the process as a way of practicing and internalizing the directions. This can also serve as a test drive to ensure that you haven't left out any important steps.
 - Pass it on. Have listeners communicate your directions to a third person. Teaching others is a great way to remember and make sense of what was learned.
 - Schedule milestones for longer assignments to review progress and to catch errors early. Make sure you communicate clearly when these milestones should occur.
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KEY COMMUNICATION SKILLS CHECKLIST

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 - 5 by circling the most appropriate rating for each item.

1 = Rarely	2 = Infrequently	3 = Sometimes	4 = Often	5 = All of the Time
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As a supervisor, I ...

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Take the time to communicate with others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Listen to others' ideas, especially when I disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Question the other person to gain more information | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Paraphrase my understanding of the issue | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Ask for input from others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Acknowledge others' feelings, even if they are negative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Treat others with respect and dignity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Seek solutions that can be mutually agreed to | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Follow through on my commitments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Follow up to ensure positive communication | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Pay attention to person through eye contact and body language | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Overall, demonstrate that I care about the other person's needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total: _____

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS

In survey after survey, employees place communication problems at the top of their frustration list.

Most managers spend so much time and effort communicating; it's hard for them to believe it could be a major problem. The paradox is that while employees are frustrated by a perceived lack of communication with their managers, most managers feel they are excellent communicators.

We often hear “communication is the key” or “leadership is communication” or any number of slogans about the importance of communication. Communication is critical. It is one of the most powerful tool managers have in their “toolbox.”

Communication can be as tactical as posting the daily numbers or as a strategic and profound as sharing the purpose and vision of the organization.

With so much emphasis on communication, how could it be such a big problem?

Actually, communication may not be the problem, and communicating more may not be the solution. In most cases, employees don't need more information. Most of the information they receive doesn't get read; that which gets read is frequently not understood; and that which is understood is usually not remembered.

The real problem is that communication being delivered is not the same, or connected with, the message being received. In other words, managers' communication is often filled with so much “static” that the message is not understood, supported or accepted by employees.

What causes this communication static? One factor is the explosion of communication methods in recent years - e-mail, voice mail, meetings, conference calls, cell phones, pagers, memos, video, intranets, newsletters, etc. With so many options, we tend to pay more attention to how we are going to communicate than what we are going to communicate. As a result, most managers think of communication as an activity as opposed to an outcome.

Another reason for the communication static is we've forgotten that true communication is a two-way process. It's not enough to just put out a message and hope employees “get it.” We have to follow up to be certain we connected - to make sure the message received was the same one we intended to give.

MASTER THE MESSAGE

As you watch the video please take note of the communication tips -

COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY

VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY & SPECIFICITY

Exercise: Making Directions Specific

The following table contains directions that are imprecise, vague or just hard to follow. Revise these statements so that they are more specific.

Productivity must increase this quarter.	
Use of that machine can be dangerous.	
Draft the report ASAP.	
You can't submit late vacation requests.	
Our department must reduce waste.	
We are denying your request because it violates company policy.	

SHARING KNOWLEDGE IN GROUP COMMUNICATION

1. Show the team how all the pieces of the picture fit together.

- Sometimes managers and teams within a specific department become isolated from the other business units.
 - Most organizations operate under the “95/5 Rule”. Most workgroups understand 95% of their department and only 5% of other business units.
 - If managers can tear down the walls between departments and show their teams the contributions each unit makes, groups will begin to support each other.
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2. Demonstrate how the team makes a difference to the customer.

- If employees know little about other departments, they often know even less about the customers.
 - Managers can help this understanding by answering some simple questions. How do we affect our customers? What does the customer do with our service/product?
 - Communicate the big picture. This not only creates awareness but also helps build positive relationships.
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3. Teach employees the vital signs of the business.

- Although they may not specifically ask, employees really want to know what all those reports and numbers mean.
 - Managers who invest the time to teach their employees the numbers of the business will reap the rewards of a greater understanding.
 - The critical numbers are the primary link to understanding the big picture; yet many managers want to share them only on a “need to know” basis.
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NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Like it or not, others judge the sincerity and value of what we have to say by our body language. In our day-to-day activities we often need to make judgments about people: Should we trust him? Does she seem competent to do the job? On a subconscious level we observe and gather more data than we realize. When we make judgments about others, and when others make judgments about us, nonverbal data factors heavily into our perceptions.

Nonverbal communication provides clues to listeners about the speaker's intent, mood, sincerity, degree of formality, etc.

-
- 1. Pair up with a partner; take turns playing the supervisor and the subordinate. The first time through, the supervisor should attempt to compliment the employee on some aspect of his or her work performance. The supervisor should deliver this compliment with his or her arms folded across the chest and without smiling.**
 - 2. Now switch roles and have the new supervisor criticize some aspect of the employee's work performance. This time around the supervisor should deliver the message while nodding his head and smiling. Other body language should attempt to depict a relaxed attitude.**

Discuss the following questions with your partner:

- **How genuine did the compliment feel?**

- **How would you feel if your supervisor delivered all his compliments in this way?**

- **How seriously did you take the criticism?**

- **How would you feel if your supervisor delivered all his criticism in this way?**

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Role-Play: Noticing Non-Verbal Communication

In our group, begin a casual, “small talk” conversation that everyone can participate in, about a topic such as the weather or plans for the weekend.

While conversing, each group member should alternately (not all at the same time) display some of the following nonverbal behavior:

Have one group member observe the body language of the participants.

Take notes on your group's interpretation of each behavior and share it with the class.

- ***How did their posture, proximity, hand gestures, facial expressions or head movements express their intentions or feelings?***

- **Could the group member who was approached have done anything differently to seem more open to the conversation?**

- **Could the approaching group member have done anything differently to more clearly signal his confidence in his or her idea?**

ACTIVE LISTENING SELF SURVEY

Self-Quiz: Assessing Your Listening Habits

Optional Activity - Check off each box that reflects a behavior that you regularly practice or an improper habit that you regularly avoid:

- I don't formulate my response to what someone is saying while he or she is speaking.
- I regularly recap what I heard someone else say if the statement delivers new, complex, or important information.
- I try to identify some aspect of what another person is saying that interests me when they speak.
- I listen to the content of what people are saying instead of judging how they are saying it.
- I don't interrupt, and I wait to comment until I understand the content.
- I listen for general themes and points rather than for minor details.
- I only take notes when I'm afraid I might forget an important point or detail.
- I work to stay focused even when complex, confusing, or boring issues are being discussed.
- I try to stay non-reactive to emotionally charged language so that I can hear the speaker out.
- I try to limit my preconceived notions from influencing my interpretation of another person's words.
- I try to express through my body language that I am receptive to the speaker's words.

*Unchecked boxes indicate areas in which you may need improvement.
Think of ways to improve your weaknesses.*

OPEN ENDED & CLOSED ENDED QUESTIONING

Use open ended questions to gather more information.

Open-ended questions are powerful ways to uncover and gather more information. These types of questions encourage the other person to describe, explain and elaborate their responses in order for you to gather more information.

Use open-ended questions when:

- You Want To Stimulate Conversation
- Need A Broad Range Of Responses
- Need To Get More Information

Examples:

- What is your view of this project?
- Tell me about a time when you...
- What do you think the best solution is?

Use close-ended questions to prompt a specific response.

Close-Ended questions help pinpoint the conversation to bring out specifics in a short time. They are useful when you do not need to gather large amounts of details. They can be associated with true/false, or multiple choice questions.

Use close-ended questions to prompt a specific response when:

- Your Time Is Limited
- You Need To Verify Information
- You Want To Confirm A Response

Examples:

- Do you agree with this decision?
- When will you complete this task?
- Did you complete this project?

EXAMINING THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another.

A. Sender Has Idea

- The communication process has five steps: idea formation, message encoding, message transmission, message decoding, and feedback.

B. Sender Encodes Idea in Message

- Encoding is the process of converting the idea into words or gestures that will convey meaning.
- A major problem in communicating any message verbally is that words have different meanings for different people.

C. Message Travels Over Channel

- Channels are the media-computer, telephone, letter, fax, and so on-that transmit messages.
- Anything that interrupts the transmission of a message in the communication process is called noise

D. Receiver Decodes Message

- Translating the message from its symbol form into meaning involves decoding.

E. Feedback Travels to Sender

- The verbal and nonverbal responses of the receiver create feedback. Feedback helps the sender know that the message was received and understood.
- The best feedback is descriptive rather than evaluative.

BEST PRACTICE COMMUNICATIONS

The Golden Rule:

The Golden Rule is an eternal moral precept: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Usually, this does not work well as a guide to effective communication. The reason is that not everybody wants to be treated in the same manner, we all have our own unique ways of providing, receiving, and processing communication.

The key to effective communication is adjusting what and how we communicate to compliment other people's communication styles.

The Golden Rule of Communication:

- Communicate with people the way they prefer, not the way you prefer.

One-On-One Communication:

- This is by far the best and most effective form of communication. When face to face with someone, you are able to pick up on subtle inflections, non-verbals and feelings and are more apt to be able to respond and understand.

Group Communications:

- Group communications is a best way to share information between workgroups or teams. The important factor here is be sure to solicit ideas from the entire group and make certain that everyone has a voice.

Communication As A Two-Way Process:

- Communication at its best is a two way process. If we keep this in mind as we communicate, only then will we be effective.
- E-Mail is an easy way to transfer information; however, it may not be the most effective way of communicating with your team. It can be easily misinterpreted or misconstrued.

COMMUNICATION QUICK REFERENCE

Why Communications Break Down	Benefits of Effective Communication
<p>Too Many Links in the Chain Too Many Messages Lack of Clarity Undefined Expectations Inadequate Listening Failure to Consider Audience</p>	<p>Initiative Teamwork Accountability Quality Productivity Results</p>
Analysis of a Message	Delivery & timing
<p>Think About What You Want to Say Consider Your Expectations Keep it Simple Be Precise & Concise Repeat Your Message Check for Understanding</p>	<p>Communicate Directly to People Watch Your Tone of Voice Use Memos or Notes for groups Consider Your Timing Confirm all Expectations Be Aware of Your Non-Verbals</p>
Target Your Audience	Establish Credibility
<p>Whom Are you Addressing? What's Important to Them? What are Their Concerns & Responsibilities? What's Their Stake in the Communication? Are There Any Special Issues?</p>	<p>Speak From Experience Back Up Your Statements with Evidence Speak with People, Not to Them Communicate with Compassion Communicate without Frustration</p>

CLUES TO NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Non-Verbal Communication	Possible Interpretation
Facial Expressions	
Frown Smile Raised Eyebrows Narrowed Eyes Blushing	Displeasure, Unhappiness Friendliness, Happiness Disbelief, Amazement Anger Embarrassment
Eye Contact	
Glancing Steady Avoiding	Some Interest Active Listening, Interest Guilty, Unresponsive, Nervous
Hand and Arm Gestures	
Pointing Fingers Folded Arms Arms at Side Hands Uplifted Outward	Authority, Displeasure, Lecturing Not Open to Change, Ready to Talk Open to Suggestions, Relaxed Disbelief, Puzzlement, Uncertain
Body Posture	
Fidgeting, Doodling Hands in Hips Shrugging Shoulders Squared Stance or Shoulders Biting Lip, Shifting, Jangling Money Sitting on Edge of Chair Slouching in Chair	Boredom Anger, Defensiveness Indifference Problem Solving, Concern Nervousness Listening, Concern Boredom, Lack of Interest
Eye Contact	
Eight Feet Outward Four to Eight Feet Eighteen Inches to Four Feet Physical Contact to Eighteen Inches	Public Space Social Space Personal Space Intimate Space

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**PROGRAM
 EVALUATION**

MASTER THE MESSAGE

Class Name:	Date:
Name:(Optional)	Company:

Please circle the number which best reflects your opinion of this training program.

	Not at all				Very
1. The objectives of this course were relevant to the knowledge/skill requirements of my job.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The course materials were useful and relevant to my job.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The course content was presented in a clear and understandable manner.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This course has increased my confidence level to apply this training to my job.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The information in this course was informative and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
6. How would you rate the delivery skills of the instructor(s)?	Low  High				
Course Presentation/Visuals	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5
Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5
Able to Stay on Topic	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged Participation	1	2	3	4	5
7. How would you rate the facilities & classroom?	Low  High				
Comfort	1	2	3	4	5
Service & Friendliness of Edge Staff	1	2	3	4	5
Workshop Supplies	1	2	3	4	5
8. Please list three ideas or skills that you will apply to your job.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>				

*Use the back of the form if you have additional comments or suggestions.
 Thank you for your comments and feedback.*

If you have any additional comments about the program, please feel free to express them in the space below. Thank you for your time and thanks again for joining us at the program.

For Preview Purposes Only