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## One Minute Ideas

### Five Levels of Communication:

1. **CLICHES** - Typical, routine, oft repeated comments.
2. **FACTS** - Information/ Statistics.
3. **OPINIONS** - Includes concerns, expectations, personal goals, dreams.

# Achieving Potential

**May 2011**

The theme of this month's edition of our monthly newsletter "Achieving Potential," is COMMUNICATION.

Everything that makes a business successful has one common element-effective communication. Whether it is your marketing program, strategic planning, customer loyalty strategy, or staff development, effective communication is the lynchpin that holds it together.

I hope you find the following information useful. If you would like to learn more about developing your success, I encourage you to take survey below.

[Take this survey to see how to maximize your success? - You will get a free debriefing on the results](#)

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Is there a topic you would like to hear about in the future? Email me at [grant@pdstrategies.com](mailto:grant@pdstrategies.com)

## Communication Smooths the Path of Change

*Productivity almost always suffers in times of great change because employee stress dramatically increases due to the universal fear of the unknown. In these times, communication becomes more important than ever.*

*Often senior executives genuinely believe they are communicating with employees when it comes to matters that affect them. Unfortunately, they often underestimate the number of matters that includes. Most high-level decisions will affect employees in one way or another. (That's why a new law recently went into effect in Britain forcing employers to answer employees' questions on any changes or decisions that affect them.)*

**4. FEELINGS -  
Emotions.**

**5. NEEDS -  
Discovering needs and  
wants.**



So how do you know what is important to employees and what to tell them? You need to put yourself in the position, the mind, and the heart of your employees' one employee at a time. If you were that person, what would you be worried about right now in the current situation? What would be important for you to know? What is the worst thing that could happen, and would you want to know about it in advance? How would you want to be told?

Of course, you can't answer those questions yourself. You need input from the very people you are trying to understand. Depending on how much you can discuss, or how much is already known, you might ask a few individuals what the grapevine is saying, and what people are worrying and wondering about.

Now, armed with this information, draft the answers to the questions. Of course they must be truthful answers, for insincerity is easily recognized and will deal a deathblow to your communication efforts. Then they must be couched in terms that are clear and uncompromising, but also considerate and compassionate. It's worth spending some time on this part. Lack of commitment to your message is also easily read and will automatically raise the cynicism level among employees.

Next comes dissemination of the information. There is, as we all know, no shortage of communication technology in the business world. However, the way a person receives news can dramatically affect how he or she feels about it, so you need to choose the medium very carefully. E-mail can be perceived as cold and unfeeling in many cases, although it is useful for routine updates that don't have emotional overtones. Some messages are better spoken, either by managers to their groups or by the CEO to the whole organization.

If the messengers don't have highly developed communication skills, it's worth engaging the services of professional speechwriters or presentation coaches to

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help them, but be sure the message remains honest, clear, and compassionate.

And above all, follow through on your commitments and promises. Nothing turns employees off more than empty words. Sincere, caring, ongoing communication can form the basis for building employee engagement when the present time of turmoil ends.

Source: Resource Associates

## Achieve Success with Positive Communication

*Positive, effective communication is the key to success in every part of your life. That includes at work, at play, and at home. Here's how to do it. Use these six strategies to communicate effectively.*



- You can accept anything without agreeing with it.  
Acknowledge amazing requests and outrageous statements with responses such as:

"That's an interesting idea."

"That's a novel request."

"What an intriguing question."

Use this as an opportunity to understand what the other person is saying. And then move on to other topics without attempting to argue.

- People judge others by their actions. This means you are being judged by the perceptions you create with your words and actions. For example, if you act angry, even though you feel otherwise, you will be judged as being hostile. If you sound helpless, even though you feel otherwise, you will be judged as being ineffective. Thus, choose actions and words that convey the impression you want to make.
- People judge themselves by their intentions. Thus, acknowledge that the other person's actions or words are correct and proper (as seen by that other person). Even when someone's behavior appears completely absurd, that person most likely believes it is justified.
- Everyone deserves courtesy and respect. Diplomacy gains more than hostility. It is always the best way to begin a dialogue. After all, no one has ever had to apologize for being courteous. When you treat others with respect, you set the standard for how you want to be treated.
- Everyone has valuable ideas. Everyone is an expert in some area. Everyone has unique talents. Effective leaders help other people excel at expressing their ideas. They ask questions. They show interest. They make the other person a star in their conversation.
- Realize that you can always learn more about the other person's needs, priorities, and situation. Ask questions. Seek solutions. Think positive. Quick reactions often lead to apologies. Start by being thoughtful and seeking to understand fully.

So, the next time you're communicating, implement these six strategies and you'll see the power of effective communication.

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# How Effectively Do You Communicate?

*Use this checklist to rate your communication skills. The more effective you are, the better the outcomes you will achieve.*

## Focus

- Do you pay complete attention to others when they are speaking? (A wandering focus discourages open communication.)
- Do you manage your thoughts during a conversation, focusing them on understanding what the other person is saying? (Effective listening requires more concentration than any other form of communication. If you're thinking about anything other than what the person is saying, you're defeating your ability to understand.)
- Do you postpone preparing your reply until after you have heard everything the other person has to say? (Thinking about what you plan to say while the other person is speaking prevents you from understanding what that person is saying.)
- Do you ignore distractions such as other people, ambient noise, and the surroundings? (Attending to distractions makes you appear uninterested, unfocused, and rude.)
- Do you make eye contact during a conversation? (Watching a person's face shows that you're paying attention. You also gather nonverbal messages, which can convey most of the important information being conveyed to you.)

## Environment

- Do you convey confidence, courage, and strength during your conversations? (A pleasant manner will encourage people to trust you and tell you more. Negative behavior conveys weakness, insecurity, and fear.)
- Do you react calmly to bad news? (Anger frightens people into avoiding you.)
- Do you encourage others to speak freely? (Appearing interested, asking questions, and treating others with respect encourages open communication.)
- Do you use a diplomatic, positive vocabulary? (Talking about what you want is more forceful than talking about what you don't want, won't do, or can't do. This means that you will avoid using the word "not.")
- Do you seek solutions? (Seeking approval, culprits, or excuses, discourages communication.)

## Clarity

- Do you stick to the subject? (Introducing new unrelated issues confuses the other person and degrades the quality of your conversation.)
- Do you maintain a "you" focus? (Speak in terms of what the other person needs, wants, and understands because that enhances the impact of what you say.)
- Do you avoid games? (Asking trick questions, setting traps, and making others look bad will cause people to avoid you.)
- Do you use a linear, logical approach to explaining things? (Make it easy for others to understand what you're saying because it's more efficient.)
- Do you use common terms? (Avoid jargon and flowery speech because these

impress only the person using them.)

Effective leaders answer, "yes" to all of these questions, and that is what makes them so successful.

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### Motivational Quotes

*"Speak when you are angry - and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret."*

-Dr. Laurence J. Peter

*"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."*

-Tony Robbins

*"We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."*

- Epictetus

For results YOU can count on, contact Performance Development Strategies, LLC at 914-953-4458 or Email: [grant@pdstrategies.com](mailto:grant@pdstrategies.com)

Make it a GREAT day,

Grant Schneider

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