

Communication basics...

By Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

In life, and especially in business we have opportunities and responsibilities to effectively share our ideas. Our success, and perhaps our survival, is directly dependant on our ability to do so, quickly and productively.

3 basic forms of communication:

Oral

- Presentations – sales, board meetings, customer, training,
- Voice inflection, warmth, tone, pacing
- Meetings – training, sales, team
- Informal talks – staff, management, clients
- Interviews – client, potential employees,
- Telephone calls
- Voice mail messages

Written

- Letters and memos
- Reports
- Business cards
- Brochures, and promotional literature
- Websites
- Articles
- Faxes
- Emails
- E-books
- Internet business

Non-verbal

- Body language
- Dress
- Personal grooming

I've heard it said, "**Communication is two-way understanding.**" Makes you think! Perhaps, 'Oral communication is two-way listening'. Following that logic 'Written communication is two-way reading'. And finally, 'Non-verbal communication is two-way seeing.' What do you think? Perhaps it is the effective use of all three that results in the understanding between two people called communication.

Getting your point across – making the connection!

1. Convey your message and ideas clearly, completely, quickly and with confidence.
2. Present your message or information from the listener or reader's point of view.

Purpose determines Path

Being clear about your purpose will assist you in choosing the most effective communication path to convey your message accurately and productively.

Do you want to speak directly, meet in person or convey in written form? What is your purpose in each case?

Here are a few examples:

Using the direct approach such as the telephone might be the best choice for these types of situations:

- I need information and I need it immediately or today? Speed is a factor?
- Here is the answer to the question you asked, or here is the information you requested?
- I think we need to discuss or clarify this situation? Or, I need some additional information or some direction to be able to continue?
- I need two-way interaction and want your help?
- I need to hear your voice and assess your commitment?
- I'd like to make an appointment to follow up on this in person?

Writing might be the better choice in these instances:

- When the addition of a written format will strengthen your oral presentation? Will it make a greater impact?
- Do you need documentation or tracking on a project or proposal?
- Will a carefully crafted memo convey the message effectively?
- Do you have the time to put it in writing?
- Do I have information to present to more than one person?

Calling a meeting might be beneficial if:

- You need two-way communication or interaction from other people?
- You have information to present to more than one person?
- What needs to be communicated requires a more formal format?
- See other information we've provided on meetings, if you feel this is the best way to go? Visit our website: www.ideaman.net for more information on meetings.

More thoughts on purpose

Whether you are planning an oral presentation or working on something in a written format doing your homework and defining your purpose is important. It will

help you more effectively convey your message and as a bonus assist you in the structure, research and delivery too.

What is your objective?

- Do you want to make a request?
- Do you want to convey information?
- Do you want to call someone to action?
- Do you want to bring a problem to their attention?
- Do you want to bring an opportunity to their attention?
- Do you have a recommendation to make?
- Are you trying to sell your abilities, services or programs?
- Do you want them to commit to a course of action?
- Do you want to entertain them? Amuse them?
- Is it your intent to present a convincing argument or proposal?
- Do you seek to inspire or motivate them?
- Do you want their feedback and input?
- Do you want to keep them in the loop?
- Do you report to them?

Identify your audience's preference

- Do they like to 'read' this type of material or would they prefer to 'see or hear' it?
- Are they interested in numbers, cost benefits, investment, techniques and tips, background or people? Or both?
- Are they conservative in their views and actions? Are they more progressive in their background and viewpoint?
- Are they easy or difficult to convince? What is their track record?
- How much time can they realistically be expected to allocate to this presentation?
- Are you competing in this situation with another firm, another colleague, time deadlines, cost factors, and market pressure?
- Who are they? Professional vs. non-professional or personal? What is your relationship to them?
- What else do you know about them?

Taking the time to do this additional homework will assist you in making better use of your organization, preparation, and delivery time. You'll be closer to the mark in your efforts and minimize your risk by delivering a well thought out and crafted presentation – either verbal or written.

A quick review

Why would you want to take the extra time and effort it takes to make an effective presentation? What would it accomplish?

An Effective presentation:

- Demonstrates that you are thoroughly prepared and have done your homework.
- Has its information well organized in a complete and concise format?
- Reveals your human side and acts as a catalyst to connect with your audience.
- Reveals your competency – demonstrates that you do indeed have the skill set and the ability to successfully complete your assignment or project.
- Consistently keeps your audience awake, and aware of your actions.

Your career, and your success in business has a direct relationship to your effectiveness in working with people – your superiors, your staff, your suppliers, your co-workers, and most especially your clients. Doesn't it make sense to invest the effort to ensure you have the best opportunity to succeed?

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