

# BUILDING YOUR LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION STRATEGY



Facilitated By: Tara Powers, MS

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## ***Communication is everything.***

If done effectively it can influence, build trust, empower, and energize people and teams. And, of course, if done haphazardly and without thoughtful consideration, it can create frustration, confusion, rework, or even conflict for everyone involved.

In this program, you will be introduced to an Engagement and Accountability model as well as learn tools, techniques, and resources to improve your communication between you, your co-workers and employees during times of constant change. You will learn how to recognize and adjust when communication is not working as well as the value of seeking first to understand, then to be understood. Simple, positive changes in how you communicate with others can initiate personal shifts in attitude, behavior, style and focus that can have a positive ripple effect through your team and the organization. The end result is higher levels of respect and trust, happier and more productive employees as well as improved internal and external customer service.

As a participant in this workshop, you will develop an annual communication plan as well as a personal action plan to serve as a reminder to implement skills learned in class. This action plan should also be shared with your team so that they can provide you feedback when applying what you learned. Interactive discussions, activities and practice scenarios during the workshop will enable you to feel comfortable and confident using the skills and best practices presented.

### **Our learning objectives for today's course include:**

- Understand the business case for effective communication
- Recognize the key elements of the feedback process
- Learn how to use an accountability framework to empower employees and team members to take responsibility and initiate change
- Develop an annual communication process and plan to effectively communicate with employees
- Complete a personal action plan for the next 30 days

# BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE

## Activity — Communication Effectiveness Check In:

**Think of a frustrating situation, how did communication play a role?**

Where or when do you see communication break down?

Is it a particular process, a certain customer situation, an internal customer situation, between departments, etc.?

**Where does excellent communication exist?**

Where do you experience it and what does it look like?

Is it a particular process, person, department, customer, situation, etc.?

**What are the impacts?**

**+ YOU -**

**+ TEAM -**

**+ Organization -**

## HOW WILL WE KNOW?

*How will we know if we are communicating more effectively with our employees'?*



*What would we see happening that is not happening today?*

- Trust Levels?
- Engagement Levels?
- Employee Satisfaction?
- Productivity Levels?
- Team Relationships?
- Others?

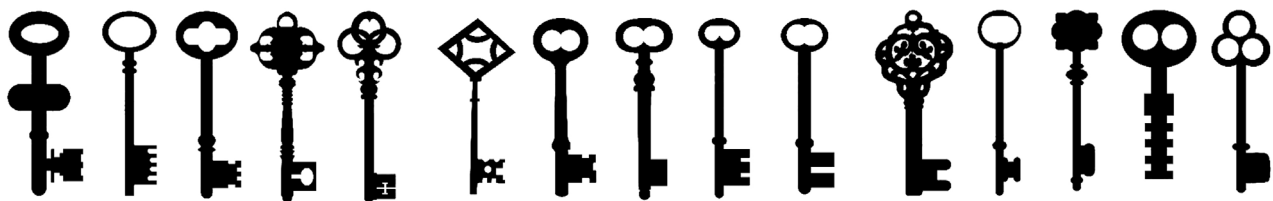
# KEY COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

## 1. Consider Purpose and Intent

- Why am I sending this? What do I want them to do with it?
- What is their style, pace and knowledge level?
- What content do they need?
- How much information do they need?
- What is the chance of a misunderstanding?
- What is our relationship like?

## 2. Consider Assumptions

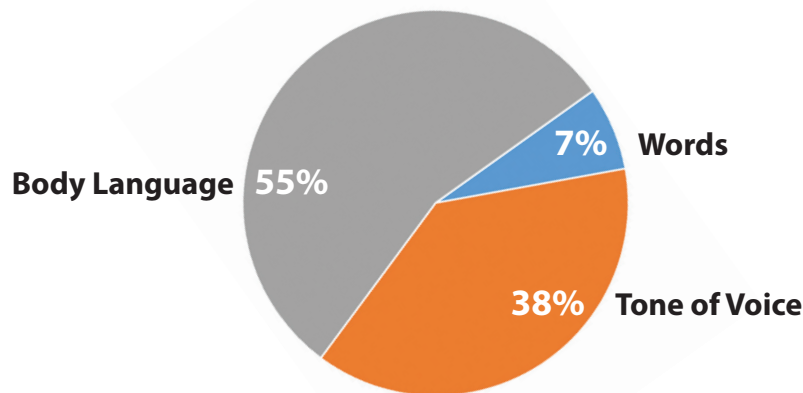
- *Ask Yourself as the Sender:*
  - What do I know and believe about this person?
  - What assumptions might they make that could impact how they interpret my communication?
  - How can I provide more clarity?
- *Ask Yourself as the Receiver:*
  - What do I know and believe about this person?
  - What assumptions could impact how I filter this communication?
  - How can I get more clarity?



# KEY COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

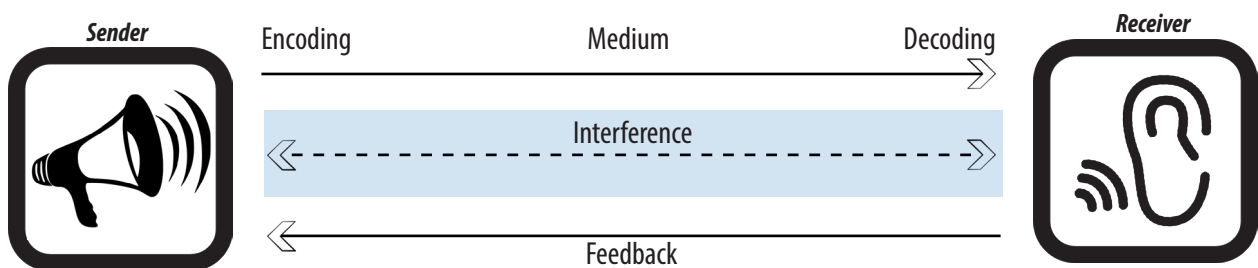
## 3. Make Use of Body Language

- Meeting in person and being a clear speaker and a great listener has the chance of being 100% effective.
- Speaking by phone only includes the words you choose (7%) and the tone and inflection of your voice (35%) for a total of 42% effectiveness.
- Using email and IM rests solely on your words carrying your message effectively, with only a 7% chance of complete clarity.



## 4. Incorporate a Feedback Loop

- A message gets encoded by the sender
- It then gets sent through a communication medium
- The receiver then decodes this information
- Some type of feedback loop must take place



**Q: Which component(s) do you need to focus on to be a better communicator?  
What will you see change when you do?**

## KEY ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

If you have done a good job providing regular feedback to your employees, there should never be any surprises in the performance review meeting. Employees should have a clear understanding of how they performed towards achieving goals and meeting expectations as well as what areas they need to work on improving. Providing regular feedback will keep the lines of communication open between the employee and manager, and create an environment where everyone can succeed.

When providing feedback to employees it is important to keep the following key elements in mind so that the feedback is clear, understandable and achieves the desired results.

- **Specific** – clear, objective examples of the behavior or performance that you observed (positive or negative)
- **Timing** – feedback needs to take place as close to the performance event or behavior that you observed as possible
- **Positive and corrective** – feedback should be given regularly for performance that needs to be adjusted or for performance that you would like to see continue
- **Shares the impact** – effective feedback lets the employee know how their behavior or performance affects the team, department or company. By taking time to explain the impact of the behavior or action, it takes away the feeling of it being a “personal” opinion
- **Allows for employee input** – there should always be an opportunity for the employee to share his or her own perceptions. There may be additional information that the supervisor needs to know.
- **Provides opportunity** – Feedback is an excellent opportunity to work together to establish an action plan for improvement to redefine expectations or goals, or to put developmental plans in place if necessary.



## 3 STEP FEEDBACK PROCESS

Here is a simple 3-step process that helps guide you through providing effective feedback starting with the facts followed by the impact and then the solution.



### Step 1: Fact

Describe the specific concrete behavior or action (Facts only, no judgment, which means no adjectives or general traits).

---

---

---

### Step 2: Impact

State how the behavior or action impacts the result AND/OR the Individual, Team, organization or Customers either positively or negatively (+ or -).

---

---

---

### Step 3: Solution/Reinforcement

Commit to specific future action or reinforce the behavior that you would like to see continue.  
(-) Feedback = Solution      (+) Feedback = Reinforcement.

---

---

---

*\*\*Applying the 3-step feedback process should be used in both positive and corrective feedback situations to ensure that the feedback is clear and effective.*



## 3 STEP FEEDBACK PROCESS

### ***Positive Feedback Practice Activity***

**Ineffective delivery of feedback: = “You excel at delivering great service”**

Facts:

Impact:

Solution/Reinforcement:

### ***Corrective Feedback Practice Activity***

**Ineffective delivery of feedback: = “Your bad attitude is affecting the team”**

Facts:

Impact:

Solution/Reinforcement:

### ***Partner Activity***

Work with a partner to identify several examples of positive or corrective feedback that you need to communicate to one of your employees following this workshop.

**How will you use the 3-step recognition process to provide effective feedback?**

# ACCIDENTAL VS. MINDFUL COMMUNICATION

## *Elements of Mindful Communication*

Leaders who use Mindful Communication are more successful at achieving results and increasing engagement as people move through change day-to-day. Mindful Communication involves two strategies:

- 1) **Employ Consistent Tactics**
- 2) **Address Emotions**

### **1) Employ Consistent Tactics:**

Leaders create and cascade a Communication Plan that is flexible to address the WHY, WHERE, HOW and WHAT.

<p><b>Why</b> — <i>The purpose and reason for change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to understand how it connects to the bigger picture so you can share how it drives and aligns to company goals and/or strategy and anticipate the implications to your department and team</li> </ul>	<p><b>NOTES:</b></p>
<p><b>Where</b> — <i>Where are we heading and how will we know when we get there</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to understand a definition of success once the change is complete; are there metrics that people must achieve?</li> <li>• Is there a visual of success that people will connect to and increase motivation to explore and invest?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>How</b> — <i>How we will get there</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What team, department or company goals must adjust to make the change successful?</li> <li>• What timeframes must we agree to as a team?</li> <li>• Empower people to own the how</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What</b> — <i>How each team member must adjust to make the change successful</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will their performance evaluation adjust?</li> <li>• What skills, information, resources will they need?</li> </ul>	

# ACCIDENTAL VS. MINDFUL COMMUNICATION

## (2) Address Emotions:

Leaders strive to build rapport and trust with those critical to their success as they Listen & Observe as well as adapt their communication when needed.

### Listen & Observe - Engagement & Accountability Framework

- They pay attention daily
- Recognize what phase of transition someone is going through and where they are on the framework

### Adapt Communication Skills

- They use specific communication tools to support people's individual emotions as they move through the Framework

“It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear...It's like being between trapezes. It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to.”

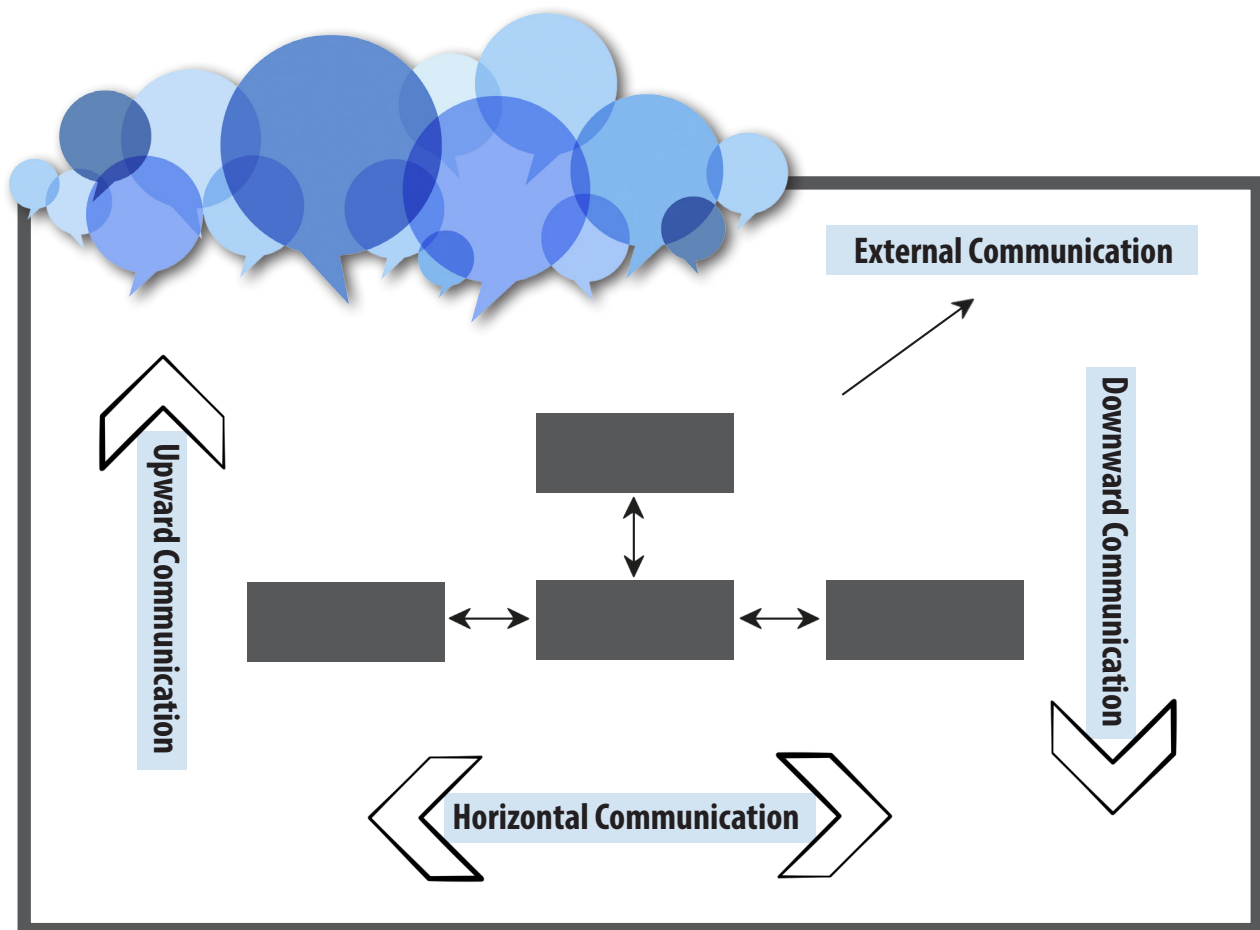
— *Marilyn Ferguson*



# DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

## *The Importance of Cascading Communication*

Effective communication in any organization has three distinct directions: Downward, upward and horizontal. Information on decisions, changes, new process, etc. must cascade throughout the organization to the right people at the right time.



# DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

**Downward communication is the flow of information from leadership down through the organization.**

What are examples of when downward communication should take place?

Who should communicate it?

**Upward communication represents the information that flows from team members to leadership in the organization.**

What are examples of when upward communication should take place?

Who should communicate it?

**Horizontal communication represents information that flows across the organization from department to department laterally or diagonally. It ties together activities and allows for collaboration and coordination in the organization.**

What are examples of when horizontal communication should take place?

Who should communicate it?

# DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

## ***Key Components of an Effective Communication Plan***

- Understand changes that you and your team need to prepare for (where is information coming from)
- Identify audience (who needs to know... up, down and across)
- Define objectives (what do they need to know)
- Identify method (how will you communicate)
- Identify who is responsible for communication (role)
- Determine frequency and time (daily, monthly, quarterly)
- Be sure to align messages
- Be sure to incorporate a feedback loop

## ***Build Your Personal Leader Communication Plan***

### **Individual Activity:**

1. Explore the questions below to begin building out your communication plan
2. Use the blank communication plan worksheet on page 25 to map it out

### **Table Activity:**

1. Share communication plan at your table
2. Get peer feedback on the following:
  - a. What gaps still exist?
  - b. Is communication aligned and linked to scorecard, purpose, etc.
  - c. Is it clear how frequent and long the communication should be
  - d. Are the correct stakeholders included

### **Consider the following questions:**

Where or who are you receiving information from that needs to be cascaded through your internal network? (Sources)

If you are not receiving information, where do you go to get it? (Sources)

Who needs to know this information that you are receiving? (Stakeholders/Audience)

Why do they need to know it? (Objectives)

What are the ways that you can communicate to them? (Methods)

What are the ways you can align your message to create value?

How will you incorporate a feedback loop?

# DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

Key Components					Q1			
Sources	Audience	Objectives	Method	Role	Jan	Feb	March	April

**How is my communication aligned?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How am I incorporating a feedback loop?** \_\_\_\_\_

# DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

Q2		Q3			Q4		
May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec