Developing & Maintaining Professional Communications Skills

The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

- George Bernard Shaw
Communications is no longer a “soft skill” – it’s a business function.

Why is any of this important?
What you said...

#1 How to: difficult people/conversations
#2 How to communicate with boss/administrator
#3 Working with different personalities/people
#4 General professional communication skills
#5 Time management skills
#6 Stress management skills
#7 (tied) What to do when advancement opportunities are non-existent; Software refresher – Excel, Outlook, new technology; Remote workplace discussion
Work from the inside >>> out

Staring with ourselves is important

- Strengths
- Support needed

Show your boss
Set the example

Assess skills
Be authentic

See similarities
See differences
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breaking our</th>
<th>Building our</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not looking when someone talks</td>
<td>“Looping” listening skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assumptions about others’ motives</td>
<td>Use many ways to communicate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immediately defensiveness</td>
<td>Build up ourselves/themselves</td>
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<tr>
<td>No barrier to others’ emotions</td>
<td>Give concise feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyper-work mode</td>
<td>Give accurate feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gossip/constant venting</td>
<td>Plan for time and stress</td>
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Be a communication leader

Set your own goal
Assessments: self & workplace
What is the ideal picture of work communication?

Invest in education
Formal: degrees, certifications
Self-taught: classes & more

Focus on trust building
Inspiring others
Reaching others
Listening & showing it
4 steps of effective communication

- Have a message
- Make it clear
- ID audience
- Assess their needs
- ID distributions
- Send sensibly
- Assess success
- Get feedback
Step 1: Clear message

• What is your action line?
• How concise are you?
• What acronyms are you using?
• Are you ready to say it?
Step 2: Know your audience

• What are they doing now?
• How do they learn?
• What backs up your message?
• Who else can help?
Step 3: Planned distribution

- What are their preferences?
- What are your resources?
- When does your message change?
- Are you overwhelming them?
Step 4: How did you do?

• Can you see the impact?
• Correction that keeps them in mind
• Can they talk through next steps?
• Are you keeping the focus?
Be prepared for change

Communication often shines the light on Gossip

Stagnation
Communicating appreciation

• Showing, doing and saying
• You can do it every day
• Go up and down the chain of command
Communicating improvements

• Be honest and clear
• Keep it focused
• A recap always helps
• Show them your dedication
Communicating with your boss

• You’re the boss of your communication
• Approach them in their way
• Show your expertise
Resources that might help!

Dealing with difficult/different people

- GOOD FORTUNE
- THE MOTH
- Talking to Strangers
- High Conflict

Episode 7: When People are Obstacles
Malcolm Gladwell
Amanda Ripley
Resources that might help!

Connection with your boss

- HBR IdeaCast
- Emotional Intelligence: INFLUENCE + PERSUASION
- HBR Guide to Your Professional Growth
- COLLECTIVE GENIUS: THE ART AND PRACTICE OF LEADING INNOVATION

Working with Colleagues: Should You Collaborate or Compete?
Resources that might help!

Education/support for self

https://idea.unt.edu/employee-resource-groups
About me

• UNT alumna (1st gen)
• Husband also an alum
• Journalist for 17 years
• Three cats, six chickens
• Former UNT spokesperson
• Communication nerd
• Let’s talk!

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