The Essential Elements
Effective Leadership Communication
Leadership Communication

All leaders communicate. It is the *power* of their communication that determines *whether they succeed or fail*.

Phil Harkins

*Powerful Conversations*
Key Management and Leadership Skills

Conceptual Skills: Least valuable at the entry level; more valuable at more senior levels

Relating Skills: Valuable across the managerial career span

Technical Skills: Most valuable at the entry level; less valuable at more senior levels

Source: James O’Rourke, Management Communication, 4th Edition
Communication Process

Persuade

Announce

Investment

Transform

Involvement

Explain
Effect on Receivers

- Agreement
- Commitment
- Awareness
- Understanding
Communication Barriers

Decoding, Sending, Feedback, Questioning, Receiving, Listening, Encoding.
Barriers to Communication

- Information Overload
- Information that Ignores Your Audience (culture, personality, agenda, attitude)
- Information in the Wrong Channel
- Poor Timing
- Delivery Problems (Incompetence/Anxiety)
Sending Barriers

Ambiguity and Mixed Messages

Assumptions that everyone understands the jargon, technical information, corporate culture lingo, field-specific terminology
Control Sending Barriers

- Ambiguity and Mixed Messages
- Assumptions
- Verbal/Nonverbal Disconnect
Sending Barriers

- Ambiguity and Mixed Messages
- Assumptions
- Verbal/Nonverbal Disconnect
Communication Mistakes Leaders Make

- Communicating without groundwork
- Lying by omission or commission
- Believing that words can overcome actions
- Ignoring the realities of power
- Mixing business and friendship communication

Communication Mistakes Managers Make

Confusing process with outcome

Using inappropriate forms of communication

Source: Stever Robbins, Seven Communication Mistakes Managers Make. HBR Feb. 2009
What you need to know

Recognize the ongoing challenge of communication.

Recognize the three qualities of leadership communication.

Understand the non-negotiable necessity of credibility and trust in effective communication.
What you need to do

✓ Establish credibility
✓ Make your thinking visible
✓ Gather information effectively
✓ Create a climate for clear communication
✓ Gain alignment and inspire commitment
Munter’s Five Considerations for Communication Strategy

- **Goal:** Who should send?
- **Person:** Who will receive?
- **People:** How should we deliver?
- **Message:** What should we say? How should we organize?
- **Culture:** What factors will affect the message?
- **Channel:** How should we deliver?
You as the Communicator
Leaders Use all Appeals to Influence Others

Aristotle’s Persuasive Appeals

- Appeal based on credibility
  - Ethos
    - Appeal based in logic
- Appeal to emotions
  - Pathos
- Appeal in logic
  - Logos

*Leadership Communication*, 4th edition by Deborah J. Barrett
Five Factors that Affect your Credibility

- Rank
  - Hierarchical power

- Goodwill
  - Track Record

- Expertise
  - Knowledge, Competence

- Image
  - Attractiveness

- Common Ground
  - Shared values, ideas, issues

Source: French, Raven & Kotter, social power theorists.
Developing and Maintaining Credibility

✓ Manage your initial credibility and your acquired credibility.

*French, Raven & Kotter, social power theorists.
Connecting With Your Audience

Understand your audience

Identify audience filters

Determine your approach
Ask Four Sets of Questions

- Who are they?
- What do they know?
- How do they feel?
- What will motivate them?

Source: Munter
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow: Creator of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
Answer Audience’s Three Implicit Questions

✓ What has changed?
✓ How does it affect me?
✓ What do you want me to do?

Source: Langford
Structuring Your Approach

✓ Use the appropriate style at the appropriate time vs. trying to find one “right style”

✓ Style decision depends on 2 key factors:
  ✓ Audience Involvement: Will this audience be more passive or more active as we communicate?
  ✓ Content Control: How much control will we need over the content of this communication?
Choosing an Appropriate Style

- **Tell** (Low Content Control, Low Audience Involvement)
- **Sell** (Low Content Control, High Audience Involvement)
- **Consult** (High Content Control, High Audience Involvement)
- **Join** (High Content Control, Low Audience Involvement)
Tell / Sell Styles . . .

✓ You have sufficient information; do not need others’ input; you want to control the content of the message.

✓ Result? Lower audience involvement and higher communicator control over content.

✓ Use the **tell** style to inform and the **sell** style to persuade.
Consult / Join Styles . . .

✓ You have insufficient information; need others’ input; want audience involvement.

✓ Result? Higher audience involvement and lower communicator control over content.

✓ Use the consult style to learn from the audience.

✓ Use the join style to collaborate with the audience.
What Would You DO?

Exercise
Left blank to accommodate teaching notes
Be Aware of Filters

- Personal Style
- Information Overload
- Communication Isolation
- Emotional State
- Needs/Motives/Agendas
- Resistance to Change
- Culture
- Lack of Common Ground
- Attitudes

Audience/Receiver
Be Aware of Filters

- Personal Style
- Attitudes
- Information Overload
- Communication Isolation
- Emotional State
- Needs/Motives/Agendas
- Resistance to Change
- Lack of Common Ground
- Culture
Be Aware of Filters

- Personal Style
  - Attitudes
  - Information Overload
  - Communication
  - Emotional State
  - Needs/Motives/Agendas
- Lack of Common Ground
- Culture
- Resistance to Change
Message and Channel Strategy

What should you say?

How should you structure?

Formal or informal?

Write or speak?

One-on-one or one-on-many?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pleased or interested</th>
<th>Displeased</th>
<th>Neutral or not interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start with main idea</td>
<td>Start with neutral statement</td>
<td>Start with Attention-getter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide details and explanation</td>
<td>Provide explanation</td>
<td>Introduce idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclude with positive closing</td>
<td>Conclude with ending off the bad news</td>
<td>Provide evidence of value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conclude with request for action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Direct Approach

✓ Improves comprehension; audience-centered; saves time; takes advantage of audience’s initial attentiveness.

✓ Use with:

✓ Non-sensitive messages with no emotional overtones

✓ Sensitive messages when:
  ✓ Audience’s bias is positive
  ✓ Audience is results-oriented
  ✓ Your credibility is high
Indirect Approach

✓ May soften resistance; arouse interest; present you as fair-minded; gives audience the chance to “buy into” solution.

✓ Use only when:
  ✓ Message is sensitive with emotional overtones
  ✓ Audience’s bias is negative and/or they’re analysis-oriented
  ✓ Your credibility is low
Meaning Conveyed By . . .

- Vocalics 35%
- Words 10%
- Body Language 55%

Source: Albert Mehrabian, *Silent Messages*
Vocalics Exercise

- *I* never said he stole the money.
- *I never* said he stole the money.
- *I never said* he stole the money.
- *I never said he* stole the money.
- *I never said he stole the* money.
- *I never said he stole the money.*

Source: Beverly Langford, Ph.D. LMA Communication, Inc.
Controlling Your Nonverbal Communication

- Synchronize with others
- Know commonly accepted meanings
How Leaders Gather Information
Listening and Asking Questions
How We Spend Our Communication Time

- Listening: 45%
- Talking: 30%
- Reading: 16%
- Writing: 9%

Ralph G. Nichols, Are You Listening?, p. 6-7, quoted in People Skills by Bolton
What Leaders Need to Know About Listening

1. Decide it’s important
2. Solicit others’ ideas and opinions
3. Pay attention to nonverbal behavior
4. Listen to the entire message before judging, refuting, or giving advice
Learn to Listen at Four Levels
Four Important Principles to Becoming a Great Listener

1. Focusing in a visible way
2. Sorting and compartmentalizing needs and wants
3. Recognizing the feeling as well as the content
4. Balancing inquiry, advocacy, and judgment

Source: Phil Harkins Powerful Conversations.
Three Key Listening Skills

- Attending
- Encouraging
- Following

Source: Mary Munter, Guide to Managerial Communication
Qualities of Effective Questions

Brief
- Ask one question at a time.

Clear
- State the question simply and clearly.

Focused
- The question should be about a single topic.

Relevant
- The audience should understand its importance.

Constructive
- State in a positive manner.

Neutral
- Avoid telegraphing how you want the audience to answer the question.
Know How to Ask Questions

State the point of the question.

Ask one question at a time.

Tell people what’s at stake.

Ask closed questions for agreement and open questions for information.

Keep body language encouraging.

Ask “why” questions with care.
Communication Role Play
Your Greatest Challenge

Recognize the critical nature of communication

Know that we can always get better
Your Task as a Leader

- Recognize and understand your strengths and weaknesses as a communicator
- Improve existing skills
- Develop new skills