



# ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS: **SET THE TONE FOR SUCCESS**

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Among the challenges facing businesses today is the need to understand that technology, communication, linguistics, access to high-speed travel, and the global interdependency of countries, cultures, and politics will be affected by diversification and interrelated markets. "The world economy is becoming more integrated than ever before." (Bateman 182-190)

Competent communications are essential for companies to succeed globally. Communication strategies must be both appropriate and effective with other companies, people, and markets to be successful. Companies are no longer islands unto themselves. Interdependency is a higher level than independence. (Covey 1989, 185)

By effectively and proactively structuring the communication styles of your organization and its leadership, companies can achieve a more harmonious culture for employees, engender loyalty among both employees and the public, and assert its values and ethics into the marketplace.

## Cultural Diversity, Perspective and Communication

Cultural diversity is often a factor in communication issues. Not understanding and being insensitive to cultural differences is no longer acceptable. More and more, cultural differences in the corporate world are being softened. As more women and minorities enter business and European American males become the smallest population in the workforce, it only makes sense that managers, leaders, communicators, politicians and organizations embrace diversity in business and attempt to understand its ramifications.

The key to a cohesive workforce is to communicate effectively to each employee or constituent. Eliminating all conflict is impossible. But if you analyze and attempt to understand language culture, then it is possible to find the source of conflict from diversity. Understanding cultural languages will enable you to connect with others better and manage more efficiently.

By using language effectively, we attempt to develop a relationship between words and what they represent. Unfortunately, predicting whether someone will receive the message the way we intended it is almost impossible. This is because everyone has their own perspective.

We develop individual perspective from the environment, social mores and cultural stereotypes. The goal of a diverse society is not to make everyone have the same perspective but to ensure that the knowledge and skills are available to manage positive conflict arising from diverse cultural perspectives. With principles at the core, every significant breakthrough is a result of a courageous break with the past. (Covey 1991, 61)

Interactive communication is an exchange of messages – oral, nonverbal, and written – among people to accomplish goals and objectives. The diverse backgrounds, experiences, education, styles, habits, and preferences of people mean that each person taking part in the communication process must listen and respond to the others considering this diversity.

“Shared meaning” is a mutual understanding that results when the sender and all intended receivers interpret the message in the same way. Communications errors, mistakes and interference can cause all or part of the communication process to fail, thus resulting in shared meaning at a lower level. We may, however, exchange and understand enough information so that senders and receivers can communicate functionally.

Listening supports the role of perception – which is the process of creating meaning based on experience – because message reception simultaneously depends on several factors including the accumulation of knowledge about people, objects and events (background). Everyone receives and interprets messages differently.

Perception is the process of creating meaning from experience. It is unlikely that two people will see the same thing the exact same way; however, this is a perceptual framework. Because of the variability of the perceptual framework, we can easily misinterpret messages or unconsciously rely on biased perceptions.

By attempting to put yourself in the shoes of the speaker, you can better understand the message being conveyed. Empathic understanding of the speaker, however, is never completely possible.

## Situational Knowledge Ties It All Together

Situational knowledge is gaining an understanding of how a communication event relates to the organizational culture as a whole; however, situational knowledge itself is not the basis for organizational improvement but for self improvement. Knowledge about a situation helps accomplish personal and organizational goals. The law of self-preservation places personal goals – based upon situational knowledge – above those of the organization. Situational knowledge can allow for better coordination among employees and management. In highly-structured organizational environments, however, the interface between those possessing knowledge and those capable of making decisions is often blocked by broken systems, structures, processes. (Covey 1990, 229-234)

The relationships among power, status and nonverbal communication are subtle but paramount to positive working relationships. Those who have power – the real and perceived authority to direct and influence – communicate nonverbally to reinforce their relative power with others. We must temper power, status and nonverbal communication cues – in favor of teamwork – for businesses to be globally linked and strategically successful.

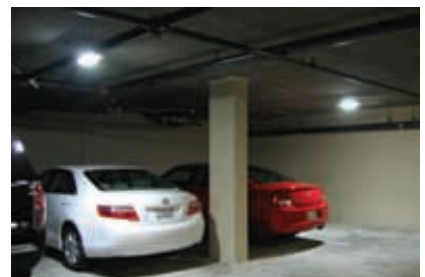
## Keys for Success: Goals, Knowledge, Communication and Anxiety Management

By understanding the four components of organizational communication – goal setting, situational knowledge, communication competence, and anxiety management – the effective communicator can extol personal areas of

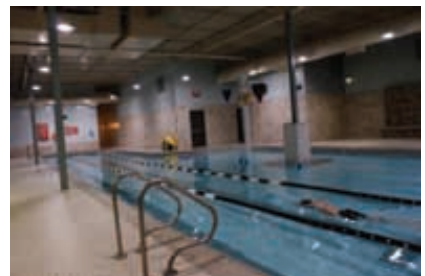
  
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proficiency and identify areas where improvements are necessary. The “strength’s theory” says focus on the strengths and manage the weaknesses. (Clifton, 19-37)

### At the Core: Values, Vision and Ethics

Vision, values, courage and ethics provide core elements of effective leaders and communicators. (Snyder, 18-24) If the organization’s values, vision and ethics are different from your own, no amount of personal growth, development, maturity or rewards is likely to enhance your career, ensure your promotional ability, or commit you to the organization.

Values are fundamental, enduring principles and ideas that people and organizations strongly believe and consider important. Difficult decisions, compromising situations and competing interests and ideas require the effective leader to align daily practices with his or her mission and personal values. (Blanchard, 1997, 39)

Ethics are based upon changing interpretations of social responsibility. “All ethical decisions are guided by the underlying values of the individual.” (Bateman, 138) People with high ethical standards will work for organizations that also maintain high ethical standards. Overall job satisfaction can be sustained by an individual in an organization that has philosophies and standards congruent with his or her own.

Effective communicators can control their listening skills and eliminate receiver

apprehension by building trust, promoting understanding, and empowering others. Trust results from the organization’s system of values and a strong commitment to ethical behavior. Understanding comes from empathic listening. Empowerment gives people the ability to think and act for themselves based upon guidelines held in place around the organizational vision and values. Covey calls this a win-win agreement. (Covey 1991, 192-194) As workers take initiative, creativity and productivity are increased. The cycle is self perpetuating. ■

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**2010 IPI  
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**When attending evening parties, get there early. That way a cluster of conversation builds up around you and you don't face the challenge of working your way into other clusters like you do if you arrive late.**

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