

ISB CTO

Week 21: Strategic Communication for Technology Leaders

Video 1: Introduction to Strategic Communication

- Effective leadership involves mastering strategic communication tailored to various audiences.
- Adapting communication styles for non-technical stakeholders, including C-suite executives and customers, is crucial.
- Networking, storytelling, and ethical communication are key skills for impactful leadership.
- Embracing change and preparing teams for it is a core leadership responsibility.
- Communication should drive action and create lasting impact across technical and non-technical groups.

Video 2: Mastering Networks

- In changing times, it is crucial to update your thinking and avoid adhering to yesterday's logic.
- The human brain is naturally inclined to sustain relationships with approximately 150 individuals, but we can train ourselves to expand this limit.
- Both sparse and dense networks are vital for innovation and implementation.
- Engaging with diverse ideas daily fosters creativity and new perspectives.
- Embracing the risk of learning and accepting alternative viewpoints is a pathway to personal and professional growth.

Video 3: Preparing for Change

- Leadership involves the pivotal role of preparing organisations for change, encompassing everything from anticipating shifts to gaining support for transformations.
- To overcome resistance, leaders must acknowledge that change disrupts established behaviour patterns, which may have served individuals well in their careers.
- Change often involves a temporary decline in performance before improvements are observed, making it tempting for individuals to revert to their comfort zones.
- Communicating change entails clearly stating what needs to change, detailing the current and desired states and specifying the new behaviours required for the transition.
- While some leaders prescribe "how" changes should be executed, astute leaders encourage team members to contribute to developing the strategies for change.
- The question of whether people will embrace change is a central challenge in leadership, one that requires a thoughtful approach and effective communication.

Video 4: Communicate for Action

- Effective change leadership requires addressing the 'what,' 'how' and 'why' of change.
- Starting with the 'why' is crucial, as it fosters motivation and understanding among team members.
- To communicate the 'why,' use various methods like verbal explanations, written documents, presentations or visuals.
- Engaging people's intellect and helping them understand the 'what' and 'why' is essential for creativity and learning agility.
- Learning agility enables individuals to adapt strategies when confronted with roadblocks.
- Talking to the heart, and motivating people to believe in and actively support change, is the next challenge in change leadership.

Video 5: Communicate for Impact

- Storytelling is a potent tool to engage the hearts of your team.
- Stories resonate with the emotional brain, driving much of our behaviour.
- All successful stories, regardless of their nature, share five key elements.
- Storytelling can be a powerful tool in business contexts but requires careful consideration and ethical use.

Video 6: Celebrate Ethics

- Storytelling is a fundamental tool for leaders to engage hearts and minds.
- Storytelling is a valuable skill for various leadership roles, from brand marketers to technical managers.
- Stories are powerful, and capable of shaping public perception and driving behavioural change.
- Leaders must consider the ethical implications of their stories to avoid manipulation or harm.
- Deviation from stated values and principles can erode trust and damage reputations.
- Effective storytelling involves practicing, refining and delivering stories consistently with passion and authenticity.

Video 7: The Art of Storytelling

- Storytelling can be a potent tool for driving change and inspiring action in a business context. It has a proven track record for engagement and influence.
- The structured approach includes defining the target group, establishing the enemy, articulating the struggle, defining the actions and depicting the picture of success.
- Personalisation and specificity in the struggle and actions make the storytelling more compelling.
- The choice of the enemy should evoke emotions that resonate with the audience.
- Ethical considerations should guide the use of storytelling in leadership and business contexts.

Video 8: Strategic Alliances and Negotiations

- Moving beyond transactional discussions to focus on strategic partnerships.
- Understanding business challenges leads to deeper collaboration.
- Empathy is essential in creating win-win outcomes.
- Cross-industry insights can drive strategic alliances.
- Small, low-cost pilots help initiate innovation.
- The CTO can influence broader business strategy, not just efficiency.
- A change in mindset and language is required for effective negotiations.
- These principles apply both within the company and with external partners.