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MODULE 2: Why influence?

“The two words ‘information’ and ‘communication’ are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting *through*.”

– Sydney Harris

What is a communication experience?

The communication experience includes:

- The Message, that’s what you say.
- The Messenger, that’s you, and how you come across.

What experience do you create? Is it one of information or influence?

Communication has the power to change the way your listener thinks or acts about your idea, topic and you. You create a communication experience as soon as you open up your mouth to speak.

Here’s the good news: Great communicators aren’t born. They are made.

Goals for the program

Our goals for you:

- Become aware of your habits and how others perceive you.
- Learn some tricks to boost your connection, rapport and likability with any audience.
- Learn a framework to organize your message of influence.
- Get outside your comfort zone.
- Have a growth mindset.

What counts in communicating?

The 3 Vs of Communication:

Verbal (the content of the message, the words you say): 7%

Vocal (the sound and tone of your voice): 38%

Visual (your observed behavior): 55%

An inconsistent message is when the words you say don’t match how you come across as you say them. When you have an inconsistent message, the visual and vocal block the verbal. People will believe the vocal and visual cues over the actual words you say.

Your objective is to create a consistent message across the Verbal, Vocal and Visual elements.

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MODULE 3: Behaviors of Trust: Connection

People judge quickly. How are they judging you?

Your challenge is to make sure their initial impressions are ones of connection and trust. You can earn trust through your behaviors, which are simply habits that can be changed.

Eye Communication is the number one behavioral skill because it either makes or breaks the connection with your audience. It shows you are interested and confident.

- Follow the 5-second rule. Maintain eye contact for five seconds with each listener. The same rule applies no matter how large the group.
- Treat your audience as a collection of individuals. Think of it as having one-on-one conversations with people who happen to be seated in a group.
- When you're in a virtual meeting, simply treat the camera as an audience member. If your entire audience is virtual, look directly at your webcam the whole time. TIP: Put a bright sticky note by the camera to draw your attention to it.
- Eye communication varies between countries and cultures. Always be sure to adjust to cultural norms.

Posture signals to your audience that you are open, engaged, and want to be there.

- Use the Ready Position: stand up straight, balance your weight evenly across the balls of your feet, feet hip-width apart, and lean forward, not back. Imagine a string pulling your head up to the ceiling.
- There's also a seated Ready Position: move to the front of your seat, sit up straight, rest your arms comfortably on the table, lean forward without putting weight on your elbows.

Gestures inject energy and add a sense of ownership and control. Just make sure they don't distract or take over your presentation!

- Learn your nervous gesture.
- Balance your hands working and resting. When they work, they work big. When they rest, they rest comfortably at your sides when standing or on the table when seated.
- Practice new gestures by matching them to your words.

Facial expression is the gatekeeper to likability.

- Warmth is the conduit of influence. A smile is the simplest way to add warmth to the experience. So, lighten up!
- Maintain a light expression, where you lift your cheeks and open up through your eyebrows.
- Your facial expression should match the content. Smile when communicating benefits and good news.

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MODULE 4: Behaviors of Trust: Credibility

We perceive credibility through confidence, focus and polish.

Pausing conveys credibility and allows you to:

- Eliminate filler words like um, uh, so, right, etc.
- Think. Pausing for just two seconds allows you to capture your thoughts or check your notes.
- Catch your breath.
- Add emphasis. Pausing adds drama and increases memorability.

Bonus Tip: Pausing also amps up your warmth, conveys a conversational tone and makes you easier to listen to.

Vocal Variety boosts credibility and keeps the attention of your listeners. The goal is vocal variety in volume, pitch and pace. Don't give your audience a chance to tune out by being flat, soft or monotone.

- To improve pitch, add variety by punching it up at points of emphasis.
- If you have an upswing (where the pitch is higher at the end of a sentence), end your sentences as statements, rather than questions.
- To improve volume, push your voice out, not up, when you speak.
- Keep your voice strong. Don't trail off at the end of sentences.

Push outside your comfort zone! There is a disparity between how we sound in our own heads and how we come across to others. Push yourself to overdo it, and don't let comfort be your guide. If it feels uncomfortable, you're probably on the right track.

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MODULE 5: From Information to Influence

The Decker Grid™ is designed to move your message from information to influence.

Begin with the Cornerstones to create focus. There are four steps.

1. Listeners are always the beginning.

Know your listeners:

- Who are they?
- Why are they here? What are they expecting from this message?
- What do they already know and feel about the subject?
- Are they data-driven or business-driven?
- What would make them challenge my message?
- What problem am I trying to solve? How can I help them?

Summarize your listener profile into three adjectives that best describe them (i.e., skeptical, budget-conscious, eager, concerned, siloed, etc.).

2. A Point of View (POV) focuses your message.

- Boil your message down to one phrase that signifies the way you want your listener to think/act.
- Your POV is the big idea, the lead of your story.
- A strong POV often starts with “It’s critical that we...” or “Now is the time to...”

3. Action Steps make your message concrete, and give logical next steps your listeners can take.

- General Action Steps invite your listeners to explore your message further. They can start with words like Consider, Imagine, Understand or Review.
- Specific Action Steps are timed, physical, and measurable. They include a date or deadline to hold your listeners accountable.

4. Benefits motivate your listeners to take action.

- Benefits should be specific to your listeners and answer the question “What’s in it for me?”
- Go back to how you described your listeners. Your benefits should address their concerns, goals and needs.

Complete the Decker Grid™

Add Key Points and Subpoints

Organize the information your listener needs to buy off on your POV, and take the action you’re requesting. Consider results, benchmarks, trends, opportunities, successes, challenges, recommendations, solutions, etc.

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MODULE 6: Strike a Chord

SHARPs are tools to create memorable and motivating messages. Add them throughout your message.

Stories

- Stories stick, numbers don't.
- Think of stories that are "heart stories" to elicit emotion. Personal stories create a head to heart connection.
- Use stories that support your key points.

Humor

- Take advantage of unplanned humor.
- Take your topic seriously, but take yourself lightly.

Analogies

- Analogies make the complex easy to understand.
- Use similes, analogies and metaphors.

References/Quotes

- Use quotes to lend third-party credibility to your message.
- Use references that have personal significance.

Pictures/Visuals

- Think beyond charts and graphs!
- Use compelling, simple images.
- Be big, bold and brilliant.

SHARPs are essential to creating an emotional connection between you and your listeners.