**Practicing Business Communication: Ball Corporation**

**Questions For Critical Thinking**

**ENGL 230, Week 4**

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1. How do you think a small margin for error affects communication on a project?

I think that a small margin for error would make communication extremely important on a project. Since everything has to be perfect, as is the case with Ball Aerospace and their work on the James Webb Space Telescope, there is absolutely no choice other than to be extremely confident in the overall project. The way you accomplish this is by effective communication, from all areas and aspects involved in the process. Everyone must double check and triple check that the specifications and standards are met accurately, and the chain of communication through every phase is imperative in reaching the end goal. Strong communication is the basis of accomplishing anything, and doing so helps eliminates any misinformation or misunderstanding; this minimizes the risk for error.

1. In what ways do you act differently in a face-to-face meeting than you do during a telephone conference call?

A face-to-face meeting provides a different set of opportunities for communication than are available in a conference call. In a face-to-face meeting, more interaction is possible thanks in large part to the opportunity to be hands on with the subject matter. You can also be more in depth whereas conference calls sometimes have to be more general in nature. Because of these factors, a person may act differently in a face-to-face meeting than during a conference call. In a telephone call you cannot perceive things like body language and other nonverbal communication. Because of the lack of these aspects, it is better to have a face-to-face meeting to ensure that everything is conveyed and understood properly. Personally, I relish the opportunity to have a face-to-face meeting because I feel like I can get down to the point and carry myself in a manner that cannot be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

1. Why is written communication in some situations (such as conveying specifications), while oral communication is essential in others (such as technology interchange transfers)?

Written communication is suitable when there are very specific standards and criteria to meet. Oral communication is essential in situations when you cannot afford for ideas or thoughts to get lost in translation. As indicated by this article, there are written guidelines and specifications the engineers need to follow precisely in order to make sure all the equipment is constructed properly in order for it to function. Ideas, however, and discussions about the project and its goals are better discussed orally in order for the flow of ideas to go back and forth. The written part is pretty non-negotiable and is set in stone, somewhat, so it is not open for interpretation by any means. Both of these styles of communication are important in their own right, but they each can truly shine and be effective when used in the proper situation such as described above.

1. What listening hurdles do you find yourself facing as you listen to others? How do you handle it when you believe someone you’re speaking to is not hearing what you say?

I think the biggest listening hurdle that I find when I am listening to others is reading too far into their emotions, feelings, or attitude and sometimes losing sight of the real message. I consider myself a very empathic listener, and sometimes this simply causes me to lose sight of what is really being said. Sometimes I hinge on the way someone said something, and it ends up bothering me or makes me question what was really meant, but in reality nothing was actually meant by it. There are certain situations where reading between the lines can be helpful, but there are others when thinking too far into something creates unrelated stresses or barriers in listening and communication. When I believe someone I am speaking to is not hearing what I say, I usually tend to respond by either stopping what I am saying as a means to indicate to them that I am waiting on them to be receptive, or depending on the nature of the conversation sometimes I just continue despite realizing this and leave it up to the listener to decipher on their own what was being said. If it’s important enough, the person usually ends up coming back to you to get the correct message again. This, I feel, can help them in a different way become a better listener because it can be embarrassing to have to keep coming back for instruction.