



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR TODAY'S LEADER

**RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR CLEAR DIRECT
COMMUNICATION**



EGADE Business School
Tecnológico de Monterrey

People usually want to be able to talk about problems, but we often do not know how to do so. To make this kind of conversation easier, we provide some recommendations to help you communicate clearly and directly.

1. Express your request in a clear direct manner.

When communication is filled with indirect statements and roundabout ways of saying things, it usually does not provide a good beginning for a relationship to be based on dialogue. Learn to express yourself clearly and keep in mind that it is possible to be both direct and respectful to someone at the same time.

Examples

"I want to talk to you about a service problem we have with client X".

If you are asked something you do not know the answer to, you should also be honest and direct:

"I don't have the answer, but I'll find out and get back to you before we leave today."

If interrupted, you can say something like:

"Excuse me, let me finish what I was saying; then, if you still have a question, I'll be happy to answer it."

2. Show respect and consideration for the person you are communicating with.

There is a difference between communicating directly and doing so abruptly. The difference implies respect for the person you are communicating with, as well as a validation of his or her feelings, individuality, and needs.

Polite phrases and recognition of the other person do not make the message less direct; on the contrary, they tend to reduce the probability of a negative reaction.

Example

"I realize it will be time consuming, but could you prepare a report on the history of our relationship with client X and present it on Friday at 3:00 at the sales meeting?"

3. Concentrate on the specifics.

People understand our messages easier if we are specific. Being specific implies speaking of events and facts instead of making judgment and evaluations. Observe the difference between these two kinds of expressions:

"We need a list with the characteristics of product X and the public it was created for, so that the publicity agency can prepare the right kind of campaign. This list needs to be ready by 5:00 this afternoon."

"The publicity agency doesn't know anything about product X because of your disorganization and lack of commitment. I hope you can prepare something useful this time."

Obviously people respond better to the first expression and also understand better what we are asking for. The second expression, full of generalities, evaluations, and accusations, tends to break down dialogue and make the other person unsure of what we're specifically asking for.

4. Explain your own point of view or feelings about the issue.

There are two recommendations for this point: establish what the situation is and what the effects are; and describe your feelings and what you want done. This will make the other person aware of the importance of what you're asking. Observe the following example of clear direct communication expressed in an e-mail:

Example

"Publicity campaigns for product X have taken the publicity agency more time than we planned because they don't understand the key concept of the product. This worries me because it is a very important product for our company and we have invested a lot of money, so we need a great publicity campaign. We have to provide the publicity agency a series of clear and complete inputs that will allow them to react quickly. We need to do this right away; the information needs to be ready by 5:00 this afternoon because the Sales manager has a meeting with the designers at that time."

5. Make conversation a true dialogue flowing in both directions.

The difference between a dialogue and a conference is that people can share their opinions and not just one person is talking. A good way to promote dialogue is by asking open questions.

Example

"What other data do you think would be important for planning a high impact campaign?"

As you can see, these 5 recommendations facilitate conversations with others and generate communication that is clearer and more direct.