



Can You Hear Me Now?

Effective Communication

Welcome

This workbook is for use during the Can You Hear Me Now? workshop. It is yours to keep, please feel free to write notes and other information you may find useful.

This workshop was developed primarily from the book "Effective Communication" written by Maureen Orey for the Association for Talent Development (ATD). All use of materials in this book were reprinted with permission as a subscription benefit of Skillport (Books 24x7).

I have also used activities and lessons that I found through other professional websites including:

<http://www.citehr.com>

<http://www.marin.edu/buscom/index.htm>

<http://n.ereserve.fiu.edu>

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/08/27/emails-only-please-10-reasons-phone-calls-are-a-waste-of-time/#754706de229c>

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/238385>

This version of the program is a shortened version. There is a there a three-hour, more comprehensive version which also includes body language available. If you would like to have this program delivered to your Court, please feel free to contact me.

My contact information is:

Kelly Clark, Training Coordinator
Human Resources Department
U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan
231 W. Lafayette
Detroit, MI 48226
313-234-5068
Kelly_Clark@mied.uscourts.gov



Choices

Use the spaces below to write the correct choice as they are read to you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____



Recognizing Barriers to Effective Communication

Recognizing barriers to effective communication is a first step in improving communication style. Do you recognize these barriers from your own personal and professional experience?

Encoding Barriers. The process of selecting and organizing symbols to represent a message requires skill and knowledge. Obstacles listed below can interfere with an effective message.

Lack of Sensitivity to Receiver	Recognizing the receiver's needs, status, knowledge of the subject, and language skills assists the sender in preparing a successful message. If the sender is angry, for example, an effective response may be just to listen to the person vent for a while.
Lack of Basic Communication Skills	The receiver is less likely to understand the message if the sender has trouble choosing the precise words needed and arranging those words in a grammatically-correct sentence. Or if the people trying to communicate speak different languages or dialects.
Insufficient Knowledge of the Subject	If the sender lacks specific information about something, the receiver will likely receive an unclear or mixed message. If you have ever assisted with the public, or if you're IT and had to troubleshoot an employee's computer problem, or assisted an attorney trying to use the CM/ECF system, you have probably experienced this. When the person who is having the difficulty doesn't have the knowledge or terminology to explain the problem it can be much more difficult to solve it.
Information Overload	If you receive a message with too much information, you may tend to put up a barrier because the amount of information is coming so fast that you may have difficulty comfortably interpreting that information. A document with little or no paragraph breaks is called a "wall of words" and readers who receive documents such as that can be overwhelmed and fail to understand the message.
Emotional Interference	An emotional individual may not be able to communicate well. If someone is angry, hostile, resentful, joyful, or fearful, that person may be too preoccupied with emotions to accurately compose the intended

	<p>message. It is always a good idea to wait until your emotions have leveled out before communicating any important information; especially if the emotion is anger. One suggestion is to write out your message and then don't send it right away. Wait 24 or 48 hours and then reevaluate the message. Most times you will find that after the initial emotion has left you can be much clearer in your message.</p>
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Transmitting Barriers. Things that get in the way of message transmission are sometimes called “noise.” Communication may be difficult because of noise and some of these problems:

Physical Distractions	<p>A bad cell phone connection or a noisy restaurant can destroy communication. If an email message or letter is not formatted properly, or if it contains grammatical and spelling errors, the receiver may not be able to concentrate on the message because the physical appearance of the letter or email is sloppy and unprofessional.</p>
Conflicting Messages	<p>Messages that cause a conflict in perception for the receiver may result in incomplete communication. For example, if a person constantly uses jargon or slang to communicate with someone from another country who has never heard such expressions, mixed messages are sure to result. Another example of conflicting messages might be if a supervisor requests a report immediately without giving the report writer enough time to gather the proper information. Does the report writer emphasize speed in writing the report, or accuracy in gathering the data?</p>
Channel Barriers	<p>If the sender chooses an inappropriate channel of communication, communication may cease. Detailed instructions presented over the telephone, for example, may be frustrating for both communicators. If you are on a computer technical support help line discussing a problem, it would be helpful for you to be sitting in front of a computer, as opposed to taking notes from the support staff and then returning to your computer station.</p>
Long Communication Chain	<p>The longer the communication chain, the greater the chance for error. If a message is passed through too many receivers, the message often becomes distorted. If a person starts a message at one end of a communication chain of ten people, for example, the message that eventually returns is usually liberally altered.</p>

Decoding Barriers. The communication cycle may break down at the receiving end for some of these reasons:

Lack of Interest	If a message reaches a reader who is not interested in the message, the reader may read the message hurriedly or listen to the message carelessly. Miscommunication may result in both cases.
Lack of Knowledge	If a receiver is unable to understand a message filled with technical information, communication will break down. Unless a computer user knows something about the Windows environment, for example, the user may have difficulty organizing files if given technical instructions.
Lack of Communication Skills	Those who have weak reading and listening skills make ineffective receivers. On the other hand, those who have a good professional vocabulary and who concentrate on listening, have less trouble hearing and interpreting good communication. Many people tune out the person speaking and mentally rehearse what they are going to say in return.
Emotional Distractions	If emotions interfere with the creation and transmission of a message, they can also disrupt reception. If you receive a report from your supervisor regarding proposed changes in work procedures and you do not particularly like your supervisor, you may have trouble even reading the report objectively. You may read, not objectively, but to find fault. You may misinterpret words and read negative impressions between the lines. Consequently, you are likely to misunderstand part or all of the report.
Physical Distractions	If a receiver of a communication works in an area with bright lights, glare on computer screens, loud noises, excessively hot or cold work spaces, or physical ailments, that receiver will probably experience communication breakdowns on a regular basis.

Responding Barriers. The communication cycle may be broken if feedback is unsuccessful.

No Provision for Feedback	Since communication is a two-way process, the sender must search for a means of getting a response from the receiver. If a team leader does not permit any interruptions nor questions while discussing projects, he may find that team members may not completely understand what they are to do. Face-to-face oral communication is considered the best type of communication since feedback can be both verbal and nonverbal. When two communicators are separated, care must be taken to ask for meaningful feedback.
Inadequate Feedback	Delayed or judgmental feedback can interfere with good communication. If your supervisor gives you instructions in long, compound-complex sentences without giving you a chance to speak, you may pretend to understand the instructions just so you can leave the stress of the conversation. Because you may have not fully understood the intended instructions, your performance may suffer.

Communication Styles Assessment

Picture a scenario you face in your job. It may be as a boss speaking to an employee who is having performance issues. Or it could be receiving constructive feedback from your boss. Circle the adjectives that most fit you in that situation. Select one per line and then write the number of the adjective in the blank to the right.

Humorous 3	Regimental 2	Concise 1	Concerned 4	
Focused on Outcome 1	Focused on steps 2	Excited 3	Apprehensive 4	
Aggressive 1	Talkative 3	Disciplined 2	Nurturing 4	
Non-confrontational 4	Schmoozer 3	Resistant 2	Assertive 1	
Innovative 1	Talented 2	Creative 3	Productive 4	
Driven 1	Enthusiastic 3	Absorbed 2	Seeking the peace 4	
Scattered 3	Structured 2	Multi-tasking 1	Helpful 4	
Analytical 2	Clear 1	Tolerant 4	Imaginative 2	
Prophetic 1	Logical 2	Resourceful 3	Practical 4	
Consistent 4	Heroic 1	Critical 2	Empathic 3	
Charismatic 3	Forceful 1	Friendly 4	Technical 2	
Encouraging 4	Independent 1	Intellectual 2	Light-hearted 3	
Likes short-term goals 2	Socializer 3	Likes long-term goals 4	Risk-taker 1	
Rule-breaker 1	Tests rules 3	Abides by rules 4	Upholds rules 2	
Explaining 2	Expecting 1	Supporting 4	Mediating 3	
Leading teams 1	Avoiding teams 2	Motivating teams 3	Seeking teams 4	
Leading by example 1	Sharing leadership 3	Avoiding leadership 4	Leading by necessity 2	
Overlooking others 1	Criticizing others 2	Understanding others 3	Promoting others 4	
Shy from drama 4	Ignore drama 1	Hate drama 2	Manage drama 3	
Tough 1	Contained 4	Questioning 2	Curious 3	
Likes physical challenge 1	Avoids conflict 3	Likes mental challenge 2	Avoids stress 4	
Avoids confrontation 4	Diffuses confrontation 3	Angered by confrontation 1	Energized by confrontation 2	

Scoring:

Count how many 1s, 2s, 3s, and 4s you had and put the total below:

Total 1s _____ Total 2s _____ Total 3s _____ Total 4s _____

Communication Styles Explanation

Take your totals for each number and enter them in the boxes under your score.

Scoring Interpretation

1 = Doer	2 = Thinker	3 = Influencer	4 = Connector
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Your score:

Doer Total:	Thinker Total:	Influencer Total:	Connector Total:
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Your high score demonstrates your strongest communication style, in that particular scenario. Your secondary score indicates your fall back or adaptive style or styles. There are strengths associated with each style as well as limitations.

Doers tend to be high achievers and leaders and drive necessary results. They also tend to be impatient and insensitive to others.

Thinkers tend to excel when they like their work and can think through all angles and contingencies. They can appear to be combative, critical and sarcastic.

Influencers can lighten up even the darkest of moments. They can be inspirational, understanding and encouraging. They can also be wishy-washy in their decision-making and seem impractical. They are often late on assignments they do not like.

Connectors are reliable team players who look after everyone in their "tribe." They are consistent and caring. They can also be stubborn and non-supportive of pushy people and what they judge to be impulsive ideas.

If you scored below a five on any style, be aware of how you treat others who demonstrate this style. You may have little patience or tolerance for people who tend toward these styles. Yet these are people you need around you to support your efforts. Do not alienate them. Instead, find ways to collaborate with them.

In the end, all the styles need to develop more tolerance for the other styles, and develop an appreciative point of view for what each style brings to the table. Diversity is the key to innovation and success.

Communication Styles Explained

Doer	
When communicating with a doer style	Will create tension or dissatisfaction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear, specific, brief and to the point. • Stick to business. • Be prepared to support your ideas and work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about things that are not relevant to the task or issue. • Being unprepared or incomplete. Avoiding or beating around the bush. • Appearing unsure or disorganized, but not asking for help.
Thinker	
When communicating with a thinker style	Will create tension or dissatisfaction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare your “case” in advance. Be prepared for a debate. • Stick to business. • Be accurate and realistic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being giddy, casual, informal, emotional or loud. • Pushing too hard for results or being unrealistic with deadlines. • Being disorganized or messy.
Influencer	
When communicating with an influencer style	Will create tension or dissatisfaction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a warm and friendly environment. Do little things to show you care. • Don’t deal with a lot of details (put them in writing). • Ask “feeling” questions to draw their opinions or comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being curt or cold. Cutting them off if they have something to say. • Controlling the conversation. Not allowing them to talk and express. • Focusing on facts and figures.
Connector	
When communicating with a connector style	Will create tension or dissatisfaction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with a personal comment to break the ice. • Present your case smoothly, non-threateningly. • Ask “how?” questions to draw their opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushing headlong into business. Creating tension. • Being domineering or demanding. • Forcing them to respond quickly to your ideas. • Demanding change.

5 C's and 1 L of Communication

Clear Communication

Use these tips to ensure you are communicating clearly:

- Construct effective sentences
- Create bullets and highlights for key information
- Use the right level of language for the audience
- Use precise and familiar words
- Check your accuracy

Concise Communication:

Saying what you have to say in the fewest words without sacrificing the other C attributes. A concise message is complete without being wordy, saving time for both you and the reader. Use these exercises to practice writing concisely. A concise message should omit not only unnecessary expressions but also irrelevant statements. Keep the following rules in mind:

- Stick to the purpose of the message.
- Delete irrelevant words and rambling sentences.
- Omit information obvious to the receiver; do not repeat at length what the reader already knows.
- Avoid long introductions, unnecessary explanations, excessive adjectives and prepositions, and pompous words.

Use Single Word substitutes for phrases whenever possible.	
Wordy:	At this point in time
Concise:	
Wordy:	Due to the fact that
Concise:	
Omit trite, unnecessary expressions.	
Wordy:	Please be advised that your request is being reviewed.
Concise:	
Wordy:	Enclosed, please find my budget report.
Concise:	
Wordy:	Please note that your vacation request is overdue.
Concise:	
Eliminate unnecessary prepositional phrases	
Wordy:	For your information, the meeting will be held on May 14
Concise:	
Wordy:	In most cases, the date of the purchase order is indicated in the upper right hand corner.
Concise:	

Complete Information

As important as it is to be concise in your messages, you don't want to leave out important or required information. It is sometimes difficult to strike a balance between too much and not enough information. To help you include all necessary information, stick to the following:



Correct Information

Make sure your message is accurate, logical, and orderly. Consider the best order to introduce the information. Check all of the information and facts for accuracy (including spelling and grammar). Ensure the flow and tone of the message is consistent.

Use this tool for future documents as a reference to help you make sure your message is correct:

- Are all key stakeholders mentioned properly in the document?
- Are the names and titles spelled correctly?
- Have the proper dates and times or deadlines been noted accurately?
- If a location is relevant to this message, has it been noted correctly?
- Have you tested web links to make sure they link to the correct information?
- Are all relevant documents attached?
- Have you run spell check and grammar check?
- If needed, have the appropriate stakeholders signed off on this communication?
- Are you addressing it to the correct email addresses (if relevant)?
- If replying to an email, are you replying to all? Or just the sender?



Courteous Information

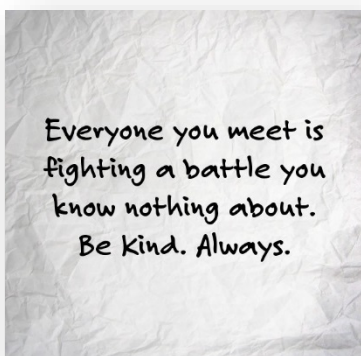
When sending a message via mail, email, telephone, or in-person it is important to show proper courtesy to your reader. **Try to put yourself in your reader's shoes. How will your reader use this information? How might it be interpreted?** If the message is in writing, is the tone positive?

If you need to say no to a request, try to emphasize what you *can* do. For example, an employee has asked for vacation time approval, but you can't allow it at the time they are asking. Try to include an alternate time that would be better.

Don't be afraid to apologize if the situation requires it. It's okay to say, "I apologize for the late response..." or "I'm sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused." These statements show your reader that you respect them and their time and efforts.

Always use expressions that show respect. Even if you personally don't get along with the recipient of your message, respect is a requirement in a business setting. Let your personal differences go and focus on the work and the business of the court. If you need to address something of a personal nature, it's best to do that face to face, otherwise it may come across much differently and negatively in writing.

Make sure when you are requesting that someone respond back to your message that they have all your contact information. Don't rely on a graphic signature block in your email, as some email clients will not display that information. Even if you know your reader knows how to reach you, provide it anyway as a courtesy.



When you are the recipient

Remember that when you receive a message via email, letter, text, or instant messenger the tone of that message may not be what it seems. **Try not to jump to the negative conclusions.** Give the sender the benefit of the doubt.

Even when you are speaking to someone face to face or over the phone, and you sense hostility or negativity from the other person, try not to take it personally. **Everyone has different stressors and other events influencing them and their bad attitude may have nothing to do with you.** However if you see a pattern, try to address it in a non-confrontational manner to see what the problem may be.



Active Listening

There are five key active listening techniques that help you ensure that you hear the other person and the other person knows you are hearing what they say.

1. Pay Attention

Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also “speaks” loudly.

- Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Don’t mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors.
- Pay attention to the speaker’s body language.

2. Show that you’re listening

Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.

- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and uh huh.



3. Provide feedback

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. “What I’m hearing is,” and “sounds like you are saying,” are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. “What do you mean when you say...?” Or, “Is this what you mean?”
- Summarize the speaker’s comments periodically.

4. Defer judgment

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
- Don’t interrupt with counter arguments.

5. Respond appropriately

Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.

- Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person in a way that you think he or she would want to be treated.

10 Tips to Better Conversations

By Celeste Headlee

1. **Don't multi-task:** Be present in that moment.
2. **Don't pontificate:** Be open to feedback. Enter every conversation assuming you have something to learn.
3. **Use open ended questions:** who?, what?, when?, where?, why?, and how?
4. **Go with the flow:** Don't let the thoughts and ideas that enter your mind prevent you from listening. Let them go until it is your turn to speak.
5. **If you don't know, say that you don't know:** Talk should not be cheap.
6. **Don't equate your experience with theirs:** All experiences are individual. It is not about you.
7. **Try not to repeat yourself:** It's condescending and boring.
8. **Stay out of the weeds:** People don't care about the names, dates, and other details, they care about you.
9. **Listen:** Listening is the number one most important skill you can develop.
10. **Be brief.**

"There is no reason to learn how to show you're paying attention, if you are in fact, paying attention."

"Go out, talk to people, listen to people, and most importantly, be prepared to be amazed."

~Celeste Headlee

**No man ever
listened himself
out of a job.**

Calvin Coolidge

QuoteAddicts

Methods of Communication

In this day and age there are many ways for people to communicate, which means there are even more ways for people to miscommunicate. Here are some pros and cons for the different methods of communication. Ultimately it is up to you to decide the appropriate channel for the situation; but considering these details may help you make the best decision.

Phone Calls	
Benefits	Drawbacks
More personal	Demands an immediate response
Promotes empathy	Can't go back and review a phone call
People listen better than they read	No visual cues
Demands an immediate response	Kills productivity
Power of the pause and tone	Requires small talk
Emails	
Benefits	Drawbacks
Can be sent any time day or night	Less personal
Creates an historical record	Tone can be misconstrued
Can be sent to multiple recipients	People don't always read it all
Allows for attachments	Can't read the vocal or physical cues of the recipient to judge their reaction
Gives recipient time to respond	Can be sent to the wrong person or persons, and be intercepted
Face to Face	
Benefits	Drawbacks
Most personal	Sometimes too personal
Best way to communicate effectively	If not prepared, can get off track of purpose
Can address multiple people at the same time	Takes time away from other tasks
Can read vocal and physical cues	Vocal and physical cues can throw off the message
Immediate feedback/response	May force people to provide an answer or feedback before they are prepared
Instant Messenger	
Benefits	Drawbacks
Casual by nature	Can be too casual
Can get a quick response	Can get a response that is not fully thought out
Can send to multiple recipients	Can be disruptive to the recipient(s)
Allows for attachments	Don't know who might see the message
Emoticons	Can promote idle chit chat reducing productivity

Reflection and Action Plan

Now that we have covered the objectives of this workshop, use the spaces below to develop an action plan that will help to put what you've learned into your everyday life both at home and at work.

What was the most impactful idea you learned today? What will you do differently as a result of this class?

Action Planning	
What behaviors do you plan to . . .	
Start?	
Stop?	
Continue?	