



SAMPLE

September/04

Please note that this sample is geared specifically to those in a Manager or Supervisory position.

COMMUNICATION

BEHAVIOURS

- *Identifies the needs of the audience prior to a presentation in order to adjust the communication approach, e.g., language, tone, content, terminology, depth of detail, etc., according to the comprehension level of the audience.*
- *Keeps all employees informed of important events and information through a variety of methods, including e-mail, one-on-one/group/departmental meetings, memos, teleconferencing, etc.*
- *Interacts with people openly and directly.*
- *Encourages others to express their views openly and honestly, even contrary ones.*
- *Keeps Manager/Director up-to-date on potential problems, as well as significant problems from the past that were effectively resolved, and recommends solutions.*
- *Communicates the corporate vision and objectives to direct reports on a regular basis, enabling them to understand how individual and team goals move the organization towards its vision.*



ON-THE JOB ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER...

✓ *Listening effectively* is critical for effective communication. Basic listening techniques which need to be demonstrated *consistently and regularly* include:

- Paying attention to verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Asking open-ended and probing questions to ensure complete understanding of what is being said.
- Paraphrasing to ensure complete understanding of what is being said
- Using appropriate body language, such as relaxed open posture, maintaining eye contact (but be careful not to stare!), nodding to indicate interest in what is being said and to let your partner know you are listening and understand what they are saying, facing the speaker directly, etc.
- Allowing for occasional silence. Please note that while (for some of us more than others) silence may feel uncomfortable, it plays a very important role in communication. Silence provides time to for both parties to think about is being said, and to consider what to say next as well as how to respond.
- Minimizing distractions, such as telephone calls, interruptions by others, etc.
- Keeping in mind the sequence of effective listening: hear, understand, and respond.

Over the next few weeks, pay attention to how often you demonstrate each the behaviours listed above. Which of these behaviours are easy for you to do, and which are more difficult? Then, make a conscious attempt to demonstrate those behaviours you have identified as being more difficult than others. To assess how well you are able to do this, ask your manager, as well as trusted friends and colleagues, for their input. Ask them how well they feel you are demonstrating the behaviours listed above, and to let you know if and when they see any change/improvement in your listening behaviour.

✓ Over the next little while, keep track of how much time you spend listening as opposed to speaking. In particular, consider how much you *listen* as opposed to *talk* when trying to influence others to your point of view, or when you disagree with another's point of view, as these are generally situations where we do more talking than listening.

Important facts about listening to keep in mind are:

- Regardless of the situation, careful listening will help you achieve your goals and get your point across more effectively.
- Whenever you find yourself talking during an interaction more than 50% of the time, chances are you are not listening enough!
- To improve your listening skills, make a conscious attempt to demonstrate the behaviours outlined above.

✓ Consider why listening is such a critical skill in order to be to be effective and successful on-the-job. Make a list of these reasons, which will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Building relationships and working well with others is essential to attaining professional and personal objectives and goals
- Listening helps create and sustain effective working relationships

✓ After your next meeting or conversation, use the following criteria to assess how well you listened. Did you:

- Interrupt?
- Feel impatient while the other person was talking?
- Find the speaker had to occasionally (or often) correct your interpretation of what he or she said?
- Give any indication (verbally or non-verbally) that you were bored with the conversation?
- Talk more than listen?
- Find yourself thinking more about what you wanted to say next instead of thinking about and considering what is being said?
- Remember more about what you said than about what anyone else said?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are probably not listening as well as you could. Remember that you are not listening effectively, you are likely missing out on useful information and ideas that could help make you more successful on-the job and in your personal life.

✓ Reasons you may not be listening to others as well as you should be include:

- **Not** scheduling enough time for the conversation.
- **Not** making enough of an effort to facilitate and/or participate in a conversation where everyone feels valued and their opinions are respected
- Disregarding what others are saying due to:
 - **Not** respecting and/or liking the individual who you are talking to
 - **Not** thinking the person who you are talking to is interesting enough, bright enough, or worthy of paying close attention to.
 - **Not** listening to what another person is saying because you think you know what he or she is going to say before it is actually said.

Whenever you anticipate having to deal with any of the listening obstacles listed above, figure out *beforehand* exactly what you are going to do to ensure you do not let these obstacles impair listening abilities.

- ✓ Particularly when communicating complex information, keep the following in mind:
 - Your communication style and the message you are trying to get across are *equally important*. You need to attend to both in order to be a successful communicator.
 - You need to use clear and simple language. “Wordiness,” “jargon” and using words that your audience may not understand is not impressive to others but instead, can obscure the message and distract and/or annoy your audience.
 - Keep in mind the interests and goals of those with whom you are communicating, not just your own!

- ✓ When someone expresses a viewpoint you disagree with, respond by:
 - Waiting until the other person has finished speaking, and then paraphrase what was said to make sure you fully understand
 - Asking for whatever additional information might be useful to help you better understanding the other person’s point of view.
 - Initially identifying the points you agree with, and then *calmly and objectively* identifying the points you disagree with.
 - Explaining simply yet in as much detail as is necessary the reasons why you disagree with them.
 - Never labeling the opinion of someone else as “right” or “wrong.”
 - Asking for their ideas as to how to best resolve this difference of opinion.

- ✓ Communicating *openly and regularly* is an essential leadership skill. Consider the following to determine how good a communicator you are. To what extent do you:
 - Share information openly without others having to ask, including with your own team members as well as individuals from other areas within the organization? What strategies do you use to ensure you maintain open communication with all?
 - Avoid sharing information and do so only when *not doing so* might be personally detrimental, i.e., when you have been specifically asked by your manager to do so.
 - Regularly ask others for feedback on your communication style and skills, including from colleagues whom you may not get along well with and therefore, who may not provide you with as positive feedback you would like/feel you deserve?
 - Solicit information and input from a variety of individuals, including your direct reports, your colleagues, your manager and your clients, in order to be the best communicator you can be?
 - Encourage and in fact welcome discussion of difficult or controversial issues?

- Consistently demonstrate excellent listening skills?
- Make use of existing communication systems within your department/organization that encourage an open exchange of ideas and information, and look for ways to enhance/perfect these systems?

Based on your responses to the questions listed above, create a personal communication action plan to help you to better communicate with your staff, clients, colleagues, etc. Share this plan with your manager to get his or her input, and schedule regular meetings to discuss your progress towards achieving your action plan goals and objectives, including obstacles you are running into and successes you have enjoyed.

✓ Make a conscious attempt to demonstrate the following fundamental communication skills at all times:

- Ensure your direct reports, your supervisor and your colleagues across the organization are provided with whatever information they require in order to do their jobs well *(Consider the extent to which you currently do this and the strategies you use to regularly and openly communicate information to others.)*
- Make use of different communication tools and styles, and use them accordingly given the differing needs and sensitivities of others with whom you are working. *(Consider how often and how well you currently do this)*
- Prior to making a presentation, identify the needs of the audience beforehand so that you can adjust your communication approach accordingly. *(Consider how often and how well you currently do this, and what the outcome was on those occasions where you skipped this important step.)*
- When you disagree with someone, make sure to do so in a manner that is neither intimidating or belittling. *(Ask others you trust how well you do this. Explain that their honest feedback is necessary for your growth and development. Reinforce that they must tell you what you need to hear, not what they think you want to hear!)*
- Make sure you fully understand what is being said to you before responding. *(Ask others you trust how well you do this. Explain that their honest feedback is necessary for your growth and development. Reinforce that they must tell you what you need to hear, not what they think you want to hear!)*
- Communicate regularly and sensitively with others whose culture or background is different from yours. *(Consider how sensitive you are to others, particularly those with a different background (cultural and otherwise) than your own. Is there anything you can do to enhance the extent and degree to which you communicate with others from different cultural groups to create an inclusive and harmonious workplace? Do you focus on similarities, while simultaneously recognizing and appreciating the differences, of all those with whom you work?*

✓ As a leader within the organization, you are responsible for creating effective and open channels of communication between you and your direct reports, you and your supervisor, and across the organization.

- What does “effective and open channels of communication” mean to you, and how can you help create them within your organization? How do you think creating these channels of communication will impact your success as a manager, your team’s success and the success of the organization as a whole?

- Exactly how can you go about creating “effective and open channels of communication?” Examples of how you can go about doing this include:

→ Meeting with your supervisor to discuss the role he or she feels communication should play in your current position.

→ Asking your direct reports, your supervisor and others in the organization for feedback about your ability to foster open communication, including specific input on what they feel you are doing well, and where they feel you could improve.

- The following are examples of ways that you can create a work environment within your team where there is ongoing sharing of information within your team. Can you think of any more?

→ Establish an open-door policy. *For example, set aside regular blocks of time during each week where employees are encouraged to drop by your office to discuss any concerns, issues, etc., they may have.*

→ Set aside a specific amount of time during each regularly scheduled meeting with your staff to discuss communication issues, such as what is working and what is not, and suggested changes for improving communication within the team and within the organization.

→ Develop a mechanism to communicate key organizational information, including the corporate vision, to your direct reports on a regular basis. *This suggestion is based on the fact that employees who are kept up-to date and informed about what is happening within their organization feel more involved and valued, which leads to increased job satisfaction. In addition, when employees understand how their individual objectives fit into the corporate vision and corporate objectives, they are much more likely to be motivated to effectively meet their own goals.*

- Never assume your direct reports understand the reasons why a particular organizational decision has been made. Accordingly, you need to explain exactly why a decision has been made and point out the implications, both positive and negative. Make sure to link the decision made to the goals of your department, the work of other groups, and to the organization's broader vision and strategic priorities.
- Insist on a work unit where everyone is responsible for keeping others well informed.
- Communicate proactively and openly with your direct reports, particularly during periods of change. This will minimize the likelihood of speculation and rumours, which is likely to occur when not enough information is provided.
- When significant change is about to take place, keep your employees informed at every stage of the process:
 - *In advance* to help prepare them for the change
 - *When the change is officially announced*
 - *During the implementation process*
 - *Following the change process*

While at first glance you may feel the last step is unnecessary, it is a critical one as it lets you know how your employees have been impacted (positively and/or negatively) by the change. You can then take action based on what you find out.

- ✓ Keep a log of situations where you felt you communicated information and ideas clearly and concisely to your employees. Review the log and ask for input from others.
- ✓ Keep a log of situations where you felt you did *not* communicate information and ideas clearly and concisely to your employees. Review the log and ask for input from others.
- ✓ Identify a client or team member whom you feel would benefit from careful listening, e.g., a new client or team member who is not performing to his or her potential. Create an opportunity to provide this individual with the special assistance they require, and then ask for feedback from this client as to how well they felt you listened to them and responded to their needs.

OTHER RESOURCES WHICH CAN HELP...



READ

Presenting to Win: The Art of Telling Your Story

Jerry Weissman, Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2003

An excellent book to assist with presentation skills

Mars and Venus in the Workplace

John Gray, HarperCollins, 2001

Gray covers a variety of situations typical on the job, from solving revenue problems to negotiating a raise, from both a male and female perspective.

Nonverbal Communication in the Workplace

Patrick Miller, Patrick W. Miller and Associates, 2000

Learn about nonverbal messages that take place between a supervisor and employees in the workplace, including facial expressions, eyes, vocal intonation, touching, body movements and postures, use of space, and dress.

Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together: A Pioneering Approach to Communicating in Business and in Life

William Isaacs, Doubleday, 1999

Learn to embrace different points of view to “think together” and bridge communication gaps.

Wake 'Em Up! : How to Use Humor & Other Professional Techniques to Create Alarmingly Good Business Presentations

Thomas Antion, Anchor Pub, 1999

Another excellent book for perfecting your presentation skills.

From Debate to Dialogue: Using the Understanding Process to Transform Our Conversations, by Deborah L. Flick, Ph.D (Orchid Publications, 1998)

This book outlines which will show you how to move from debate into dialogue about any issue, especially difficult or controversial ones.

Communication Skills Profile

Elena Tosca, Jossey-Bass, 1997

Learn all the skills for effective communication, including how to hear, understand, and listen to others.

Learning to Lead

Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith, Perseus Press, 1997

The authors assert that leaders are made and not born, and that leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential.

Write to the Point: Effective Communication in the Workplace

Michael B. Goodman, Prentice Hall, 1996

Learn all the skills to be an effective writer, including brainstorming techniques, word choice, audience analysis, grammar, sentence and paragraph construction, illustrations and organization.

How to Talk to Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere: The Secrets to Good Communication, Larry King, Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1995

Learn how to start a conversation, give speeches and presentations, improve listening and communication skills, put people at ease, and discover the key to effective business meetings.

Communicate to Win: 12 Key Points for Success

Heinz Golmen, Northern Typesetting Co. Ltd., 1995

This book presents a 12-point plan for communication success, with a chapter devoted to each rule.

Messages: The Communication Skills Book

Mathew McKay, Martha Davis and Patrick Fanning, New Harbinger, 1995

This book gathers the most essential communication skills into one volume, and provides many examples and exercises.

Listening: The Forgotten Skill: A Self-Teaching Guide

Madelyn Burley-Allan, John Wiley and Sons, 1995

Learn how to acquire productive listening skills that will help you professionally, socially, and personally.

WATCH



INTERNATIONAL TELE-FILM, (1-800-668-0749) URL: <http://www.itf.ca/>
This company offers a number of films dealing with *Communication*, including:

Leading with Persuasion

This 20-minute video demonstrates the process of effective persuasion, which they assert is not about winning, but about making sure all ideas get presented in the best possible light.

THE RICHARDSON/MCKAY TRAINING SOLUTION (1-888-281-8038)
<http://www.trainingabc.com/>

This company offers over 3000 training videos, many dealing with *Communication*, including:

Breakthrough Listening

Viewers will learn that there is no such thing as an objective listener—listening is interpretative. They also will learn: everyone has a habitual way of listening and observing; power and position can be barriers to effective listening; mood changes our listening; listening changes our mood; and listening for other people's concerns alerts us to new opportunities.

FORMAVISION (+33 (0) 1 47.08.12.12) URL: <http://www.formavision.com>

This company offers a variety of English and French training videos, including a series of *Communication* videos, including:

Communicating Non-Defensively

Learn techniques for understanding silent signals, such as how to: read body language and tone of voice; recognize contradictions between words and physical actions; interpret culturally influenced signals; and more.

ENTERPRISE MEDIA (1-800-423-6021) URL: <http://www.enterprisemedia.com/index.html>

This company offers a wide variety of films related to the development of behaviours related to this competency, most of which are listed under the *Communication, Leadership and Listening* categories.

ATTEND COURSES AND WORKSHOPS



(Current as of September/04)

The following are recommended **public** programs designed specifically to enhance *Communication* skills. If you would like to know more details about any of the programs listed, simply log onto the web site by clicking the link.

For information about our **internal** programs related to *Communication*, please access our intranet and/or contact your Human Resources Representative.

External Programs:

MCLUHAN & DAVIES, Toronto, 416-928-3131

<http://www.mcluhananddavies.com/>

This organization offers a number of quality programs geared to improving communication (written and presentation) skills. In particular, check out:

- Think on Your Feet
- Wavelengths
- Clarity Mountain
- The Skilled Presenter.

People Skills, RIDGE ASSOCIATES, 315-655-3393

URL: <http://www.ridge.com>

This seminar teaches the skills involved in listening, reaching agreement, confronting and managing conflict. Private coaching in instant-reply video session helps participants develop their skills and monitor their progress.

CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP, Colorado Springs, CO, 336-545-2810 URL:

<http://www.ccl.org/programs/>

This organization offers a number of high-quality leadership development programs across the United States and in Europe, many of which will assist in the development of *communication* skills.

NTL INSTITUTE, Alexandra, Virginia, 1-800-777-5227 or 703-548-1500
URL: <http://www.ntl.org/training.html>

This organization offers a variety of unique, experiential learning programs in major US cities. Their website provides a complete list of leadership development programs geared to managers at all levels of the organization, many of which will assist in the development of *communication* skills.

CAREER TRACK, 1-800-780-8476
URL: <http://www.careertrack.com/index.asp>

This organization provides a variety of seminars, tapes, CD ROMs and on-line courses. Examples of some of their public seminars addressing *Communication* are:

How to Become a Great Communicator

Experts agree that your professional success depends primarily on human relation skills. To see the truth in this, just look around you. It is not necessarily the technical skills, hard knowledge, or intelligence that makes "fast-track" professionals super-effective in their jobs. Many times, it is superior skill in handling people that propels careers, boosts productivity, and ensures job satisfaction.

Speak with Confidence and Clarity

Dynamic presenting and speaking are not strictly for talented "naturals." There are known, specific methods and strategies, and you can learn and practice them. This seminar will teach you how to stand up with confidence and skill!

THE NIAGARA INSTITUTE, Niagara, Ontario 1-800-663-7305
URL: <http://www.niagarainstitute.com>

This organization offers a variety of programs geared to mid and senior managers. One program in particular which addresses *communication* issues is:

Working With Others

In this three day program, managers learn numerous techniques to help them improve their leadership and management skills.

WATERLOO MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CENTRE, 1-800-265-9726
<http://www.watmec.com/2003/PUBLIC/publicSet.asp>

This educational institution offers a number of high quality programs geared specifically to managers and supervisors, many of which will assist in the development of *communication* skills. In particular, check out workshops listed under *Communications*, as well as under *Management* and *Supervision*.

SCHULICH BUSINESS SCHOOL, York University, 416-736-5079

URL: <http://www.schulich.yorku.ca/ssb-extra/ded.nsf/public+seminars+/-conferences/alphabetically>

The Business School offers a variety of programs geared to mid and senior managers, many of which address *communication*, including:

Successfully Managing People

This seminar has been designed to allow managers to develop new leadership and behaviour styles which will accommodate our changing environment. We will examine current effective managerial behaviour and extract principles which we can utilize to improve our personal performance. Improving interpersonal, communication and managerial skills are primary thrusts of the seminar.

CANADIAN MANAGEMENT CENTRE, Toronto, 416-214-5678

<http://www.cmcamai.org/reg/index.asp?sid=0>

This organization offers a wide variety of high-quality programs geared to mid and senior managers. To improve *communication* skills, check out the following programs:

- Communication Skills Program
- General Management Program
- The Management Course (offered in four separate one-week sessions, and covers a variety of topics, including *Communicating for Results*)

PADGETT THOMPSON

<http://www.tregistry.com/ama.htm>

This organization offers a variety of seminars that are particularly useful for new supervisors and managers. In particular, check out programs listed under their *Communication Skills Program*. Examples of programs addressing communication are:

How To Be a Super Communicator

In just one day, learn how to get support from employees and coworkers, project a confident self-image, and master the key communication skills that will influence the rate at which your career grows. The result will be better relationships with key people and enhanced leadership potential, and the ability to project poise and power in every situation.

How To Speak And Think On Your Feet With Confidence

This workshop is chock full of face-saving techniques that will make any business presentation a whole lot easier on your nerves. Learn powerful skills and solid strategies for making excellent presentations without an excessive amount of preparation time.

AMERICAN PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY CENTER, 1-800-776-9676

URL: <http://www.apqc.org/portal/apqc/site/content?docid=109514>

This organization offers the following program addressing *communication* skills:

Storytelling: The Art of Effectively Communicating Knowledge Throughout Your Organization,

This course focuses on the use of storytelling to effectively communicate knowledge and associated learning in organizations.

MICA, 1-888-448-4718,

URL: <http://www.micaworld.com/Default.aspx>

This organization, with offices in 5 major cities (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Chicago and New York), offers a wide variety of workshops addressing *communication*. Look under their *Communication and Persuasion* category for a detailed description of each workshop.