

The last Module examined communication in general skills and discussed *the WHY*.



*Module 7 discusses the characteristics of effective communication and the **WHAT**.*

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## **Module 7**

### **Effective Communication, The What**

**Berlitz**  
**Global Leadership Training and Language Education Company**

**Objectives**

- Define effective communication.
- Make the connection between organizational communication and interpersonal communication.
- Identify characteristics of effective communicators in our society and in our organization.

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## Wikipedia Definitions of Communication

- Two-way sharing of messages through various mediums
- Sharing meaning through the use of signs
- A prescribed collective performance that is symbolically meaningful to the participants



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## Wikipedia Definitions of Communication

- Expression, interaction, and influence; how the interaction of people causes and affects communication; how it is mediated by psychological variables that cause behavior, including emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and personality
- Participation in a common culture and society; shared patterns of action and meaning that make communication possible
- Sharing messages between two people



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*Communication is what the listener does.*

Peter Drucker  
Management Author and  
Consultant



George Conner, PE  
Deputy Director, Operations  
Communication

## Communication: Three Primary Steps

1. **Thought:** Information exists in the mind of the sender. This can be a concept, an idea, information, or a feeling.
2. **Encoding:** A message is sent to a receiver in words or other symbols.
3. **Decoding:** The receiver translates the words or symbols into a concept or format that can be understood.

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## Effective Communication Happens...

...when the sender effectively encodes thoughts into a ~~well-~~intended message that is received by the **intended** “audience” in a manner that can be understood.

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## What is communication?

**It is HARD.**

The wonder is that  
we ever truly communicate at all!



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## Communication Breakdown

At an organizational or one-on-one level, the breakdown often comes when leaders do not possess interpersonal relationship skills or have problems with them.



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## Organizational Communication

- Honesty
- Empathy
- Courage
- Safety
- Intellectual Rigor
- Transparency



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## Organizational Communication

### Honesty

Successful companies tell the truth, all the time.



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## Organizational Communication

### Empathy

Healthy organizations have respect for teams' and others' views, positions (place in life and in the organization), feelings, and understanding.

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## Organizational Communication

### Courage

Strong organizations talk about the difficult things. How an organization deals with uncomfortable and challenging subjects can define their culture.

Organizations with strong communication values do not just hope bad things go away, wait for problems to fix themselves, or decide that the problem must be someone else's problem.

Courageous communication also includes the questioning of authority.

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## Organizational Communication

### Safety

A culture of effective communication doesn't beat people up for speaking up, making mistakes or having ideas that might not work.

If we want employees to be creative, address and solve problems, and continue forward progress, we must make it safe for them to do so.

We may have to defend them or admonish others on their behalf to make sure safety exists.

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## Organizational Communication

### Intellectual Rigor

Although people should be safe, ideas don't have to be safe, necessarily.

We must have the courage to question each other and our ideas. Concepts and ideas should be questioned, examined, and checked, regardless of the source.

The key is in our empathic communication style.

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## Organizational Communication

### Transparency

Great organizations share as much information as they possibly can.

Where there is an absence of information, a vacuum forms.

This void, if left for too long, gets filled with rumors and assumptions, even in the healthiest organizations.

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*He who knows others is wise.  
He who knows himself is enlightened.*

Lao Tzu  
Philosopher and Poet

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## Effectiveness Audit

Score the following questions on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being strongly disagree and 10 being strongly agree.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I know effective communication when I see it.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ In ALDOT's culture, listening is as valued as talking.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ It is safe to share a new idea at ALDOT.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ My boss is an effective communicator.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I am an effective communicator.

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## Interpersonal Communication: Levels of Listening

- I. Not at all
- II. While distracted
- III. Focused listening
- IV. Deep listening

Hey Honey, please pick up some milk on your way home from work.

Where are my keys?



LOL;)

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## Interpersonal Communication: Translation Challenge

The challenge is twofold:

- Learn to say what we mean clearly.
- Learn to listen well enough that we actually understand what others mean.

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*The key to accurate translation or effective two-way communication  
is high trust.*

Stephen Covey  
*Principle-Centered Leadership*



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## Effective Leadership, Accurate Translation

- Simplify your message.
- See the person.
- Show the truth.
- Seek a response.

John Maxwell

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## Effective Leadership, Accurate Translation

***Simplify your message.***

It's not just what you say but also how you say it.

**“Be clear, be clear, be clear.”**

**--Napoleon Bonaparte**

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## Effective Leadership, Accurate Translation

### *See the person.*

Become audience oriented.

- Who are they?
- What are their questions?
- What needs to be accomplished?
- How much time do we have?



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## Effective Leadership, Accurate Translation

### *Show the truth.*

Believe in what you say, and live what you say.

Being passionate about your subject is compelling.

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## Effective Leadership, Accurate Translation

### *Seek a response.*

The goal of communication is action.

Every time you speak to someone, give that listener something to feel, something to remember, and something to do.

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## Keys to Communication: The 7 C's

### Completeness

To be effective, communication should be complete; i.e., it should include all the information the recipient needs.

Complete communication reduces the need for follow-up, questions, and answers. It improves the quality of the overall communication process.

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## Keys to Communication: The 7 C's

### Conciseness

Conciseness is not about keeping the message short but rather about keeping it to a point; i.e., the message does not include any redundant or irrelevant information.



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## Keys to Communication: The 7 C's

### Consideration

A sender should always consider and value the recipient's needs, moods, and points of view.

Tailoring the contents and style of your messages based on the target audience strengthens the key points delivered, thus allowing for a more thorough understanding of the message.

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## Keys to Communication: The 7 C's



### Concreteness

Effective communication happens when the message is supported by facts and figures.

It is about answering questions in a timely and consistent manner and developing your argumentations based on real-life examples rather than on general scenarios.

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## Keys to Communication: The 7 C's

### Courtesy

Be respectful of the recipient's culture, values, and beliefs. Also, adopt a demeanor your audience can easily relate to and understand.

Courtesy has a positive impact on the overall communication because it prompts a more positive and constructive approach.

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## Keys to Communication: The 7 C's

### Clearness



Be clear and specific.  
The message should focus on a single objective, thus emphasizing its importance and allowing for a prompt understanding of its contents.

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## Keys to Communication: The 7 C's

### Correctness

Using grammar and syntax correctly vouches for increased effectiveness and credibility of the message.

In fact, grammar and syntax mistakes make it harder for the recipient to decode the message and understand its contents.

Incorrect usage has a negative impact on the overall communication.

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James Brown, PE

West Central Region Engineer

Role of Communication

## Group Discussion

Discuss the following questions with your group. Select a member to report out your best answers (rotate reporters).

1. Each person offers three of the most effective communicators, past or present, at ALDOT.
2. What characteristics do they share?
3. Choose the top three for the group to report out.

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## Effective Communication – The What Wrap Up

- Listening is as important as talking.
- Interpersonal communication drives organizational communication.
- Effective communicators make effective leaders.

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## Final Thought

*Some of you are “naturals.” Others are not.  
All of you are smart enough to learn a skill.*

*You know the benefits of effective communication.  
You have seen the consequences of ineffective communication.*

*Because you are a leader, you will do what it takes to get better.*

**Barry Fagan,**  
Proud ALDOT Leadership Academy Contributor

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