



Effective Communication Skills

These videos can be used as meeting openers or as video punctuation marks for driving home a point or getting a discussion going.

Following are our suggestions on how to use the videos. You can use this as an entire thought-provoking training or use parts of this and integrate it with your own training.



Discuss the benefits of effective communication:

Listening is as powerful as talking. We learn more. We spot opportunities. As leaders, we need to make ourselves available to those who want to talk to us. It can make the difference in a company's success or failure. We also need to know how to approach people who filter communication differently from us. Effective communication may make the difference between success and failure in our careers.

Example:

Steve Case, the founder of AOL, figured out early on that computers were about people connecting and not about the technology. In the early 90's, everyone was focused more on the new technology and how to make it work.

Case is known for being an active listener who finds patterns and opportunities.



(Video: Steve Case on Connecting the Dots)

Suggested Interaction with Audience

- Divide the group into two groups: “A’s” and “B’s”.
- Tell the A’s to tell a story about their proudest moment and why. Give them 2 minutes
- Tell B’s to repeat the story back to A’s. Give them 2 minutes. Then, repeat the exercise with B’s talking and A’s listening.
- Ask if they felt heard. Did the A’s listen more because they knew they were going to be asked to repeat back what they heard? Who enjoyed talking more than listening? What did they notice?

Benefits of Active Listening

Listening can seem like a passive skill. But, if you’re really listening to the other person, you’ll learn something new.

This is called “empathic listening” or active listening. It builds trust because a person feels heard; that person could be an angry customer, a frustrated colleague, or an enthusiastic employee with a great idea.

It is an essential skill for third parties and people who disagree as it enables the listener to receive and accurately interpret the speaker’s message, and then provide an appropriate response in a negotiation or mediation.

The benefits of empathic listening:

1. builds trust and respect,
2. releases emotions and reduces tensions,
3. new information or ideas surface
4. creates a safe environment conducive to collaborative problem solving.

Interaction with Audience

- Can they recall a story of when they were treated poorly by a company? What was wrong? Did they tell their friends?
- What about a great story? What do they think of that brand?

Example:

Intel founder Andy Grove faces a highly competitive environment for micro-processors worldwide. Intel has to make ever more powerful chips for increasingly creative uses in computers, PDA’s, cameras. This makes it imperative that Grove is aware and listens for every good idea:



(Video: Andy Grove on listening.)

During his tenure as CEO of Intel, Grove oversaw a 4,500% increase in Intel’s market capitalization from \$18 billion to \$197 billion.

How to Get Your Message Heard

When listening or talking we need to be aware of how the other person hears; the filters through which they listen are based on how they operate in life. Some people operate by how they *feel*. These are the people who want to talk about their weekend before diving into a project. They're very relationship focused. Others are *creative* and all about the 'juice' of an idea. Then, there are those who are *results-oriented*. They have little tolerance for small talk and want to dive into the project at hand.

We all have a mixture of these but if you don't first understand where a person is most comfortable, you'll miss an opportunity to move a relationship forward, in business and in life!

Questions: See if you can identify people who fit in these categories: relationship, vision, results. Where do you fit?

Example:



(Video: Stuart Gelles - 3 Styles of Communication)

Talking Too Much

Your team or colleague has a great idea. S/he is all excited. They share this with you. You then add to the idea. That actually can be de-moralizing. The greater your title in the organization, the more likely your input will kill creativity.

Example:

Executive leadership coach Marshall Goldsmith...who is also a best-selling author and coaches 100 CEOs says he has seen more great ideas killed by overzealous, talkative leaders:



(Video: Marshall Goldsmith – Commitment Killers)

Listening to Improve as a Leader/co-worker

Wonder what your colleagues really think of you?

Want to give them feedback? Want to do this in an empowering way so that your entire team moves forward?

Here's a practical way to give feedback that insures listening.

Example:

Marshall Goldsmith was a pioneer in the use of customized 360-degree feedback (confidential feedback from direct reports, peers and managers) as a leadership development tool. His early efforts in providing feedback and then following-up with executives to measure changes in behavior were precursors to what eventually evolved as the field of executive coaching.



(Video: Marshall Goldsmith on Feed*Forward*)

How to Get Honest Communication

You're a leader and you need to hear the news; good and bad. Our natural tendency is to surround ourselves with people we like. The problem is you might not be getting the information you need.

Example:

Marshall Goldsmith: Getting honest feedback and not creating Yes wo/men or suck ups who won't tell you the news you need to hear. In other words, communication to avoid favoritism.



(Video: Marshall Goldsmith on Avoiding Favoritism)