



7 Ways To Communicate More Effectively At Work



Technology is wonderful in most areas of our life. Yet there are some aspects where using advanced technology may not be the best route. There are times at work when we miscommunicate because of technologically-based assumptions. We assume that our emails went through, that our slides were attached, that the texts were received, or that the answering machine works. As managers, we have to guard against misperceptions caused by miscommunication. Great communication goes a long way to decrease frustration and increase productivity. Here are 7 ways to communicate more effectively at work.

- Talk face-to-face. Get up and go have a conversation with someone, especially if there is a misunderstanding. Much of our communication today is done without even seeing the person who works just a short walk away. Just a five minute conversation can help us understand that person's perspective and clarify responsibilities. At Zappos in Las Vegas, the boss has a cubicle along cubicle row like everyone else. They believe that close quarters encourage workers to share ideas with others around them, which includes the boss. If your co-workers are not within walking distance, pick up the phone.
- Provide clear information. Before you pass information on to others, make sure that it is accurate and complete. This sounds very basic, but when we assume that the other person knows what project we are referring to, we provide an avenue for a problem. If we aren't clear, we create confusion and communication breaks down. My assistant seems to read my mind, so I am sometimes careless with my communications to her because I assume she is following my train

Mary's Updates

New Fun Website!



Have you visited my website lately?

We overhauled the Productive Leaders website to make it easier to navigate while adding lots of FUN touches! Take a look at the [Fun Stuff](#) page.

(Thank you, Robyn Graham and her team at [Websites by Robyn](#) for being so creative!)

Mary's Book of the Month



[Topgrading: How Leading Companies Win by Hiring, Coaching, and Keeping the Best People](#)

by Bradford D. Smart, PhD

How do you build a great company? Hire, promote and retain the best possible employees. Bradford Smart calls these hires the A-Players. Research shows that typically, only one-fourth of those hired turn out to be A-Players. The other 75% underperform. Smart reminds us that the cost of a staffing mistake is estimated at 15 times the base salary, so the financial drain on the average company is huge. Smart's *topgrading* practices for hiring, training and promoting prove that it's possible to vastly improve how people are hired and promoted.

Topgrading means filling every position in the organization with an A-Player and replacing underperformers until the entire team is all A-Players. When you are *topgrading*, you only hire A-Players. Smart acknowledges that *topgrading* is a

of thought. She is an amazing communicator, so when I am not clear, she asks for clarification.

- Ask questions. Like my amazing assistant, asking for clarity is a sign of a great communicator. Never be afraid to ask questions to confirm that what you are hearing is the message the other person is conveying. Asking questions also tells the other person that you are listening, that you understand, and that you are solidifying what you have heard.
- Listen. Really listen with your whole body. Listen as you look at the other person and focus on what they are saying, not on your next meeting, your to-do list, or what you want to say next. Many times people are so quick to talk that they forget to listen. Good communication involves both verbalizing and active listening. In addition, when you are communicating with someone, let them know that you are listening with both your body language and responses such as, "Tell me more."
- Let others talk. We have all attended meetings where one person speaks, and no one else gets to voice their concerns or ideas. Leaders especially need to be mindful that they do not dominate meetings. If people perceive that the boss just wants an affirmation of his or her ideas and not an open, honest group discussion, employees will shut down. Silence does not mean acceptance or agreement. As one person commented, "Why would I end my career by criticizing the boss's ideas?" If people are not encouraged to express their opinions, the result is stifled ideas, resentment, and frustration. Listen to alternate opinions and encourage people to voice their thoughts.
- Honesty. People listen to people they trust. Honesty is still good policy (and it is easiest to remember). When information is shared honestly and respectfully, even bad news can be managed.
- Confirm completion. Close the communication loop. When you are communicating with someone at work, make sure to review each step clearly if it is a new procedure. You can also ask for confirmation when the work is accomplished. People will often complete a task, but if you don't know it was completed, you still think about it, so ask that they close the loop with you by letting you know when it was finished.

significant investment, but he reiterates that you get what you pay for, especially regarding talent.

Why should you recruit and pay for A-Players? High performers contribute more, innovate more, work smarter, earn more trust, are more resourceful, take more risks and initiative, develop better business strategies, implement change more effectively, deliver higher quality work, demonstrate greater teamwork, and find ways to complete tasks in less time with fewer resources. A-Player managers attract and retain A-Players, who want to be part of great organizations.

Twitter and Social Media

Retweeting: Tweets with **RT** in front of them means ReTweet or a forwarded tweet. ReTweeting promotes other people's ideas and it shows you are paying attention. Add your personal perspective, "Great explanation of economy." Suggestion from Gina Schrek: If you want your tweets to be ReTweeted, make them interesting and try to keep them to 120 characters so others can easily forward them.

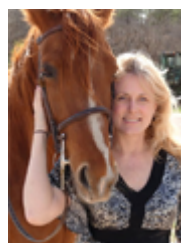
Pet Tip:

Does it seem like your dog or cat scratches more during the winter?

Repeatedly coming out of the cold into the dry heat can cause itchy, flaking skin. Keep your home humidified and towel dry your pet as soon as they come inside, paying special attention to feet and in between the toes. When you bathe pets during the winter, use a moisturizing shampoo and/or rinse to keep pets skin from itching.



Thank You for Reading this Newsletter



Know anyone who is planning an event needing a speaker, or a business that needs a push forward? Please [contact me](#). I greatly appreciate your referrals!

Mary C. Kelly

Sometimes we forget that everything we do and say is communicated to others, and we need to be aware of the perceptions our actions create in others. It's great to use technology to our advantage, but sometimes we need to add a personal touch for a better outcome.

Connect with Mary



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