

Planning Effective Client Communications

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Communication Exercise

Agenda

- Tips for Effective Communication
- Grammar
- Reports
- Status Updates
- Meetings/interviews

Three Key Components to Client Communications

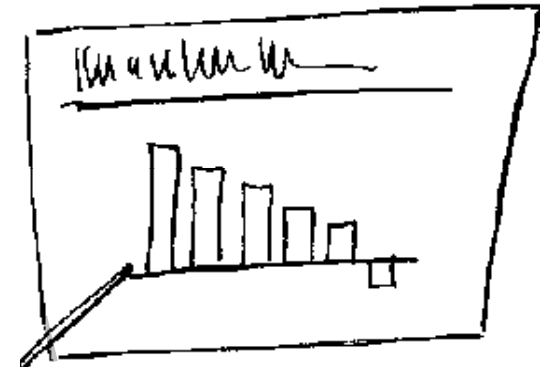
Your Audience



You



Your Story



"Ready" "Fire"

Ready

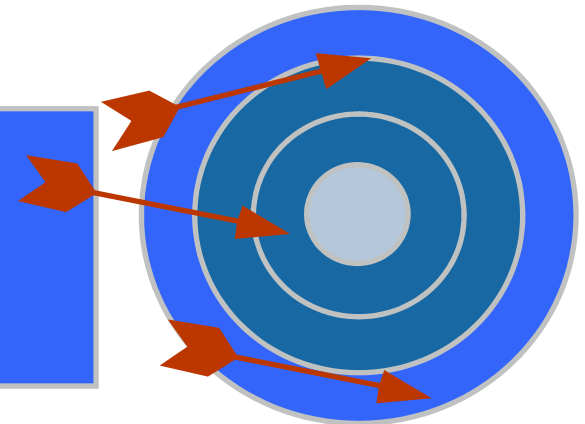
Discover

- **Gather data**
- **Analyze data**
- **Identify/assess issues**
- **Conduct diagnostics**
- **Develop conclusions**



Fire

Communicate



"Ready" "AIM" "Fire"

Ready

Aim

Fire

Discover

Organize

Communicate

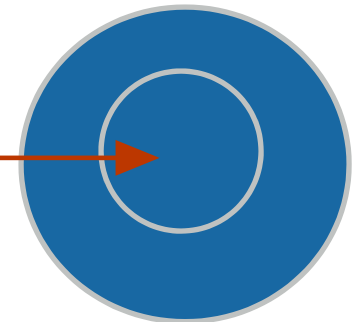
- **Gather data**
- **Analyze data**
- **Identify/asses s issues**
- **Conduct diagnostics**
- **Develop conclusions**

Determine what you want the audience to do at the end

Identify your clients' perspective

Summarize your key points

Present your message

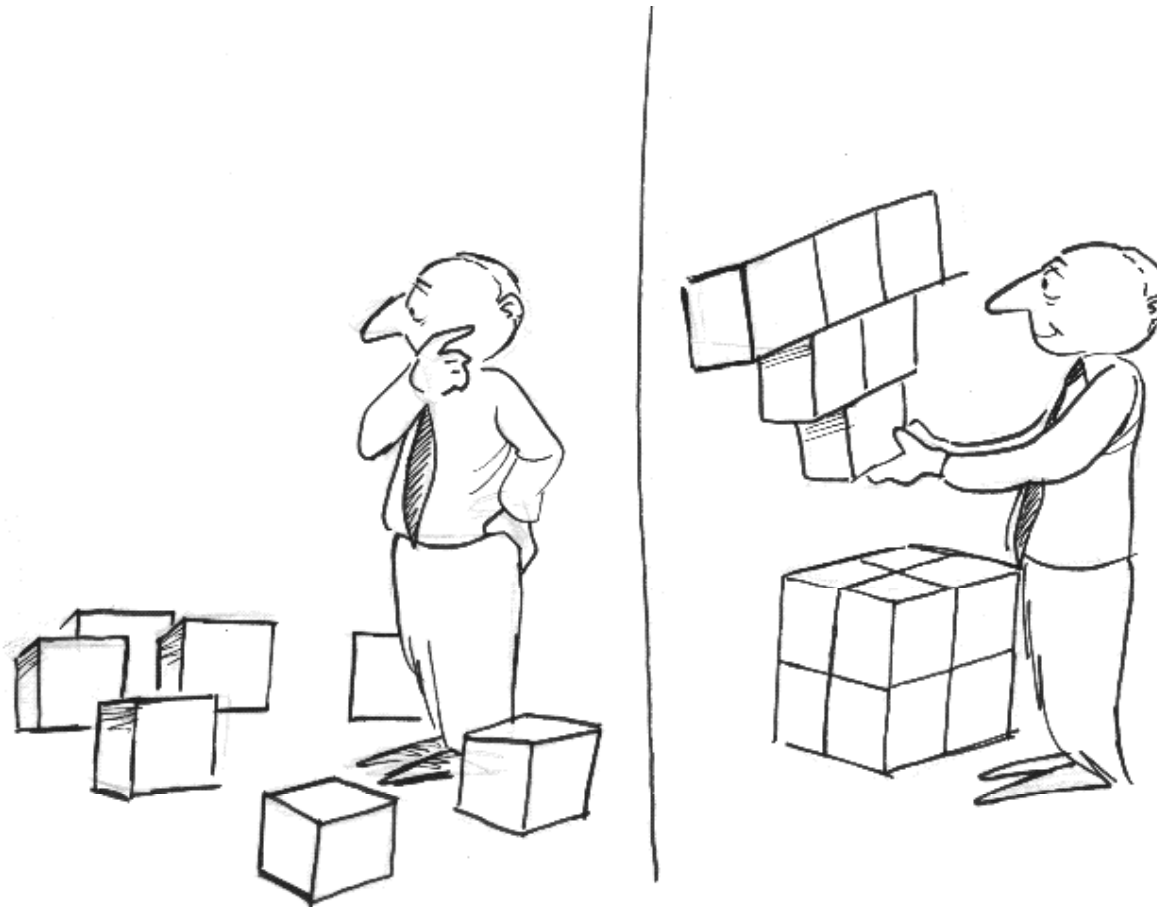


What is the point?

Good communication
provides an outcome,
not a process



Provide Focus by Grouping



Know Your Audience

Executives

- Visionary
- Long-term
- Big picture
- Bottom-line results
- Action
- Focused
- Company-wide
- Open
- Decision-makers

Management

- Shorter-term
- Departmental
- Operational
- Defensive
- Turf-oriented
- Expert endorsements
- Detail-oriented
- Influencers

Client Comprehension Depends on Your Ability to Communicate Clearly

- Be careful with word choice
- Use active verbs; avoid passive voice
- State ideas simply and positively
- Use plain English



Language

- “A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences.... This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.

— William Strunk Jr.
in *Elements of Style*

- Some basic guides
 - Be clear
 - Write in a way that comes naturally
 - Don't explain too much
 - Don't take short cuts at the cost of clarity
 - Avoid fancy words

Parallel Form

- This principle, that of parallel construction, requires that expressions of similar content and function should be outwardly similar.
- Unskillful writers often violate this principle, from a mistaken belief that they should constantly vary the form of their expressions. It is true that in repeating a statement in order to emphasize it writers may have need to vary its form. But apart from this, writers should follow carefully the principle of parallel construction.

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Parallelism Examples

Faulty Parallelism	Corrected Version
Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method, while now the laboratory method is employed.	Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method; now it is taught by the laboratory method.

The left-hand version gives the impression that the writer is undecided or timid; he seems unable or afraid to choose one form of expression and hold to it. The right-hand version shows that the writer has at least made his choice and abided by it.

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Parallelism Examples

By this principle, an article or a preposition applying to all the members of a series must either be used only before the first term or else be repeated before each term.

Faulty Parallelism	Corrected Version
The French, the Italians, Spanish, and Portuguese	The French, the Italians, the Spanish, and the Portuguese
In spring, summer, or in winter	In spring, summer, or winter (In spring, in summer, or in winter)

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Parallelism Examples

Correlative expressions (both, and; not, but; not only, but also; either, or; first, second, third; and the like) should be followed by the same grammatical construction. Many violations of this rule can be corrected by rearranging the sentence.

Faulty Parallelism	Corrected Version
It was both a long ceremony and very tedious.	The ceremony was both long and tedious.
A time not for words, but action	A time not for words, but for action
Either you must grant his request or incur his ill will.	You must either grant his request or incur his ill will.
My objections are, first, the injustice of the measure; second, that it is unconstitutional.	My objections are, first, that the measure is unjust; second, that it is unconstitutional.

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Parallelism Examples

When **making comparisons**, the things you compare should be couched in parallel structures whenever that is possible and appropriate.

Faulty Parallelism	Corrected Version
My income is smaller than my wife.	My income is smaller than my wife's.

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Pronoun Reference

- Pronouns quite naturally connect ideas because pronouns almost always refer the reader to something earlier in the text. I cannot say "This is true because . . ." without causing the reader to consider what "this" could mean. Thus, the pronoun causes the reader to sum up, quickly and subconsciously, what was said before (what *this* is) before going on to the *because* part of my reasoning.
- We should hardly need to add, however, that it must always be perfectly clear what a pronoun refers to. If my reader cannot instantly know what *this* is, then my sentence is ambiguous and misleading. Also, do not rely on unclear pronoun references to avoid responsibility: "They say that . . ."

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Active versus Passive

Verbs are also said to be either *active* (The executive committee approved the new policy) or *passive* (The new policy was approved by the executive committee) in voice. In the active voice, the subject and verb relationship is straightforward: the subject is a be-er or a do-er and the verb moves the sentence along. In the **passive voice**, the subject of the sentence is neither a do-er or a be-er, but is acted upon by some other agent or by something unnamed (The new policy was approved).

Active	Professor Villa gave <u>Jorge</u> an A.
Passive	An A <u>was given</u> to Jorge by Professor Villa.
Passive	Jorge <u>was given</u> an A.

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Intensifiers That Don't Intensify

- Avoid using words such as *really*, *very*, *quite*, *extremely*, *severely* when they are not necessary. It is probably enough to say that the salary increase is *inadequate*. Does saying that it is *severely* inadequate introduce anything more than a tone of hysteria? These words shouldn't be banished from your vocabulary, but they will be used to best effect when used sparingly.

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Prune the Redundant

- Avoid saying the same thing twice.

Many uneducated citizens *who have never attended school* continue to vote for better schools.

- A phrase that repeats itself—like "true fact," "twelve noon," "I saw it with my own eyes"—is sometimes called a **pleonasm**.
- Redundant phrases are bad habits just waiting to take control of your writing.

Source: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Tense Consistency

- Remember that if you're writing in the present tense, don't shift to the past tense (or vice versa) unless you have a good reason to do so.

Confusion

In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the narrator is one of the few truly successful characters in terms of moral development. However, she was also seriously flawed in some ways.

Repair Work

In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the narrator is one of the few truly successful characters in terms of moral development. However, she is also seriously flawed in some ways.

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Reports

Reports

- Criteria for Communicating (2410)
 - Objective
 - Scope
 - Conclusions, recommendations, and action plans
- Quality of Communications (2420)
 - Accurate,
 - objective,
 - clear,
 - concise,
 - constructive,
 - complete, and
 - timely

Key Elements of Internal Audit Reports

- Executive Summary
- Background
- Scope
- Results

Where to Start?

- Template
- Standard CC list
- Background
- Scope

Components of Executive Summary

- Objective and Approach in 1-2 sentences
- Conclusion Statement
- Summarized Affirmative Results
- Recommendations with Action Plan, or summary

Components of Results

- Testing approach
 - Active voice
 - Quantity sampled
 - How tested
- Affirmative Results*
- Recommendations with Management Responses*
 - Reportable findings
 - In order of priority

*All items in scope should have results in either affirmative results or findings

Evaluation of Management Responses

- Will the control gap be addressed?
- Is the timing reasonable?
- Should there be a short-term response as well?
- What will Internal Audit follow up on?

Status Updates

Key Elements of Status Reports

- Overall status
- What has been done?
- What is next?
- Potential issues and who is key contact for each
- Barriers/Roadblocks

Meetings/Interviews

Effective Interviewing

- Prepare, prepare, prepare
- Open the interview
- Manage the interview
- Build on the interview
- Listen
- Follow-up after

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

- Determine objective of interview
- Identify your audience
- Prepare an outline of what will be discussed; share it with the interviewee in advance, if possible
- Research subject and area
- Develop strategy and questions

Open the Interview

- Clearly introduce yourself
- State the objectives of the interview
- Ensure the client is prepared for the meeting
- Make the other person feel comfortable

Manage the interview

- Actively listen and respond to what is said
- Ask for specific examples
- Follow “leads” in conversation
- Beware of jumping to conclusions
- Ask the person to repeat something if your mind wandered or if you didn’t understand
- Use appropriately open or closed questions
- Use bias-free questions
- Interpret non-verbal messages
- Take notes
- Paraphrase
- Pose follow-on questions based on anticipated next steps

Build on the Interview

- Ensure objectives have been met
- Summarize key points and action items
- Ask for references to other people if necessary
- Leave the door open for potential follow-up
- Thank the person for their time and effort
- Reflect on results

Conducting the Interview

- Use tact and avoid disagreements
 - Admit that you aren't as expert in the person's job as he or she is
 - Don't contradict a person, even by implication, in front of others but you may be willing to tactfully disagree if founded
 - State the other person's viewpoint to his or her satisfaction
 - Admit your mistakes at once
 - Remember that the other person is a human being
- Listen – restate/paraphrase, reflection, nonverbal feedback, encouragement responses

Follow-up after the Interview

- Schedule more than one meeting, if needed
- Give the person feedback at follow-up meetings as to what you have done with the information given to you
- Return borrowed information as soon as possible

Situations

Questions and Discussion

Thank You!

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