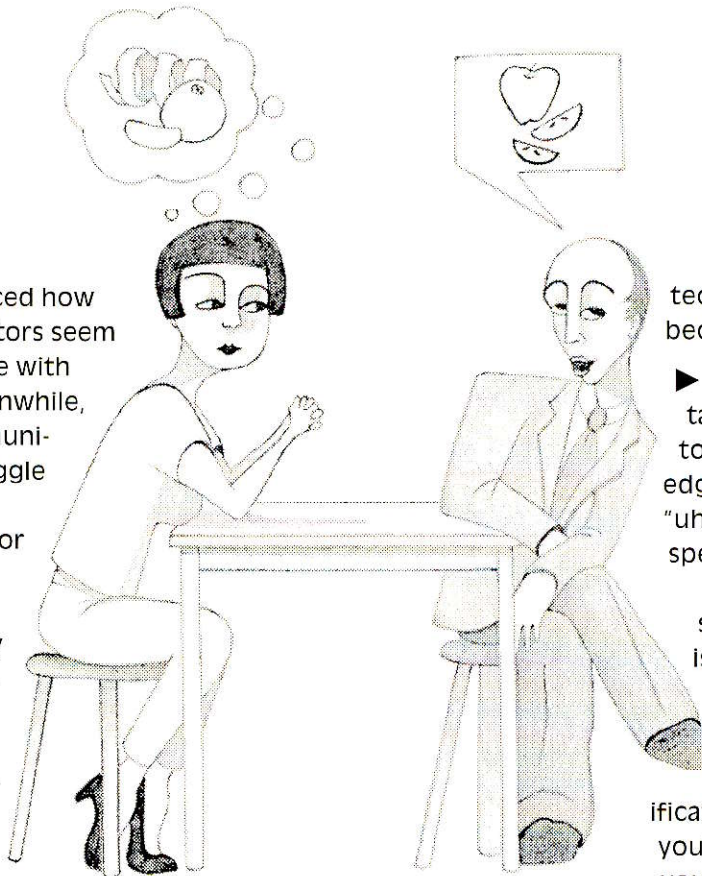


The Great Communicator:



Have you ever noticed how good communicators seem to get things done with little or no effort? Meanwhile, those with poor communication skills often struggle against the misunderstanding, indifference or even outright resentment of coworkers.

Although some lucky people are born knowing how to communicate, most of us can become good communicators by practicing a few communication techniques. These techniques include both sending and receiving skills: getting the message across and listening effectively.

Getting the Message Across

To ensure that your message gets across, try these techniques:

- ▶ Use language appropriate to your listeners. That usually means the simplest language that fits the situation. Obviously you don't want to treat your peers like kindergartners. But avoid trying to impress listeners with four-syllable words and complicated jargon.
- ▶ Consider your listeners' opinions, prejudices and states of mind, all of which may distract their attention. And try to schedule important communications

YOU!

for times when your listeners are rested and fed.

- ▶ Check your impact. Asking "Do you understand?" may not be enough. Ask a listener to repeat what you said and to tell you how he or she intends to respond.

Listening Effectively

No matter how good you are at getting the message across, communication may fail unless you listen "actively." These

techniques can help you become a good active listener:

- ▶ Show you're tuned in. Maintain eye contact and lean toward the speaker. Acknowledge points with an "I see," an "uh-huh" or a nod. Notice the speaker's nonverbal communication. Is he or she enthusiastic, angry, nervous? What is the intent of the speaker's communication?
- ▶ Check your understanding. Ask questions for clarification. Then restate what you've heard to make sure you've got it right. ("So you're saying that...") Show empathy with the speaker, even if you don't agree with his or her point: "You sound worried, Bill."
- ▶ Finally, respond to show you are listening in good faith. Possible responses include taking action, simply stating that you sympathize or appreciate the communication, or stating that you will take no action for a certain reason. Make your response clear and, if you indicate you will take further action, do so.

When you communicate clearly and listen effectively, people know what's expected. And they know that their needs and ideas count. When people feel this way, they are more likely to cooperate to get things done.

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Outcomes, Inc. (505)243-7145 or 1-800-677-2947**