

Interpersonal Relationships & Communications

People Skills for Managers

Samuel A. Malone



SAMUEL A. MALONE

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNICATIONS

PEOPLE SKILLS FOR
MANAGERS

Interpersonal Relationships & Communications: People Skills for Managers

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INTRODUCTION

Practising good interpersonal skills is the hallmark of a good manager. Good managers earn the trust of their staff by keeping their word and staying loyal to them. They expect their staff to stay loyal to them in return. Managers should understand the importance of emotional intelligence and practise the skills of empathy. They build rapport with staff by remembering their names, being friendly and taking an interest in their welfare. Managers need to be good at managing upwards (i.e. their boss) as well as downwards (i.e. their staff).

A manager gets things done through people. To do this effectively the manager must practise the art of good communication. The higher up you go in the management hierarchy the greater the need for good interpersonal relationships and communication skills. We don't need to learn how to hear, as it is an innate capacity. However, we do need to learn how to listen. Most people feel that listening comes naturally. This is not true. Active listening must be learned and includes restating, summarising, paraphrasing and clarifying to check understanding. People like people who listen attentively to them. Listening is probably the most complimentary thing you can do, and the easiest and best way to win friends and influence people.

The text is well illustrated with diagrams, relevant inspirational quotes and acronyms to help the reader understand, remember and grasp the content easily. Each chapter begins with questions to prime the mind and facilitate learning.

After reading this book you will be able to:

- Improve your interpersonal relationships with others
- Effectively influence others
- Use and interpret the Johari Window Model
- Identify and interpret the Life Positions Model
- Build rapport with others
- Remember names
- Deal with personality clashes and with difficult people
- Identify personality types
- Identify the attributes of a good manager
- Manage upwards
- Identify the features of good communication
- Listen effectively
- Identify the barriers to listening
- Ask good questions
- Identify and use body language

Samuel A Malone

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1 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

What are influencing skills?
 What is the Johari Window?
 How can I build up rapport?
 What are the attributes of a good manager?
 How can I manage upwards?

1.1 INFLUENCING SKILLS

When you influence people, you get them to do willingly what you want them to do in an unobtrusive friendly manner. Influencing issues can be categorised under three headings: managerial, relationship and staff management issues.

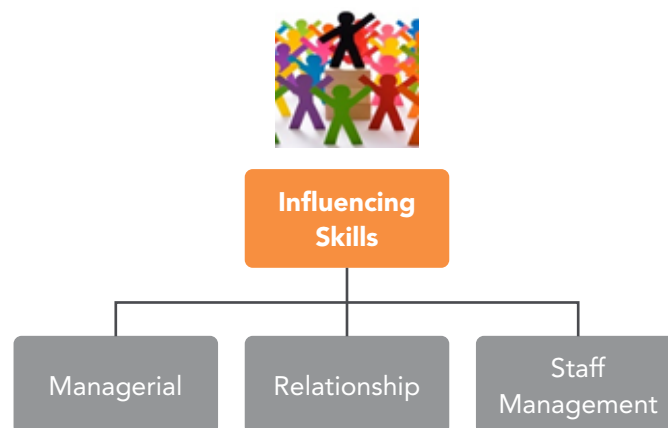


Fig. 1.1. Influencing Skills

MANAGERIAL ISSUES

- **Create a vision of the future and share it with employees.** Employees will only feel that they own the vision if they helped formulate it. This will give them a sense of ownership and a commitment to see it through to fruition. The vision must be backed up by realistic and measurable goals so that progress towards its achievement can be measured. Get the staff to commit, verbally or in writing to the vision, because then they are more likely to honour and follow through on that commitment. Most people like to show that they are as good as their word.
- **Set challenging goals.** Buckingham (2005) found research that managers with self-assurance set high goals, persist in the face of obstacles and have the resilience to

bounce back when setbacks occur. Without goals you have no sense of direction and will operate like a rudderless ship. Goals provide the impetus and spur to motivation.

- **Aristotle identified three types of influence: logos, pathos, and ethos.** Logos is the logic of an argument supported by proof to make a case. This approach would be very successful if everybody was a logical, linear thinker. However, this is not so. Pathos is an appeal to the emotions. People are emotional in nature and we are strongly influenced by our emotions. Ethos is an appeal based on the speaker's perceived character. For Aristotle, ethos is the most important source of influence. If the listener does not trust or believe the speaker, logic or emotion will have little effect. Thus, a manager with demonstrated ethical values will command a high level of respect and influence. Espoused values are not the same as enacted ones. The manager must walk the talk to gain employees' trust and credibility and act like a role model.
- **Generate trust by doing what you say you will do and by being loyal to your staff.** Mutual trust means that staff can rely on you and you can rely on them. Trust is won by having a high sense of integrity, being honest, telling the truth and doing what is ethically right. Trust is like a bank account, hard to fill but easy to empty. Managers who tell the truth are trusted more by their staff even if at times they find the truth hard to swallow. Those who are guarded in what they say and put on a false front are unlikely to be trusted by their staff.
- **Be credible.** Be knowledgeable, authoritative, authentic, and exude confidence when going about your work. Staff are impressed with managers who demonstrate self-belief, self-efficacy and self-esteem, are calm under pressure, and show that they know what they're doing. Authentic managers are honest with themselves as well as being honest with others. This is the opposite of being phoney as in pretending you're something that you are not. Staff expect their managers to be genuine and transparent in what they do and say.
- **Double check information that you receive.** This will ensure that decisions are objective and based on sound sensible advice and information. Managers who make good decisions win the admiration of their staff and thus have greater influence. Test the waters before you step in. If you are unsure about the likely reception to a change of policy use the grapevine to test the reaction you will get. If it is negative then you can announce that such a policy is not going to be implemented. Discuss issues with as many interested parties as possible so that you can gauge the reaction to important decisions beforehand. This will help you anticipate problems and to take corrective action before it is too late.
- **Be imaginative.** Develop your creative as well as analytical abilities. Consider problems from various alternative points of view and pick the most realistic, acceptable and feasible one. Creativity is one of the most desired attributes of a manager. Foster the ability to cut through convoluted arguments and complex problems to reveal the basic issues underneath.

RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

- **Influence others by maintaining good relationships.** Be human and keep your feet firmly on the ground by staying on friendly terms with employees, customers and suppliers. Show that you value, respect and appreciate them by being courteous at all times, as good manners cost nothing but will win you the regard of all you come in contact with. Rudeness and arrogance is never acceptable and only generates resentment and disagreement.
- **Always acknowledge mistakes, as you are not infallible.** Trying to cover up mistakes is only prolonging the time when the truth will inevitably emerge. Apologise when you make a mistake or do something inappropriate, by saying you're sorry. This is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. President Kennedy accepted full responsibility for the disastrous Bay of Pigs operation and contrary to expectations his popularity in the polls soared higher than ever.
- **Develop a positive assertive attitude and encourage staff to do likewise.** Ask employees directly, clearly and confidently what you want them to do. Back up your requests with proof and evidence as needed as this approach is effective and carries the least risk. See staff strengths rather than weaknesses. See weaknesses as areas for improvement and development and problems as opportunities. Focus on solutions rather than problems. Banish the fear of failure from your employees. Get them to learn from their mistakes and accept responsibility. Create a no blame culture by seeing mistakes as learning opportunities.
- **Scarcity affects the value not only of goods but of information as well.** Goods become more desirable as they become scarce and less available. Likewise, information considered exclusive or that confers unique benefits is more persuasive. Give the impression that the information given is special and confidential to staff. This will increase the strength of its influence and the value and desirability of its acquisition.

"Today the most useful person in the world is the man or woman who knows how to get along with other people. Human relations are the most important science in the broad curriculum of living".

– Stanley C. Allen

STAFF MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- **Use your staff as colleagues and advisers, not mere employees.** You are more likely to influence people if they like you and you like them in turn. People prefer to say yes to those they like and are reluctant to say no. Share relevant information with staff by being approachable, friendly and accessible. Employees prefer to be kept informed by their manager about company performance and developments particularly those that have an impact on their immediate jobs or future employment prospects. However, the grapevine is the main source of information for employees despite the fact that it is inaccurate 5 to 25 per cent of the time. The grapevine has its uses but should not be relied on exclusively and the information should be cross-checked diligently against more reliable sources. Unfounded rumours can do untold damage to some businesses and so managers should ensure that the grapevine is fed accurate and up-to-date information.
- **Treat people equally.** Employees like their managers to be fair and consistent in their dealings with them. A manager should not have favourites among staff. Human nature being what it is this impartiality is hard to do in practice. Always act even-handed and respect the human dignity of staff and never undermine their sense of self-worth. Your job is to boost their morale and self-belief rather than destroy their confidence.
- **Get to know staff as well as you know the company you work for.** You need to understand yourself before you can understand others. This is like Aristotle's appealing to the pathos or emotions. Take a genuine interest in staff welfare. Do this by active listening to find out their wishes, concerns, ambitions and needs. The best way of doing this is by being available to staff to discuss their concerns when they need you. Social gatherings for employees and their families provide the opportunity to get to know people better in an informal and relaxed context and create a sense of belonging that will transfer to their work place.
- **Demonstrate that you care about staff by empowering them to make decisions** and to take responsibility for results. Make people feel empowered and capable by delegating authority and encouraging them to accept challenges. Exploit the differences between people by using and developing their unique abilities. Most people crave to be appreciated. Fine tune jobs to match their individual needs and abilities. Find ways for individuals to grow and develop on the job. Be conscious that knowledge workers because of their superior education need more scope to use their initiative than others do.
- **Make your expectations known** so that staff are aware of exactly what they need to do to achieve desired results. Tell them what you expect and how they are doing so that they know what you want and are in a position to improve their performance if necessary. Employees tend to live up to their manager's expectations! This is known in psychology as the Pygmalion Effect.

- **Reward employees as appropriate** with money, praise, promotion and recognition. Catch people doing things right and praise them. Praise should be given as near to the event as possible for greatest effect. Praise is only deserved for outstanding performance or working beyond the call of duty. Always qualify the praise with the reason for giving it as undeserved praise will only arouse suspicion and cynicism and is counterproductive. There is nothing more meaningful than a simple sincere “thank you” for a job well done. However, some employees may perceive praise without reward as patronising.
- **Encourage staff development by acting as a role model.** Demonstrate that you are a hard-dedicated worker and lifelong learner and encourage staff to follow your example and be likewise. Coach and mentor them to develop their skills. Book them on appropriate courses to broaden their horizons. Get to know the learning styles of staff so that you can match them with appropriate on-the-job and off-the-job learning opportunities.

“Recognition for a job well done is high on the list of motivating influences for all people; more important in many instances than compensation itself. When someone is promoted, a promotion that everyone could see coming because of an excellent record, the entire department is stimulated. For it is clear, then, that promotion is based on merit. A promotion that seems to come out of the blue, which is always the case when no one knows what the next fellow is doing, causes nothing but resentment and a further weakening of the will to work”.

– John M. Wilson

1.2 AMICABLE MODEL

There are many different influencing styles that can be practised by a manager. What suits you and the context in which they are used will be deciding factors. Practising the ideas contained in this model will win you the respect of your staff. **AMICABLE** is an acronym which will help you remember the key elements involved:



Fig. 1.2. AMICABLE Model

- **Authority.** People admire and look up to authority figures. In the modern world we routinely look to legal, financial, medical, or technical experts for advice and so we are more likely to defer to managers with authority, knowledge and expertise. Keep up to date in your specialist field so that you know what you are talking about and win the respect of your staff. Relying too much on positional authority may backfire. Thus, the autocratic style of management is not recommended and may breed resentment and can often turn into intimidation.
- **Marketing.** Selling ideas to staff is often effective particularly if the topic is new to them. Another technique of marketing is influencing people to buy by giving them free gifts. This is the principle of reciprocity meaning that people feel obliged to return a favour. Give and take is a normal part of everyday life. If you are obliging, supportive and helpful to staff they are likely to act likewise with you. Provide social proof that other employees are doing what you suggest. Most of us are influenced to behave in a particular way if we believe other people like ourselves are doing the same. If you can convince people that they have control over the situation then they are more likely to be persuaded to do it.
- **Impassive.** Emotionally controlled managers earn the respect of their staff. These are people who are patient, calm and cool under pressure and demonstrate a high emotional intelligence. Managers who lose their temper will be seen as irrational, volatile, impulsive and emotionally unpredictable. Impassive managers quietly, calmly and patiently demonstrate the validity of their case to staff to win them over.

- **Collaborative.** Managers who are friendly and collaborative are liked by their staff and thus likely to win their trust, respect and co-operation. In the modern workplace teamwork and collaboration are key survival skills. The good manager knows how to complement the styles of other team members, coordinate team efforts without managing them, get members involved in decision making, win commitment and build consensus. Good management is based on inspiration rather than domination, on cooperation rather than intimidation.
- **Assertive.** Assertive male managers tend to be seen as strong-willed, self-assured and having greater credibility. Assertive female managers are sometimes perceived as “pushy” and masculine. However, the more women in higher management the less likely this attitude will prevail. Employees admire assertive traits in managers irrespective of gender such as decisiveness, confidence, patience and persistence.
- **Bargaining.** The good manager when negotiating aims for win-win solutions rather than win-lose. By making concessions on both sides you will reach a mutually acceptable agreement. This involves a careful balance so that all concessions are matched equally. This wins the respect of employees rather than their resentment because they see they are not being deceived and exploited and that their views are taken into consideration.
- **Logical.** Managers who solve problems in a logical way and build conclusions on the basis of factual evidence rather than hearsay will win the respect of employees. Proactive managers are admired rather than reactive ones. Less educated people are most influenced by a one-sided argument while more educated people are most influenced by a two-sided argument. However, don’t go overboard on the logic, as you will need to connect emotionally with your staff as well to win their support.
- **Emotional intelligence.** Managers who are emotionally intelligent by being sensitive to the moods and concerns of their employees win their respect. The sensitive manager knows how to listen without judging or giving unwanted and irrelevant advice. Commenting diplomatically that an employee seems to be a bit down is often taken as a sign of caring rather than prying. Judge staff by their actions rather than their words as an employee will often say one thing but do another.

“There is nothing which we receive with so much reluctance as advice.”

– Joseph Addison

1.3 SELF KNOWLEDGE

As a manager the more you know about yourself the better. Understand your flaws and weaknesses because these are the shortcomings that will be exploited and used against you and get you into trouble. The more accurate feedback you get from others the more self-knowledgeable you will be about your own behaviour and how it affects others. It's important that we see ourselves as others see us. Undertake a 360-degree feedback if you feel you have the maturity to accept its findings and the courage to take corrective action.

THE JOHARI WINDOW

Having knowledge about the Johari Window will help you become more self-assured and transparent in your dealings with others. It was designed to help people understand how they interact with others and how disclosing personal information can improve rapport. Johari is named after the creators of the model, Joe Luft and Harry Ingram. The Johari Window as illustrated in fig.1.3 is a two-by-two table that contrasts areas of public and private information.



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The **first box** of the window is known as the public or open area. This represents information known to both self and others including your experience, skills and expressed views. A person's idiosyncrasies, manner of speech, mode of dress, marital status, and favourite pastimes will be in the public area. Other people's perceptions about your behaviour, views, attitude, feelings, emotions, knowledge, skills and experience may be known. This is the type of information that facilitates communication, rapport and interaction with others. This model maintains the more information that is in the public area the greater the co-operation, and the less mistrust, confusion, conflict and misunderstanding. Good managers build trust by sharing information. Where information is lacking it is human nature to fill the void by rumour and gossip. Gossip reflects the culture of an organisation. Malicious gossip suggests an organisation that is secretive and vindictive. Self-disclosure requires a great deal of self-confidence and trust. The size of the public area can be increased horizontally into the blind area, by giving and getting feedback, and can be increased vertically into the closed area by self-disclosure. Top performing organisations encourage the expansion of the public area by policies of open communication and transparency.

The **second box** of the window is the blind area or blind spot and occurs when others know information about you that you do not know yourself. For example, staff might know that you are usually in a bad mood early in the morning but by the afternoon your mood improves for the better. So, if they want to get approval for something from you the best time to look for it is in the afternoon. Thus, they often lack rapport and awareness and can be manipulated by their staff. In the morning you are likely to be obstreperous and make life difficult for staff. Thus, managers with large blind areas can be difficult to deal with and are often insensitive and inaccessible to others without being conscious of it. They are totally unaware what people think about them and may not realise that they are arrogant, patronising, or talk too much, or at times that they are rude. They may lack sensitivity about particular mannerisms they have that are annoying, irritating or distracting to others. Managers should promote a climate of non-judgemental feedback. This reduces fear and encourages disclosure on all sides. Feedback will help managers eliminate their weaknesses and help them become more self-aware and self-actualised.

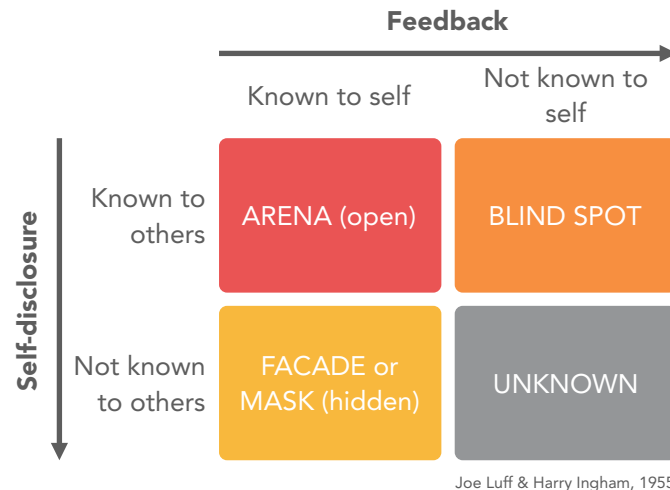


Fig. 1.3. Johari Window

The **third box** of the window is the closed, hidden area, façade or mask. It represents information known to you but not shared with others. This area may include personal feelings about others, your opinion about the boss, views on sensitive issues and information about one's personal life. It may also include fears, hidden agendas, secrets and manipulative intentions. People keep information in the closed area because they feel that disclosure would damage their reputation, undermine their position in the hierarchy, or hinder their chances of future promotion. Where trust in an organisation is low, then the closed area will be large, and the public area will be small. On the other hand, where trust is high in the organisation, the closed area will be small and the public area will be large. Managers will differ to the extent that they are prepared to disclose personal information. It is natural and often wise to keep private information relating to one's personal life hidden and ultimately the amount of disclosure will be at the manager's discretion. A small closed area reduces the potential for disagreement, confusion, misunderstanding and poor communication. The culture of the organisation will have a major influence on manager's willingness to disclose information. A bureaucratic culture tends to be cautious and secretive and encourage cumbersome paper procedures.

The **fourth box** of the window is called the unknown area so that information in this box is unknown to oneself and others. It includes unconscious motivations, repressed feelings, and past memories. One may also be unaware of latent abilities, aptitudes, subconscious feelings, repressed desires and certain attitudes and motivations. Most of us have acquired conditioned behaviour and attitudes from childhood. Some psychologists believe that information from the unknown area has an important impact on the way people behave in all areas. One would expect young people, and people who lack experience or self-belief to have large unknown areas. Providing staff with the opportunity to develop new experiences and skills is often a useful way to discover unknown abilities, and thereby reduce the unknown area.

"Knowledge of the self is the mother of all knowledge. So, it is incumbent on me to know myself, to know it completely, to know its minutiae, its characteristics, its subtleties, and its very atoms".

– Kahlil Gibran

CONCLUSIONS ON JOHARI

As a manager, create a work environment that encourages two-way feedback, self-discovery, lifelong learning and self-development. Help staff to reach their potential and become self-actualised by discovering and developing their talents. It is a well-known fact that most employees in organisations are working well below their potential.

Obviously, the Johari Window can be very useful as a personal development tool. When we meet people for the first time we tend to be reserved and are reluctant to disclose much about ourselves. The open window is thus very small. As trust and familiarity develops we become less inhibited and disclose more and more about ourselves. Our background, history, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, needs and ambitions become known. Thus, the open window becomes larger and the closed window becomes smaller.

To increase the open window further it is necessary to reduce the blind area. This can be achieved by being more open and honest and by seeking and accepting feedback from other people. As the open area grows and the hidden and blind areas diminish, it is likely that the unknown area will reduce as well. This will lead to greater self-awareness, self-confidence, transparency and rapport with others.

Most organisations encourage the expansion rather than the contraction of the closed area. Companies tend to hire hands rather than hearts and minds and show only superficial interest in people's personal and domestic lives. It is unlikely that employees will leave their personal and domestic concerns on the doorstep when they enter work. Employers often expect employees to do their job, collect their pay, and keep their mouths shut and their troubles to themselves. Dealing with personal issues is viewed as a minefield exposing managers to problems demanding their valuable time and attention.

1.4 UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

Thomas Harris (1967) best-selling self-help book describes four fundamental life positions that will help you understand the behaviour of others.



Figure 1.4. Thomas Harris Life Positions Model

1. **I'm not okay – You're okay:** People who adapt this life position feel helpless and have an inferiority complex. They are often shy and diffident. They compare themselves unfavourably with others and lack self-confidence and low self-esteem. If they have problems, they blame themselves because they are incompetent or lack sufficient experience or influence to change events.
2. **I'm okay – You're okay:** People who hold this position see themselves as interdependent with others and their environment. They are self-confident and are happy and comfortable with themselves and view others as likewise. They are more likely to seek social support and network with others and have no difficulty being assertive, open and discussing their problems with others. Because they see others as equals and okay, other people will reciprocate in a similar fashion. This is a position of mutual recognition and self-respect.
3. **I'm not okay – You're not okay:** People with this life position feel hopeless and consider themselves and others equally worthless and are consumed with negative feelings. They feel disconnected from others and from their environment and tend to be introverted and obsessed with their own worries, problems and concerns. Consequently, they are likely to be depressed and lack motivation and interest in life.
4. **I'm okay – You're not okay:** People who adopt this position are angry with the world in general and consider that they can only rely on themselves. They view other people as worthless and potential enemies and so they may dominate and bully others. They are suspicious and resentful of others and blame everybody else for their problems and so consider it pointless to speak out, as they believe nobody will do anything to help them.

From a manager's perspective, adopting the second position means you are positive about yourself, self-confident, assertive and willing to delegate. These skills are particularly appropriate if you want to avoid work over-load and burnout by asserting yourself and delegating appropriately. The other three life positions do not make an effective manager. Feeling angry, helpless or hopeless is not a recipe for success in business.

1.5 BUILDING RAPPORT

The following are some behaviours you can practise to build rapport with your staff. They can be divided into non-verbal and verbal approaches.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION (NVC)

- **Smile sincerely.** A smile lights up your face and encourages others to smile back. However, a false smile will be seen as insincere and devious. Even forcing a smile will put you in a better mood. You can make yourself happier by smiling which in turn changes the way you feel and behave and the way others react to you. Try smiling at yourself in the mirror early in the morning to start the day on a positive note.
- **Keep a relaxed open stance.** Show that you are friendly, open and welcoming rather than closed, distant and unapproachable. For example, keeping your arms folded is a non-verbal gesture which may be interpreted that you are closed, guarded and unfriendly.
- **Lean slightly towards the other person to show you're engaged,** friendly and approachable but do not invade their personal space. Invading personal space can be seen as intrusive and threatening. In some cultures, it is seen as completely unacceptable.
- **Maintain eye contact.** People who don't are seen as shifty and untrustworthy. However, don't stare! Staring unnerves people and makes them feel uneasy. Break eye contact now and again when you feel it is appropriate to do so.
- **Occasionally touch the other person on the elbow or shoulder in a friendly non-invasive way.** Touching should be done very sensitively as it has the potential for creating difficulties especially with the opposite gender. It may be misunderstood as an invasion of privacy and inappropriate touching may even be perceived as sexual harassment.
- **Mirror the other person's behaviour** such as their breathing, rate of speech, tone of voice, hand movements and posture. However, it should be done sensitively as it may be perceived as mimicry and cause offence. If a person is sitting, you should sit too. People like people who are like themselves and sensitively mirror their movements. As Aristotle first pointed out, birds of a feather stick together.

"The most effective way to achieve right relations with any living thing is to look for the best in it, and then help that best into the fullest expression".

– Allen J. Boone

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- **Use the other person's name casually during the conversation.** If you are likely to meet the person again, be sure to memorise their name, or better still record it in your name and address book, as the sweetest sound to another person's ears is the sound of their own name.
- **Use humour as appropriate.** It is sure to lighten up even the most difficult situation and put people at their ease. However, in this politically correct world sexist and racist jokes are unacceptable, may cause resentment and therefore should be avoided.
- **Emphasise the things on which you agree** such as shared beliefs, views, attitudes, culture and values. People from similar backgrounds tend to get along with each other better. This forms the basis for all good relationships.
- **Build goodwill** by meeting the needs of your staff and helping them solve personal issues. Move quickly to resolve interpersonal conflicts. Employees appreciate when you take an interest in their lives and enquire about their families and personal concerns. This should be done in an unobtrusive way as otherwise it may be seen as meddling in their business.
- **Practise the skills of empathy.** Empathy is now recognised as one of the most valuable interpersonal relationship skills. Understand yourself and be able to express yourself in a friendly and tactful way having regard to the sensitivities and needs, of others. Control your anger, impulses and desires so that you do not upset others. Make staff feel valued as individuals by tuning into their feelings and concerns and understand where they are coming from.
- **Develop political awareness.** This is often described as political savvy or street-wise. It is the ability to read hidden agendas, to work the formal and informal decision-making processes in the company, to read situations and to decipher the sub-text of what is said and not said. It also means the ability to get things done informally through networking without relying on formal status and authority.

"The tragedy of life is in what dies inside a man while he lives – the death of genuine feeling, the death of inspired response, the death of the awareness that makes it possible to feel the pain or the glory of other men in yourself."

– Norman Cousins

RAPPORT BREAKERS

The following are behaviours to be avoided because they prevent rapport from developing between people. The acronym **DAFT TIP** will help you remember the points:

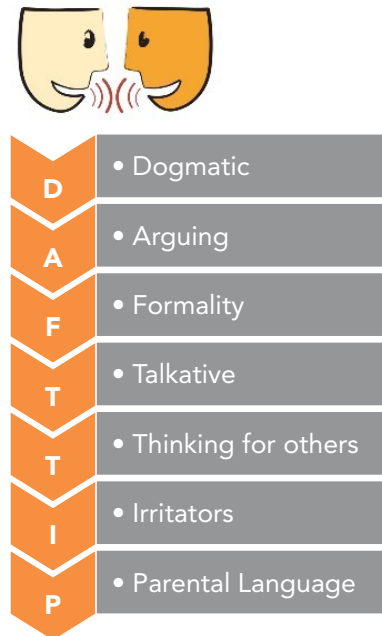


Fig. 1.5. Rapport Breakers

- **Dogmatic.** The more dogmatic you are in your approach to people, the more likely they are to resist and cling to their own opinions and beliefs. Some people are dogmatic even when not supported by logic or facts. People are very reluctant to give up their own beliefs, values and attitudes especially when they feel pressurised or intimidated to do so.
- **Arguing.** If you argue with people they are likely to argue back but are more likely to agree with you if you show consideration and try to understand their point of view. We all like to be understood, accepted and respected. No one likes an argumentative person.
- **Formal language.** Build up rapport with people by talking to them in a friendly, informal and conversational way. Formal language is a barrier to understanding and is only appropriate in formal legal and business situations.
- **Talkative.** People like people who listen actively to them and take their views into consideration. They get defensive if patronised and talked down to or have to deal with someone who wants to monopolise the conversation. We all prefer a dialogue rather than a monologue.
- **Thinking for others.** Doing another person's thinking for them is annoying and patronising. Don't anticipate what other people are going to say by interrupting them. You are not a mind reader and can't possibly know what is in their mind. A phrase like "what you don't seem to realise is" may be insulting.

- **Irritators.** Phrases such as “with respect”, “let’s be realistic”, and “I’m perfectly reasonable” annoy people and should be avoided. They are seen as insincere fillers and verge on the insulting.
- **Parental language.** Parents when talking to children often use words such as “can’t”, “must,” “should” and, “ought.” Delivered to an adult this sounds parental, talked down to, and makes people uncomfortable and creates resistance rather than rapport.

1.6 REMEMBERING NAMES

As a manager you should do everything you can to develop the skill of remembering names. Employees love the sound of their own name and respect managers who take the trouble and interest to get to know their names and something about their backgrounds. The following acronym **MEMORY**, will help you develop the skill of remembering names:

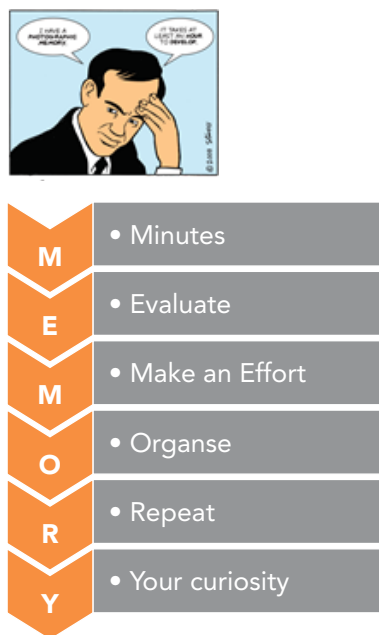


Fig. 1.6. MEMORY Model

- **Minutes not seconds.** When you meet a person for the first time take the opportunity to absorb their name rather than being preoccupied with your own thoughts. This takes concentrated attention, reflection and practice. Most people are so conscious of themselves, and what they are going to say next, that they fail to hear and register the other person’s name. Ask them to repeat their name, if necessary, as people usually don’t mind this as they appreciate the interest you are taking in them. If their name is strange ask them to spell it for you. Imagine their name printed in large capital letters emblazoned on their forehead.

- **Evaluate.** Ask questions about the name, as curiosity is the key to a good memory. Inquire about the name's origin and the person's background. Family names have a unique history and meaning attached to them. Has the name a coat of arms and a family motto? What county or country does the name originate from? What does it mean? Can you name any famous people with the same name? Then link the person's name you want to remember with the famous name. Use the power of visualisation by painting word pictures to remember names. For example, to remember Walker you could visualise the person with a rucksack or a walking frame. Your ability to paint word pictures is only limited by your imagination. All these questions will help you to imprint the name on your mind.
- **Make an effort.** Use the name frequently but naturally during the conversation. Link the face to the name in a memorable fashion. For example, link the name to a prominent feature of the face. Also, you can link the name to a person you know already. Imagine in your mind's eye the two people shaking hands with each other or make it more memorably by seeing them argue or fighting over some dispute or in some slapstick situation. Memory is improved by using the *MUSE* principle – **m**ovement, **u**nusualness, **s**lapstick and **e**xaggeration. Lastly, make sure you address the person by name when saying your goodbyes.
- **Organise.** Do this by exchanging business cards if these are available and appropriate. Otherwise write the name into your diary with a few points about the individual to help you place them in context for the future. For example, where they come from, what they do for a living, where they currently reside and what their favourite hobbies are. Background family information will help you put the name in a stronger context.
- **Repeat and review.** Repetition is the secret of a good memory. Constantly review information to imprint it on your long-term memory. Occasionally, look up your diary and bring the person to mind so that if you meet them again you will remember their name. Similarly, review the business cards you have collected. Use your powers of imagination and visualisation to recall their face and general appearance. If you link and associate information to something you are very familiar with you are more likely to recall it. When going to a meeting or conference review the names of the participants before you go.
- **Your curiosity.** Exercise curiosity about the person and build up a dossier by inquiring with others who may know something about their background and family. Look up the telephone number in the directory and see if they are listed. If they are members of a professional body looking up a membership directory will reinforce the name.


“The secret of a good memory is attention, and attention to a subject depends upon our interest in it. We rarely forget that which has made a deep impression on our minds”.

– Tryon Edward


1.7 HANDLING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Most of us come in contact with difficult obstreperous people from time to time. In everyday life you may be able to avoid or ignore such people. However, as a manager you have to work with these people and make the best of it and so you should know how to successfully manage them. There are different types of difficult people. Some are aggressive; obstreperous while others are complainers and procrastinators. Some have a negative attitude to life and others are indecisive. Some are argumentative while others are moody and silent. Some are perfectionists while others love to work to a deadline. Some are sycophants and others are know-it-all experts. Some make impractical suggestions or question every instruction. Some are rude and insensitive and say harsh things about you behind your back.

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Irrespective of what is said you should not take it personally or react in a confrontational way. As a manager your job is to create a happy working environment for staff by encouraging collaboration and maintaining morale and productivity. To do this you must have the flexibility to adapt your style to different situations and personalities. The following are some suggestions on how to deal with difficult people:

- **Establish the facts.** Don't jump to conclusions. Maybe it's not the person's fault and you may be partly to blame. Something you are doing at the moment may be contributing to the problem. It takes self-knowledge and courage to admit to ourselves that we are part of the problem, and that we should take the initiative to improve someone else's behaviour by changing our own. Critically examine your own behaviour to see if you can do anything to improve the situation. Ask questions to ascertain how the employee sees the situation from their perspective and listen carefully to what they say. Acknowledge their feelings while controlling the natural urge to interrupt or argue. Enquire if you can do anything differently to improve or rectify the situation. For example, you may be giving instructions in a cursory way without adequate explanation or without giving the employee an opportunity to raise questions, exchange views and explore issues. This can cause resentment and may lead to uncooperative employee behaviour.
- **Do not make the mistake of responding spontaneously** without thinking in public to sarcastic or rude remarks, personal attacks or other inappropriate behaviour by a difficult employee. Instead, inform the employee that you will discuss the matter later, in private. Public criticism is always de-motivational for the employee, and nobody wants to lose face in front of colleagues. In private, praise the employee's good points but tell them that certain behaviours are unacceptable in the workplace. Behave in a calm, cool, polite and professional manner. Make it clear what your expectations are regarding acceptable behaviour for the future. Tell them that you show respect for employees and that you expect them to do likewise when dealing with managers. It is your duty to help employees understand when their actions are perceived as disrespectful and suggest to them alternative ways of behaving. Focus on the types of acceptable behaviours you expect to see in the future.
- **Notice out of character behaviour.** If employees have become argumentative and difficult to deal with, it may be because they are having personal problems. They may have children who are misbehaving, a parent who is sick or dying or may be in a situation where their marriage is in danger of breaking up. The manager should discreetly enquire with other employees to find out the reason for the sudden change in behaviour. If this source of enquiry is not successful then they should raise the issue in a diplomatic, courteous and sensitive way with the employee concerned.
- **The energies of chronic complainers may be productively directed elsewhere.** Their talents might be used to spot mistakes, flaws in design, or inconsistencies in

planning and policies. Their ability to critique may help you eradicate mistakes or inefficiencies that otherwise could spell disaster. They may help you identify the reasons for customer complaints and service problems. In this way the chronic complainer's talents may be directed in a more constructive and productive way.

- **Directly challenge the person with the problem behaviour.** Tell them the detrimental effect their obnoxious behaviour is having on you, fellow workers and the work situation. Sometimes being confrontational can stop the negative behaviour on track and clear the air. Care must be taken to criticise the difficult behaviour and not the person. If the person recognises the benefits of change and decides to change their behaviour then the problem will gradually disappear. Getting stuck in to a challenging job will often help people forget about their problems and differences. Energies are channelled productively into the task rather than into making dysfunctional relationships worse.
- **Convert difficult people into allies rather than friends.** Focus on their strengths and use their unique talents to achieve the objectives of the company. You have a job to do and they have a job to do, so that it is in the best interests of both if you can do it without friction and disharmony. Therefore, focus on the achievement of common interests and objectives that are for the good of the company. Jointly doing a job that you both want to do can improve trust and foster a better relationship.
- **Don't micromanaging staff.** Most people like to get on with the job without too much interference from their managers or supervisors. You may be creating a difficult employee by continually looking over their shoulder. When you delegate work to your staff you may tell them what to do but you should not tell them how to do it. Let them exercise their own discretion and initiative on developing the methodology of doing the job. This will prevent arguments about how the job should be done.
- **Leave the situation alone** if the benefits of doing something are not worth the risks involved. Some problems do tend to disappear or get forgotten about with the passage of time. However, they could also build up and explode into major issues at the most awkward of moments. You may decide to live with the situation if you have not too many interactions with the person concerned. Another option is to decide to be neutral in your reaction to the problem behaviour and behave as if it doesn't bother you. Even though relationships are strained if the difficult person provides you with what you want when you need it then you may be willing to overlook the problem behaviour. Sometimes a little forethought, diplomacy and tact will go a long way.
- **Redesign the job.** Some people may be difficult because they are bored with the job they have. Improve the situation by job simplification, job rotation, job enlargement, and job enrichment. Sometimes a job can be simplified through method study. Cumbersome procedures can be rationalised by reducing the number of forms

involved and by improving the methods and reducing the operations needed to do the work. Moving people around between different jobs can relieve boredom as they will learn new things, be confronted with new challenges, develop themselves further and meet new people. When people are removed from what they perceive to be an unpleasant work environment, their perspectives change and the problem behaviour may go away.

- **When everything else fails you may need to avail of mediation services** or in more extreme cases take disciplinary action such as transfer, demotion or dismissal to sort out the situation. Inaction is not appropriate in most situations as if ignored they tend to go from bad to worse.

1.8 PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD MANAGER

Personality plays a big part in the success of any manager. The acronym **PEACE** will help you remember some of the desired traits of a good manager:

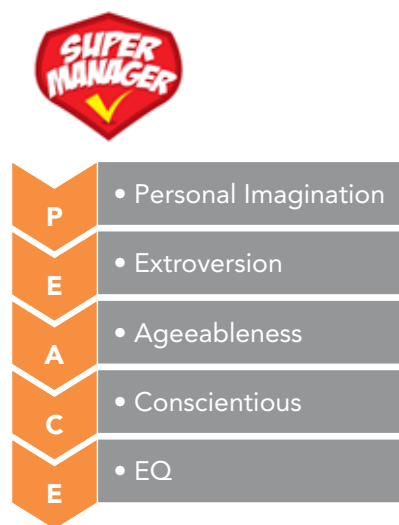


Fig. 1.7. Attributes of a Good Manager – PEACE Model

- **Personally imaginative.** A combination of creativity and logical thinking will help generate alternatives and solve problems. In these times of lifelong learning and continuous improvement a creative approach to solving problems is necessary. Creative people tend to be intellectually curious and enjoy new experiences such as getting involved in training and development opportunities and new learning situations.
- **Extroversion.** Management is about working with and through other people. Managers need to be sociable, approachable, gregarious, decisive and assertive. Interpersonal relationship, good communication and problem solving skills are a requisite to doing the job effectively. Introverts are more suited to research and

specialist type jobs, and people who are reserved, quiet and shy are unlikely to make successful managers.

- **Agreeableness.** Ideally managers should be empathic, good-natured and cooperative. Managers spend a lot of their time in the company of others so that it is important that they can get on with other people and be sensitive and responsive to their needs. When negotiating they should pursue a win-win rather than a win-lose approach. To be a successful manager you need to be politically aware and astute.
- **Conscientious.** Managers need to have a good work ethic if they are to be successful at their jobs. They should be dependable, reliable, careful, and thorough. Managers are hired to achieve desired results. They are paid to do a good job in an efficient and effective manner. They thus tend to be ambitious, competitive, goal oriented, energetic and hard working.
- **Emotional maturity.** Good managers are positive, optimistic, confident and resilient and are sensitive to their own needs and to the needs of others. They are able to handle stressful situations without getting agitated and solve interpersonal conflicts satisfactorily. They know how to control their own emotions and pacify the emotions of others. They have a strong sense of self-belief and have the resilience to bounce back from difficult situations.

"One of the great undiscovered joys of life comes from doing everything one attempts to the best of one's ability. There is a special sense of satisfaction, a pride in surveying such a work, a work which is rounded, full, exact, complete in its parts, which the superficial person who leaves his or her work in a slovenly, slipshod, half-finished condition, can never know. It is this conscientious completeness which turns any work into art. The smallest task well done becomes a miracle of achievement".

– Og Mandino

1.9 UNDERSTANDING PERSONALITY TYPES

An understanding of personality will help us become more effective managers as we become aware that different personalities require different approaches. Psychologists have researched personality and have come up with various models over the years. One of the most popular and useful is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). A brief overview of this model will help the manager to become aware of the importance of personality when dealing with people. The model presents four categories such as Extraversion-Introversion, Sensing-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving. These preferences result in 16 personality types. A type is a combination of the four preferences. We all exhibit these behaviours in different combinations and to different degrees. The MBTI is an instrument requiring a professional to administer and evaluate it.

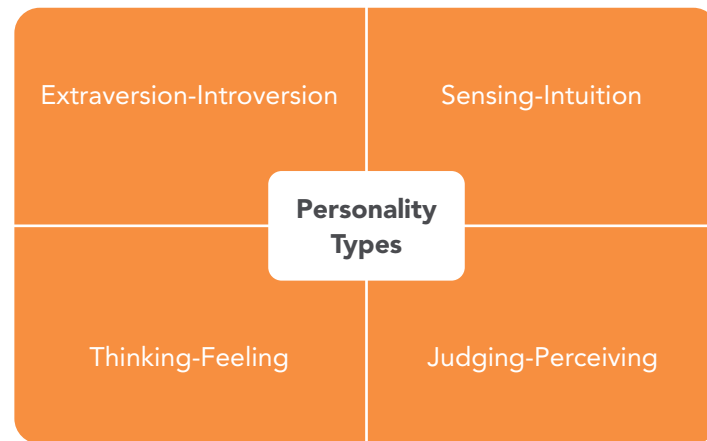


Fig. 1.8. Personality Types

1. ***Extraversion-Introversion.*** Extraverts like to focus on the outer world of people and things and are energised by them. They like interpersonal relationships and are action oriented. If they understand something they like to explain it to others. They enjoy working in teams. Extraverts like to respond to things quickly and tend to talk before they think things through thoroughly. They tend to be animated during a conversation and use a lot of body language. Introverts tend to look inwards at concepts, thoughts, beliefs, ideas and impressions. They like theories and abstract models and tend to think things through before they talk. They like frameworks to integrate and connect information so that it becomes meaningful. They can be sociable but are usually reserved and quiet and may be shy with strangers. They prefer concentration to interaction and are more comfortable when dealing with people on a one-to-one basis. They like to reflect on issues and to plan carefully before they take any action. They don't use much body language during conversation. People are both extraverted and introverted with one type dominant over the other. The dominant one is expressed in conscious behaviour.
2. ***Sensing-Intuition.*** This describes what people pay attention to and their preferred way of taking in information. Sensing people use all their senses such as sight, hearing, taste and touch and like detail and facts. They tend to focus on the here and now and on concrete information gained through their senses. They prefer organisation, systems and structure. They like the practical and to discover things for themselves. Intuitive people tend to focus on the future with a view to seeing patterns and possibilities. They like to see relationships between facts that they have collected. They are imaginative and like new ideas and stimulating assignments. They trust their hunches and like to see the big picture. They love variety and to be working on several projects at the same time. Their office environment is often untidy with their desk cluttered with files, books and magazines that they are currently working on.

3. **Thinking-Feeling.** This describes the preferred way of making decisions. Thinking people are logical and objective and so like to have the facts before making a decision. They like to discover cause and effect relationships. They appreciate visions, goals, and objectives, as they like to know where they are going and what they should be aiming for. Clear, precise objectives and action plans are the driving force for thinking people. They tend to be cold, detached and impersonal. This person's working environment is tidy and organised. Feeling people are value driven and emotion plays a significant part in their lives. They value interpersonal relationships and harmony with others and focus on human values and needs when making judgements or decisions. They like attending meetings and to work in teams. Their office environment tends to be personalised with family photos, certificates and group photos of staff adorning the wall. Some people are more dominant thinkers than feelers and vice versa.
4. **Judging-Perceiving.** Judging people like a planned and organised approach to life and are decisive, proactive and self-organised and driven by deadlines. They like to finish jobs, only want to know the essentials, and take action quickly. They like to be led by an organised time driven manager. Perceiving people prefer a flexible, spontaneous approach to life, and like to keep their options open. They are curious, adaptive and creative and tend to leave things to the last minute. They often start jobs that they find difficult to finish. They thus need to be managed and monitored to ensure that they get the job done on schedule. Deadlines keep perceptive people disciplined and on target.

1.10 MANAGING UPWARDS

Most managers are accountable to other managers but may be good at managing their own staff but poor at managing their own boss. As a manager you will need to acquire the skills of managing your boss as well as managing staff. This is important if you have ambitions to move up the career ladder. It is likely that your boss will determine if you get the next promotion or not and so it's important that the boss likes you. The following are some tips to manage your boss effectively.

- **Know the type of boss you're working for.** Study their management style, temperament, personality, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, and idiosyncrasies. Some managers like to be kept informed verbally while others prefer written reports and memoranda. Some managers are more outgoing than others. Find out what the preferences, priorities and goals of your boss are and help him achieve them. You are much more likely to get support for what you want to do if you support the boss's objectives and style of management.

- **Never gossip about or bad-mouth your boss.** If the shoe were on the other foot you certainly wouldn't like your staff to undermine your reputation by talking behind your back. Even if you have genuine concerns about the managerial competencies of your boss keep them to yourself. Nobody is perfect. So, learn to work around your boss's shortcomings and try to compensate for them. On the other hand, your boss will appreciate open and honest feedback. He will also depend on your knowledge and support to know what's going on in the workplace.
- **Build trust by being supportive, loyal and reliable.** Trust takes a long time to build up but can be destroyed instantly. Relationships are built on trust and once it disappears on either side, then the relationship is over. Don't argue aggressively with your boss if you value your career, as such behaviour is likely to be counterproductive. Be more diplomatic and sensitive in your approach if you have genuine concerns or disagreement about work issues.
- **Match your strengths to the boss's weaknesses.** Support your boss in every way possible and help him do his job successfully. Encourage your boss to delegate tasks to you that you're particularly competent to do. The boss, even if he doesn't show it, will appreciate your support.
- **Under-promise and over-deliver.** Customers appreciate when we meet their needs. Similarly, build up your reputation by delivering or over-delivering on your promises. People like people who do what they say they will do. They are particularly impressed with people who exceed expectations.
- **Focus on solutions rather than problems.** Never bring a problem to your boss without having thought out possible solutions first. Offer suggestions on how to fix immediate problems and how to avoid likely ones in the future. This gives you an opportunity to demonstrate problem solving and creative abilities. A good boss won't steal your ideas and will give you credit for them. You will be seen as lacking initiative if you are always running to your boss with problems without having thought out solutions.
- **Take every opportunity to make a good impression on your boss.** Use opportunities like presentations, chairing meetings, assignments, special projects and budgets to make your mark. On an everyday basis make sure your reports, letters, memos and emails are of a high standard.
- **Compliment your boss in a genuine way on his strengths and special expertise.** Likewise, don't be reluctant to accept compliments but instead be happy to get them. Accept them graciously rather than disagreeing with them.
- **Keep your boss informed on a management by exception basis,** by concentrating on the important rather than the routine. Your boss will not appreciate bad surprises. If the first he hears about a problem is on the management grapevine then be prepared for trouble. The boss does not want to be shown up in a poor light.

- **Get regular feedback from your boss on your performance.** Don't wait until the annual performance review. Have plenty of time to put things right if need be. Find out exactly what the boss's expectations for you are. What should your goals be and what will the boss hold you accountable for? How will your performance be measured? Make your career goals known to your boss.
- **Keep your boss informed about your successes.** Unsolicited written accolades from other managers or customers about a job well done should be forwarded to your boss and are sure to impress him. If you have acquired relevant job-related qualifications, let the boss know about them. This demonstrates that you are a lifelong learner and are investing time to acquire skills to further the goals and success of the company as well as your career.
- **Build a career network with other senior managers** so that you become known and respected in the organisation as a person with great knowledge and expertise and who gets things done. Take every opportunity to help them when the opportunity arises. Your reputation for helping others and getting things done will be enhanced throughout the organisation.
- **Find a mentor.** Mentoring is accepted as a successful way of advancing your career. Make sure that the mentor has a compatible personality so that you both get along with each other. They can coach and guide you towards the right jobs for you in the organisation. Many prominent and famous people attribute their success to a good mentor.

"If the boss is a jerk, get over it. First of all, don't you think there's a good chance that your boss's boss knows what's going on? If so, just keep your head down and do the work. Usually, if you put in maximum effort and produce excellent results, someone in the company is going to take notice. Either you will get promoted or your jerky boss will get the heave-ho. It happens all the time".

– Suze Orman

1.11 SUMMARY

Practising good interpersonal skills is the hallmark of a good manager. Managers need to create and sell a vision of the future to their employees. Good managers earn the trust of their employees by keeping their word and staying totally loyal to their staff. They expect their staff to stay loyal to them in return.

The Johari Window will help you understand yourself by understanding how others perceive you. Build rapport with others by being pleasant, smiling and adopting positive body

language. Understand the importance of emotional intelligence and practise the skills of empathy. Build rapport with employees by being sensitive to their needs, remembering their names and taking an interest in their welfare. Good managers need to be both creative and logical. A manager needs to know how to handle difficult people. Different personalities need to be handled in different ways.

Managing upwards the relationship with your boss is just as important as managing downwards with your staff. Treat the boss the same way, as you would like your staff to treat you. Be loyal, faithful and supportive to your boss and they are likely to do the same.

1.12 FIVE STEPS TO IMPROVING YOUR IPR SKILLS

1. Generate trust by keeping your promises, supporting your staff and being impartial and loyal to your employees.
2. Be courteous, friendly, approachable and pleasant at all times. Good manners cost nothing but will win you the respect and regard of staff. Apologise when you make a mistake or do something inappropriate, by saying you're sorry.
3. Actively manage relationships downward with staff as well as upwards with your boss. Take a genuine interest in the welfare of staff. Find out and try to meet their wishes, concerns, ambitions and needs. Empower staff by encouraging them to make decisions, get things done and take responsibility for results.
4. Practise influencing techniques such as reciprocation, liking, authority, assertion and win-win solutions. Memorise the acronym **AMICABLE** and adopt the suggested behaviours.
5. Build rapport by remembering people's names, smiling, maintaining eye contact, mirroring the other person's behaviour and empathising.

2 COMMUNICATION

What are the features of good communication?

How can I improve my listening skills?

How can I ask good questions?

What is body language?

How can I use body language to improve communication?

2.1 FEATURES OF COMMUNICATION

The communication process consists of a listener, a speaker, a message and a context. We will first of all deal with the listener. Some experts maintain that we spend about 80 per cent of our conscious hours communicating, with listening accounting for 50 per cent of this time. In other words, we spend about 40 per cent of our conscious hours listening.

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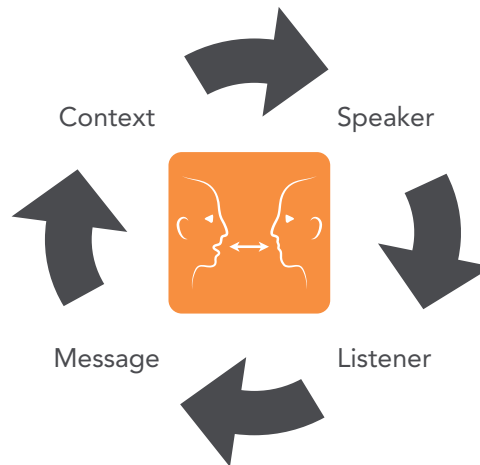


Fig. 2.1. Communication Model

SPEAKER

The speech rate is between 125 to 175 words per minute (wpm). The thinking rate is between 400 to 800 wpm and so we have plenty of spare capacity for distraction and mental doodling. Use this time constructively to summarise and prioritise key points in our mind rather than to daydream or thinking up what to say next. Speak within the normal range, as other people find it difficult to listen effectively and concentrate fully on what you are trying to say if you speak at less than 100 wpm. Slow speech creates boredom in the listener. Similarly, it is difficult to follow those who speak too quickly because we become overwhelmed and overloaded with information.

Accent, tone and emotion can all affect delivery. There is nothing wrong with accent provided you pronounce words carefully and distinctly. In fact, different accents can add colour, variety and interest to a conversation. If you speak in a monotone voice you will surely put your listener to sleep while a conversation delivered with appropriate emotion will enhance the credibility and conviction of the words spoken. An expert speaker will get more attention and carry more influence and credibility than a non-expert.

Listener

Communication does not take place until it is received and understood. Arouse the interest of your listener and hold their attention by making the message relevant to their needs. The role of listening in communication is elaborated on below.

MESSAGE

The structure of your message should be clear, logical and coherent and, therefore, think before you speak and pick the most appropriate words to get the message across. People are all different in the way they perceive the world, so vary the words used to suit the needs of the person spoken to. Remember the most important letter in the word COMMUNICATION is **U** (you) i.e. the other person. Unfortunately, it is often ignored.

Keep your sentences short and simple, as long-winded ambiguous sentences will challenge the concentration, patience and attention span of the listener. A slow delivery will aid understanding if the topic of conversation is complex.

"To effectively communicate, we must realise that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."

– Anthony Robbins

CONTEXT

The environment in which you speak will have some influence on the way the message is received. A room that is too hot or too cold will adversely affect the concentration levels of the listener. Similarly, a room that is stuffy and lacks proper ventilation will induce sleep rather than alertness.

Noise will interfere with the capacity to hear. In fact, distractions of any sort will lessen the impact of the message. Uncomfortable seating is not helpful and may induce backache. Seating arrangements may also detract from or facilitate the message. Seats in rows discourage involvement while those in horseshoe shape encourage interaction.

2.2 SUCCESSFUL VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The following tips if practised will help you become a successful communicator. Verbal communication should be:

- **Formed in the imagery, language and experience of the target audience** to achieve the greatest impact. The words used must evoke images in the minds of the audience so that they can visualise easily what you mean in their heads. The appropriate use of metaphors, analogies, practical examples and stories should help this process.
- **Tailored to meet the characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, concerns and values of the target audience.** This is essential if you want to win them over to your point of view. You must address their concerns and convince them of the merits of your case if you want to win support for any alternative point of view.
- **Understood.** The structure must be logical with a start, middle and end and the language used concrete, clear, concise and simple. Avoid abbreviations, technical jargon and acronyms or if thought necessary explain them as they are introduced. Abbreviations and technical jargon is a form of shorthand and in appropriate circumstances can be useful. In inappropriate circumstances it can be misleading, confusing and unhelpful.
- **Believed.** What you say must be credible and spoken with sincerity and conviction. If you don't believe something yourself it will be difficult to convince others of its merits. In this context the body language should be aligned with the words. If one contradicts the other, your message will not be accepted.
- **Remembered.** Short sentences are remembered better than long ones. People remember the start and end of a speech while the middle parts are less well remembered unless you make them unique and outstanding. Controversial issues are remembered better. Repeating key points help people remember them better. Psychologists maintain that you need to hear key points at least three times before they make an impression and enter long-term memory. If what we say touches the emotions of the audience it is more likely to be imprinted and remembered.
- **Acted upon.** If the message is not acted upon by the recipient then it fails. We must implement the message by walking the talk! Words reinforced by action are understood and remembered better. We learn by doing and living out the words as experience.

Watch What You Say!

"In the course of your conversation each and every day,
Think twice, try to be careful of what you have to say;
Your remarks may be picked up by someone's ear,
You may be surprised at what some people think they hear.
Things that you innocently say, or try to portray,
Can be changed, and greatly exaggerated along the way;
Many stories change for the worse as they are retold,
So, try to keep any questionable remarks 'on hold'.
May I give all of you some very sound advice?
When you speak of others, say something nice;
Try to say good things, regardless of who is around,
If you have nothing good to say, don't utter a sound.
You may find that an innocent remark, in the end,
May lose you a close and valued friend".

– Henry Lessor

SPEAKING

- **Before.** Establish credibility. As previously mentioned this is established by being perceived as an expert and belief in what you say. Consider your objectives and know the outcome you want to receive and state the benefits for you and the other person. This creates an aura of expectation.
- **During.** State your objectives. Vary your talk until you achieve the desired outcome. The meaning of communication is the response you get. If it's not working try something else. Listen to views and be prepared to change yours if necessary. Get the other's agreement. Pay attention to how the other person is listening and study body language to gauge their reaction. Illustrate the points with stories, analogies and examples. Connect emotionally with the other person to build rapport. People are influenced and led by their emotions.
- **Concluding.** Feedback is a most important aspect of communication. Verify by getting feedback that your message has been received and understood as intended. Express genuine appreciation and acknowledge the other's contribution.

2.3 LISTENING

MEANING OF COMMUNICATION

We don't need to learn how to hear, as it is an innate physiological capacity. However, we do need to learn how to listen because it is a psychological process. Listening is the process of receiving, interpreting and understanding what is said. Most people feel that listening comes naturally but this is not true and we must practise the art of listening to become effective listeners. In fact, some companies run courses for their managers in listening skills. Communication experts maintain that 10 per cent of communication is words, 30 per cent consists of sound, and as much as 60 per cent consists of body language. Managers spend about 75 per cent of their waking hours communicating.

When you listen, it takes up about 55 per cent of your time; when you speak 23 per cent, and when you read 13 per cent and write 9 per cent. Thus, we spend 78 per cent of our time listening or speaking to others. Some managers are task oriented while others are people oriented. They are likely to be better communicators and spend more of their time interacting with people.

A person with a good vocabulary tends to be a good listener as they can understand and assimilate a greater range of words and concepts. They have also developed good concentration skills and can identify the key elements of a conversation and organise them into appropriate categories. A highly motivated person will remember more of the content spoken. People who are extremely tired and agitated make poor listeners. Generally, introverts are better listeners than extroverts. Some people only want to talk about themselves or about their own interests and these people make poor listeners. We tend to listen more carefully to people of high status because we perceive them as having higher credibility and greater expertise and thus worthy of our attention.

"The average person looks without seeing, listens without hearing, touches without feeling, eats without tasting, moves without physical awareness...and talks without thinking."

– Leonardo da Vinci

THE EAR MODEL

The **EAR** model is a useful acronym for effective listening and succinctly summarises what we have discussed so far:

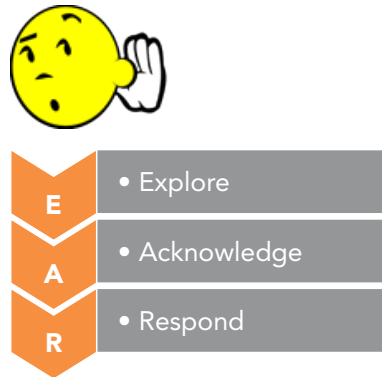


Fig. 2.2. EAR Model

- **Explore** the issue using open-ended questions such as “What?”, “Why?”, “When?”, “How?”, “Where?” and “Who?”. Observe body language such as head nods, facial expressions such as frowns and levels of eye contact to gauge the meaning of the total message.
- **Acknowledge** the message by sensitively paraphrasing and summarising what you think the speaker has said and wait for confirmation. This keeps the conversation focused and on track.
- **Respond**. This is what you say back to the speaker after you have confirmed that you have received the message correctly. This will then encourage the speaker to continue and engage in dialogue.

When listening most people spend their time responding. Instead spend more time exploring, observing body language, and acknowledging for greater understanding.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening is the most important part of communication so mentally prepare to listen. Active listening and paying attention doesn't mean agreeing to everything that is said but means acknowledging the speaker's point of view even if you disagree with it. You should listen to understand not just to respond. Focus carefully on what the other person is saying while critically evaluating what they say. It includes the listener making suggestions regarding what the speaker is trying to say.

Listeners must give the speaker an opportunity to agree or disagree with their interpretation of what is being said. Active listening includes restating, summarising, paraphrasing and clarifying to check understanding. Reflect back feelings as well as the essence of the content. Simultaneously monitor body language to assess the meaning of the total message so that you take account of both the verbal and non-verbal content of the message.

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words."

– Rachel Naomi Remen

The acronym **HARNESS** summarises the essentials of active listening and will enable you to easily recall the elements:

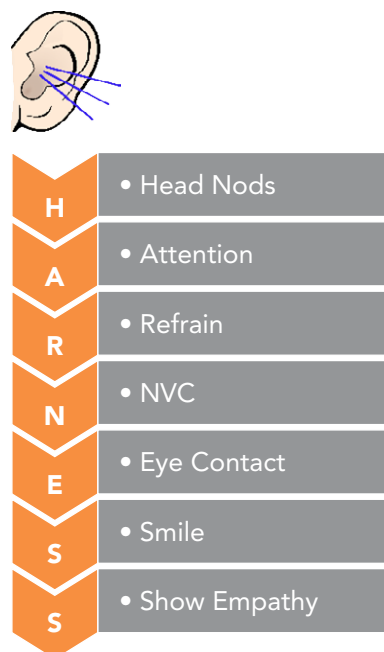


Fig. 2.3. Active Listening Model (**HARNESS**)

- **H**ead nods visibly show that you are actively listening and interested in what the speaker is saying. Some people just sit there expressionless and motionless, resulting in the speaker not knowing whether the listener is interested or not in what he is saying.
- **A**ttention. Lean forward to demonstrate that you are actively engaged and concerned. The body language here shows the listener is positively interested and alive. People crave and value the attention of others. The most important thing we can give to other people is our attention.

- **Refrain** from distracting mannerisms such as playing with your hair, ears, pen or watch. Some people walk up and down like a caged animal. I witnessed our Finance Director giving a speech while he walked up and down and habitually and continually jingled the coins in his pocket. Of course, this was a major distraction for those trying to concentrate on the speech and listen. These mannerisms are so common and usually the speaker is so engrossed in the presentation that he is unaware that it is happening.
- **NVC (Non-verbal communication).** Don't interrupt the speaker but use your posture and gestures to show interest. Maintain a comfortable social distance. A distance of 2.5 to 3 feet is often suggested but this can vary in the context of culture or the relationship with the speaker.
- **Eye contact.** Remember that too much eye contact can be intrusive or intimidating. On the other hand, too little eye contact can be interpreted as boredom, shiftiness or lack of interest and confidence. To maintain a balance, look occasionally away or at the other person's forehead.
- **Smile.** A smile lights up your face and encourages the other person to smile back. A smile demonstrates that you are friendly, approachable, likeable and pleasant and interested in the other person's concerns. A smile relaxes the situation and costs nothing but reaps enormous benefits.
- **Show empathy** by mirroring the speaker's tone, facial expressions, posture and gestures. Reflect back the speaker's thoughts and emotions in a non-judgemental way. For example, by saying, "you sound very worried." Also reflect back the meaning of what you think has been said to the speaker. This is not necessarily what the speaker intended to say. This gives the speaker an opportunity to clarify and explain what they actually meant.

2.4 FACILITATIVE LISTENING

Facilitative listening like active listening is a useful skill for a manager to develop when dealing with others especially teams. We hear with our ears but we listen with our minds and hearts, and so we need to listen to other's concerns, moods and feelings and react appropriately. Facilitative listening is listening attentively to speakers while being aware of how other people are listening or not listening in the group. This requires a great deal of concentration and awareness. The following are the various types of listening used in facilitation:

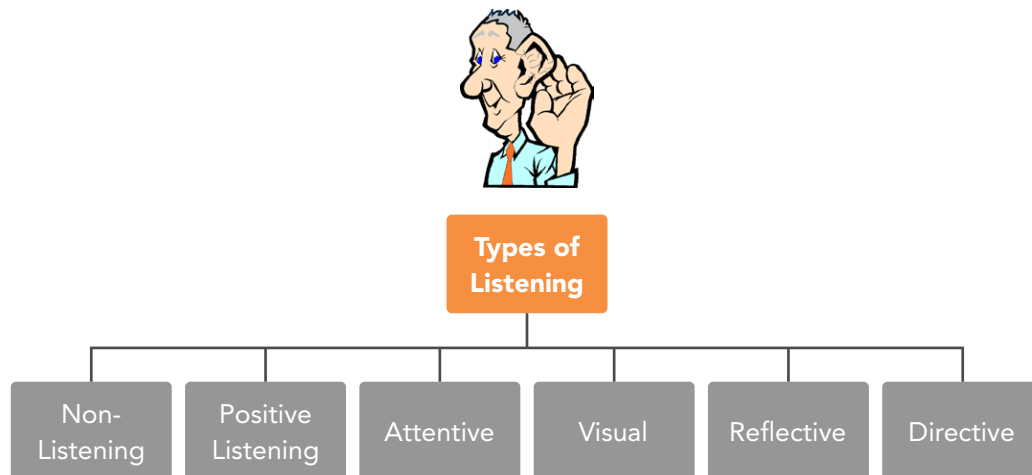


Fig. 2.4. Facilitative Listening Model

- **Non-listening.** This is where we are distracted with our thoughts and do not receive the message. Many people are so self-obsessed in thinking up what they are going to say next that they fail to hear what the other person is saying.
- **Passive listening.** We hear the words but not the message. The other person is doing all the talking as in a monologue and so we are not engaged and may be only listening at a superficial rather than a deep level.
- **Judgemental.** Our prejudices and bias may affect the interpretation of the message. For example, you may have great difficulty listening to someone expressing racist or sexist remarks particularly if these views are anathema to you. As a facilitator your role is to listen attentively and put your personal feelings temporarily on hold.
- **Attentive.** We are focused on the message by engaging with the words as well as the non-verbal signals. It can be very demanding to listen to what people are saying as well as observing their gestures, movements, posture and tone of voice simultaneously. Nevertheless, this is the way facilitators should listen. Our ability to listen attentively is constrained by the time span of attention which is not more than 30 minutes and for most people considerably less.
- **Visual.** This is where the words are unspoken and we have only the non-verbal cues to help us interpret what is going on. The eyes are the windows of the soul, and so observing the eyes of others can provide their reactions, such as interest or disinterest, belief or disbelief to what we are saying. Maintaining eye contact with the speaker also lets them know that you are actively hearing what they say.
- **Reflective.** We restate the message in our own words as feedback that the message has been received and understood. This can then be confirmed or corrected by the speaker. Reflective listening has to be done in an impartial and sensitive way so that the speaker does not feel that you are trying to manipulate words. This skill is acquired through practise.

- **Directive.** This is where the listener tries to influence or shape what the speaker is saying without being intrusive or domineering. Directive listeners may add their own interpretation and emphasis or add something that the speaker did not intend or say. Facilitators need to be aware when this is happening and give the speaker an opportunity to clarify the situation or repeat exactly what they said.

"Through sharing our thoughts, we inspire one another, share visions and create the future. We discover common values and build commitment. By thinking through and analysing how, we determine how we can do things together."

– Ruth Hild



The advertisement for e-learning for kids features a large central image of a smiling woman leaning over a laptop to assist two children, a boy and a girl. To the right, two smaller circular inset images show children engaged in learning activities: one group of three girls looking at a book, and another group of children working on laptops. The background is a vibrant yellow with orange and white abstract shapes. In the top left corner is the e-learning for kids logo, which consists of a colorful grid of squares. A green oval on the right side contains three bullet points. At the bottom, a text block provides information about the foundation, its mission, and its achievements. A green call-to-action button is located at the bottom right, with a hand cursor icon pointing towards it.

e-learning for kids

- The number 1 MOOC for Primary Education
- Free Digital Learning for Children 5-12
- 15 Million Children Reached

About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFK! An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.

BENEFITS

The benefits of listening include the following:

For managers

- You become more thoughtful, observant and insightful. Study and draw conclusions about the words, reactions and feelings from the body language of others though it may be difficult to talk and observe at the same time.
- The reason we have two ears and one mouth is that we should listen twice as much as we speak. People learn more by spending more time listening than talking. In practice this is a rare skill.
- Others will like you more if you listen more. It is probably the most important aspect of winning friends and influencing people and the most neglected. Listeners are likely to show greater understanding and acceptance of the needs of others if they listen more.
- Improved interpersonal relationships. Employees want to be heard, understood, respected, accepted, and valued and want to be treated like unique human beings rather than automatons.
- Effective negotiation cannot be achieved if managers fail to listen carefully and find out what employees' really want. Industrial relations problems are often exacerbated by failure on the part of one party to listen actively and effectively to the concerns of the other.
- When giving advice or instruction to staff, managers who listen for feedback that their message is being received and understood prevent misunderstandings and mistakes from recurring in the future.
- There is a health benefit of listening. When we talk, our blood pressure goes up. However, when we listen it goes down and so listening is good for your cardiovascular health. These days listening is a very rare skill and those who practise it win the respect and admiration of others.

"Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible...the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family."

– Virginia Satir

For staff

- Greater employee satisfaction. Managers must spend more time listening if they want to find out about the concerns, feelings and grievances of staff. Managers will also learn more by tapping into the expertise of staff. By doing so they will reduce staff stress and frustration and avert conflict. Employees who have direct and frequent communication with managers feel more involved and are less likely to file grievances, complain or go on strike.
- Employees who are listened to are flattered by the attention they receive. Managers can keep the conversation ticking over by listening and occasionally asking pertinent probing questions rather than dominating the conversation. Listening conveys attention and interest and encourages employees to share information, which in normal circumstances they might be hesitant to do. Use silence as appropriate to tempt others to speak as most people don't like a vacuum in a conversation and will do anything to jump in and fill it.

"I need thinking time when someone asks me a searching question. I wonder why it seems to be so uncomfortable for many people to wait through the silence. People of all ages have deep feelings, and if we have patience to wait through the silence, it's often astounding what people will tell us."

– Fred Rogers

2.5 BARRIERS TO LISTENING

There are mental and personal barriers to listening.

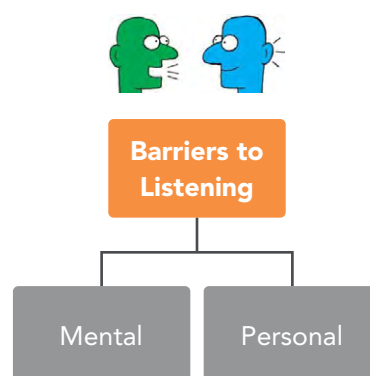


Fig. 2.5. Barriers to Listening

MENTAL BARRIERS

- **Mind reading.** Some people engage in mind reading due to lack of trust. They imagine they know what others are thinking and feeling about them, and so make assumptions, anticipate what they are going to say and jump to conclusions. In fact, it is impossible to know what other people are thinking, and these misconceptions can hinder true listening. Some people assume if they know people a long time they know what's going on in their minds. This is untrue. If you want to find out what people are thinking ask them!
- **Mental set.** Our perceptions are unique and are influenced by our experience, attitudes, values, feelings and education. We like others to confirm and support rather than to challenge our long-held views, beliefs and attitudes. Perceptions are highly selective and subjective and say as much about us as about how we feel about others. We all use stereotypes to understand people, as these are useful shorthand devices but can inadvertently show prejudice and create misunderstanding.
- **Blocking.** People filter or block out what they don't want to hear such as criticism. We all like to hear only nice and complimentary things about ourselves. Some people pre-empt a discussion by having their mind made up in advance. If you prejudge or evaluate what people are saying, then you are less likely to respect and listen to their point of view.
- **Distractions.** It is impossible to listen to two people at the same time. It may be necessary to put the phone on hold so that you give the person your complete attention. How many of us have made presentations to managers who are continually interrupted and called outside the door by phone calls and 'urgent messages' from their secretaries. It is impossible to listen if attention is elsewhere!
- **Rate of speech.** We speak at between 125 and 175 words per minute but think at between 400 and 800 words per minute. In between, there is a lot of opportunity for distraction, mental doodling and daydreaming. It is also very difficult to listen and concentrate on a slow (below 100 wpm) or a very fast speaker (above 300 wpm). A slow rate of speech will bore us while a fast rate of speech will overwhelm us.
- **Bias.** Making assumptions, jumping to conclusions and having fixed views are all barriers to listening. Suspend judgement to open your mind to other's point of view. Disabled or old people often complain that they are patronised or talked down to.
- **Blocking out the message.** If you feel very strong and passionate about a topic or fanatical about certain issues then your emotions and feelings may distort or block out the message. Hence religious fundamentalists and fanatics are not open to reason or other viewpoints.

PERSONAL BARRIERS

- **Lack of attention.** You may be preoccupied with other issues or spend time rehearsing in your mind what you're going to say next. The presence or absence of anxiety or stress will also adversely affect the level of attention.
- **Using complicated words and sentences** will discourage people to listen to you. The content and language must be suited to the educational level, background and experience of the listener. The most persuasive message is one that is direct, clear, concrete and simple and focused on one idea. Multiple ideas in the same sentence are difficult to follow.
- **Inappropriate body language.** These could include a deadpan facial expression, no eye contact and no head nods. A bored look, yawning and paying attention to other matters while the speaker is talking demonstrate disengagement and lack of interest. Body language should be congruent with the spoken word.
- **Lack of motivation.** If the speaker fails to arouse your interest and grab your attention or doesn't address your needs and concerns then you will not be motivated to listen. People who have a keen interest in the topic spoken are more likely to be motivated to listen.
- **Interrupting others** when they speak by assuming that you know what they're going to say next. You can't listen and speak at the same time. Also, finishing the other person's sentences can be very irritating and patronising for the other party as it undermines the other person's ego and confidence and hinders the building of rapport.
- **Men and women communicate differently.** Men tend to focus on power and status issues while women like to focus on interpersonal relationships and emotional issues. Men like to talk about sport and their achievements, and about technical things such as cars and personal computers. This can lead to misunderstandings between men and women if we are unaware of the gender preferences.
- **Monotone.** It is very difficult to listen to someone who speaks in a dull monotone, or who mumbles and does not project their voice. A monotonous voice induces lack of interest and sleep.

"Good communication does not mean that you have to speak perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs. It isn't about slickness. Simple and clear go a long way."

– John Kotter

2.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF LISTENING

Being aware of these will help you practise the appropriate type of listening. The key points are recalled by the acronym **DECADE**:

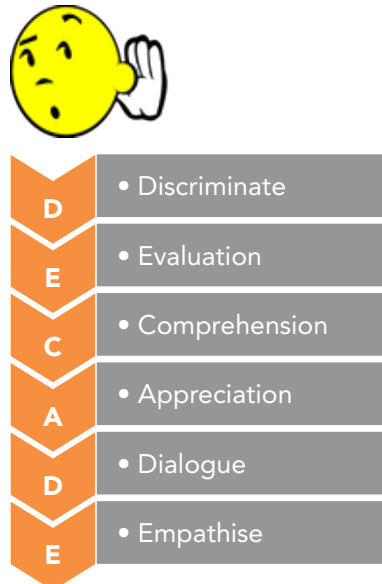


Fig. 2.6. Types of Listening Model (DECADE)

- **Discriminate.** Scan, monitor and check to differentiate between facts, opinions and assumptions. Study the person's facial expression to see if what we are saying has caused shock, surprise, disagreement or acceptance.
- **Evaluation.** To make sound judgements we need to critically weight up the evidence supporting an argument before making up our mind. Use this type of critical listening when buying something from a salesperson, when negotiating a salary increase or when attending a meeting. We listen for the central propositions being made and the strengths and weaknesses of an argument.
- **Comprehension.** Here you listen for the main facts and overall themes to understand what is being said. This type of listening is needed when listening to new information or to a lecture or conducting a fact-finding interview. We also use this type of listening when listening to TV documentaries or news programmes on the radio.
- **Appreciation.** You listen with appreciation when listening to classical music for relaxation or to a good presentation by a renowned speaker on a subject that you are keenly interested in. Hold up the speaker as a role model and aspire to their style and method of delivery.
- **Dialogue.** Dialogue is a two-way conversation as opposed to a monologue which is one-way. The emphasis is on sharing views, giving and receiving feedback and building rapport. Dialogue is needed to arrive at a mutually acceptable position. This type of listening is essential when negotiating as the needs and goals of each side must be explored and acknowledged.

- **Empathise.** You empathise when you listen sincerely with your heart, to better understand thoughts, emotions, beliefs, feelings and concerns. In this type of listening you show unconditional positive regard for the other person, meaning that you accept them in a non-judgemental way, warts and all.

"One of the basic causes for all the trouble in the world today is that people talk too much and think too little. They act impulsively without thinking. I always try to think before I talk."

– Margaret Chase Smith

FOUR TYPES OF LISTENERS

Galanes et al (2000) reports that there are four types of listener:

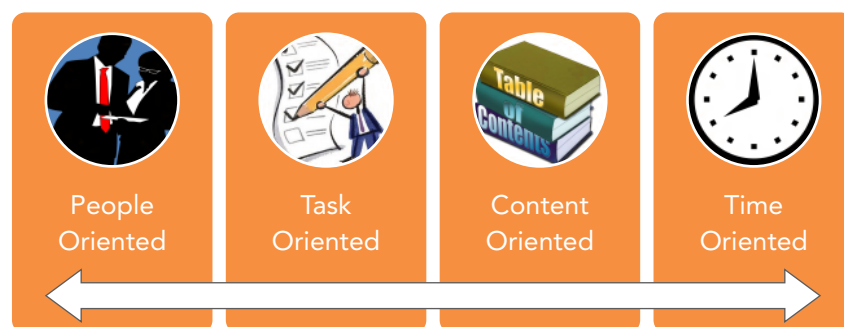


Fig. 2.7. Four Types of Listeners

1. **People-oriented listeners.** They are concerned for others' feelings and needs but can be distracted from the task owing to their focus on emotional issues. They are the people we seek out when we need emotional support and an empathic listening ear.
2. **Task-oriented listeners.** These are practical people who are mainly concerned with getting the job done and may be insensitive to the emotional needs of others. Thus, they tend to be impatient with people who don't stick to the point.
3. **Content-oriented listeners.** These are logical people who enjoy analysing information and interpreting things literally. They love detail and like to hear all sides of an argument and thus make good mediators. They can be slow to make decisions, as they prefer to have established the facts and gathered all the information first.
4. **Time-oriented listeners.** They like to get things done on time by practising good time management skills. They are impatient with people who are disorganised, waste time and can't seem to make up their minds. They are prone to jump to conclusions before they have heard all the facts and information.

"He who asks is a fool for five minutes, but he who does not ask remains a fool forever."

– Chinese Proverb

2.7 ASKING QUESTIONS

Employees have answers; so, ask them questions if you want to tap into their unique knowledge, experience, skill and expertise. Be non-judgemental to get the best response. When you ask questions, communication is purposeful, interactive and dynamic. A question is only as good as the response you get. If you are not getting the response you want maybe you should reformulate the question or ask a different question. The answers you get are determined by the type of question you ask and the words you use. A pause before or after a question encourages maximum response.

Questioning is a skill. So, pay attention to the structure of your question and the pauses you use. To get the right answer you must ask the right question. Questioning involves five steps:

1. Determine the information or additional information you need.
2. Select the right type of question.
3. Ask the question.
4. Evaluate the response.
5. Take the appropriate action required.

"I keep six honest serving men
They taught me all I knew
Their names are what and why and when
And how and where and who."

– Rudyard Kipling

2.8 FACILITATION QUESTIONS

Questions can be used to involve people, create interaction and discover information. Asking provocative questions can help the team reach the right answer. There are many types of questions including the following:

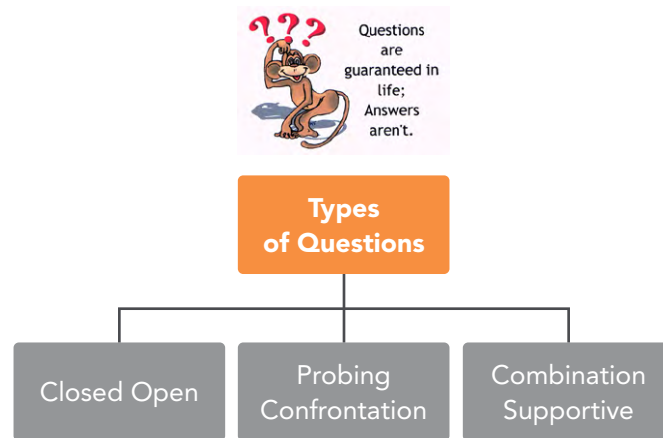


Fig. 2.8. Types of Questions

- **Closed.** Closed questions encourage a specific response and are used to control the conversation. They give the inquisitor control by encouraging a yes/no response or a restricted answer and are useful in fact finding, research or selection interviews. In a research situation answers will be easier to code and classify for statistical analysis. When time is limited and you need to elicit specific information the closed question is the preferred approach. Leading and direct questions are types of closed questions. Lawyers and inquisitors use leading questions to lead the accused into expected answers. Managers and interviewers use direct questions to get specific information. For example, “who was your last manager?”
- **Open.** Open questions encourage people to open up, discuss and explore issues. These invite self-disclosure and are used to encourage people to talk by exploring options, expressing opinions, attitudes, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. The respondent has greater control to shape the conversation in these situations while the questioner has more time to listen and observe. Discovery questions are a type of open question to enable the questioner to investigate subjects.
- **Probing** or clarification questions can be used to expand on or clarify issues. A clarification question tries to make clear what the speaker has said. It may help the speaker reframe the issue so that it is clearly understood and not misinterpreted. The ability to probe insightfully is at the core of effective questioning. Clarify issues by asking the question “what exactly do you mean?” Seek justification for issues by asking the question “how have you arrived at that conclusion?” Determine relevance by asking the question “how is this pertinent to the discussion?” or look for elaboration or extension by asking such questions as “go on and tell me more.” Clarification questions can be either open or direct.
- **Confrontation.** This question is used to confront issues by trying to gain a clear understanding of what is happening by bringing it out into the open rather than sweeping it under the carpet. They tend to be direct and to the point.

- **Combination.** This is where you move the group forward by asking a combination of open and closed questions rather than by giving directions. Some people use a funnel sequence, going from open to closed questions as appropriate. In other words, they start with the broader aspects of the topic and narrow down to the specifics. Less frequently they may use an inverted funnel. Here they go from a narrow perspective and then widen out to more general issues. Managers should be aware of the benefits of using open or closed questions and the funnel and inverted funnel approaches.
- **Supportive.** Supportive questions boost the team's morale and self-esteem by providing them with the encouragement, motivation and confidence to continue with what they are doing. These are used to encourage speakers to elaborate and explore issues further.

"All new and original thought begins with a question, which leads to an exploration."

– Dawna Markova

ADVANTAGES OF ASKING QUESTIONS

- They improve understanding by providing additional information or clarifying a situation. It is surprising how much people will tell you if you only ask the right questions, in the right place, at the right time and in the right way.
- They encourage others to communicate more concisely and clearly and keep a conversation going. Asking questions is an art and keeping conversations going is part of that art, as otherwise conversations may die a sudden death and be extremely difficult to revive.
- They foster relationships and self-esteem through interaction. Employees will value the fact that the manager is taking the trouble to understand exactly what they mean by asking questions to explain and elaborate on the situation further.

2.9 BODY LANGUAGE

Verbal communication and body language are intertwined in our everyday interactions and form a total package to help us understand others. Body language can replace, complement, modify or contradict the spoken word. It includes the look or expression on our face, the frown on our face, the glint in our eyes, our hand gestures and the tension in our bodies. It can be considered under two headings: vocal and non-vocal. Vocal is verbal body language and concerns speech such as volume, tone, rate and accent. Non-vocal is got to do with conveying feelings and language such as expressions, gestures and movements.

VOCAL BODY LANGUAGE

Vocal body language can be speech volume, tone, pitch, rate and accent. The acronym **STRAP** will help you remember the key points:

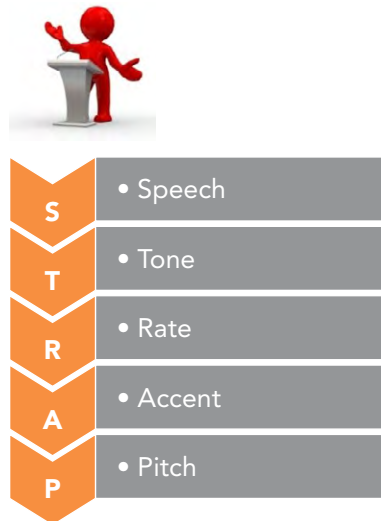


Fig. 2.9. Vocal Body Language

- **Speech.** Vary the volume for effect. A louder voice is seen as confident, assertive, authoritative, and commanding attention. A soft voice is seen as shy, anxious, diffident and unassertive.
- **Tone.** Tone of voice is an important indicator of our emotional state and may indicate whether we are angry, sad, disinterested or happy. It can also indicate our attitude towards another person such as approval or disapproval, acceptance or annoyance, friendship, resentment or antagonism.
- **Rate.** If you speak too fast you are less likely to be understood as you may be indistinct and overload the mental capacity of the listener. On the other hand, if you speak too slowly you will put undue demands on their concentration abilities. Use the pause to naturally slow down your talk and collect your thoughts. A pause replaces annoying non-words meaningless fillers like “uh”, “um”, “like” and “you know” and gives you an opportunity to take a relaxing breath.
- **Accent.** Accents may convey status. However, an affected accent can sound patronising and insincere and undermine the credibility of the speaker. Accents can be used to identify social class or where a person comes from. For example, the upper class may have a very distinctive and grand accent. Similarly, college educated people usually speak better and more fluently than people without this advantage. However, there is nothing wrong with a local accent and in fact, can be very attractive, provided you pronounce your words clearly and can be understood.
- **Pitch.** Flat, unmodulated pitch can mean someone is sad, while a high pitch can mean that they are tense, irritated or distressed. Variations in pitch can be a source

of annoyance to the listener. Good speakers vary the inflexion, pitch and volume to put variety, interest and excitement into their voice. Emphasise key points you want listeners to remember. It's important to control how you end your sentences. Raising the pitch of the voice at the end of a sentence makes it sound like a question while a slight lowering of pitch at the end of a sentence makes it like a statement. Make sentences sound like statements in order to strengthen your message.

NON-VOCAL BODY LANGUAGE

The face and eyes are the most revealing parts of the face in terms of body language. The eyes are often referred to as the mirror of the soul. Non-vocal body language may convey feelings and attitudes. Action speaks louder than words. However, body language can have different meanings in different cultures. Non-vocal body language includes facial expressions, gestures, movements, posture and personal appearance:

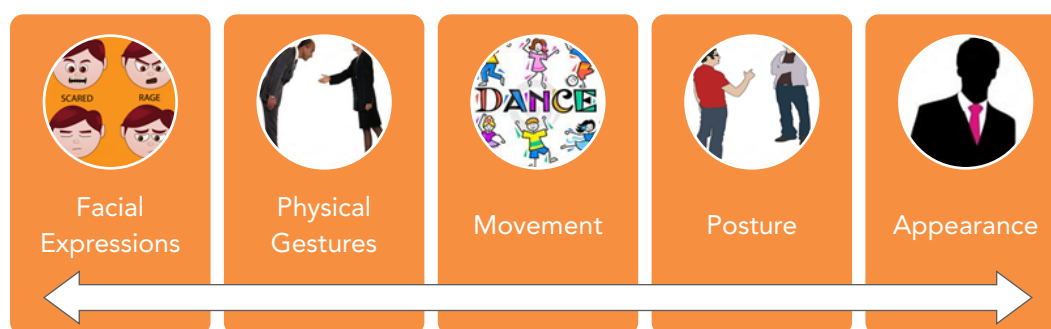


Fig. 2.10. Non-Vocal Body Language

- **Facial expressions.** These display happiness, delight, liking, interest, surprise, boredom, anger, fear, rage, sadness and disgust. The face reveals how you feel about what you're saying. A smile may indicate great happiness or pleasure. A frown may indicate great annoyance, anxiety, irritation or puzzlement.
- **Physical gestures** like a head nod, a handshake and touching the persons elbow or shoulder can display interest, affection, concern, warmth, friendship and agreement. Politicians in particular when they are shaking hands also touch the other persons elbow or shoulder as a show of friendship, acceptance and solidarity.
- **Movement.** You can use your hands to emphasise or express a point. Keeping your hands stiffly by the side or stuck in your pockets can create the impression that you are wooden, insecure or distant. Doodling with a pen can be a sign of boredom, but it might also indicate concentration.
- **Posture** can display confidence or a lack thereof. Arms open can indicate a desire for closeness, engagement and involvement. Closed arms can indicate the opposite.

Poor posture such as slouching may be interpreted as a lack of confidence or interest while an erect posture creates the opposite impression. A tense and rigid posture may show you are anxious and nervous and not fully in control. A casual posture at a job interview may be seen as disinterest, lack of respect and commitment, casualness or complacency and may therefore prove to be counterproductive.

- **Personal appearance.** The way you dress can say a lot about you. The occupation or status of a person is often gauged by how they are dressed. A well-dressed manager with a relaxed commanding presence reflects ease, confidence, credibility, competence and charisma. In a formal situation a casually dressed person may be perceived as disinterested, disrespectful and too informal. So, dress appropriate to the situation. Being overdressed or underdressed in comparison to others may make them feel uncomfortable.

"It's a mistake to think we listen only with our ears. It's much more important to listen with the mind, the eyes, the body, and the heart. Unless you truly want to understand the other person, you'll never be able to listen."

– Mark Herndon

AUGMENTING COMMUNICATION WITH BODY LANGUAGE

The following body language augments communication:

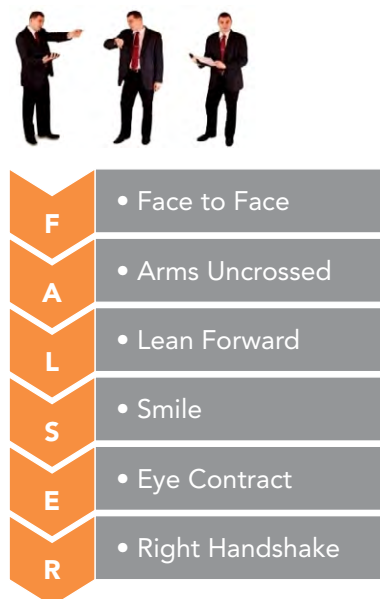


Fig. 2.11. Augmenting Communication with Body Language

- **Face the person you are speaking to.** Facing away from someone can be interpreted as indifference, ignorance or rudeness. When seated a side by side position is considered co-operative, while a face-to-face position is seen as competitive. A 90-degree angle in relation to each other is perceived as non-confrontational and thus good for conversation.
- **Arms uncrossed.** Keep arms, legs and feet uncrossed. Open your jacket as an open posture conveys the message that you are transparent, honest, approachable and willing to engage in conversation. On the other hand, crossed arms may be interpreted as you are being defensive, closed and trying to hide something. Mirror your body language in harmony with the person you are talking to. This should be done naturally and unobtrusively.
- **Lean forward to demonstrate interest.** Be within a few feet of the person you are talking to. Being too near somebody can be upsetting for them, as you are perceived as invading their personal space. Leaning backwards may be interpreted as rejection, disengagement or aloofness. In particular leaning backwards with hands clasped behind your head is often seen as a sign of superiority, hubris, overconfidence and disdain. The amount of personal space a person needs varies among genders and cultures.
- **Smile.** Smiling creates a positive environment and shows excitement, happiness, friendliness, interest, and empathy. Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important as it is on display all the time. A smile costs nothing but is the most valuable thing you can give others. A pleasant disposition attracts people while an unpleasant one discourages interactions. Smiling and laughter is contagious. Even on the phone smiling puts more warmth and a friendly tone in your voice.
- **Eye contact.** Maintain eye contact. This increases credibility and trust. A person who avoids eye contact is often seen as shifty, dishonest and untrustworthy. A person who looks down while speaking suggests timidity and shyness and may not be taken seriously. Looking to the side as you speak may suggest avoidance and insincerity and affect your credibility. However, lack of eye contact means different things to different people and in different cultures. In Latin or Asian cultures, looking down in the presence of authority is seen as a sign of respect and lower status. When you talk to people you should observe the way they use their eyes. Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) practitioners claim that when people look to the left they are searching their memory. On the other hand, if they look to the right they are using their imagination.
- **Right handshake.** A handshake should not be too hard or too soft. A soft handshake may be interpreted as unfriendly or timid. A hard one may be perceived as aggressive or forceful. A handshake should not be too hard as to cause discomfort to the other person. The competence and confidence of a person is often gauged by the strength of their handshake – hence the firm strong handshake of US President Donald Trump.

USE OF BODY LANGUAGE

Where there is a contradiction between body language and speech, the body language takes precedence and is believed. If you are saying one thing and thinking another the body language may give you away. How you say something and how you behave has greater impact than the words used as people believe what they see and how you react more than what they hear. Actions do speak louder than words.

A significant amount of communication takes place through body language. Although we can't observe our own body language other people do. However, we can seek feedback from others on how we are perceived. Where the situation is ambiguous Mehrabian (1971) found that facial expression accounts for 38 per cent of meaning, speech volume and pitch accounts for 38 per cent, and the actual words used only account for 7 per cent of the meaning conveyed.

A situation is ambiguous when the words spoken are inconsistent with the speaker's tone of voice or body language. Thus, these percentages should only be used as a guide and not generalised to all communication situations. It is not true in most circumstances that the actual words used only account for 7 per cent of the meaning conveyed. Common sense would suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, the findings of Mehrabian do highlight the importance to communication of body language. How you say something may have greater impact than the words used.

Body language is useful in many situations such as:

1. **Replacing verbal communication.** Deaf people, bookmakers, auctioneers, and deep-sea divers use sign language. For example, racecourse bookmakers use the tick tack system, conductors use a baton to conduct an orchestra, policemen use hand signals for directing traffic and auctioneers use hand signals for accepting bids.
2. **Complementing speech.** Giving directions can be difficult using words alone. Body language such as hand movements can clarify, extend and augment what is said. When speaking let your hand do some of the talking by using a hand gesture to punctuate sentences.
3. **Modifying speech** and making it more interesting by varying tone, rate and emphasis. The more varied your speech the greater interest and attention it commands.
4. **Contradicting what is said.** Words are one meaning while tone of voice and body language might suggest another. Sarcasm, rage, disbelief and humour are often conveyed more forcefully through body language.
5. **Expressing emotion through facial expressions.** A clinched fist can be a sign of anger. A frown can signify annoyance. However, pupil dilation or contraction can signify surprise or interest and is outside our control being an automatic response.

6. **Regulating conversation.** Catching a person's eye indicates that you want to engage with them. Breaking eye contact may indicate that you wish to interrupt or discontinue the conversation. A drop in the volume of the voice or change in gaze pattern may indicate that it is the other person's turn to speak or that you want to terminate the conversation and leave.

2.10 SUMMARY

A manager gets things done through people mainly through the art of good communication. The higher up you go in the management hierarchy the greater the need for communication skills and the less the need for technical skills. The ability to listen is primarily affected by the power of short-term memory, concentration, motivation and the range of your vocabulary. Age, gender, fatigue, personality and disposition also affect listening skills. In any communication situation we have a speaker, a message, a listener and a context. The effectiveness of the communication will be adversely affected if any of these go out of synchronisation.

We don't need to learn how to hear, as hearing is an innate capacity but we do need to learn how to listen. Most people feel that listening comes naturally. This is not true and we must practise the art of active listening to become effective listeners. It includes restating, summarising, paraphrasing and clarifying to check understanding. Reflect back feelings as well as the essence of the content to create empathy.

An acronym **HARNESS** was used as an aid to recall the essentials for active listening. People like people who listen respectfully and attentively to them. The barriers to listening include mind reading, bias, filtering, and lack of attention. Employees have expertise and knowledge so ask them questions if you want to tap into this resource. There are many types of questions that the manager can use including open, closed, discovery, clarification and supportive. The actual words used convey less than half the meaning, and so to interpret a message fully you must take the accompanying body language into account.

2.11 FIVE STEPS TO IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. In formal situations take notes while the other person is speaking to assist your memory and show that you value what they are saying. Afterwards, frequently repeat and review the information that you wish to register in your long-term memory.
2. Use the difference between the thinking rate and speech rate productively to summarise and prioritise the key issues that the speaker is making. This will improve your listening skills.
3. Think before you talk and pick the most appropriate words to get your message across. Study body language to gauge the reaction to your words. The words used plus your interpretation of the body language used equals the total message.
4. Practise the art of facilitative listening to become an effective listener. Listen twice as much as you speak. The greatest compliment you can pay to a person is to listen to them attentively. It is the simplest and best method for winning friends and influencing people.
5. Practise the art and science of asking questions. It is the most efficient and effective way of acquiring information and keeping the conversation going.

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- *The Role of the Brain in Learning*
- *How Adults Learn*
- *Learning Models and Styles*
- *Experiential Learning*
- *Learning with Technology*
- *The Ultimate Success Formula*
- *A series of books on People Skills for Managers*

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