7 Secrets to Highly Effective Communications
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So, What’s In This Guide?!

“Success is 15 percent due to professional knowledge and 85 percent due to “the ability to express ideas, to assume leadership, and to arouse enthusiasm among people.”

Dale Carnegie said this 78 years ago, yet all of us know what research reveals: That many leaders or aspiring leaders miss the mark on communicating ideas that generate success for themselves and their teams.

What’s The Problem?
One of the biggest complaints that executives have about their professionals – individually and in teams – is poor communication skills. They want their leaders to write, speak, and lead with more clarity, influence, and forward momentum.

Ironically, the number one complaint that professionals have against their senior leadership is also poor communication skills. They say it’s unclear, inconsistent, and that managers or board members don’t listen.

Things Are About To Get Better For You
Anyone can be an effective communicator. Good communicators aren’t born, they work at it. Highly effective communicators move ahead faster and generate better results.

Communication is leadership. If you’re intentional about constantly improving, you will find that you and your team will achieve goals more effectively – and will go further, faster.

From my college days working at UCLA’s Placement and Career Planning Center, to launching several businesses, including a global, public company with 1,100 employees, and serving on several boards, I’ve observed seven habits that that leaders can develop for highly effective communications at every level.

The seven communication skills in this guide will accelerate your success.

To further advance in your career, download the Pocket Mentor mobile app, which provides you with daily advice, tools, and action plans to win at work, succeed, and enjoy life. Start your free trial: http://bit.ly/PocketMentorApp
For the next seven days, focus on and cultivate one of these habits and see your communications effectiveness increase.

Effective communicators:

1. Recognize And Seize Opportunities

They do this in every type of communication. There’s no such thing as “routine” communication. From emails to weekly meetings, to presentations or keynote speeches – whether in-person, online, or by phone they find opportunities to add value, clarity, feedback, or inspiration. They truly understand the power of words at work.

What formerly “routine” opportunity will you seize this week and improve on? Write it below:

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________
2. Know Objectives

Whenever they communicate, they think in advance about what they want to accomplish with the words they speak. Think of a critical message you need to deliver this week. One of the best ways to know your objectives is to understand the objectives of others. What is the ideal win/win outcome for the critical message you need to deliver this week? Write it down as an objective:

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

3. Reflect On Their Communication Strengths And Weaknesses
Effective communicators don’t take themselves too seriously; yet they want to grow, so they pay attention. There are obvious datapoints on how effective they are – whether it’s a disconnect between the quantifiable goals they’ve set and what their team has achieved, or from feedback by others.

Think about feedback someone has given you about something you’ve said or written recently. Was it a compliment? Did they need clarification? Did they get your point? Reflect on it below:

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

4. Find Resources To Improve Their Skills

Such as Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott, or the ever popular How to Win Friends and Influence People, a book Warren Buffett said changed his life.

What resource will you commit to finding and reviewing this week? It can be an article, book, podcast, or other resource. Write it down below:

___________________________________________________

5. Take An Interest In People

Highly influential communicators don't want to just hear themselves talk. They want the benefit of other points of view. They encourage their teams to ask questions and share feedback.
They also look you in the eye when they listen – making eye contact is a powerful, yet an overlooked way to connect. Eye contact is also a primary way to assess whether you are getting through and gauging the reaction of your listeners.

Real conversations that connect and move ideas and projects forward happen with eye contact.

6. Prepare To Influence And Lead At Every Meeting

Effective communicators do this whether they are leading the meeting or not. Research shows that we spend up to 40% of our work time in meetings! Meetings are the prime opportunity to add value and stand out, if you know how.

Because we spend so much time in meetings, extra advice is required:

- If you have been invited to a meeting, you are supposed to contribute constructively.
- Give more than is asked of you, be prepared and speak up.
According to Jo Miller, “Speaking up and contributing in meetings can be your best opportunity to shift others’ perception of you: from tactician to strategist, from task achiever to change-agent, and from doer to leader.”

On a recent Dose of Leadership Podcast episode, leadership expert Dr. Mindy Hall, author of Leading with Intention, shared a simple, yet powerful way to make every meeting better with a ‘Two Plus Two’ approach:

“Show up with two questions you want to ask and two things you want to contribute. Putting these together requires considering who will be there, the context, and the power dynamics. Know your objective in attending the meeting, and what the meeting convener hopes to achieve. Preparing two questions activates a learning mind-set, whereas articulating two contributions ensures that you are prepared to add value.” – E.J McNulty, Strategy + Business

What one strategy will you employ in a meeting this week? Write it below:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

7. Ask A Lot Of Questions

Asking questions helps to understand the assumptions and expectations of customers and teammates. Whether you address an individual or team, remember that people resent being talked to. They’d rather be talked with. Ask questions such as:

- Did you mean_______
- Are we agreed on_______
- Should we table this for now?
- Can we revisit this later?
- Do you need my help?
- Are you concerned?

Ok, one more:

8. Don’t Avoid Difficult Conversations
Instead, they prepare by looking at issues from another’s point of view, they ask questions, and they build goodwill from the outset by setting a productive tone.

Finally, effective communicators give a recap after key conversations. Whether the conversations are in meetings, by phone, email, etc., it’s important to ensure that everyone is aligned with what’s agreed upon. Effective communicators know the problem named is the problem solved – They identify and confront real obstacles.

And, above all else, they liberally use the words please and thank you!

**Conclusion**

I hope you have found these tips valuable in your personal and professional development. What difficult conversation will you have this week? Write it below (and use the 8 steps above to prepare in advance!):

___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

For even more valuable career tips, please head over to the iTunes Store and start your free trial of the Pocket Mentor mobile app. A portion of profits goes to Year Up, connecting low income young adults who need opportunity with companies who need talent.
What people are saying about Pocket Mentor:

Pocket Mentor! ★★★★★
“Pocket mentor is a wonderful tool to help a professional or entrepreneur get daily guidance and achieve clarity with one's own vision and goals. Often mentoring is needed to get through a difficult situation or stepping through challenges and it's hard to find a good mentor to get real applicable methods and ideas. But pocket mentor does an incredible job of taking that place!” - Pocket Guidance

Invaluable! ★★★★★
“This app is brilliantly designed. It provides the utility of an actual mentor in the mobile world, giving you new ideas as a professional and/or a leader to move your projects and ideas forward, find new opportunities, and navigate difficult situations. I used this app a lot to tackle large projects at work and at home. This mentor will help you function with more clarity, confidence, and impact!” - Angela G.

Curated advice for the professional ★★★★★
“The wisdom of a book, with the convenience of an app! I don't normally write reviews, but I felt obliged by what this app has done for me. This app has become incredibly relevant in my life. Whenever I'm facing a difficult decision, if I
need direction, or even when I have a spare moment, I always take advantage of this app. The additionally charge for the extra content is totally worth it. I highly recommend this app.” - cjg20314

God send for me! ★★★★★
“T'm perpetually disorganized and can get easily lose focus thus draining creative energy. This app is great because the pool of ideas offered and the great daily advice, it really helps channel my creative energy and focus. It also is helping me hone my leadership skills and having successful mentors and ideas in my pocket is perfect!” - atomsplitter

Amazing! ★★★★★
“This app is amazing! It is the perfect way for a working professional or an entrepreneur like me to find professional advice. The app provides daily articles and advice on problems such as how to deal with a difficult boss or how to manage your time. The advice is really helpful and easy to understand. The app also provides categories so you can look for specific advice. You can also bookmark articles that really stick out to you. I love this app!” - sgilbert48

Pocket Mentor rocks! ★★★★★
“I love the Pocket Mentor app! I am a solo entrepreneur running my business on my own and I always am struggling to find advice and mentorship to grow my business. Pocket Mentor has been the perfect solution. It provides me with daily support and guidance delivered right to my phone. I also love the excellent content on the app on leadership, inspiration, entrepreneurship, personal wellness and more... I already have learned so much!” - Meg R.

Love this app! ★★★★★
“I love the idea of a mentor in my pocket that I have access to anytime, anywhere! Thanks to Pocket Mentor I have already gained the confidence and clarity I need to propel my career. The daily articles help to keep me accountable to continuously learning and improving myself.” - Smitty1221

Let's Connect:
I would love to know how your career has benefited from these tips. Let me know if you have any questions and please share your success stories by emailing me at caren@carenmerrick.com. I reply to all my emails and may even feature your comments or questions on upcoming blog posts and podcasts.

Remember, you know more than you think and you can contribute more than you know, and wherever you are in your career right now you can thrive.

Warmly,

Caren

About The Author

My goal is to help high achieving leaders become board worthy and board ready.

I draw on 25 years experience to advise motivated leaders on how to achieve their leadership goals, including the goal of serving on a board.

I am:
● A serial entrepreneur, one of my most successful ventures was as co-founder and EVP of webMethods, which grew to a global company of over 1,100 people, $200m in revenue and sold for $540m.
● An executive who has recruited boards and reported to boards of directors
● A public company board member who has also served on a variety of private enterprise, and nonprofit boards
● A mentor, author, and speaker on leadership, entrepreneurship, and board service

Earlier in my career, I was co-founder, President, and Chairman of the webMethods Foundation, a pioneering corporate foundation that made grants supporting innovative nonprofits that lift thousands of low income families out of poverty through education. We also supported micro-enterprise among the amazingly talented people of East Africa.

I love adventure in both my work and personal life. I’ve been married to my husband, Phillip, for 23 years, and we have two sons. In our free time, my family loves to sail on our catamaran, “Glad In It,” especially in the U.S. Virgin Islands and other parts of the Caribbean. We also enjoy time at our cottage on the Chesapeake Bay, where we first tasted the joys of sailing along the vast beauty of this national treasure.

If you want to serve on a board, make a significant impact in the world and grow yourself, your team, and your business, my goal is to help you get there – further and faster with proven strategies. You can become the person and leader you want to be.

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