Communication Counts
Speaking and Listening for Results

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Overview of the Workshop

*Communication Counts* uses a unique “play within a play” approach to explore six key issues in effective communications:

1. Avoiding Miscommunication
2. Active Listening (or Reading)
4. Communicating Assertively
5. Avoiding Multi-Tasking and Distractions
6. Being Aware of How Your Communication Style Affects Others

Discussion questions and activities are included to help workshop participants recognize these keys to effective communications, explore how they affect their relationships, and begin to practice applying them.

**Group or Self-Study?**

*Communication Counts* is designed for use in small group sessions. However, if you have an individual who can benefit from this material but can't attend a scheduled workshop, they can watch the video, respond to the quiz at the end, and follow up with a brief discussion with their supervisor about the main content points. They can also work on the Communication Counter activity (see page 21).

**Timing**

This Leader’s Guide is designed to be flexible; include as many of the discussion questions and activities as you like in the time available.

You’ll be able to explore the program’s topics and issues in greater depth if you allow about 90 minutes for the session. Or, break the training into several shorter segments over a series of meetings, referring back to the video as required.

**The Workshop Kit**

CRM Learning’s *Communication Counts* includes this Leader’s Guide, a DVD and a CD-Rom.

- This **Leader’s Guide** provides an introduction to the workshop, suggestions for its use, discussion questions and activities.
- The **DVD** includes the 19-minute video program.
- The **CD-ROM** contains PDF files of the participant worksheets.
Michael’s mind continues to wander, and Angelina finally calls him on it. They decide to look for information on *multitasking and distractions*, and learn that research indicates doing two things at once is an ineffective way to get things done. Communication, like everything else we do at work, requires focus and attention to get the desired result.

As we watch Michael and Angelina’s interaction, it becomes clear that they have different communication styles. The final point in the program – *Being Aware of How Your Communication Style Affects Others* – explores this issue, as we see a manager observe and react to an uncomfortable interaction she has seen between two of her employees. We learn that style matters, and affects how we work as a team. Michael and Angelina review tips for being aware of, and adjusting, your communication style to get the results you need, including both verbal and nonverbal behavior.

The video ends with a final scenario and a quiz on some of the main points that were covered. We observe a manager holding one more staff meeting to complete a long-running project. There is a lot of resistance and misunderstanding about the need for the meeting and the need for more work on the report, and there is little time to complete the task. The program presents a series of scenes from the meeting, followed by questions about the interactions we see, which Angelina and Michael discuss and answer.

**Option: Using the Video Quiz in Training**

As mentioned above, the video ends with a quiz, where Michael and Angelina respond to questions about the staff meeting shown on-screen.

Watch this quiz as part of the video, or use it as a group activity to launch your follow-up discussion.

If you use the quiz as a group activity:

- As each question appears, pause the video as soon as Michael and Angelina finish reading the answer options.

- Ask the participants how they would answer the question, and then continue playing the video to see how Michael and Angelina responded.

- Discuss any differences of opinion about the answers, and then move to the next question.
Discussion Questions and Activities

The questions and activities in this Guide will help you explore six key communication behaviors that affect our ability to work with each other to achieve our individual and organizational goals.

• The discussion questions and activities are organized in line with the main content points in the video, and are designed to help participants relate the communication behavior of the characters in the video to their own situations.

• The Communication Counter (page 21) activity will help participants explore the overall issues surrounding effective workplace communications while focusing on their own behavior and the communication styles they see around them.

Using the Discussion Questions

The discussion questions will be most effective if used after the entire video has been shown and the participants have seen how all six key points affect their communications. Each discussion section (beginning on page 10) begins with a brief recap of the scene it is based on.

However, you may want to show each segment again before each discussion to refresh the participants’ memory of the interaction shown in the video. The DVD is set up to allow this: just go to the menu and select the chapter you want to repeat.

Completing the Activities

This Guide suggests one or more activities for each of the six skill points. You can choose to do these as part of your discussion of each key point, or you can use some of them as follow-up activities.
1. **Avoiding Miscommunication**

*Main Points*

When you are the speaker/sender:

- Present ALL the information you can that might be relevant
- Make it as clear as possible

When you are the listener/receiver:

- Clarify when you’re not sure about something you heard
- Check your assumptions

*Video Scene*

Remind the participants of the scene’s content before asking the discussion questions. Or, use the chapter menu to play the video segment again.

This video segment shows how an unclear request for a meeting causes a misunderstanding between a manager and employee. The manager used what he felt was clear language in a memo asking for attendance at a meeting. The employee took it as an optional invitation, and since the timing conflicted with her typical flex schedule, she did not plan to attend.

*Discussion Questions*

1. Did Brittany misinterpret the invitation request? What assumption did she make?

2. If you were Brittany (after having had this conversation with your manager), would you attend the meeting your manager described as “imperative” during your conversation? What would your decision depend on?

3. If someone says “Please join us….” in a memo or email, how would you interpret their message — as optional or as mandatory? [Suggestion: Poll the participants to see if their interpretations vary.]

4. In general, what actions should we take to make sure important messages are received clearly? What could have been done with the wording in the manager’s message?
Activities

Activity: Unclear Words and Phrases

Use the Unclear Words and Phrases worksheet on the CD-ROM for this activity.

Directions: Review the unclear words or phrases in the first column. In the second column, write substitute words or phrases that have a better chance of being interpreted correctly.

Leader’s Note: Add your own list of unclear words to column one if you want to expand the activity.

Column one includes this starter list of unclear words, all of which require more specificity:

- “Tighten up” your findings, or “tighten up your work”
- “Take care of it”
- “Change it” / “Improve it” / “Fix it”
- “Figure out what’s going on”
- “It’s a problem” / “It’s not ready” / “It’s not good enough”

Activity: Using the Right Words

What you say or write might not be as clear as you think it is! Before sending or delivering most forms of instruction, or even day-to-day communication, it’s good practice to review the message from the recipient’s perspective.

Directions: Ask the participants to write a simple note or memo to give someone instructions on a small assignment (it doesn’t need to be a real one).

Ask them to share their work with a partner, who will review it and point out what was clear to them, what was unclear and any assumptions they made based on what they read.
6. Be Aware of How Your Communication Style Affects Others

Main Points

Tips for being aware of how your communication style affects others:

- Pay attention to others’ reaction to you.
- Be more aware of the impact your style may have on others. For example, loud can be construed as angry; acting distracted can be seen as apathy; humor or sarcasm can be construed as not taking things seriously.
- Check your non-verbal behaviors (eye rolling, sighing, checking your watch). In communication, 60-70% of all meaning is derived from nonverbal behavior.

Video Scenes

Remind the participants of the scene’s content before asking the discussion questions. Or, use the chapter menu to play the video segment again.

We see a manager react to an uncomfortable interaction she has observed between two of her employees. She calls one of them in and shows a great deal of patience as the employee continues her defensive behavior. The manager points out the effect her communication style has on those she works for and with.

Discussion Questions

1. What makes up a person’s communication style?

2. How does the way we say something affect what we say?

3. Have you ever worked with anyone like Trish, who is unaware that their communication style is affecting their effectiveness at work? What was that experience like?

4. How would you describe the manager’s communication style when she held the one-on-one meeting? How did she respond to her employee’s attitude during the meeting? Will her response prove effective? Why or why not?

5. Does attitude apply to other methods of communication, like email? Since body language and tone of voice won’t affect our email communications, what can we do to make sure our written messages are respectful and clear?
Activities

Activity: What's Your Style?

How can we change our style to fit the occasion? Use the What's Your Style? worksheet to explore this question.

Directions: Let's assume that we have some control over our communication style, and that we can adjust our style to fit the circumstances.

For each of the situations in column 1, describe what you can change to fit your style to the circumstances.

For example, you would probably not talk to someone who is obviously upset the same way you would talk with them if they were in their more typical "calm mode." But what would be different?

Leader Note: Examples of changes would include voice volume, rate of speech, postponing a conversation to a better time, etc.

Follow-Up Activity: Communication Counter

The Communication Counter is a worksheet which allows participants to take a real-time inventory of communication behaviors they observe or catch themselves performing over a specific period following the workshop. A three to four day period is sufficient for them to get the idea and see what is going on around them.

Directions: The workshop's six key points are listed in the first column on the worksheet. Tips offered in the video for each key point are listed in the second column.

Over a 3-4 day period, participants should write down examples they observe – in themselves and in others – of effective and ineffective communication behaviors.

Note: They should do this at their own desk, after they observe an interaction, and make their notes as specific as possible when describing the behaviors observed (no names, please!!!).

When you get back together with the participants at a future meeting or lunch-and-learn, ask them to share some of their observations. Remember: the identities of the real life "characters" should not be shared.
Activity: What Works Best?

Key Point: Active Listening (or Reading)

Directions: Review the active listening behaviors listed below. Rate them in terms of their importance to the specific work tasks and communication needs of your work.

Circle 1 as most important, 3 as neutral, and 5 as least important.

After your group discusses and agrees which behaviors are most important, write down ways to improve those behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Important?</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>How can I improve?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>I focus my thoughts on the person who is speaking and what they are saying.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>I try to interpret what the other person is saying.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>I ask for clarification.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>I listen for what is not being said as well as for what is being said.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Even when I am busy or feel I already know what the person is going to say, I focus and listen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>I am aware of the non-verbal cues I am sending to the other person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>I refrain from “rehearsing” what I am going to say next—before the person has finished speaking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>I mentally move past distractions or the speaker’s manner of delivery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>When necessary, I change the situation to eliminate distractions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity: Communication Counter

Directions: The workshop’s six key points are listed in the first column below. Tips for each of them are listed in the second column.

Over the next 3-4 days, look for effective and ineffective examples of each key behavior – in yourself or in others. Write them in the table.

Note: After you observe effective or ineffective behavior, go back to your desk to write it down. Make your notes as specific as possible when describing the behaviors you observed, but don’t write down anyone’s name!!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Point</th>
<th>Tips</th>
<th>Effective Examples</th>
<th>Ineffective Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding miscommunication</td>
<td><strong>Sender:</strong> Present ALL the information you can that might be relevant. Make it as clear as possible. <strong>Receiver:</strong> Clarify when you’re not sure about something you heard. Check your assumptions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active listening (or reading)</td>
<td>• Keep your focus by taking notes or asking questions. • Feed back what you’ve heard. • Effective listening takes effort!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing the right approach, timing and method for delivering your message</td>
<td>• Make sure how and when your message is delivered matches what is being conveyed. • Put in the time and effort to communicate effectively. • Use your judgment to determine what is appropriate to be handled in a quick email vs. face-to-face.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating assertively</td>
<td>• Be respectfully direct about what you need and want; use “I” statements. • Be persistent. When needed, repeat a simple statement of fact.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding multitasking and distractions</td>
<td>• Focus on the task at hand. • Minimize the distractions you are causing for yourself. • Change your environment if you can’t control what’s going on around you.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being aware of how your communication style affects others</td>
<td>• Pay attention to others’ reactions. • Check your non-verbal behaviors.</td>
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</table>
Materials Included With *Communication Counts*

*Communication Counts* is a workshop appropriate for use in a number of different communication skills development areas. This video program reveals six common workplace communication problems and provides common-sense tips employees can use to avoid them.

♦ In the **chaptered DVD**, the main characters are taking an online course on workplace communication. The course features vignettes in a variety of workplace settings that illustrate different types of ineffective communication and how they undermine performance and results. Interspersed with the examples, our characters then provide viewers with actionable information they can use to minimize misunderstandings and maximize results. The DVD is closed-captioned.

♦ The **Leader’s Guide** provides suggestions for group training, discussion questions and exercises on each of the six problem areas presented in the video. These will help the facilitator identify communication issues and stimulate discussion and learning by the participants. Included is one exercise that allows the participants to interact with the video, answering the quiz questions featured in the tutorial before they see how the video’s characters respond.

♦ The Leader’s Guide and **CD-ROM** also contain reproducible **Participant Worksheets** that cover each of the six areas of communication discussed in the workshop. These are designed to help participants think about and work through how they communicate in the areas of clarity, their approach, assertiveness, how they listen, deal with distractions, and how their communication style can affect others.
Program Information and Pricing

Purchase Price: $695.00

Rental Price: $275.00

Preview Price: Free

Running Time: 20 Minutes


Quantity Pricing Discounts

*Communication Counts Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Discount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 copies</td>
<td>10% off</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-5 copies</td>
<td>15% off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 copies</td>
<td>20% off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 copies</td>
<td>25% off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Industry discounts may also apply; call your Sales Consultant for more information.

(contents, pricing & discounts subject to change without notice)