



The Truth About Getting Your Point Across

...And Nothing But the Truth

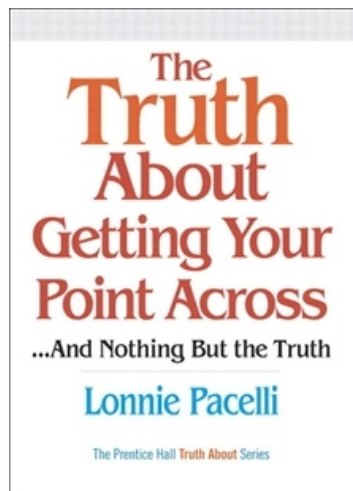
By Lonnie Pacelli; Prentice Hall, 2006

“Different strokes for different folks.” This saying applies not only on how people relate to one another but also to the manner one communicates with people to convey ideas -- be it in professional settings such as meetings, presentations, interviews, brainstorming or even a simple chat. Effective communication brings about productive employees and healthy relationships. Be it verbal or non-verbal communication, the thing that matters most is how you get the message across, effectively.

“The Truth About Getting Your Point Across” by Lonnie Pacelli presents practical tips on how to be effective communicators. Some situations are based on true to life experiences of the author. And as you walk through the pages, you may find yourself

in one of the many situations. The tips offered in this book on improving your communication skills are practical, simple and easy to apply.

[read the summary](#) ➔



About the Author/s:



Lonnie Pacelli is an internationally recognized author and is president of

Leading on the Edge International. Lonnie has over 20 years leadership expertise as an executive, project manager, developer, tester, analyst, trainer, consultant, and business owner. During his 11 years at Accenture he built leadership expertise consulting with many Fortune 500 companies including Motorola, Hughes Electronics, and Northrop-Grumman.

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- What Makes a Great Communicator
- Communication in Professional Setting
- One on One Meetings
- Communication Skills





I. What Makes a Great Communicator

Basic Characteristics

You, just like anybody else, have the potential to be a great communicator. You simply have to possess the following basic characteristics:

- Courage to go against the conventional wisdom
- Conviction to feel strong about one's ideas
- Wisdom or a great knowledge of subject matter
- Clarity in delivery of message; it should be simple and concise
- Credibility or integrity

Understand Your Recipient

Understanding your recipient's communication preference saves time, allowing for more interaction. If you have limited knowledge of your recipient's preference, the following ideas may help:

- Asking the recipient's preference
- Watching how the recipient communicates
- Ask other or co-workers

In essence, it is not about adopting your style but taking into consideration your recipient's preference.

Help Others Be Good Communicators

Sharing has always been a positive approach. If

you are an experienced communicator, share your tools, techniques and tips. It will always be a two-way street-- one learning from the other person.

II. Communication in Professional Setting

Group Meetings

Meetings always form part of every manager's calendar. It is important that meetings are controlled to avoid waste of time. Oftentimes, too much attendees spoil the session. For one, these people may not be well informed of the agenda or not interested enough except to listen to the information. There are, however, precautionary measures to avoid such disasters.

• Ensure a common knowledge among the attendees

Make sure that the attendees have a common knowledge of what will be discussed in the meeting. This can be accomplished by keeping the attendees informed of the agenda. Gathering some information about their expectations in the meeting will also be helpful.

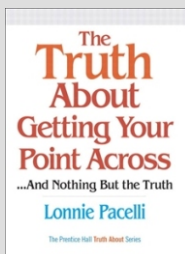
• Keep the meeting to a manageable number of attendees

An optimal size of 8 is preferred especially when the topic at hand is more of decision making. It is best that stakeholders are informed only after the decision has been made.

• Prepublish the meeting agenda and purpose

This offers two-fold results. One is to prepare the attendees mentally and the second is to allow the attendee to assess whether it will be appropriate for him to attend the meeting. The decision then rests on the attendee. In preparation, agenda

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should be distributed at least one day before schedule.

• **Qualify lieutenant attendees**

Often, managers would like to include some of their key staff to attend. Take a few minutes beforehand to keep them informed since these types of attendees normally come in the last minute.

• **Take of-topic questions offline**

Focus is very important in meetings. Try to stick to the topic if there will be occasions when attendees would ask questions not related to the discussion. Always keep in mind the meeting's purpose. Do not lose control of the agenda.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is one of the best means to get outstanding ideas and solutions to tough problems. Innovative ideas come up in the open. There is no such thing as a stupid idea, but of course these should be realistic enough to implement later. During brainstorming, some important tips to consider are the following:

- Just list down the ideas. Don't assess them all at the same time
- Disagreeable ideas with other participants should be set aside in a "parking lot," do not quickly dismiss them. However, take time to look at them for some ideas that can be generated.
- Do not chastise out-of-the-box ideas. This will dampen the participant's innovativeness and creativity.
- As facilitator, avoid being biased with the participant's ideas. Delineate role as facilitator or participant.
- Keep the participants informed on when the brainstormed ideas will be put to use and the steps to be taken with the gathered ideas.

Setting Directions

Setting direction is not the sole responsibility of upper management. It is something that the entire organization should understand, remember and participate in. This does not entail a very complicated discussion if the organization knows:

- Where to go
- When to get there
- How to get there
- What to do to get there

Once direction has been set, the organization is now ready to put it into action. A helpful guide is to post it in places where the members can see and remember it. Directions should be aligned with your own personal objective, as this will eventually lead to higher productivity. In times when there will be significant business change which will affect the direction, set aside time to make the necessary revisions. After all, the direction should allow you to reach your destination.

Solving a Problem

A problem clearly stated is a problem half solved. Thus, it is important to go down to the roots of the problems than the symptoms. Once the root cause has been identified, it will be easier to solve the problem.

Next to defining the problem is arriving at solutions that will best solve the problem. One can make a list of choices or alternative courses of action and the resulting consequences. However, the choices should be based on actual, realistic, and factual ideas.

Presenting Status Reports

Simply put, status reports are meant to inform management of the results without focusing on the activities behind it. Status reports should instead focus on key indicators, milestones, risks



and issues. Some people commit the mistake of trying to put all details which oftentimes are ignored by the manager because of lack of time to read it. Complete, straightforward, timely, concise, and brief status reports should only take a minute to read.

III. One on One Meetings

Interviews

The famous saying, "First impression lasts," also applies when presenting oneself for an interview. Interviews are simply a form of selling yourself. Here are some tips to guide you to sell yourself successfully:

- **Do your organization research**

With technology at hand, it is now easier to get the information you need regarding details of the organization. It impresses upon the interviewer one's keen interest to be part of the company

- **Talk to someone who already works at your potential employer**

This is a good means to know or confirm your idea about the organization and also one's interest to work for the company.

- **Ask someone to mock interview you**

A friend, a colleague or a family member may pose as your interviewer. The purpose is to get you out of your comfort zone so expect difficult questions too.

- **Learn as much as you can about the job**

A job description from your friend who works for the company can be of help for you to understand the job very well.

- **Learn about your interviewer**

Having an idea about your interviewer's job, likes, or interests can help establish connection.

- **Dress the part**

Every interviewer expects the interviewee to be dressed in business formal. There is no such thing as presenting yourself for an interview overdressed.

- **Be punctual**

At times, the interviewer would throw oddball questions. These are intended to see the interviewee's creativity and response to pressure. There are ways to face these surprising questions. These include verbalizing your thought process, using assumptions to arrive at

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To know more about the author, go to: <http://www.leadingonedge.com/lonnie-pacelli.htm>



estimates, and staying concise while avoiding babbling. No matter how odd the question maybe, never insult the interviewer for asking such.

Feedbacks

Timely feedback results to effectiveness. When giving one, provide a comfortable environment free of distractions. Let the person whom you're giving feedback feel important. Face to face position will better suit the session, removing the impression of hierarchy. Talk about specific behaviors and not the person's character, ethics or intelligence.

Informal Communication

Not all communication should be confined within the four corners of the room. There are times when managers and staff get to have unstructured, random bursts of interaction. This provides the opportunity for managers to show their soft side which people like to see. It doesn't have to be long conversations. A five to ten-minute bursts count a lot.

Occasional drop-ins are also common informal communication. However, busy people do not always have the luxury of time to accommodate drop-ins. The following techniques maybe considered if one cannot afford time to talk:

- Don't start discussion you can't stop.
- Ask if the issue is urgent or assess the urgency.
- Don't be lured by "got a minute" which would normally mean 10 minutes.
- Train the drop-in to schedule time with you or offer to schedule the meeting with you.
- Stand up. It gives the impression that you have to attend to other things.

IV. Communication Skills

Effective Presentations

Presentations are meant to inform, sell and influence. However, the main objective of presentations is to educate the attendees. It is not at all easy but you can give your audience a reason to listen to you by:

- Getting a very clear understanding of your audience's problems
- Being provocative; mentally stimulate your audience
- Having a compelling teaser or summary of what you want your attendees to learn from the presentation
- Telling your audience specifically what you want them to get out of your presentation
- Captivating them in the first few minutes of your presentation

Preparing the presentation is one thing, delivery is another thing. Entertaining audience facilitates conveyance of ideas. Allow your personality to shine through when making presentations. Be passionate about your topic, throw in a little humor and move around while maintaining eye contact. Do not be afraid to vary your voice speed, intonation and volume. Then without noticing it, everything will flow naturally.

The Art of Listening

Listening is not just about knowing the details of a problem and coming up with solutions. More important is the journey in arriving at the solutions. An efficient listener does not necessarily mean an effective one. An efficient listener may know the details, diagnose the problem, and come up with solutions in a short time, but an effective listener allows the other person to talk and take a journey. He listens to the other person's feelings and other important details of the problem. An effective listener will provide inputs but not formulate the solution for the person. Otherwise, the sense of ownership of the solution is lost and most likely will fail.



A good climate to allow them to talk maybe done by:

- Providing a comfortable environment.
- Sitting comfortably at a table and making the other person feel that he is the most important person in your calendar and that nothing will interrupt your discussion.
- Helping articulate the problem.
- Showing patience rather than frustration should the person cannot articulate the problem because of negative emotions.
- Assisting with problem solving; don't plunge in and do it yourself.
- Helping the person internalize his problem, allowing him to make the discovery and devise his own solution.
- Being empathetic.
- Showing a sincere concern without allowing distractions of your own concerns. Better yet is to schedule another meeting than to be distracted

- Cowardice - fails to admit his own mistakes and passes the blame to others
- Untrustworthiness - cannot gain the confidence of members due to lack of necessary skills, wisdom in decision making and integrity

Influencing People

The true test of leadership is getting people to follow you when they do not have to follow you. There are barriers to avoid though if you want people to follow you.

- Arrogance claiming to know everything
- Indecisiveness - not sticking to decisions made
- Disorganization - asks for the same information multiple times, leading to frustration among the members
- Stubbornness - failing to listen to other team members while insisting on his own
- Negativism - a pessimist attitude; not being able to motivate others

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