

5 KEYS TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATING ANY MESSAGE

Before You Communicate

- Pause to evaluate your current mood before beginning your communication – verbal or written.
Unless you are in a situation where you are forced to do so, it is generally considered unwise to communicate when you are in a heightened state of emotion – either positively or negatively (e.g. anger, frustration, elation, exuberance, etc.).
- As you consider the message you are planning to communicate, evaluate and determine the proper vehicle for delivering the message.
Is the message better suited for an in-person delivery (e.g. meeting, phone call, etc.), or, is this topic appropriate for a written communication (e.g. email, memo, etc.)?
- Properly identify the Target Audience for your message.
Take time to determine who should receive this message. Who will need to take action on the message you communicate? Whom else will need to be informed by this communication?
- Determine the proper timing on communicating your intended message.
Evaluate if now, later, or never is the right moment to communicate your message. Consider the possibility

Clearly Communicating Your Message

1. **When beginning your communication, do not recount history unless absolutely necessary.**
You will have the attention of the recipient for only a short period – the purpose of your communication should be the initial focus of the message. If a recipient requires history, allow that individual to make the request separately.
2. **Messages should be concise with limited superfluous information, avoiding tangents.**
Focus the words you choose on what must be communicated, leaving out unnecessary details which will only serve to obscure or confuse the message being delivered.
3. **Remove emotion and/or opinions unless absolutely necessary in relaying the message.**
Personal opinions on factual information or requests for action should remain that way – ‘personal’. Unless the message being communicated warrants the addition of an opinion, such as a recommendation or judgement, keep your message focused on the information necessary to be delivered.
4. **Assume the recipient of your message knows none of the content you are about to communicate.**
Often times, the individual creating the communication will inadvertently omit key pieces of information from the communication. This is due to the fact the communicator is already privy to the full complement of information. Create your communication with the same mindset as when you were first receiving the information.
5. **Focus your communication on factual information, eliminating all exaggeration and embellishment.**
Providing a message with facts and supporting information is critical, but do not offer inaccurate or untrue statements in an effort to further your point. Allow the critical information, rooted in fact, be what drives your messaging.

After You Communicate

Written Communications

- Before sending, read and re-read your communication multiple times slowly and with purpose to validate content, clarity, and tone.
Consider soliciting feedback from trusted advisors before sending a communication.
- Gauge effectiveness of your communication by evaluating if your Target Audience has absorbed your message.
Assuming the recipients have read the message you have sent, determine effectiveness based on how well actions and/or information is propagated throughout the Target Audience.

Verbal Communications

- Take time to consider how your intended Target Audience received your communication.
Did your Target Audience understand the message you communicated the first time you made the delivery? Did you receive the answer you were looking for, or, see the action taken you were intending to see?
- Proactively engage trusted advisors to provide constructive feedback on how to communicate more effectively.
Discuss your verbal communications with individuals with whom you have interacted. Ask questions as to the effectiveness of your delivery, the clarity of your message, and how the recipient perceived the delivered message.