

75 Tips for Effective Communication



Kim Chamberlain

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Effective Communication

Hello and welcome to *75 Tips for Effective Communication*.

Communication is something we do all the time, often without thinking about it. However the art of communicating effectively is not something we can 'learn' and then say we know how to do it, it's something we can always continue to learn about and improve on.

This booklet is in five sections and looks at a range of aspects regarding communicating effectively:

- Underpinning communication skills
- Presentation skills
- Impromptu speaking skills
- Networking skills
- Business Etiquette skills

It has been written as a collection of tips to allow you to dip into it easily.

Happy communicating,

Kim Chamberlain

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Underpinning Communication Skills



- 1 The essence of being a good communicator is that:
 - You have a clear message. It will be hard to communicate clearly if the message isn't clear in your own mind
 - You get your message across in the best possible way

- 2 Poor vs. excellent communicators

On a continuum, where at one end are the excellent communicators, and at the other end are the poor communicators, you will notice that people at the 'poor' end tend to focus on themselves. The people at the 'excellent' end focus on the needs of others, and ensure that people understand their message.

- 3 Remember to S.T.A.Y.

To be able to move towards the 'excellent' end of the continuum, it's useful to S.T.A.Y. - **Stop Thinking About Yourself** - and focus on meeting the needs of others.

- 4 Your audience

When communicating, you will have an 'audience'. This may be anything from a one-on-one interaction through to a large group. No matter the size, all audiences are looking for the same fundamental communication skills from you.

- 5 Control

Audiences want to communicate with communicators who are 'in control'. Good communicators are in control of all things—their voice, their words, their posture, their facial expression, their movement, their emotions ...

- 6 3 factors that help you deliver a verbal message well:
 - How you look - do you look confident and competent?
 - How you sound - do you sound confident and competent?
 - What you say - do you have a clear message?

- 7 First impressions

People make judgements on the above three factors within a short space of time. First impressions **do** count, people **do** judge a book by the cover. W. Edwards Deming said "By focusing on the first 15% of anything, the rest will effortlessly follow".

- 8 Within 30 seconds of meeting you people have judged your educational level, socioeconomic level, and your level of 'success'. Within four minutes they've gained a generally 'positive' or 'negative' view of you based on how confident, trustworthy, friendly, reliable and intelligent you appear.

- 9 To make the most of these first few seconds:
 - Look people in the eye
 - Have open body posture, strong stance, firm handshake and ...a smile
 - Say your name clearly so that it's easily understood

- 10 Be prepared

Work out in advance who you be speaking to and meeting with
How will they dress? Behave? Communicate?
Prepare yourself accordingly

11

Project a positive image

People want to you to look and sound:

- confident and assured
- at ease
- enthusiastic
- as if you can relate to them

12

Your appearance

Be aware of your clothing, body posture, eye contact, facial expressions.
Do they convey the message you want them to?

13

Do you sound like you mean what you say?

Do you mumble?

Do you weaken what you say by using words such as “kind of” “just”, “I think”, or “um” “you know”?

Do you use a rising inflexion at the end of sentences which sounds like you are asking a question?

Presentation Skills



- 14 Before preparing your presentation
Spend time finding out about your audience, your input and the equipment.
This has two benefits:
- It will help build your confidence, as you will be making it more of a 'known' than an unknown situation. Often nerves appear due to the fear of the unknown
 - It will enable you to better meet your audience's needs
- 15 Find out about your audience
How many will be there?
Who are they?
What is their knowledge or experience of your topic?
- 16 Find out about your input
What is the organiser expecting you to talk about? Note that it may be different from the angle you want to take.
How long are you speaking for?
Will there be a question and answer session afterwards?
Where are you in the speaking programme?
- 17 Find out about equipment
Work out what you need, for example whiteboard, PowerPoint facilities, microphone. Check if these are available.
Make sure you are comfortable about using them. If not, consider alternatives.
Arrive early so you can check everything is working.
If using technology, always have an alternative ready in case the equipment doesn't work.
- 18 Preparation
When you start preparing your presentation, make sure you know as much as you can about your topic — do your homework. It's hard to feel confident if you don't know your topic well.
Always know more than you are going to speak about. It will give you more confidence, it will ensure a better presentation, and it will help you if there is a question and answer session afterwards.
- 19 Structure
Structure your presentation so that it is in three parts:
A short Opening, a longer Body and a short Ending.
- 20 Option
A simple format for your structure could be the 'Tell Them' structure:
Opening: Tell them what you are going to tell them
Body: Tell them
Ending: Tell them what you told them
- 21 The body
Split the body of your presentation into approximately two to five main sections (your key messages). Any more than that and both you and the audience may find it difficult to remember the main messages.

- 22 Keeping your audience interested
To keep your audience interested it's important to bring variety into your presentation, eg use of visuals, activities for your audience, demonstrations, stories etc.
The best way to make your audience lose interest is to have no variety at all.
- 23 Using notes
If you use notes to deliver your presentation, it's not a good idea to have the presentation written out in full, as it will sound like you are reading it. You will also lose eye contact with the audience and you are more likely to lose your place.
Instead try having bullet points or short sentences written down as prompts.
- 24 Memorising
Avoid memorising your presentation word for word, as if you lose your place it will make it hard to get back on track.
Instead, aim to remember the concepts and the order in which they come.
This will mean that each time you practise, the words will come out differently.
That's OK!
- 25 Prepare in sections
Prepare your notes in short sections or bullet points which relate to the main sections of your presentation.
- 26 The golden rule
Practise practise practise! Many people spend a long time preparing the content of their presentation, but little or no time practising.
Practise speaking to the topic.
Practise using equipment and visuals.
Practise your timing.
Practise your delivery: facial expressions, movement, tone of voice, pace.
- 27 Practise in sections
Practise your presentation enough so that you can speak to each section by just a quick look at your notes.
- 28 Try videoing yourself giving a real or a practise presentation
Firstly, watch it through a few times to get over the 'cringe factor'.
- 29 Evaluate to improve
Then watch it with the sound turned down so you can see how confident and competent you *look*.
Then just listen to it without watching the screen, and see how confident and competent you *sound*.
Write down all the good points you notice. These are the aspects you need to keep in your presentations.
Then write down one or two suggestions for improvement that would make the presentation more effective if you were to give it again.

- 30 Handouts
If you are going to use handouts, make sure you prepare enough copies ahead of time - or send a copy to the organiser in advance so they can run off the copies in plenty of time.
Print off an additional 10% in case you need extra for late bookings / late arrivals.
- 31 Make your handouts simple, with good visual impact
Include contact details if appropriate.
- 32 When to hand them out?
If your audience needs to use them during your presentation, give them out before or during.
If they are not needed during your presentation, give them out at the end otherwise they will act as a distraction.
- 33 Before you go on
Make the opportunity to speak to someone there, so you get used to using your voice.
Stand up, move around a little so you get the energy flowing.
If you are going to drink some water, have it at room temperature, as ice cold water will restrict the muscles in your throat.
- 34 Breathing
To reduce the nerves, try some slow, low breathing before you go on. Breathe out first, then allow the breath to come in gently.
- 35 Remember to S.T.A.Y.
Instead of focusing on yourself, think of your role as one of **helping** the audience to understand your message.

Impromptu Speaking Skills



36 Impromptu speaking is what we do most of the time.
There are guidelines and frameworks we can use which will help us speak with impact and avoid the waffle.

37 Try the LiPCoTE structure:

Li Listen
P Pause
Co Confirm
T Tell
E End

38 Listen

'Listening' is a different activity from 'hearing'. Listening is active, hearing is Passive.

To be able to make the best contribution when speaking, the more we actively listen, the better we can reply. The benefits of doing this include:

- Respect - if you listen to others they are more likely to listen to you
- Reflect - you can use what people have said in what you say
- Target - you can comment directly on the issue

39 Pause

If you pause, even briefly before you reply, then two things happen:

Firstly it will give you time to work out the gist of your response.

Secondly your reply is more likely to be given credibility, because it shows you have given consideration to the issue.

40 Confirm

If you want to clarify the question, or buy more time to prepare a response, ask for confirmation of what the person said.

41 Tell

Give your response - keep to the subject, stay focused.

During your 'pause' time work out where you want your reply to go before you start speaking. This will help you speak more fluently, with more purpose and you will be better able to get your message across

42 End

Know when to end. People don't want a long rambling response.

Keep to the point then stop.

43 Be animated when you speak

If you are externally animated it has a beneficial effect on your mental processes, as physical activity and the mind are closely related.

If your body is animated, your mind functions at a lively pace.

Networking Skills



- 44 The aim
The main aim of networking is to build connections with others.
People prefer to do business with people they have built up a relationship with based on trust and likeability.
- 45 Networking is a 3-step process
1. First you need to meet people.
 2. Then you form relationships with them.
 3. Then you develop and grow these relationships.
- 46 Personality traits and interpersonal communication
When people describe a good networker, they will invariably talk about personality traits and interpersonal communication skills. They will mention, for example, being a good listener, being interested in others, pleasant to be around, approachable, positive, enthusiastic....
Working on these issues in yourself could be the most beneficial thing you could do.
- 47 Remember to S.T.A.Y.
Poor networkers focus on themselves and what they can get.
Excellent networkers focus on others and what they can give.
- 48 Always a networker
Great networkers live as networkers. They don't 'do' networking when they want something.
On a regular basis they will be working on helping others and building, growing and nurturing their relationships.
- 49 Networking events
It's useful to do some preparation before you go to a network event.
Give yourself a goal or purpose for the event you are going along to. It may be simply to meet one new person, or you may have a very specific goal.
- 50 When you are asked "What do you do?" bear in mind that the purpose of this question isn't just to find out what you do, but also to see if a relationship can be built.
It is said that many people would prefer not to talk about work, so consider including information about yourself as a person, eg hobby, interest, where you come from ...
- 51 Prepare a couple of conversation openers you can use when you are there.
Talk about 'universals', i.e. things anyone can easily talk about. For example the event, the food, the speaker...
- 52 Remember that the aim of a networking event is to meet others, so don't stay with the people you came along with all. At least not all the time.
Aim to meet at least one new person at every event.

- 53 Make yourself approachable
If you smile, have open body language and look at ease, and people are more likely to want to talk to you.
- 54 Getting to speak to people
When breaking into a group, look for the person whose eyes are distracted, or who has open body language or a welcoming facial expression, and speak to them first.
- 55 Getting away
Remember, that most people want to move along too. The aim isn't to stay with one person for the whole event. The general rule-of-thumb is that we usually talk to people for approximately 3-8 minutes.
- 56 Prepare a simple 'moving away' phrase that you are happy using.
For example "I know you'll have other people to talk to so I won't take up any more of your time".
- 57 Business cards
Always take your business cards with you.
Take enough, make sure they are good quality and up to date, and have them handy.
- 58 Afterwards
Write something on the back of the business cards you've collected to help you remember the people you have met.
Follow up on any promises you have made.
Make contact with anyone with whom there was some synergy.

Business Etiquette Skills



- 59 Phone etiquette
When answering the phone, make sure you have finished any activities such as eating, drinking, or having a conversation.
- 60 Answer with a smile
People can 'hear' a smile. You may like to have a mirror near the phone to check, or have a picture nearby that makes you smile.
- 61 Making a call
When phoning someone up, check that it is a convenient time for them to talk before launching into the purpose of your call.
- 62 Mobile phones
There are some places where it's accepted that mobile phones should not be used. This includes business meetings, courses, speeches and lectures, unless the speaker states they can be used.
- 63 Urgent calls
If you are expecting an urgent call, put your phone on vibrate, sit near the door, and leave the room to take the call.
- 64 Pen
Keep paper and a reliable pen handy in your car, bag or jacket to take messages.
- 65 Netiquette / email etiquette
Remember you are dealing with people.
Behave as you would face-to-face.
- 66 Online disinhibition effect
Be aware of losing some inhibition and writing things in an email you would not say face-to-face simply because you can 'hide' behind the email.
- 67 Signature
Have a clear signature with all your contact details.
Be careful about including quotations and sayings in your signature. Don't include anything that has the potential to be offensive or misunderstood. What impression does your signature message send to someone who doesn't know you?
- 68 Forwarded emails
Be wary of putting something in writing if you don't want it forwarded.
Phone instead.
- 69 The 24 hour rule
For conflict in cyberspace remember the 24 hour rule:
If you feel angry or irritated and write an email while in that frame of mind, put the email in your 'drafts' folder, leave it for 24 hours and then decide if you still want to send it.

- 70 Dress and image
People believe what they see before they believe what they hear.
What is your dress and image saying about you?
Does it give the impression you want it to?
- 71 Dress for success
Dress as though you hold a higher position than you actually do.
Dress for the job you want, not the job you've got.
- 72 Under or over?
If in doubt, it's better to be overdressed than underdressed.
- 73 Grooming
Attention to grooming is essential for both men and women (nails, hair, shoes, etc).
People notice the small details.
- 74 Quality
Buy the best quality clothes and accessories you can afford - bag, pen, watch, shoes, etc. People will notice.
- 75 If you want to charge more money for your services you will need to look like you are worth what you are asking them to pay.

Please remember that communication is a life skill we can always improve on, and that if we practise these skills on a regular basis, even briefly, we can improve the quality of our relationships, both personal and professional

With all best wishes,

Kim Chamberlain

75 Tips for Effective Communication

Questionnaire



Questionnaire

This is the Questionnaire which accompanies the e-book *75 Tips for Effective Communication*.

I think many people would agree that it's easy to read a 'how to' type of book and think "that's a good idea" ... but then never actually do anything with that thought.

This simple questionnaire is designed to take you to the next step - one of thinking through the Tips listed in the e-book, working out how you fare on them, and what would be useful for you to do next.

It's not a 'test' and there is no score at the end, it's simply a way for you to evaluate and to plan your next step.

My suggestion would be that you print this questionnaire off and fill in your thoughts on each item (be honest with yourself!). Then decide which aspects you would like to work on, and refer to them over a period of time to see the improvements being made.

There are 20 questions. The number in brackets refers to the number of the Tip in the e-book. You will need to refer back to the e-book to read the Tip.

Blank pages are included at the end for you to write in additional topics you may like to work on.

Happy communicating,

Kim Chamberlain

Underpinning Communication Skills

Tip	(5) When you are speaking to others, how 'in control' do you feel?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(9) When you first meet people, what kind of first impression do you think you make?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(13) Do you sound like you mean what you say? How do you rate yourself as a 'mumbler', 'weaker' 'rising inflexion speaker'?
How I fare	
My next step	

Presentation Skills

Tip	(15) Do you research the audience before you give a presentation?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(16) Do you spend time researching the issue of your input, or do you just start preparing your presentation?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(22) Do you bring variety into your presentation? How?
How I fare	
My next step	

Presentation Skills

Tip	(23) Do you use notes? Are you happy with how you use them or is there room for improvement?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(26) Do you practice practise practise?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(35) When giving a presentation do you tend to focus on yourself or on the needs of the audience?
How I fare	
My next step	

Impromptu Speaking Skills

Tip	(38) How good a listener are you?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(39) Do you pause before responding to a question or do you launch into an answer?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(41) Are you able to give a focused response or do you have a tendency to waffle?
How I fare	
My next step	

Networking Skills

Tip	(45) How are you at the three stages of building networking relationships?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(47) Are you a getter or a giver?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(52) Do you tend to stay with people you know at a networking event?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(57) Do you remember to take your business cards with you? Do you make sure they are handy?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(58) How are you with making contact with appropriate people afterwards?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	
How I fare	
My next step	

Business Etiquette Skills

Tip	(60) Do you smile when answering the phone?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(67) Does your email signature have all your contact details?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	(71) Would you say you 'dress for success'?
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	
How I fare	
My next step	

Tip	
How I fare	
My next step	

The Author



Kim Chamberlain MA Hons, NVQ, Dip CG, Dip FJ, ATM, APS
Speaker, Trainer, Author

Through the services she provides, Kim's goal is to help people take the next step in their personal or professional development.

Kim is an author, trainer and international speaker, is a national speaking champion, the founding president of the Wellington National Speakers Association, was voted as one of the top newsletter writers in the world and has written two series of books for a New York publisher. Originally from the UK, Kim loves moving to new places, and has lived in five countries on three continents. She enjoys dancing and crafts, and would refuse to be stranded on a desert island if there were no pens, paper or chocolate.

Conference speaking

- The value of failure in achieving success
- Small steps: An effective way to make changes
- Taking a risk
- Is there a formula for achieving more in your life?
- Women in business, can we juggle work, family and recreation time?

Training

- Presentation skills
- Presentations skills training for women

Books and e-books

- Better Speaking Better Thinking: General Edition (E-book)
- Better Speaking Better Thinking: Business and Management supplement (E-book)
- Five-Minute Brain Workout (Book)
- Five-Minute Brain Workout for Kids (Book)
- 365 Games and Puzzles to Keep Your Mind Sharp (Book)
- 5 Minutes! 199 activities to put more life into your life (E-book)
- Woman to Woman: 1,000 Conversation Starters for Talking about Anything (Book)
- Conversation Starters: 1,000 Creative Ways to Talk to Anyone about Anything (Book)
- Conversation Starters for Every Grandparent
- Successful Woman: A guide to achieving success in six life areas (E-book & book)

Available via:

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