



How to Speak so Everyone Listens

Why we care: If your audience didn't hear you, you didn't deliver your message.

What we can do: Use what you learn in this webinar to speak so everyone listens by 1) undoing your own communication biases, 2) identifying the preferred communication style(s) of your audience, and 3) tailoring your message to deliver the information people most want in the way they want to hear it. Note that preferred communication styles are not personality types, but just the way people like to give and get information. People's preferred communications styles can change depending on the situation and circumstances.

Don't assume: 93% of leaders think they're effective communicators, but only 11% of their employees agree. Assess your own communications style and preferences at <http://www.leadershipiq.com/quiz-whats-your-communication-style/>. You may prefer lots of facts and data, or like to get right to the bottom line, but that doesn't mean everyone else does, too. Communicate to others by addressing their preferences. Also read: [Which Of These 4 Communication Styles Are You?](#)

The **Four Communication Styles** are based on levels of emotion and linearity in how people like to give and get information. By identifying the style(s) you are communicating with, you can customize your message, so it gets heard and understood.

- **Intuitive** communicators are unemotional and freeform. They want communications that are short and to the point and that don't waste their time. Give Intuitives the bottom line first to gain their buy-in and then present your other points. [Learn how PechaKucha can help.](#)
- **Analytical** communicators are unemotional but linear. These are data-focused people whose trust is earned by confident communications that convey expertise. Don't use "feeling" words. Instead, give Analyticals the hard facts and numbers; the more specific you make your communications, the more successfully you'll allay their suspicions and win their buy-in. Read: [Are You A Technical Genius Who Gets Accused Of Lacking People Skills?](#)
- **Functional** communicators are emotional and like to have control of the process. They respond best to linear communications that start at A, and then cover B, C---all the way to Z. Give Functionals process-oriented details that flow from start to finish. Read: [How To Talk To People That Don't Get Right To The Point](#)
- **Personal** communicators want emotional and freeform communications that establish an interpersonal relationship. Give Personals information using emotional language in an informal, friendly and warm way that gets them involved in talking about factors like: who else will be involved and how what you're asking them to do will make them **feel**. Read: [If You Want To Be An Empathic Listener, Stop Using This Word.](#)

Diagnose your audience's preferred communication style by gathering information. If possible, have them take the style assessment above. Or ask: "What's the one question you need answered today? The answers will tell you who your audience is. Observe: are they rushed, cold and aloof, warm and in no hurry? Listen for verbal indicators. For example, Analyticals may ask: "Where is the data coming

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from?” Intuitives: “Where does this get us?” Functionals: “What happens first?” and Personals: “Who else will be involved?” **Perspective taking:** study shows that when we feel like someone really understands our perspective, even if they don’t agree with us, we like them nearly 20% more and feel nearly 80% more empathy towards them. Make **“I understand why you feel that way”** a regular part of your communications.

If you’re not sure what communication styles(s) are present, or you’re walking into a situation cold, **multi path your message** to hit each style in order of attention span. See the webinar slides for an example. Start with Intuitives (bottom line) who have the shortest attention spans. Next address Analyticals (data), then Functionals (A to Z), and then deliver a warm and fuzzy ending for the Personals who have the longest attention spans. We often hear this technique used in Presidential speeches.

Speak like a human: Avoid **emotional triggers** that make people defensive. For example: “you” language that attacks, adverbs and absolutes that exaggerate the facts, and negations and negative emotions (can’t, couldn’t, didn’t). Read: [Saying The Word 'You' Is A Good Way To Start Fights And Make People Mad](#). Use **concrete language** (high imagery, e.g. “dead body”, “happy clown”) and not abstract language (lacks imagery; e.g. “useful purpose”, “value added”). People want to hear about things that are relevant to them, that are going to help them, that solve a pain or that inspire them to do something bigger than themselves. Use the **“narcissism ratio”** to track how many times you say “I” or “me” versus the number of times you talk about your employees, your customers, or whomever it is you're talking about. **Say “No” when needed.** The phrase **“I’ve decided not to”** shows confidence. Avoid saying “I’m sorry” and offering long explanations. Good communication requires **PRACTICE!**

Delivering your message: Face-to-face allows for tone of voice, two-way interaction and body language and provides the best opportunity for assessing the preferred communication style(s) of your audience. Video conferencing and phone only deliver tone and two-way interaction. Voice mail only offers tone of voice and IM two-way interaction. Email, the least desirable form of communication, presents the greatest risk of message misinterpretation. Personals are least likely to respond well to email (if you use email with Personals include lots of “feeling” words). Analyticals will do OK with email if you deliver the facts and data (face-to-face is still preferable). The more you pick up the phone or “pop in” to talk in person, the greater chance that your message will be heard and understood resulting in the desired actions you want people to take.

Summary: Good communication skills are a major predictor of success regardless of job title and/or type of organization, and a significant contributor to work engagement level. Everyone has a preferred method to give and get information. There are Four Communication Styles (Intuitive, Analytical, Functional and Personal). Learn how to recognize the style of your audience so you can react with speed and accuracy in tailoring your words to match what your audience wants to hear. Assess your own preferred methods of communication to understand the biases that may color your communications. Then consider: “Who am I talking to” and “How do I best reach them” and adjust your message accordingly. You’re not delivering the same message in different ways, but rather presenting different kinds of information to each of the four styles. Avoid emotional language and trigger words and use concrete language (not abstract language). Remember that people tend to be harder to reach during stressful times. Avoid communication modalities that don’t give you enough “juice” (email). Stick with richer communication modalities that offer greater bandwidth, for example, face-to-face.

Mark is a regular contributor at Forbes.com. Follow him at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markmurphy>