



Northwest Construction Consumer Council

Effective Business Communications for Project Managers: Building Knowledge & Skills

November 13, 2002

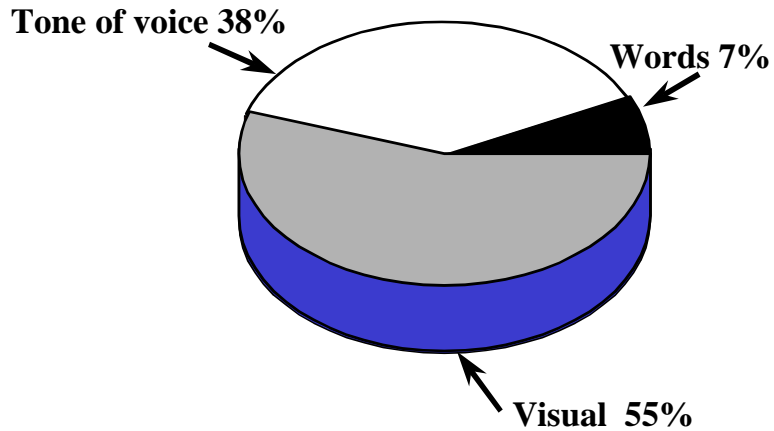
D. Joel Whalen, Ph.D.
Kellstadt Graduate School of Business
DePaul University, Chicago

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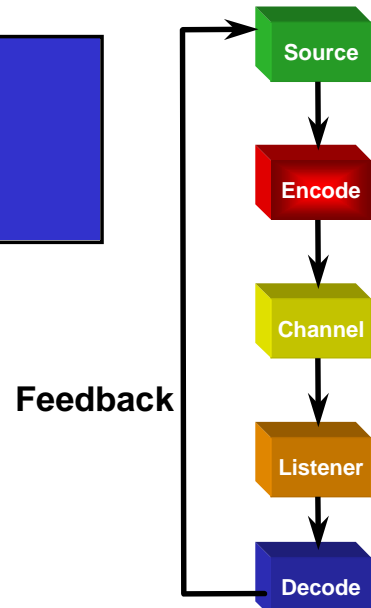
Meaning



Source: Mehrabian, Albert, *Silent Messages*, Belmont, CA, Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971, p. 56.

Shannon/Weaver
Model of
Communication

Shannon, Claude & Warren
Weaver, *Bell Telephone Labs*,
1948.

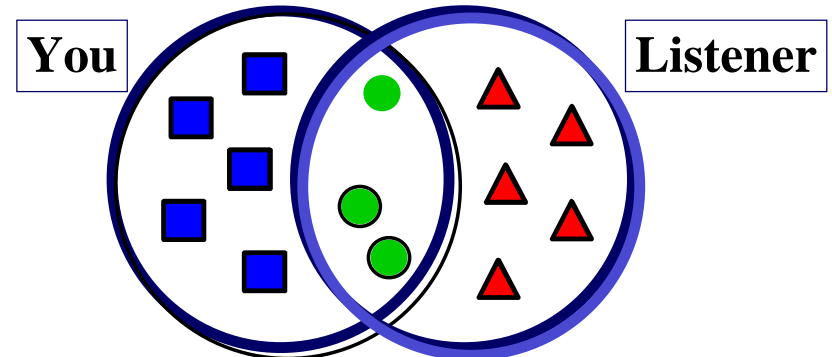


What you communicate is:
How you are feeling

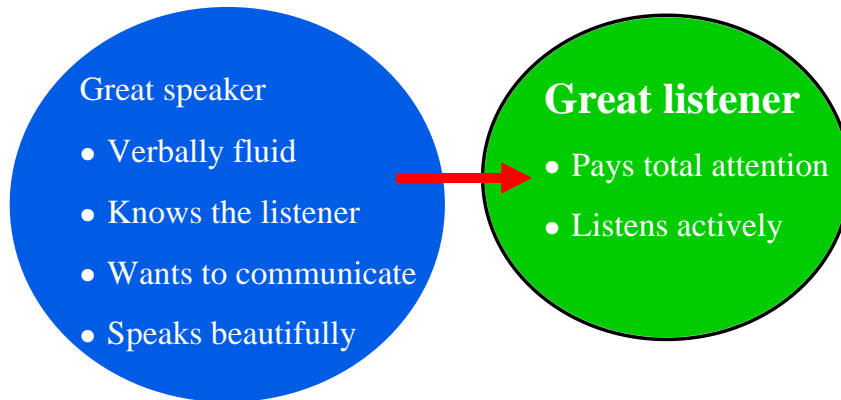
Really?

- Sad
- Questioning
- Resigned
- Sarcastic

Effective Communication Model



Is this great communication?



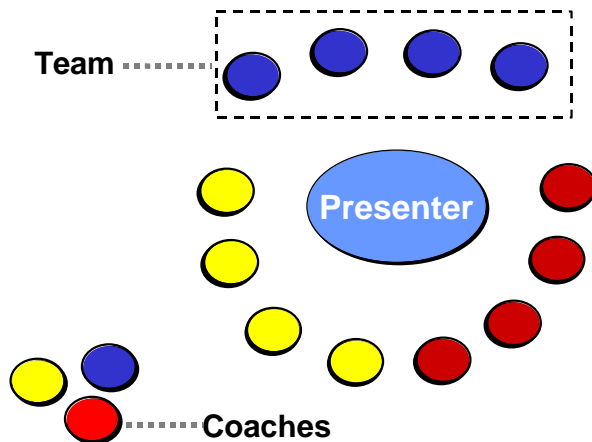
Learn skills *Not just knowledge*

Process of Learning

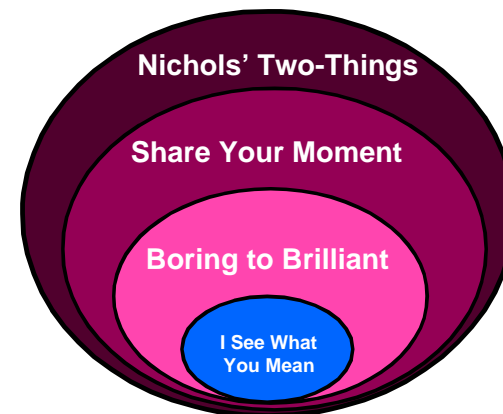
Tell = Forget
Show = Remember
Do = Understand
Teach = Master

- Be *yourself* and think when speaking
- Don't coach gestures and eye contact

Your group



Effective Communication Basic Modules



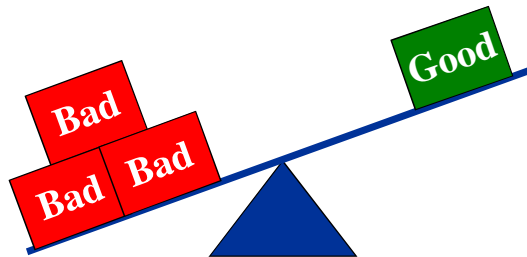
Effective Oral & Written Communication It is *not* about You

It's about changing what people:

- See
- Hear
- Feel
- Think

Your silent message

- Listener creates own message
- Bad news 3X greater than good news



Five Realities of Communication

Pete Heineman, University of Omaha

Reality One:

- When you don't communicate you send a message
- Silence is a message too
- Listeners create their own meaning to fill the 'void'

Realities of Communication

Reality Two:

- Meanings are in people, not in words
 - Listeners attach their own meaning
- ⇒ People who are unaware that *meanings* are in people are the ones who complain:
"But I told them!"

Communication is not about you

- Shooting pictures into listeners head
- People have a 'screen' in the front of their mind
- People create their own messages from what you say

Realities of Communication

Reality Three:

- Communication is a learned behavior
- We want to get reward and avoid punishment
- People write or speak to maximize reward and minimize punishment

Realities of Communication

Reality Four:

- Misunderstanding is the normal result of communication
- Communication's enemy is the illusion that successful communication has taken place
- Each communication results in a somewhat *different meaning* in sender's mind & listener's mind
- The question is: how big is the difference between you and your listener; i.e., how far apart?

Realities of Communication

Reality Five:

- When communication breaks down, a normal response is to ask, "Whose fault is it?"
- Someone is assigned the blame—they deny it, and time and energy are spent in defense and attack



Make the *Realities of Communication* work for you

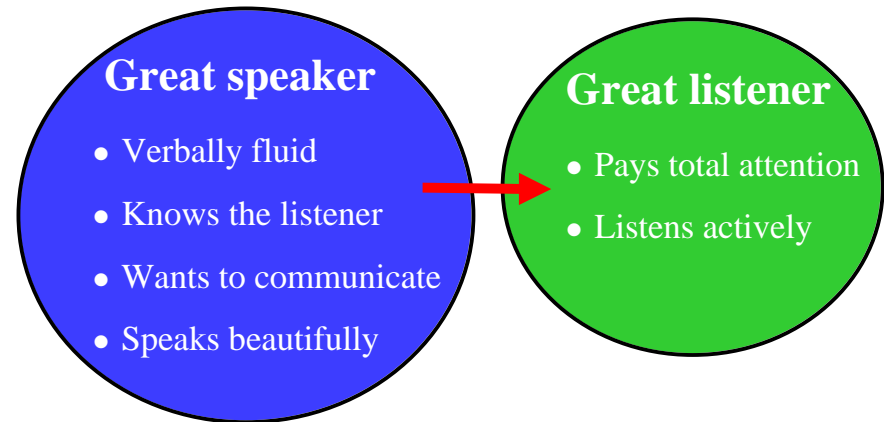
Realities

1. Silence is a message too.
2. Meanings are in people not words.
3. People communicate to get reward and avoid punishment.
4. Misunderstanding is normal.
5. When people miscommunicate, someone is assigned the blame.

Here's what you'll do:

- Discuss this Reality with your teammate(s):
For example, consider the Reality's importance, the impact on the way people work and communicate.
- Give specific examples that show the Reality at work.
- Make some notes on what you've discovered— your team will brief the other teams.

Is this great communication?



Stephen Covey: *Habit 5*

Planning Communication Message Strategy

“Seek first to understand...

Then, to be understood”

—The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Big mistake

- What to write?
- What to say?

Communication Channels

- Speaking
- Writing

Communication Channels' power & limitations

Power of Speaking *Attitude & Emotion*

- Pictures
- Sounds/smells/feelings/touch
- *Felt Sense (more on this later)*

Communication Channels' power & limitations

Power of Writing *Details and Complexity*

Numbers—

- Financial data
- Statistics
- Time of day
- Dates
- Procedures
- Instructions
- Directions

Oral Message

What you'll remember:

- First & last things said
- Pictures & stories (events)
- Repetition — things said 3X (sort of)

Oral Message

What you'll forget:

- Names
- Numbers
- Details
- When things happened
- Sequence of events: will tend to create and add

Message Strategy What to *Write* and What to *Say*

Write down what you remember from the Pizza Story:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____

Nichols' Two-Things[©]

Nichols' Two-Things is:

- Message Packaging device
- Message Delivery technique
- Fast
- Very productive
- Creates a professional impression
- Maximizes communication impact

- People remember 2 things
- Will forget more ideas

Nichols' Two-Things[©] Big Messages

- Trust your brain
- Data reduction device
- Like ANOVA
- Your brain searches for patterns
- Looks for similarities
- Master of the Message

- ❶ Pick a topic
- ❷ What jumps into your brain?



Popular USA *Nichols' Two-Things*® Message Topics

- How to use dental floss
- Middle seat on the airplane
- Body piercing
- How to serve shrimp
- Baseball's *designated hitter* rule
- Dryers that steal socks
- Sea otters mating
- Beer backwash
- Tropical drink cocktail umbrellas
- Bellybutton lint

Nichols' Two-Things®

Question Opening®

- Captures attention
- Starts listener thinking

Repetition

- Make complete thoughts
- Link all levels together

Nichols' Two-Things®

Big Messages® criteria

1. Umbrella and important
2. Sensory rich
3. Benefit/interest to listener

Cold Closing®

- Summarize
- End on a strong, positive emotion

Grand Tanian® Team Exercise

Pick the topic you like best:

- Low Fat Diet
- Road Runner *versus* The Coyote
- Running Shoes

Work with your partner(s):

1. Apply the *Nichols' Two-Things*® Message Packaging strategy
2. Fill-in the *Nichols' Two-Things*® phrase at each level
3. Pick Facilitator
4. Other partner(s) answer the Facilitator's questions



Nichols' Two-Things[©] Making Big Messages Checklist

Facilitator:

"When you think of (topic), what's the first thing that comes to mind?"

Answer: Usually your Big Messages.

Big Messages Checklist:

Are Big Messages ...

- umbrella and important?
- sensory rich?
- benefit/interest to listener?

Nichols' Two-Things[©] Test for Sensory Rich Messages

How to tell if your Big Message is Sensory Rich:

Ask: "When I say (Big Message), what do you see?"

Pass the Sensory Rich Test: If you see a picture in your mind, then your Big Message is Sensory Rich.

Fail the Sensory Rich Test: If you don't see a picture, your Big Message is *not* Sensory Rich.

Do this: Go back to the Topic.

The Facilitator asks again: "When you think of (Topic), what's the first thing that comes to mind?"

**Sample
Nichols' Two-Things[©]**

Topic Summer is the best season

<u>Warm, bright sun</u> Big Message One	<u>Bar-b- que</u> Big Message Two
1 <u>Feels good on your skin</u>	1 <u>Good food</u>
A <u>Warm, healthy feeling</u>	A <u>Flavorful food</u>
B <u>Relaxing</u>	B <u>Fun food</u>
2 <u>Gives you energy</u>	2 <u>Friends and parties</u>
A <u>Streets full of people</u>	A <u>Informal fun</u>
B <u>Lots to do outdoors</u>	B <u>Family and close friends</u>



Nichols' Two-Things[©]

Topic _____

Big Message One

1 _____

A _____

B _____

2 _____

A _____

B _____

Big Message Two

1 _____

A _____

B _____

2 _____

A _____

B _____

Check if your Big Messages are: Umbrella/Important? Sensory Rich? Listener Benefit/Interest?



Good Communicator's Check List

- Set a positive attitude before you speak
- Remember that communication is *not* about you
- Know that communication happens in the listener's mind

Plan communication:

- Decide what is best to say
- Decide what is best to write
- Say important things first and last
- Shoot pictures into your listener's head



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