



Communication and Your Credibility

How would you rate the quality of communication at your office?

Ineffective communication often results in poor cooperation, lower productivity, undercurrents of tension, gossip and rumors, and increased turnover and absenteeism.

A report issued by the Forum Corp. and reported in Across the Board shows that colleagues rated highly trustworthy were also assumed to be highly competent. Team members lack credibility when they fail to help create a climate of trust and openness - they aren't believable, no matter how hard they try to communicate. To build trust, you must be seen as a collaborator, not a competitor.

1. Understand that communication is a two-way street. It involves giving information and getting feedback; it isn't finished when information is given.
2. Listen to the speaker; show respect. They'll feel part of the team and will tend to be more dedicated and productive.

If you want to listen so you really hear what others say, make sure you're not a:

- Mind reader. You'll hear little or nothing as you think "What is this person really thinking or feeling?"
- Rehearser. Your mental tryouts for "Here's what I'll say next" tune out the speaker.
- Filterer. Some call this selective listening - hearing only what you want to hear.
- Dreamer. Drifting off during a face-to-face conversation can lead to an embarrassing "What did you say?" or "Could you repeat that?"
- Identifier. If you refer everything you hear to your experience, you probably didn't really hear what was said.
- Comparer. When you get sidetracked assessing the messenger, you're sure to miss the message.
- Derailer. Changing the subject too quickly tells others you're not interested in anything they have to say.
- Sparrer. You hear what's said but quickly belittle it or discount it. That puts you in the same class as the Derailer.
- Placater. Agreeing with everything you hear just to be nice or to avoid conflict does not mean you're a good listener.

3. Build Personal Trust:

By admitting doubt or error and acknowledging mistakes, managers were felt to be competent. Co-workers thought, "I can trust you. You won't try to bluff me." Colleagues rated highly trustworthy were also rated highly competent. To build trust, you must be seen as a collaborator, not as a competitor.