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# High-Performance Communication Overview

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In business, it is common for participants with differing perspectives to clash and suffer poor results due to difficulties in exchanging information. The required collaboration is not necessarily difficult to perform with training. This paper presents an overview of the skills required and presents some details regarding conducting productive conversations.

## 1) Communication matters.

- a. The VitalSmarts study (Consultants to 300 of the Fortune 500)
  - i. 25 years; 20,000 individuals
  - ii. Purpose - Seeking widespread agreement on who “really gets things done” and analyze what it is that they do.
  - iii. Findings
    - 1. Conduct Productive Conversations
    - 2. Create and Maintain Good Relationships
    - 3. Exercise Influence



FIGURE 1 - HOW DO YOU DISTINGUISH YOURSELF?

## 2) Anatomy of Good Results

- a. Great results require great decisions
- b. Great decisions require great communication
- c. Great communication requires trust and openness
- d. Great trust and openness comes from feeling safe



FIGURE 2 - FROM "FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM (LENCIONI)"

### 3) How well do we Communicate?

- a. 272 companies; 9,561 respondents (2007 Leadership IQ)
  - i. 93% of people have avoided confronting a coworker about inappropriate behavior
  - ii. 81% of managers have avoided confronting a subordinate about inappropriate behavior
  - iii. 89% of people have avoided confronting their boss when he or she failed to fulfill an expectation or promise
  - iv. 77% of people say that when they speak up about sensitive topics, the other party gets angry or defensive
  - v. 83% of people say that they occasionally or frequently withhold important information from bosses, coworkers and employees because they fear the conversation will end badly

### 4) Skills to Learn

#### Face-to-Face Communication Skills

- Identifying Needs and Setting Goals
- Learning / Coaching
- Motivation
- Interpersonal Problem Solving
- Influence
- Logic and Evaluation
- Facilitation
- Relationship Management
- Persuasion
- Negotiation

### 5) TWO for the price of one!

- a. In EVERY conversation there are TWO things to manage
  - i. The CONTENT (**SPIRAL Model** – Statement, Proof or Issue, Response, Assess Logically)
  - ii. The RELATIONSHIP (**THE SCORE Model** – See below)
    - 1. Emotions (*reactions to a stimulus*)
    - 2. Feelings (*perceptions about things, situations, or people*)

### 6) Advocacy vs. Inquiry

Characteristic	Advocacy	Inquiry
Concept of Decision Making	A contest	Collaborative problem solving
Purpose of discussion	Persuasion and lobbying	Testing and evaluating
Participant's role	Spokespeople	Critical thinkers
Patterns of behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Strive to persuade others</li> <li>•Defend your position</li> <li>•Downplay weaknesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Present balanced arguments</li> <li>•Remain open to alternatives</li> <li>•Accept constructive criticism</li> </ul>
Minority Views	Discouraged or dismissed	Cultivated and valued
Outcome	Winners and losers	Collective ownership

## 7) Relationship Management (THE SCORE) – ALWAYS be prepared

**T**entativeness  
**H**umility  
**E**mpathy  
  
**S**implicity & Sincerity  
**C**uriosity  
**O**penness  
**R**espect for Content, Process, Counterpart, & Self  
**E**ngagement

## 8) A Productive Perspective

- a. No Victims, No Villains
- b. Identify the most pressing issue
- c. Clarify the issue with as much detail as necessary
- d. Determine the current impact in as much detail as necessary
- e. Determine the future implications (what will happen if things don't change)
- f. Examine the contribution system for the issue.
- g. Imagine the ideal outcome
- h. What should I do to move towards what I want right now?
- i. What am I pretending not to know about this situation?

## 9) Credibility – Develop This / Question This

- a. Competence
- b. Trustworthiness
- c. Good Will
- d. Dynamism
- e. Eyewitness access to information
- f. Background and Training
- g. A good track record

## 10) Evidence (Response)

- a. Social Consensus v. Objective Evidence
- b. Primary v. Secondary
- c. Expert v. Layperson
- d. Six Levels of Strength (low to high)
  - i. Assertion (in my opinion...)
  - ii. Common Knowledge or Stipulation
  - iii. Lay Opinion (if a reasoned conclusion)
  - iv. Expert Opinion or Consensus of Lay Opinion
  - v. An Empirical Study or Consensus of Expert Opinion
  - vi. Consensus of Studies

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Fig. 1—People ruining their business

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