



## Fulcrum Search Science Inc. Communication

Communication has always been, is and will continue to be the number one problem in organizations. As a person in a leadership role, you must clearly communicate your vision of the future, your performance expectations and results.

- Be clear and specific about what you want.
- If you are not sure that the people you are speaking to have understood you, ask them to repeat your message in their own words.
- Observe people's response to your message. Most of what people think is not expressed verbally. Learn to read people's thoughts through their facial expressions, hand and feet gestures. Above all, look at their eyes for signs of confusion, disagreement, disbelief, resistance or understanding.
- If there is background noise, speak loudly or move to a more quiet area. Use gestures to reinforce your verbal communication, especially in noisy areas.
- In order to keep people's attention, modulate your voice. Suddenly speaking louder or softer, quickly or slowly will increase interest in what you are saying; so will pausing before or after a key point.
- Maintain eye contact with people you are talking to. Bear in mind their cultural background. In some cultures, excessive eye contact is a sign of disrespect.
- Pay full attention to the other person. Avoid taking phone calls or allowing interruptions to distract you. Don't hold two conversations at the same time.
- When you communicate an important point, raise your voice slightly or begin to speak deliberately. Also, let your body language reflect the importance of what you are saying by leaning forward, opening your eyes wider, and using appropriate hand gestures.
- Begin conversations positively. If there is potential for conflict, start off with something you both agree on. Build on areas that you have in common to establish a positive atmosphere that will enable you to tackle more difficult issues.
- Avoid using but to join sentences. This word immediately puts people on the defensive. A better word to use is and.
- Use I messages. Using you will make people defensive.

### READING BODY LANGUAGE

Here are some signs that let you know what people are thinking or feeling:

- Crossed legs and arms Not open to your ideas.
- Darting eyes Anxious or lack confidence.
- Eyes up at top left Trying to out-manoeuvre you. May be lying.
- Eyes up at top right Wondering, mental problem-solving.
- Hands on hip or hip jut Confident, almost arrogant, challenging.
- Jacket buttoned up Formal.
- Jacket unbuttoned Open, informal.
- Leaning back, arms behind head Contemplating, skeptical.
- Looking over bifocals Evaluating, skeptical.
- Open hands - palms down Demanding.
- Open hands - Palms up Wanting, needing.
- Slouch Low self-esteem.
- Slow blink Doesn't enjoy being there.
- Smile Enjoyment, pleasure.

***Cy Charney, President of Charney & Associates Inc. (905-886-5606), is a leading Canadian management consultant focusing on organizational performance improvement. The above is an excerpt from his book, The Instant Manager, published by Stoddart.***