



PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

Materials:

- PPT slide for stairs illustration
- Whiteboard and Markers

WORKSHOP: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

by Rose McConnell

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: Misunderstanding and miscommunication can hamper ministry effectiveness and damage relationships. A wise ministry team is proactive in deciding how to best communicate among members of the team.

CONTEXT: This training would be most effective for PWOC Boards and Bible study teachers as part of an initial board retreat, board meeting, or teacher training.

TIME: 45-60 minutes

HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: (10 minutes)

Create a sign or PPT slide with these directions found posted on the stairs of a business:

Please, when using the stairs

Stay to the right when going up,

Stay to the left when going down.

This will keep people from running into each other.

Think about it! Unfortunately, this is a symbolic picture of what can happen because of miscommunication.



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It is estimated that 45% of the energy in most organizations is wasted because of misunderstandings and two out of every three mistakes occur because of miscommunication.¹

Share (briefly and succinctly) with the group a time when you experienced miscommunication. For example: My mother and I agreed on a gift for my children at Christmas. On Christmas Eve we discovered that she thought I would pick it up, wrap it and she would pay for it. I thought she was going to bring it with her. Neither of us bought it before the stores closed and the children got their gift the day after Christmas.

Have your participants turn to someone next to them and share a time they experienced miscommunication. After 3 minutes, invite the group to share a few examples. Provide some quick feedback for each example and be sure to thank each volunteer.

The best learning involves verbalization. Having partners talk to each other gives them a chance to connect and also gives the opportunity to make a personal contribution to the topic at hand. Sharing with a partner may give an individual the courage to repeat their story to the whole group.

MAKE YOUR POINT 1: Preferred Methods of Communication

(5 minutes)

There are three basic ways to communicate – electronically, through a phone call, and face-to-face. However each of these can be broken down to sub-categories: Electronic communication includes email, text or via social media sites. Communication through a phone call includes cell or landline. Face-to-face communication includes one-on-one, small group, or large group.

Invite someone to read Philippians 2:3-4:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

¹ Don DeGraaf, Colin Tilley and Larry Neal, *Servant-Leadership Characteristics in Organizational Life*. The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, "Voices of Servant-Leadership Series," Monograph Booklet 6, p.3, 2001.



How could this scripture apply to effective communication? (A way to avert miscommunication is to communicate in the preferred way for the listener).

NOTE: A wise leader will instruct her team to "err on the side of grace" in modes of communication. An email is very easily misunderstood and can cause a lot of misery if the offended person begins broadcasting her offense. Better to go to the person directly and ask for clarification. A powerful tool in dissolving bitterness is to pray for the offender, whether the offense was intentional or not.

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 1: Preferred Methods of Communication (5 minutes)

Have the following headings written on a poster or whiteboard.

HOME PHONE CELL PHONE TEXT FACE-TO-FACE EMAIL FACEBOOK OTHER

Instruct the group to write their name under their preferred method to communicate, (i.e., how they want to receive information).

A chart or visual representation of information is very helpful. Simply listening to everyone's preferences would be quickly forgotten by most, but seeing it displayed in an organized way helps the brain to process that information. It also becomes a visual aid in the follow-up discussion.

Do you notice patterns and trends? What might that mean?

If your group all has the same preferred method, you are blessed. Most groups have a combination. Ask someone to record this information to share with everyone in the group. You now have a quick reference for the best way to communicate with your leadership team.

What are some of the pros and cons of these different methods? *(If you want to take this concept further, consider using the optional activity on pros and cons of communication methods).*



MAKE YOUR POINT 2: Response Time in Communication

(5 minutes)

Another potential area of misunderstanding and miscommunication is response time. Electronic communication makes us *available* 24/7. How does that affect the response expectation? Right, people expect a quick response. At one time, 48 hours was a reasonable expectation for email responses. Currently, the expectation can be anywhere from immediate response to within one day. Many co-workers expect a response within four hours or even less.²

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 2: Response Time in Communication

(15 minutes)

NOTE: Make sure you coordinate ahead of time with the leader of the particular group you are addressing. Ask her to share her expectations concerning communication response time. If you are the leader, take this opportunity to share your expectations. Allow time input from the group with the goal of consensus and clear expectations for response time from team members in the various modes of communication.

Your participants will have more “buy-in” if they are part of the decision-making process. This honors their intelligence and their preferences as capable volunteers. Coming up with agreed-upon response times together will be more beneficial than making an executive decision based on what is best for you.

Email: _____

Phone call: _____

Text: _____

Facebook/ social media: _____

² Trainer note: see this study for details: <http://www.toistersolutions.com/blog/2012/5/21/how-quickly-should-you-respond-to-an-email.html>)



NOTE: Be sure to address that there are times when you need to pray over a reply, or even sleep on it before offering a response. What is something you might say when you do not have a ready answer? Allow some suggestions that might include:

- "I'm not sure, but I'll find out for you."
- "I got your message, let me think on this and get back to you."

Next, decide what you will and will not communicate through each mode of communication. For example: it is usually unwise to use email to address a heated situation since it can so easily be misunderstood. Come up with a plan of action.

Email: _____

Phone call: _____

Text: _____

Facebook/ social media: _____

Look again where you placed your name on the preferred communication list. When you consider response time, is this still your preferred way to communicate with our ministry team? If not, write your name under an alternate heading. (Make sure to record any adjustments).

There are no right or wrong answers. The goal is to decide on the best method of communication for our team.

NOTE: If you have quite a few women who work outside the home, phone calls may have to be in the evening and emails that are not work-related may need to wait until the next day. If the group agrees on the response time, 24-48 hours may be an acceptable response time. If your group is primarily under the age of 35, carries smart phones and expects responses immediately, 1-2 hours may be an acceptable response time – even if the response is "busy now, will get back to you by ____." You may even set one response time for during the week and a different one for the weekend, (i.e., Unless it is an emergency, I will not contact you on Sunday so you can spend that time with your family).



APPLY IT TO LIFE: (5 minutes)

Below are 7 scenarios. You may use all of them or you may choose the group of scenarios that best fits your training audience.

Work as a whole group to quickly come to consensus on which mode of communication would be best for each scenario.

For any group:

- 1) You must alert everyone of the cancelation of PWOC due to a problem with the chapel building.
- 2) You need to inform your group of the death of a PWOC participant or a PWOC participant's immediate family.

For PWOC Board:

- 3) You must alert the board that the Chaplain has changed the guidelines for PWOC.
- 4) You must inform the board that a member of the board has stepped down.

For Bible study teachers:

- 5) You must inform your class that a member of the class is in the hospital.
- 6) You must inform your class that a class member has delivered her baby.
- 7) You must inform your class about an outside activity.

Thank your group for participating today. As you close out your time together, remind them of these words from Scripture concerning communication:

"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." (James 1:19)

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." (Colossians 4:5-6)



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: (15 minutes)

There are pros and cons to each form of communication. Depending on time and your group, you may present this concept either as a learning activity or as a read and discuss. If you are choosing a read and discuss, have the information below printed. Ask the group to read and mark anything that stands out.

If you chose to present this as a learning activity, divide the larger group into small groups of no more than four people. Instruct them to draw a T-graph under each heading, with Pro on one side and Con on the other. Provide the Pros and Cons handout upon completion to compare lists.

Pros & Cons of Communication Methods

E-mail

Pros:

- Familiar to most
- Good for task messages
- More available with smart phones

Cons:

- "Old fashioned" to some
- Not good for emotional messages
- More available with smart phones
- Emails do not always arrive as planned
- Expectation of quick response by some
- Not everyone has smart phones

Facebook

Pros:

- "Email" type messages
- More Available
- Facebook groups combine information

Cons:

- Not everyone uses or uses frequently
- Wall posts public or for all friends
- Not good for emotional messages

Text

Pros:

- Quick response time
- Good for task messages

Cons:

- Brief snippet (may not explain fully)
- Not good for emotional messages
- Not everyone is comfortable with it



Cell Phone

Pros:

- Can hear tone of voice
- Quick response time
- Actual conversation

Cons:

- May be distracted while talking (i.e. in store)
- Not everyone has a cell phone
- May forget tasks decided upon in conversation

Home Phone

Pros:

- Can hear tone of voice
- Actual conversation
- Better for emotional messages

Cons:

- Not everyone has land line
- May have longer response time if not home
- May forget tasks decided on

Face to Face

Pros:

- Best for building relationship
- Best for emotional messages

Cons:

- May take longer to have conversation
- May forget tasks decided upon in conversation
- May be distracted if not one-on-one time

