

Business Class

WEEK 7 - COMMUNICATION BEST
PRACTICES



Welcome to Class!

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Surprising statistics
- What is good/effective communication?
- Reasons of ineffective communication
- Results of bad communication
- Communication strategy
- Best practices
- 1st Q&A session
- Best practices, contd.
- Crisis communication
- Communication with customers
- 2nd Q&A session



Class Objectives & Rules

EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES

★ Objectives:

- In today's lesson, you're going to learn the obstacles to effective communication and how to avoid them.
- By the end of this lesson today, you'll know how to make your message reach its recipient and achieve your goal.



Lesson for Today

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

- Workplace communication today is also about creating dialog, improving collaboration and as a result driving people's engagement.
- No matter the company, without proper communication there is no good performance and business success.
- There are several things employees and managers or executives can do to start the development of the business communication skills.



Surprising statistics

37%

managers uncomfortable with giving feedback

57%

employees not being given clear directions

69%

managers not comfortable communicating with employees

— Business Class | Just Take a Lesson



What is effective communication?

PROCESS

- This simply means that receiver understood the message the way you intended to.
- Even if you did all you needed to deliver the information correctly, very often people hear what they want to hear.
- They listen selectively or are distracted and the information is not reaching them as it should.

SKILL

- There are things you can do to improve on your side, leaving very little for the other side's interpretation.
- Good communication is a skill and as such can be learned. It requires practice and good feedback as well as – ways to measure it.



The importance of communication skills



Source: <https://blog.smarp.com/top-5-communication-skills-and-how-to-improve-them>

Ineffective communication reasons



- Lack of consistent and comprehensive communication strategy
- Email overload
- Time consuming and unproductive meetings
- Inappropriate language used (too formal or not formal enough)
- Incorrect channels used for communication
- Delays in sharing the information
- Sugarcoating of the information in case of sharing the bad news, challenges or company's difficulties (instead of telling the truth) [sugarcoat – lukrować lub osładzać]

Ineffective communication effects



- Staff turnover
- Bad customer service (in result - the companies' trust decrease)
- Time loss when searching for information
- Poor employees performance
- Project failures
- Internal conflicts and decrease in morale
- "Telephone game" result – people sharing incorrect or misinterpreted information
- Missed opportunities (missed clients, contracts etc)
- Difficulties in implementing any innovative solutions or any changes in the company (people won't welcome any changes if they don't understand what is going to change)

Communication strategy



Internal communication best practices roadmap



Best practice

THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

- It's the highest time to say "preparation" :-)
- What's the purpose of communication?
- What results do you expect?

SPEAK THE OTHER'S PERSON LANGUAGE

- Mind the audience, that also means – mind the generation!
- Adjust the language used and the driver of your message – should it be email? Or should it be company's newsletter or short video message?



Best practice

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TOOL

- Technology is your friend but can also be your worst enemy.
- You may need different tools to communicate with teams that are office based and with the ones working remotely
- Do not avoid personal meetings though, when needed some information should be shared face-to-face.

MAKE IT ENTERTAINING

- People are more willing to digest the information if they have fun doing it.
- When things are entertaining, people engage their emotions.
- Being emotionally engaged means being part of the company, which really drives the productivity.



Best practice

LISTEN MORE, BE APPROACHABLE

- Communication is also listening to what others share and being easy to approach.
- “Open door” policy.
- Reach out to people by their first name and allow them to do so too (where possible).

TIMING AND PLACE

- Sometimes the information that needs to be shared is not pleasant.
- You should know that some news needs to be told or shared personally.
- Mind the place and time depending on what you are going to share.



Is everything clear so far?

Let's have a Q&A session!



Best practice

CLEAR STANDARDS

- What channels are there and what kind of information they contain?
- What kind of information is allowed to be shared in emails or instant communicators?
- For example – company’s newsletter is sent every quarter; Financial results are shared end of the year; Posters at the office inform about team activities and achievements.

ASKING FOR FEEDBACK

- If you want to know if you are doing it right, ask your people.
- Employees should have a place to share their feedback freely, even if needed – anonymously.
- Ask people what they would like to change to get the message better.



Best practice

SIMPLE MESSAGES

- People are busy and what they need is the short message with most important data.
- Use videos, pictures and infographics and everyone will digest it.

EASY ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- People should know where to find essential documents and files, so if they need anything, they don't waste time searching for it.
- Have a clear onboarding strategy for new employees (every job starts with getting information about the company, its vision and strategy.)



Best practice

STRUCTURE FOR SHARING

- Who shares what, when and to whom?
- What information people can get from their manager, what can they expect to be sent from HR and what other departments may share.

SUGARCOATING BAD NEWS (DON'T)

- Telling the truth is the only way to gain trust.
- No matter what crisis the company is going through, if you share it correctly, people will help your organization to go through it.



Best practice

SHARING BETWEEN TEAMS

- Communication seems to be shut in so called silos, especially in big companies.
- Teams are not sharing information among themselves and managers tend to inform specific departments selectively.
- This may cause work disruptions such as: doubled effort for same projects, projects which are in contra to each other etc.

MINDING YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

- Raised voice, folded arms, rolled eyes or pointing fingers, all of this can cause a damage to your communication.
- People really mind the body language and if you are angry and your body shows that, what you tell won't matter as much as what your body shows.



Best practice

REMOVING LANGUAGE BARRIERS

- Working in international environment may require communication to be sent in several languages.
- Even if everyone speaks English, some really important news should be shared in people's native language to make sure things are correctly understood.

DON'T NEGLECT ONE-TO-ONES

- Team meetings are never going to have some people to share their ideas or thoughts freely, simply because they are shy or afraid of speaking in large groups or they are just introverts.



Best practice

TRAININGS

- This is an investment for the company and time investment for employee, but benefits are huge.
- Employees will be able to share more easily and honestly their feedback, gain better verbal, written and listening communication skills.

ALIGNING INT. AND EXT. MESSAGES

- Aligned communication builds trust. This also assures you that if one day your former employee gets hired at your customer's office – there's no “shocking news” he can share.
- Digital era, and world of social media we live in allows people to check the information and share it easily.



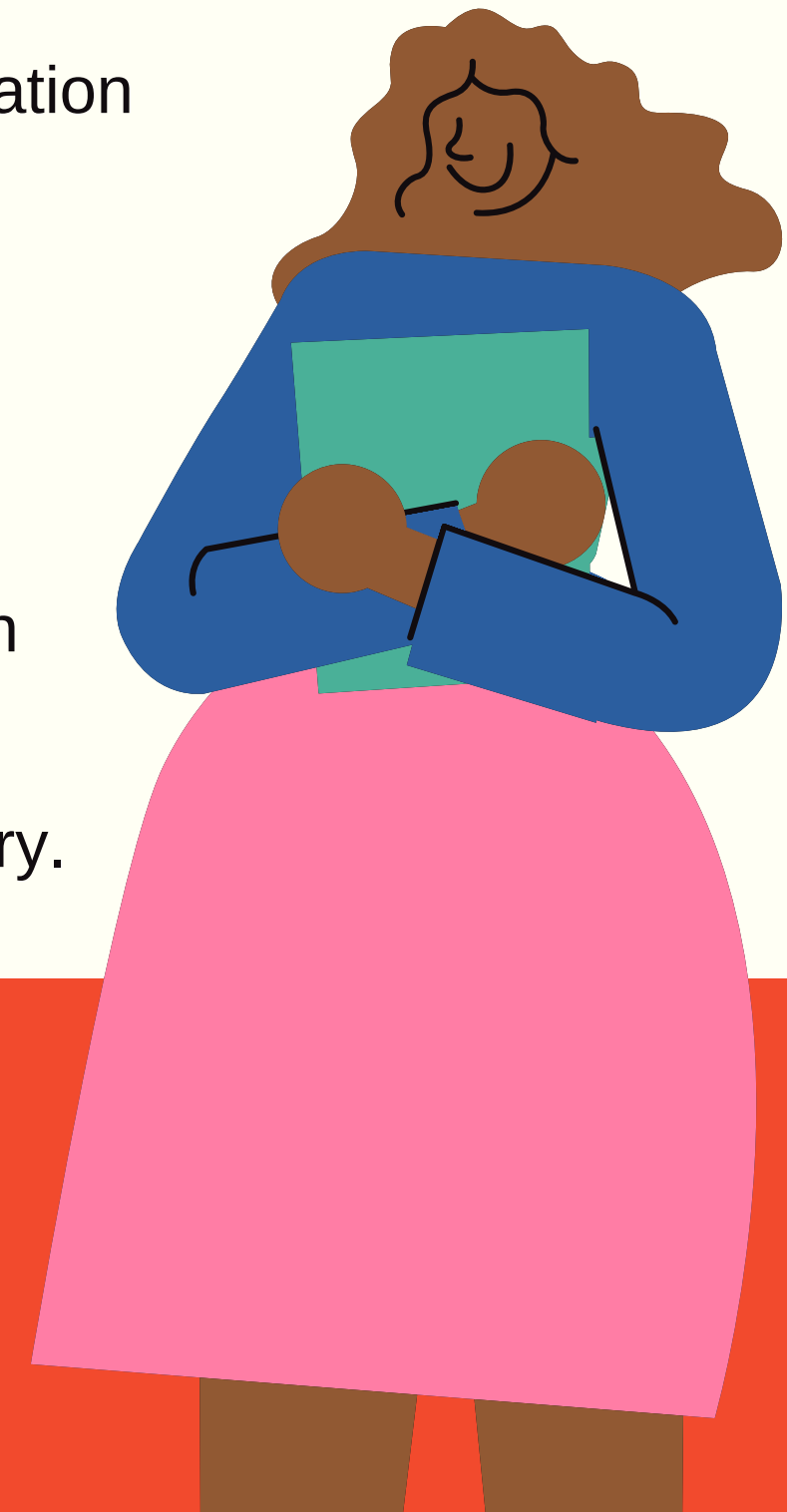
Best practice

EASIER LIFE FOR EVERYONE

- The only way to avoid the information overload is to deliver only the messages that specific parties really need.
- However, there is very thin line between overloading with information and not communicating enough
- When in doubt, over-communicate.

MEASURE RESULTS

- You need to know if your communication strategy works.
- You can measure your results by productivity changes or by using employee satisfaction surveys.
- Measure it systematically so you can compare the results and adjust your communication strategy as necessary.



What to avoid



THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY EVEN BEST STRATEGY CAN STILL FAIL. YOU SHOULD AVOID BELOW IN YOUR COMMUNICATION, NO MATTER THE CHANNEL USED

LACK OF SPECIFICS

- People tend to give vague and general terms, even if they actually know the specific dates, times or requirements.
- Try to avoid using terms like: “we can meet anytime”, “call me when you are free”, “we will talk tomorrow” or “we can finish this as at your convenience”.
- If you hear a sentence or business request which has no clear instructions – best is to ask and clarify. You will avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

What to avoid



NEGATIVE SENTENCES

Instead of telling others what they do wrong or what they should not do, it is better to tell them what to do and how. Positive instructions and guidelines bring better results.

"BUT" SENTENCES

- Telling someone he did a great job, but...
- Very often such sentence causes people to hear only the negative side.
- Replace this with 'and'. "You did great on this project, and....".
- If you need to communicate something negative to someone, just do it (in respectful way of course).

What to avoid



LACK OF FOCUS

- If you have conversation with someone, be there fully.
- You can also demand that full attention from others.
- If someone is not giving this to you, don't be afraid to mention it.
- You can always ask "is this a good time for conversation, or should we reschedule it?". This way you show respect to other's people time but also make it clear that conversation is important to you and you need a full attention.

Houston, we have a problem!

CRISIS SITUATION

For organization it can be anything from emergencies caused by weather, terrorist attack or natural disaster, to economic problems (including bankruptcy, restructuring or staff redundancies).

EMPLOYEES SHOULD ALWAYS BE INFORMED

...in many different ways, via many different means, so they feel up to date and same time secured about their future. In case of emergencies organizations should have the contingency plans to keep the companies running and same time ensure the safety of their employees. Every single crisis situation may require different types of communication and none of the emergency situations can go without proper communication.

Communication with clients

- Means “any type of interaction with client”.
- Can be written, spoken, personal or via specific platforms (websites or social media).
- Also includes documentation, anything from sales sheets to client onboarding forms.
- Any interaction is really building a relationship which is core to your business.
- Having good relationship with your customers often means successful business.
- Best methods for client communication are not very different from the ones for the employees and organization ones.



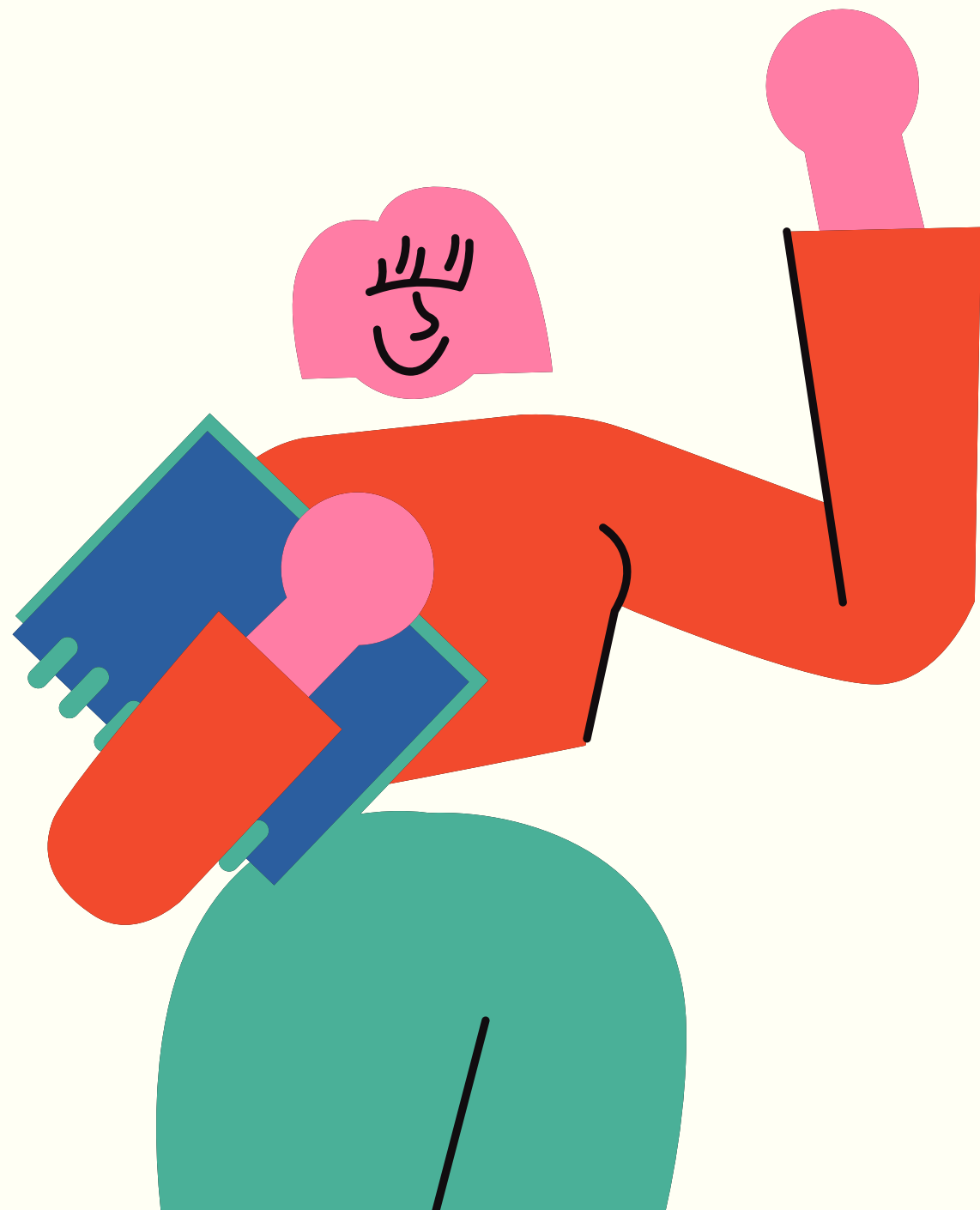
Communication with clients



PRINCIPLES

- Be polite and respectful
- Always tell your clients the truth
- Speak their language (simplify things or avoid technical jargon)
- Listen actively and respond to their needs
- Know your product or service
- Have clear customer service strategy
- Be active on social media (and be responsive)
- Be flexible (customers may require reporting or other type of information on how they cooperate with your company)
- Choose the right channel(s) for communication
- Learn to say “No” when necessary
- If mistaken, accept it and learn to apologize
- Keep in touch (do not only wait for your client, reach out and ask them how they are doing from time to time)
- Ask for feedback

Summary of Today's Class



RECAP 1

Communication is as much about information as it is about collaboration.

RECAP 2

There are proven strategies to make it work for you.

RECAP 3

Pay special attention to communication in crisis.

RECAP 4

Customers deserve to be informed in a similar way to your colleagues.

Is everything clear so far?

Let's have a Q&A session!



Thank You

FOR JOINING TODAY'S CLASS

In a few second you will get the recording and ebook.
Please have a look at the tasks I have prepared for you.
See you next week!

