



MISCOMMUNICATION IN THE AGE OF COMMUNICATION

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“Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.”

A TWO WAY STREET

I had a great professor at the University of Toronto teaching us Business Communication years ago, long before the Internet!

Every time he would come into the classroom, he would say the same thing over and over again,

“Ladies and gentlemen, communication is always a two-way street. If you send a message to your customer and do not receive the response you expected, it means you used the wrong words, the wrong channel, at the wrong time and with the wrong phrases. The communication did not take place. Go back and try again.”

His words stayed in my mind throughout the years in my personal and professional life.

Then came the Age of Digital Communication with all its Power!

Effective Communication is the foundation of every single success in business life. Whether it is with the customers or internally with the colleagues, there is nothing more important than using the right words at the right time, through the right channel.

One would think that as we have more tools to use as effective channels in this day and age, communication should have become a lot more effective with a lot more success stories.

Well it has not actually improved....It is distributed globally in seconds but the content is what can make or break it.

The fact is, human communication is incredibly complex. But the good news is that a basic understanding of what happens when we communicate can help us prevent miscommunication.

[\(https://blog.ed.ted.com/2016/03/31/how-to-avoid-miscommunication-in-ted-ed-gifs/\)](https://blog.ed.ted.com/2016/03/31/how-to-avoid-miscommunication-in-ted-ed-gifs/)

In this modern-day digital age, technology has changed the way we work and communicate. Colleagues can collaborate regardless of their location, employees can work from home, and leaders can get important messages out to staff efficiently. Yet despite the clear advantages of digital communication and telecommuting, there are many restrictions that still exist. Like many other soft skills, communication can be undervalued in organizations because it's difficult to measure, but its power in shaping business outcomes, company culture and staff engagement should not be underestimated.

[\(https://www.aib.edu.au/blog/communication/face-to-face-communication-in-the-digital-age/\)](https://www.aib.edu.au/blog/communication/face-to-face-communication-in-the-digital-age/)

Furthermore, for the first time in many years, the age gap in the offices have widened because the baby boomers are now working until later in life. This applies both to our customers and internally to our colleagues. How do we close the gap to communicate better since communication is what makes or breaks a deal?

According to scientists, humans began speaking about 100,000 years ago, and writing began around 4000 B.C. Prior to written language, humans used pictures (cave drawings), which evolved to word symbols. The evolution of language, what some have called the "human system of communication," proves false the old adage "a picture is worth a thousand words," since it's almost impossible to convey conditional, complex, or complicated ideas with a simple image.

I always warn my students about using just a visual (a picture) of their products on the landing page of a website. A visual can be interpreted in various ways by each individual. But if we add the right words to the picture, we can actually form the perception by the customer as we expect.

I see pictures on LinkedIn by companies that have attended trade shows and they just post the picture of their stand and the explanation of "they were there". Ok good for you...that is what I feel like saying for these pictures but what is in it for me? What happened at the show, is there anything I can benefit from it? What was the value of "you" attending the trade show? Did it help your customers? or did you launch an innovation or even a new product?

Every written communication, especially on digital channels, have to be written with the use of creative thinking asking ourselves the question:

- What is our expected answer?

- Do we know the audience?

- Do we expect a “like” or a “comment”?

Knowing the audience we are communicating with is paramount.

“One message works for all” does not work anymore!

I see the new generation as very impatient when it comes to choice of words...They tend to rely on digital masters such as “Google” and use acronyms a lot...This is not helping them in real business life. How a communication is perceived depends solely on the profile of the target audience. In business life, it is not only about "us but it is about “them”. And to succeed in this, we need to raise our knowledge base, use creative thinking and sometimes say things they have not heard before.



On the other hand, in offices where we know there is a major age gap, my generation tends to use communication as they have done for the last number of years. Both the old and the new has to renew themselves. They need to understand the world from others’ perspective as well. We all need to know that our ideas are not and cannot always be the perfect ones... But we can learn from each other.

After all communication is a two-way street!

Avoid assuming that because people are a certain age they will act a certain way.

Instead of treating others as you like to be treated, find out how they like to be treated

Acknowledge age difference and talk about how you can learn from each other and help each other be more successful. Only team work can have victorious results in business.

And always REFRESH and UPDATE your knowledge whatever your age is!

Google is only a tool...

For it to be used effectively, human mind and strong thinking based on renewed knowledge has to come into place. If you don’t ask Google the right question with the right words, you will not get the results expected.

Even with all the digital power, human mind, and deep knowledgeable, creative thinking has to take charge over technology.

In one of the TED-Ed blogs, there is great advice by Katherine Hampsten:

“4 simple practices can help us all navigate our daily interactions for better communication:”

Recognize that passive hearing and active listening are not the same. Engage actively with the verbal and nonverbal feedback of others, and adjust your message to facilitate greater understanding.

Listen with your eyes and ears, as well as with your gut. Remember that communication is more than just words.

Take time to understand as you try to be understood. In the rush to express ourselves, it's easy to forget that communication is a two-way street. Be open to what the other person might say.

Be aware of your personal perceptual filters. Elements of your experience, including your culture, community, and family influence how you see the world. Say, “This is how I see the problem — but how do you see it?” Don't assume that your perception is the objective truth; that'll help you work toward sharing a dialog with others to reach a common understanding, together.

Lastly, there is nothing more important in branding than communication, because a brand is an invisible asset. To make it either a commodity or an asset depends on the success of communication.

The customers of the future don't care about products; they want solutions.



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Brands must stand for something bigger so that they can flex their relevance and inspire attachment. If you look at companies like GE or IBM...They all have different categories of provision but in the end what sells is what solves their customers' problems and the customers develop strong trust in their solution.

Embed the brand deeply in the company and culture. Build the brand around the problems you solve, not the products you sell.

To innovate and create new value, sensing and solving problems in an environment where opinions and information are readily solicited and shared is key. Companies that facilitate open sensing are driven by data and learning. They embrace transparency and new information. They use integrated systems to put operational and performance information at managers' disposal via mobile apps. To be great at sensing, they ensure teams are truly open in terms of a perpetual ability to absorb influences and input from diverse sources. They appreciate diversity as the wellspring of creativity and new value.

Customer data is what should be the basis for every single communication sent to them
