

PATHBUILDERS[®]
MANAGE

FALL 2025

**COMMUNICATING
ACROSS LEVELS**

**DECEMBER 2025
SESSION THREE**



COMMUNICATING ACROSS LEVELS

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Communication is the real work of leadership.

~Nitin Nohria, former dean of Harvard Business School

**MANAGERS ARE AT THE NEXUS
OF COMMUNICATION
IN THE ORGANIZATION**



COMMUNICATING WITH SENIOR LEADERS

- ↑ Provide input and manage expectations
- ↑ Secure resources & support
- ↑ Celebrate and advocate for your team
- ↓ Listen to understand direction, goals, strategy



COMMUNICATING WITH DIRECT REPORTS

- ↓ Create clarity – organizational direction and expectations
- ↓ Inspire extra effort, coach/provide feedback
- ↑ Gather status updates and viewpoints
- ↑ Solicit feedback and hear needs



COMMUNICATING WITH PEERS

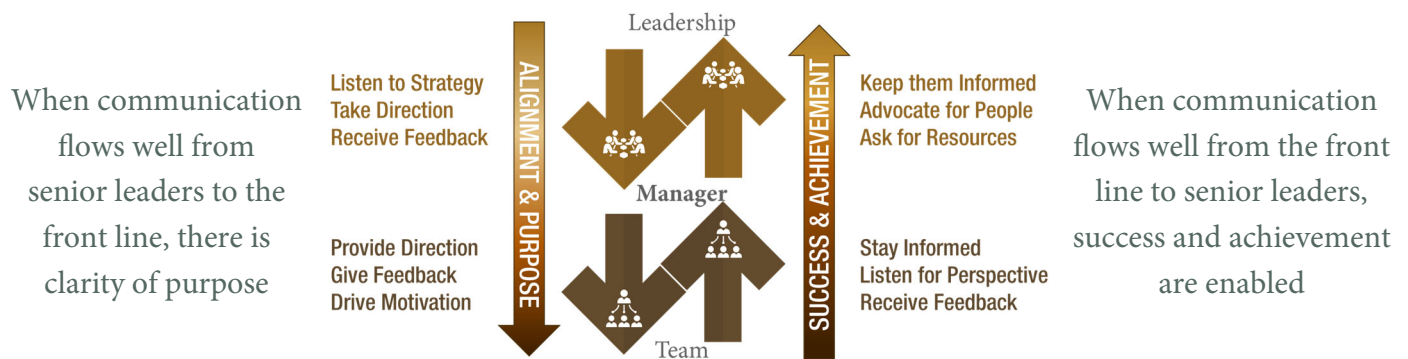
- ↔ Combine functions & areas of expertise
- ↔ Collaborate to drive outcomes
- ↔ Gain perspective on other areas' needs
- ↔ Build connection between teams

NOTES

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COMMUNICATING ACROSS LEVELS



COMMUNICATION POWER SKILLS

- Listening to understand
- Interpreting and contextualizing
- Asking great questions
- Seeking connection and common ground
- Mastering clarity
- Turning data into information
- Tailoring the message so that others can hear

NOTES

THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNICATION

I said it...
so I believe you heard it
You heard it...
so I believe that you understood it
You understood it...
so I believe that you embraced it
You embraced it...
so I believe that you will act upon it

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COMMUNICATION STYLES

There are four fundamental types of communicators

- Intuitive – wants to focus on the bottom-line, gets to the point
- Analytical – conveys expertise, facts, numbers, and seeks expertise from others
- Functional – process oriented, linear, wants to see and discuss the steps
- Personal – friendly, more casual, gets people involved

From Mark Murphy, leadership speaker, founder of LeadershipIQ

DISCUSSION: COMMUNICATION STYLES

Note the communication style that you find the most difficult to connect with and share ideas for adjusting style to communicate better.



THE POWER OF ADAPTING TO STYLE

- Your audience can “hear” you
 - You appear “trustworthy” - no need to question
 - You accelerate acceptance, speed, and decision-making
- What if your audience includes all four styles?
 - Highlight what you will be telling them—acknowledging different needs
 - Hit the bottom-line first because the “intuitives” won’t wait
- How will I know their styles?
 - Listen—we speak as we want to hear
 - Notice the questions asked—what was “missing” for them?

NOTES

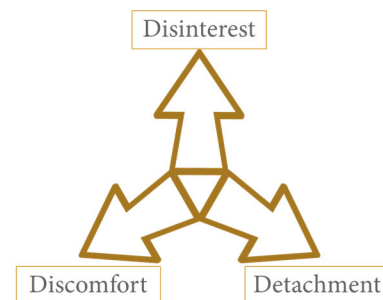
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CAPTURING INTEREST

- It's a mistake to presuppose the receiver is receptive to you
- Messages can be unheard or misunderstood
- Key to move receivers into your zone of interest!

CONNECTING ZONES OF INTEREST



DISINTEREST

What you are experiencing:

- Unanswered emails
- Unreturned calls
- Lack eye contact
- Rescheduled meetings
- “Not interested”

How you need to respond:

- Identify their priorities
- Connect your work to those priorities
- Highlight business value
- Address objections
- Ask for commitment

DISCOMFORT

What you are experiencing:

- Pushback
- Excuses
- Lack of commitment
- Low energy
- Resentment

How you need to respond:

- Understand their values & concerns
- Seek agreement on business priorities
- Show how you align
- Ask for commitment
- Keep the “door open”

DETACHMENT

What you are experiencing:

- Lack of awareness
- Lots of questions
- Misunderstanding
- Competing priorities
- Lack of support

How you need to respond:


- Learn their top priorities
- Explain your plan
- Seek ways to collaborate
- Build an alliance
- Nurture the relationship

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EXERCISE – WHERE IS THIS HAPPENING? (EXAMPLE)

 PICK ONE!	DISINTEREST	DISCOMFORT	DETACHMENT
WHAT YOU ARE EXPERIENCING	No response to three emails about new marketing materials	Objection to getting new materials produced	Checking his phone during your time on the mgmt. team meeting agenda
HOW YOU CAN CONNECT	Explain how the materials are for marketing AND for his employees' buy-in	Ask their concerns directly – is it timing, cost, resources, other?	Request a meeting at a better time to share why their team's data is vital


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CONNECTING ZONES OF INTEREST




Think of a situation where the individual may be outside of your zone of interest. Take note of what you are experiencing. And, given what you now know, identify a few steps you could take to bring your issue into their zone of interest.

 PICK ONE!	DISINTEREST	DISCOMFORT	DETACHMENT
WHAT ARE YOU EXPERIENCING?			
HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND?			




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A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS—QUESTIONS

What do you need to achieve? Who do you need to engage?	
 STYLE	 INTEREST
What is the style of the person/group you are communicating with?	How interested is your audience in your goal?
 APPROACH	
How do you need to communicate with this person/group to achieve your objectives?	

A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION—EXAMPLE

WHAT: Needed 30 Inside Sales Resources for lead development for new market	WHO: GM, Global SMB
 STYLE	 INTEREST
Analytical – why is this the best way to engage – how will we know it is working	Discomfort – similar efforts in the past had not been successful
 APPROACH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Acknowledge that I had studied the past and demonstrate why this approach would yield improved results ✓ Share that agreements were in place for working these new leads (GM was also very concerned about increasing leads to BPs) ✓ Lay out KPIs that would provide insight on success 	

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HOMEWORK: A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Use the framework below to plan out how you will prepare to deliver a key message – to a more senior leader, to a peer, or to a direct report or team member. Consider their communication style and their interest level when planning your approach.

WHAT:

WHO:

STYLE

INTEREST

APPROACH