

Interpersonal Communication

By Bob 'Idea Man' Hooley

"It's important to talk to people in their own language. If you, do it well, they'll say, 'God, he said exactly what I was thinking.' And when they begin to respect you, they'll follow you to the death." Lee Iacocca

Words are powerful, so choose them with great care. Keep in mind, the 500 most commonly used business words in the English language have over 14,000 definitions based on usage and context. Choose them to best communicate the message you want to convey, and say it in their language, not yours. It works!

Communication comes from the Latin root word '*commune*,' which loosely translated means 'held in common.' To effectively communicate we have to go the extra mile to ensure those we are talking with understand what we are saying as well as we do. It is not just sending a message – it is creating a shared meaning and mutual understanding – quickly, clearly and concisely. We must also be an active listener to ensure we draw out and understand what they are attempting to communicate to us. It is a foundation for building a workable, lasting relationship – in work or in your personal life.

When you establish such a relationship, I'd suggest focusing on these areas:

- Be open,
- Recognize,
- Accept,
- And appreciate other viewpoints

This is the secret to effective communication – being open and flexible. How we listen and respond will dramatically impact our ability to understand and communicate.

Phrases that ignite them

or

Phrases that rain them out

I like that...

I'm glad you brought that up...

That is great! We can do that...

I agree...

Yes, I think you might be onto something...

Great work!

We can do something with that idea...

Tell me more...

That is interesting, could you explain...

Be practical...

You haven't considered...

The problem with that is...

I don't see how that can work...

No way that will work...

If I had been doing it...

We don't have the time, or money...

Let me tell you...

I'm not interested, get back to work.

"The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."

Dorothy Nevill

To minimize the chance of being misunderstood, especially with so many definitions, take a moment and paraphrase what is being said to you.

- It helps you get on track – the same track – with the speaker.
- It helps you focus.
- It helps identify areas that need clearing up.
- It let's the other person know they are 'actually' being heard.
- It can help identify goals and common objectives – '*commune*'

Here are some examples of paraphrasing:

- Are you saying...?
- If I heard you correctly, ...
- Am I understanding you that...?
- Let me see if I understood you correctly...

Effective communication, especially as an active listener, is based on:

- Looking at the person
- Being an active listener
- Asking questions
- Searching for common ground
- Being in the present – being present! (*Two words – two meanings!*)
- Not being stuck in the past or in history
- Focusing on ideas, concepts – not just the words
- Willing to deal with the issues, not the personalities
- Being positive and remaining open and flexible in your thinking.

“Communication does not begin with being understood, but with understanding others,”
W. Steven Brown

Some interesting research in our early development – food for thought!

- At age one, the average child has a vocabulary of three words
- At fifteen months – nineteen words
- At two years of age – a working knowledge of 272 words
- Age three – big jump to 896 words
- Age four – 1,540 words
- Age five – 2072 words
- Age six – communication with 2,562 words

Wonder how many words we have each added to that list? Words are tools that paint a picture.

Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey, DTM, PRA, CKD-Emeritus, Accredited Speaker, 2011 Spirit of CAPS recipient is an inspirational leader, speaker, and a prolific author whose works include **'Legacy of Leadership, Strive for significance – lead on purpose!'**, **'Speaking for Success'** and **'The Courage to Lead!'** His articles have been featured in a multitude of North American trade and global consumer publications. He is a respected leader who has been honored by CAPS, NSA, Toastmasters, and the United Nations for his leadership contributions. His creative Ideas At Work have allowed him to travel the globe sharing insights, encouragement in 61 countries, so far. With Covid-19 he has been zooming around the globe to share his ideas. His **innovative Ideas At Work!** have been successfully applied by global leaders as well as Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.