

CEO

The CEO Magazine

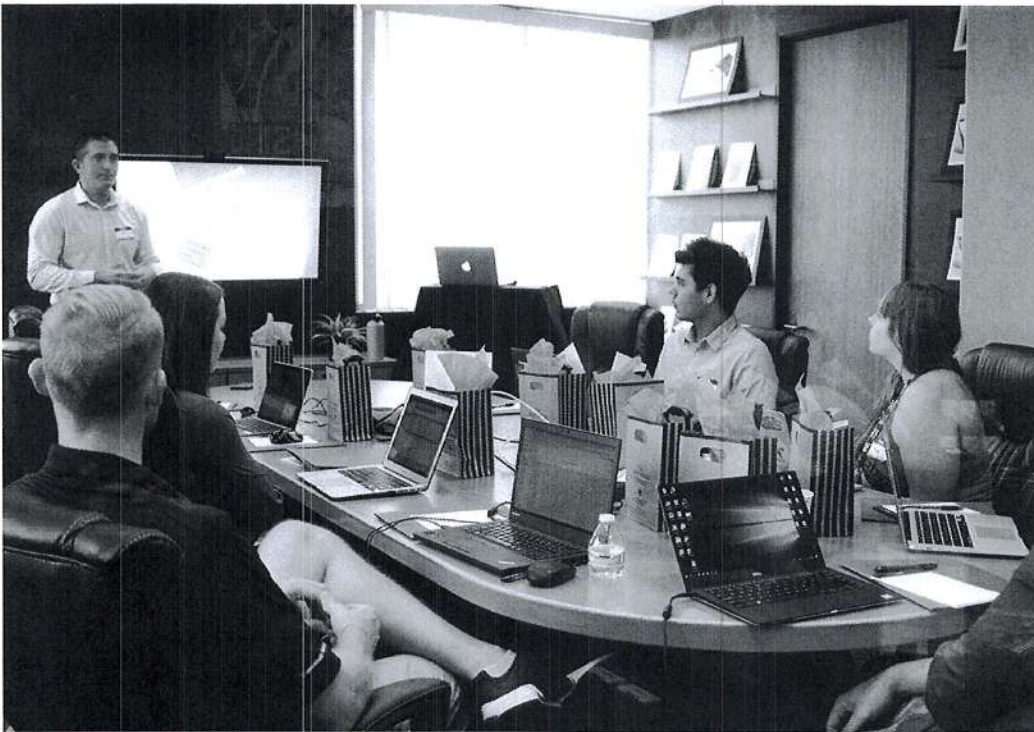


Home > Entrepreneurship > Is Your Communication Direct—Or Downright Damaging?

Entrepreneurship > Finance > Management > Self Governance > Small Business

IS YOUR COMMUNICATION DIRECT—OR DOWNRIGHT DAMAGING?

written by Dianna Booher | March 5, 2019



Leaders like to think they know when and how to be direct. They should. Direct communication is good. Damaging communication, on the other hand, can destroy a relationship, partnership, sale, or reputation forever.

Why does one listener consider a comment “over-the-top” disrespectful, while another listener interprets the same remark as just “firm,” straightforward, even prudent? Why does one media outlet report a politician’s statement as a huge blunder, while another outlet reports the same comment as appropriate and even justified?

Consider the following five criteria to decide if some of your common statements are “just being direct” versus damaging to your team members and even to your own career.

5 Criteria for Determining If Your Communication Is Direct or Damaging

Examine the Context for Clues

Context often matters as much or more so than words. Words rarely play Solitaire. For example, consider this short sentence:

the-ceo-magazine.com/dianna-booher/is-your-communication-direct-or-downright-damaging/

RELATED POSTS

Why Inexperience Young Professionals Better Innovators

June 1, 2020

Doing Well by Doir and Other Lessons Learned from 30 Y CEO

December 9, 2019

4 Tips For Steering Business Through Times

December 6, 2019

Using the right too crucial to laying th groundwork for yo business' future. H what to look for.

July 23, 2019

You Can't be a Gre Coach Without thi

May 7, 2019

> Business Ops

> Editors

> Entrepreneurship

> Finance

> Leadership

> Management

“*I see.*” (said with a smile and nod—can mean “I understand.”)

“*I see.*” (said with little intonation and a frown—can mean “I’m closing down this conversation.”)

“*I see.*” (said with a haughty tone and a sneer—can mean, “I’m angry and I’ll get even.”)

The more context wrapped around a thought, the more clues to your real meaning and how you’ll come across to colleagues.

Note the Attitude

In communication, we call attitude “tone.” In a lighthearted conversation with a colleague about a social issue, I might be expressing a strong opinion about how the law should be changed to allow thus-and-so. My colleague ends with, “Then you should run for office!” I respond, “Right. I’m working to get my name on the ballot now!”

It’s highly likely that the comeback will be playful banter as well, not to be taken seriously.

Or the contrary: If the previous conversation has been serious, and someone gets called out for making an insulting remark, then they shouldn’t cry, “Foul, I wasn’t serious. I was just joking.”

Before you walk away from a conversation on a sensitive topic, consider the tone of the conversation overall. Did your remark fit the overall attitude on display? If not, don’t be surprised if it’s misinterpreted later. If that’s a possibility, take the extra step to clarify. Were you serious? Teasing? Being playfully sarcastic?

Watch the Body Language

You can force the words, but controlling the body language proves much tougher. When there’s a conflict between words and body language, people will believe your body language.

Acknowledge Your Bias as a Listener

Everyone has filters through which they see the world. Some biases are harmless; others are apparent and damaging to ourselves as well as others.

Early in my writing career, I queried my literary agent, a native New Yorker, to ask what he thought about my proposing a book on a murder in Texas that had gained national attention. His response: “The story’s not big enough for people to care. You’re dealing with New York editors. In their eyes, if it didn’t happen in New York, it didn’t happen.”

Smart agent. He acknowledged his own bias (and that of his buyers) and articulated it clearly. Listeners who acknowledge biases can function objectively if they decide to do so. When you communicate, understand that overcoming your own listener bias is a key part of the communication challenge. Analyze it and deal with it from the beginning.

Demonstrate Good Intentions

Some organizations value harmony over sincere, direct communication. When that’s the case, people hesitate to speak openly about what’s on their mind for fear of upsetting others. They choose instead to withhold authentic disagreement or valuable feedback for the sake of “relationships” and “harmony.”

But direct communication doesn’t *necessarily* exclude harmony. The grease that keeps the wheels turning is trusting someone’s good intentions. When your first thought is, “This person said X in an attempt to help, not hurt,” then direct communication leads to useful feedback, high performance, and increased productivity.

Demonstrate your good intentions frequently. As a direct communicator, you need others to trust that you mean well and value integrity.

Direct communication doesn’t have to be a dirty habit that happens in secret. It need not damage your workplace. On the contrary. Direct communication that demonstrates good intentions strengthens relationships.

> Marketing

> sales

> Self Governance

> Small Business

> Strategy

> Uncategorized

authentic leadership, branding business g
business management Business Strategy CEO chang
management Communication corp
culture culture customer service Cynthia
decision making Dianna Booher
effective leadership emotional intelligence
employee engagement
entrepreneurship executive coaching hiring
innovation leadership leader
development leadership
qualities leadership skill
Ungar management managing employees
marketing motivation NSBA organizat
culture performance personal growth
productivity Sales self management &
business startups strategy stress manager
succession planning team management
management vision

AGGRESSIVE TONE

COMMUNICATION

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

LEADERSHIP

MANAGEMENT

0 comment



DIANNA BOOHER

Dianna Booher works with organizations to improve their productivity through clear communication and with individuals to increase their impact by a stronger executive presence. She is the bestselling author of 48 books, published in 61 foreign-language editions. Her latest books include *Faster, Fewer, Better Emails*; *Communicate Like a Leader: Connecting Strategically to Coach, Inspire, and Get Things Done*; *What MORE Can I Say: Why Communication Fails and What to Do About It*; *Creating Personal Presence: Look, Talk, Think, and Act Like a Leader*; and *Communicate With Confidence*. National media such as *Good Morning America*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *Forbes.com*, *Fast Company*, *FOX*, *CNN*, *NPR*, *Bloomberg*, *Success*, and *Entrepreneur* have interviewed her for opinions on critical workplace communication issues. Dianna works with organizations to help them communicate clearly and with individuals to increase their impact by a strong personal presence. She's the founder of Booher Research Institute, Inc, a communication consulting and coaching firm serving more than a third of the Fortune 500. *Successful Meetings* magazine has named Dianna to its list of "21 Top Speakers for the 21st Century." Her latest book has won an Axiom Award Silver Medal 2018. www.BooherResearch.com 817-283-2333.

previous post

A CEO'S AMAZING TRANSFORMATION STORY

next post

6 WAYS LEADERS COMMUNICATE AUTHENTICALLY TO INSPIRE OTHERS

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE

WHY INEXPERIENCE MAKES YOUNG PROFESSIONALS BETTER INNOVATORS

June 1, 2020

DOING WELL BY DOING GOOD AND OTHER LESSONS...

December 9, 2019



4 TIPS FOR STEERING YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH TOUGH...

December 6, 2019

LEAVE A COMMENT

Your Comment

Empty text area for comment

Name*

Email*

Website

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.