



Workshop at the APMP Conference October 22nd

The interactive workshop at the APMP Annual Conference 2009 is a good example of the collaborative and interactive nature of our approach. Gavin Dobbing of QinetiQ and I designed a session where we role-played a series of crucial meetings that take place in the bid process. During the rehearsals we devised ways to portray various common communication problems that can compromise, or even wreck a bid. We then played these flawed meetings in front of the APMP audience who were invited to give us their feedback.

The feedback revealed that most people are intuitively tuned in to the behaviour of others (which is why the behaviour of any person in a conversation has such a dramatic effect on the way that the words, once spoken, are interpreted and acted upon).

Following the audience feedback I introduced a series of techniques that can quickly and authentically enhance everyone's outward behaviour to get more from those around them. This led to a wide ranging discussion with everyone present on the way these skills could be of use to them in the variety of situations they faced in meetings, in negotiation and during presentations.

The feedback on the workshop was extremely positive.

What follows is the document given out after the session. It explains the skills taught in those two hours. If you would like to know more, and to see filmed examples of how we work, visit our website at www.craftofcommunication.com

Craft of Communication - our unique approach.

Our work is rooted in the work John Abulafia has done in theatre and drama training. The communication skills he has taught to actors are transferable to anyone who deals with any kind of audience. This approach has proved to be very popular with my clients because it is practical, interactive, dynamic and can be applied immediately. Our clients acquire the precise communication skills they need for the situations, audiences and individuals they deal with every day.

Craft of Communication offers coaching in a wide variety of Presentation, Facilitation, Leadership and Sales Skills. Our goal is to help clients to develop a personal and powerful way of communicating as speakers, team members and leaders. Our unique approach raises energy levels, develops both speaking and listening skills, builds authentic confidence, enhances impact and influence, improves memory, helps clients to make more effective use of the voice - and more.

Craft of Communication - coaching for the Bid Process.

With our group of associates - voice coach, film team, actors skilled in role play, and expert in group dynamics and the psychology of teams - we have the resources to offer coaching in the whole range of communication skills needed at all stages of the Bid process. We can coach individuals and groups, rehearse meetings and run practice Q & A sessions. In doing all this we would see our role as collaborating with adding value to the services you offer your clients.

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SOME KEY LEARNING POINTS

Audiences FEEL before they THINK.

This doesn't mean an audience does not think. It means that the way they think is profoundly affected by the way they feel about the speaker. That, in turn, influences the way they feel about what the speaker is saying.

A. Getting the attention of your audience:

You can change the way others perceive you by making small changes to posture and breathing.

The Key Concept is **Status**: the more Space and Time you take up, the Higher your Status. The Less Space & Time you take up, the Lower your Status.

How to take up more Space:

By pulling yourself up to your full height, keeping head neck and back in relaxed alignment, keeping your feet under your shoulders.

How to take up more Time:

When Speaking: use the principle of One Breath, One Thought.

There are two other, more subtle, ways of raising status. These both involve changing the way you think about the space around you.

High Status Thinking: When you enter a room or start a meeting, work on the principle that: *"The space and Time belong to me for the time it takes me to say what I have to say."*

Seeing & Being Seen. While addressing others, make sure you do so by allowing yourself to Be Seen, and to ensure you See others.

B. Keeping the attention of your audience.

The Key Concept is **Punctuation**. There are three techniques that help you to do this.

- A. One Breathe, One thought.
- B. When responding to interruptions, do not let interrupter speed your pace of speech. Reply at HALF the pace of the person who interrupted.
- C. When you address groups, divide them into three subgroups. Take the first point to the group in the centre, the second to a group on the left, a third point to group on your right. And so on.
- D. Use good articulation. Being loud does not necessarily make a voice audible. (One can For that you clear, crisp consonants. This creates good articulation. The rule of thumb is "EnD youR worDS".

C. An Interactive Approach to presenting ideas - Using The Seven Kinds of Question.

There are seven kinds of question. All of them are useful, but in different ways:
Each will yield different kinds of information. Each sets up a different relationship with others.

1. Closed Questions:

Examples: ***When did? Who did? What is? How much?***

Information: These elicit short factual answers. They are useful when you are gathering information.

Relationship: The other person is a resource for you.

2. Open Questions:

Examples: ***Can you tell me more about that? Can you describe that for me?
Why do you think that was...?***

Information: These encourage the other person to elaborate on their views & explain their thinking.

Relationship: The other person is treated as an expert.

Open Questions are, however, relatively unfocussed and most useful when the other person is sure of their position. If they are unsure, or unaware of important factors, you can use Open Questions to help you move to -

3. Focussed Questions

Examples: ***Why do you think that event happened? What factors led up to that event?***

Information: These help the other person to focus on their views on specific ideas or events.
The form of the question invites them to think about them analytically and in context.

Relationship: The other person is treated as an expert, even if they fall short of that. It also establishes you as their personal facilitator helping them to see factors that have so far, been invisible them.

4. Hypothetical Questions:

Examples: ***What would happen if ...? If you were able to have another attempt what would you do?***

Information: By allowing the speaker to re visit an issue in a different context, this form of question encourages creativity and helps to reveal what they are assuming.

Relationship: You are now leading them into previously unexplored areas. If handled well, this exploration starts to create a relationship of trust between you and them.

5. Reflecting Feeling:

Examples: ***To me it seems as if ... Does it feel as if ... I wonder if you are saying that...***

Information: This helps to validate the speaker's personal opinion. It helps you to explore the emotions or conflicts that lie behind what they have been saying.

Relationship: Establishes you as a confidant, promoting trust in your ability to understand their issues.

6. Questions that seek agreement

Examples: ***"Can we agree with that the next step is to ... Are we in agreement that we should..."***

Information: This helps you to the group to focus on finding agreement. If necessary use this in conjunction with a warning about time.

Relationship: If used to carry the discussion forward to the next meeting, this can solidify the relationship you have worked for in the preparation and the meeting.

7. Leading Questions:

Examples: ***"So you believe your approach to this problem has been completely successful?"***

Information: These are either intended to alter their thinking to align it to your views, or get someone to reveal what they wish to keep concealed.

Relationship: Useful when you are not sure you trust someone, or if you feel they are being obstructive. They can make them feel boxed in and will, in tim

D: Influencing others: Using the Feeling Objective

This technique helps you to take the initiative in establishing, managing and changing how audiences feel about you, the situation and the information you are presenting.

Once you have established who you are dealing with in your presentation, meeting or negotiation, you need to ask two questions:

A: "What outcome do I want?"

Once that is decided, ask the second question:

B: "In order to achieve that outcome, how do I want the audience to feel?"

You need to be proactive in deciding which emotion they want their audience to feel. In doing this you choosing your **Feeling Objective**.

It is important that these are real emotions. It will not help you to set yourself the goal of making others feel "Positive" or "Get Buy-In". Those are attitudes, not emotions: to get someone to be positive, or to achieve buy in you need to make them feel **EXCITED**.

Some examples of Feeling Objectives:

Example A: If you are introducing a potentially challenging idea, and accepting this idea involves risk, you may want the audience to feel **REASSURED**.

Example B: If you are trying to persuade others that it is important that they change the way they deal with issues, you may need to make the audience feel **ANXIOUS** about the consequences of failing to change.

Example C: You can use more than one Feeling Objective, but they cannot be used simultaneously, only in sequence. So if you are reporting to your team that the past year's result have been good, the Feeling Objective should be to make them feel **PROUD** But in order to ensure they do not get too smug, the next Feeling Objective should be to make them feel **WARY** of the consequences of relaxing their of their achievement, efforts.

It is important to realise that a Feeling Objective is not about what you feel. It is about what you get your audience to feel. Often, this is created by the way you structure an argument, or the language you use. Taking Example A: you may choose to reassure your audience by structuring your argument as follows:

1. Explain honestly and bluntly that the proposed course is risky.
(This proves you are taking a responsible, adult approach, and promotes a sense of trust.)
2. Explain the risks and potential disadvantages.
(This shows them you understand their anxieties.)
3. Explain the potential gains and advantages,
(This helps to move doubters towards a more positive view and rewards those who endorse your strategy with a sense of recognition)
4. Explain the safeguards that will minimise the risk without restricting freedom of manoeuvre,
(This is how you end up managing to REASSURE those listening.)

John Abulafia
CRAFT OF COMMUNICATION Ltd
john@craftofcommunication.com
www.craftofcommunication.com
07813 29 95 97