

Say What You Mean When You're in Business

103 Things You Can Learn About Communication That Will Increase Your Business!



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SAMPLE

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Introduction

How many times have you walked away from a conversation and thought “Oh I wish I had said this!”? Have you ever been disappointed with the way you had approached a customer service situation? Many business owners feel this way. Often it is not a lack of business experience, but rather a lack of effective communication skills. Studies show that only 43% of people feel that they are effective communicators.

How many times have you emailed a customer only to have them misunderstand or, worse yet, take offense? Afterwards you probably spent more time trying to explain what you meant or smooth things over. Miscommunication can cost your business BIG-in lost business, missed opportunity or ill will. How many man hours can you afford to waste doing something over again or straightening out a misunderstanding? Are there things you are doing or not doing that give your customers the wrong impression? Make you look less than professional?

Very few high schools and colleges actually teach any communication skills so it is not surprising that many business owners are not comfortable speaking with their customers, business associates and suppliers. What is surprising is the fact that they don't teach these vital skills. Did you know that 87% of what you and I do during our day is communication related? Studies also show that people who are effective communicators are more successful, earn more money and are happier are their counterparts.

Starting a small business is difficult and keeping it afloat can be challenging. The better you are able to express yourself, the easier it is to build a successful business whether you have a sole proprietorship, a direct sales team, or a larger company with employees.

After earning my degree in Speech Communication, I spent over 20 years working in various businesses from large fortune 500 companies to network marketing to sole proprietorships. Each one presented unique communication challenges to overcome. I learned quite a lot about effective business communication and I have been writing about it for the past four years.

I served seven years in customer service for two Fortune 500 companies; I got off for good behavior! I learned a great deal when I managed a small brick and mortar photography studio and I understand what it takes to build a distributorship and an internet business. Each experience was invaluable, but it took over 20 years!! I give you the benefit of all my training and experience in one simple format that you can easily refer to, as your business needs change. As you have time, begin to implement each of the simple tips and techniques. Practice or adopting these changes may make all the difference in how you present yourself and your business to your customers, business associates and suppliers. My prayers for your success!

In His Service,
JoJo Tabares

How to Use This Book

“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.” Proverbs 3:13-14

This e-book is designed to give you the most comprehensive information about how to present yourself and communicate in business. It has been broken down into chapters so that the information can be easily referenced later. Most books on communication don't really address the specifics of communication in business. Not only will I be walking you through each aspect of communication as it relates to business in general, but I will be specifically addressing issues relevant to different kinds of businesses: home based businesses with only a sole proprietor, businesses with employees, as well as network marketing businesses.

I have designed the chapters so that you can come back to a certain topic quickly and easily and go over that section again when you are ready to tackle that area. Most people will not be ready or willing to take on everything at once so I tried to make it easier to pick and choose. Each tip is numbered as well so you can easily come back to them when you need to.

I would suggest that you read the entire e-book through once to get a general feel for how communication may affect your business success. Then go back and re-read the entire e-book and concentrate on the specifics. During this second reading, you might want to either write down those things that you deem most important for your business or print out a copy and underline those things that you deem important to implement right away. Next, look through your notes and decide which ideas would be the most beneficial to you in terms of increasing your income or success and begin to implement the simplest and easiest of them. Work your way down to the ideas that you believe might be more expensive, time consuming and of least importance to your particular business.

Keep in mind that this is an unapologetically Christian guide to your success and I do refer to Almighty God and what His vision for you might be. Additionally, I go into how you may have opportunities to share your faith as you encounter others in your business dealings. I believe that Christians should be ever mindful that we are a beacon for others and an example to others-both believers and nonbelievers! Therefore, we are to conduct ourselves at all times in accordance with the morals and values that our Father has set for us in His Word.

I pray that each of you reading this will be richly blessed both in spirit and in your business. May the Lord richly bless you and your family...

NOTE: The following is a sampling of the lessons you'll find in *Say What You Mean When You're in Business*. To order the full version, click here: <http://artofeloquence.com/store/business/SWMB>

1. Why is Communication So Important to My Business?

"A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." Proverbs 25:11

The 10 Commandments of Small Business Communication By JoJo Tabares

1. Thou art the owner. Thy company's image depends entirely upon thee!
2. Thy reputation is golden. Build thy company's name with caution.
3. Remember that bad customer service travels faster and farther. Communicate accordingly.
4. Thou shalt not bear negative witness against thy competition.
5. Honor thy business associates and they will honor thee in return.
6. Remember: people don't pay amateurs so present thyself as an expert in thy field.
7. Thou shalt not commit confusion. Miscommunication can cost thee much!
8. Honor thy customer and make him feel special.
9. Thou art the best person to explain thy business so speak up and speak well!
10. Thy family might not be supportive at first. Present thyself well.

Everything you do and say as a business person communicates something about your business to your customers and your potential customers, from the way you speak to customers on the phone to the image you present in cyberspace! Everything that is associated with your business makes an impression one way or another from your ads and promotional materials to your phone messages and return policy. Even the condition of your car when you pick up a prospective client can give him a picture of how you run your business.

Consider how you would feel if you received a phone call from someone wanting to sell you life insurance if he were not listening to your needs. Instead of mailing you what you asked for, he sent you something you had no need for. What would you think of his company? What would you think of him as your representative?

What would you think if you received that information on very cheap white paper with no letterhead and the type smeared off onto your hands when you touched it as you were reading? Would you trust the company to provide your family with the protection they would need? Or would you fear that they may not be around tomorrow for your family to collect?

How would you feel if a doctor showed up to your appointment-wearing street clothes and had no stethoscope because he was just starting out and couldn't afford one? Would you have trust in him to diagnose you or would you want a second opinion?

Some of you are treating your business this way in some form or another. Many things may seem small to you, but they are the very things that can make or break your image! Many companies start out small because they have small budgets. I want you to keep in mind that it is not the size of your budget that will create an image that you are a long term, successful business; it is how your customers perceive you. There are many things you can do that will lend credibility to you and your business. This whole e-book is designed to show you how to communicate to your customers an image that conveys that you know what you are doing, that you are an expert in your field and that you will be around for a long time to come!

Before we begin, I have an assessment quiz that will help you determine what areas of communication you are strong and what areas you can use a little more practice. Then we will look at some universal truths about communication and how you can say what you mean in your business.

Communication Effectiveness Quiz

Check your CEQ: Communication Effectiveness Quotient.

1. How often do you feel intimidated by someone?

Always

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

2. How often does intimidation prevent you from speaking up?

Always

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

3. Do you shy away from conflict?

Always

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

4. How often do you find it difficult to get your point across?

Always

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

5. Do you find yourself angry with little idea of how to express yourself?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

6. Are you ineffective in diffusing another's anger?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

7. Do you feel you are ineffective in getting what you want?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

8. Do you feel unappreciated for your efforts?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

9. Do you purposely avoid contact with people that you have had a conflict with?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

10. Do you find conflict emotionally taxing?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

11. Do you "stick your foot in your mouth" frequently?

- Always
- Often

Occasionally
Rarely
Never

12. Do you fail to take into account the values or views of those you are speaking to?

Always
Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

13. Do you find yourself using humor inappropriately?

Always
Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

14. Are you uncomfortable with a pause or gap in the conversation?

Always
Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

15. Are you uncomfortable in groups or making a presentation?

Always
Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

16. Do you avoid situations where you could speak in public?

Always
Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

17. Are you uncomfortable speaking to successful people?

Always
Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

18. How often are you uncomfortable speaking to someone who has different beliefs than you do?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

19. Do you have to force yourself to meet and greet at a public event?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

20. How often are you uncomfortable introducing yourself to strangers?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

Now let's add up your score:

- Always = 1pt
- Often = 2pts
- Occasionally = 3pts
- Rarely = 4pts
- Never = 5pts

90-100 pts: Silver Tongued Devil

You are an effective communicator! President Reagan would be proud! You are very comfortable with your ability to communicate your needs and make effective use of those abilities to get results in most situations. You will achieve a high level of success in your chosen field.

70-89 pts: Tongue in Training

You are fairly comfortable in most situations and demonstrate some ability to get things accomplished when persuading others of your ideas, but there is some room for improvement. You are less confident and effective in a few interpersonal situations and may benefit by further study or practice in these areas. You will be able to achieve more than the average person because you are on the right track.

50-69 pts: Tongue Impaired

You are uncomfortable in many interpersonal situations and tend to be self-conscious. You have some difficulty in communicating your wants and needs and as a result there are many situations in which you find yourself settling for less.

You would benefit a good deal by brushing up on some specific communication techniques and sharpening your skills. You will have a more difficult time achieving your dreams unless you take action now to learn to express your desires to others.

20-49 pts: Tongue Tied

You tend to be accused of saying the wrong things or are afraid to speak up. You are easily intimidated and uncomfortable with conflict or situations in which you disagree with others. You will continue to be dominated by fear and doubt when dealing interpersonally in business and your personal life unless you learn the skills that build your confidence, competence and set you free.

How to Communicate Confidence

Even if you are confident in your abilities, you must convey it to those around you. You may actually *be* confident, but if you never "notify your face", the world may mistake your confidence for shyness. "The world is governed more by appearances than realities, so it is fully as necessary to seem to know something as it is to know it." -Author Unknown

You have heard the term..."act as if"? Well, act as if you are confident! People without confidence have telltale signs that others recognize. I am sure you can recognize them too; you just haven't thought about it this way before. Here are five tips that will help you communicate confidence when you speak:

1. Speak Loudly and Carry the Big Room!

A little more volume will work all the nervousness right out of your voice. The softer you speak, the more you appear nervous and the more that shakiness in your voice will show. Most people think the opposite but as a former singer, I can tell you that the softer your voice, the harder it is to control. Speak up and be heard or don't bother to speak at all!

2. Don't Mumble Mabel!

Mumbling is a shy person's trait. Speak clearly and you will fool them into thinking you are sure of yourself--even if you aren't, at the moment! The amazing thing is that you can even fool yourself! As you begin to speak clearly, your whole demeanor will change!

3. Look Me in the Eye When You Say That!

Shy people avoid eye contact. Look 'em straight in the eye. Unless you are lying, you have nothing to hide! Maintaining eye contact with others communicates that you are confident in yourself and what you are saying.

4. Speed Up or Slow Down!

Some people speak slower when they are nervous and some speed up as they get jittery. Speak at a more moderate pace. Physiologically slowing down your rate of speech will help your nerves if you are a Chattering Charlie. Picking up your rate of speech will increase your energy if you are a Lethargic Louie. But more importantly, it will make it appear confident on the outside!

5. Stand up tall.

I am only 5' nuthin' so every quarter inch counts! Nonverbal communication will show you off as a "shyling" if you speak while hunched over. Stand up tall and get every inch you can muster! This is how a confident speaker stands whether he is 5'2" or she is 6'3"!!

Remember, your knees can be knocking on the inside as long as nobody sees it on the outside!

5. So What Do I Say?

"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."
-Proverbs 16:24

Many business owners feel a bit intimidated when it comes to this subject. I know what you are thinking: "I don't want to seem like a pushy salesman. I don't want them to think I am hard up for customers. I don't want to look like I am begging." How to start a conversation about your business can take many forms. The best way is to get them to ask you, but here is a list of ways in which you can gracefully and eloquently enter the conversation:

22. Have a prepared and succinct answer for the inevitable question: What do you do?

When someone asks you this question, think of it as an opportunity to tell people about your business. You will need to set the tone by answering this in a way that shows you to be a professional (fill in your industry/ field). Here are answers that will not elicit interest in your business:

- I am a stay-at-home mom.
- I work from home.
- I am a work-at-home mom.
- I have a little business that I do part-time out of my home.
- I work at Kmart and I have a network marketing business that I do part-time.

When people ask you this golden question, have a ready and well-rehearsed response prepared. Tell them in one or two sentences exactly what you do in a way that piques their interest: "I write books and give seminars on effective communication skills."

Telling someone that you work at Kmart will communicate that you may not be successful. You may be very successful for someone who just started out. Many successful businesses are started while maintaining an outside job, but just don't put this front and center in your introduction. It lends more credibility to your job and less to your business. In addition, telling someone that you do something "part time" or "from home" sounds like it is not a serious business. It is better to say "I run an xyz business." And if the subject of additional income arises, you can discuss it then.

23. How do I start the conversation?

Some business people prefer to hand out business cards. I have never been good at sticking a business card in the hand of a total stranger who has not so much as inquired about what I do for a living. I prefer to have them ask me for a

card or at the very least ask me what I do for a living. Again, you will need to have the answer to that question ready! How do I get them to ask?

* I may ask someone about themselves and then ask what they do for a living. It usually sparks a reciprocal question.

* If I am in line at a grocery store or a bank, I will make a comment that can be overheard by others in line that might spark a conversation about my business. I may mention an item that I need to buy for my business. Many times someone in line will ask what kind of business I have.

* Sometimes I ask someone outright about my business in order to get feedback on a product I am working on or redoing the packaging for.

* Sometimes I will notice something unique about another person and after talking about what she does, I will ask for a business card. Usually she will ask for mine as well.

After I have opened up the conversation, if they are interested at all, I can offer them my card. If they mention that they know someone else who might be interested in my products, I will ask if I can give them two cards or a few cards.

Sometimes starting a conversation with someone can be as easy as saying. "Long line, huh?" Or "Oh, that is a beautiful sweater!" You can ask her about her children if she has some with her. You can ask her about something she is carrying. Be positive, upbeat and respectful. Once your conversation has begun, see how far you can go. If she doesn't seem to want to talk to you after your initial comment, you have not failed. You simply went as far as you could go with that person at the time. Move on! If she is interested in what you do, give them a card or a coupon or flyer. If she wants more information, get her number.

Just remember that each person is an individual with needs and worries of the moment. Just because she is not interested now doesn't mean she doesn't like what you do. It just may mean that she is not ready to communicate with you about it just now. If you are respectful of her time and of what she is going through, you might get another opportunity another day to share what you do with her. At the very least each person who does not appear to be interested in talking with you about your business can be thought of as communication practice!

In addition, the more people you mention your business to, the more exposure it will get. You never know where this may lead. The person you mentioned it to may have been impressed, but had no time to talk to you or no use for your product. However, he may mention it to someone who does. Unfortunately the bad impression of a pushy salesman who shoves a business card into a stranger's hand might also spark this person to share their experience of you with another. It just may not be the kind of publicity you wanted.

Helpful Resources for Business

JoJo's Articles:

<http://artofeloquence.com/articles>

On this page of our site you'll find a collection of JoJo's best articles spanning various topics and all age ranges. This page is constantly being updated so check back often!

JoJo's Blog:

<http://www.ArtofEloquence.com/blog>

Communication FUNdamentals is posted several times a week with articles, tips, Friday Funnies and various other ingredients that allow parents to learn more about communication skills in a fun and creative way. You can subscribe to our RSS feed so you don't miss a post! Its' a great way to gain insight for your young children!

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Art of Eloquence Catalog of Communication Studies:

<http://artofeloquence.com/store>

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