



Interview with Jim Eicher, author of the
Neurolinguistic Communication Profile

Q: What is Neurolinguistic Programming?

A: Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is a system of communication developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler in the 1970s at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where I was an undergraduate student. Prior to coining this term, Grinder and Bandler had created a system of individual and family therapy techniques based on the work of Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir, Gregory Bateson, and others. This system evolved into NLP as we know it today.

Q: How does Neurolinguistic Programming relate to the concept of rapport?

A: From the outset, Grinder and Bandler noticed that applying their numerous communication techniques, particularly those they derived from Milton Erickson, resulted in the rapid development of rapport. It wasn't something they were looking for, it was just blatantly evident. They then catalogued and described in detail the communication and behaviors needed to create rapport. Many people the world over are now familiar with the rapport tools of NLP such as mirroring verbal and non-verbal behavior; matching thinking and communication styles; and visual, auditory and kinesthetic preferences for learning. In the big picture – so to speak – rapport is a subset of the many NLP behavioral tools you can use to improve your communication outcomes.

Q: Why are neurolinguistic communication and rapport important to individuals in today's organizations?

A: Organizations are groups of people. ANY tool that enables you to communicate more effectively, mitigate conflict, or build teamwork enhances individual and group performance. I believe NLP is of particular value today for two reasons: 1) NLP's focus on decision making, learning, and thinking processes can facilitate the rapid transfer of information and competencies so necessary in a knowledge-based economy. 2) NLP's decades-long success with developing rapport skills for managers, sales personnel, and consultants has proven that applying rapport-building behaviors to business situations enhances individual and group performance.

Q: Is it possible for individuals to learn how to develop their neurolinguistic communication skills?

A: Yes, it's quite simple: buy the *Neurolinguistic Communication Profile* and use it in your training. But seriously, folks, there are a number of ways to develop NLP-related skills, and there is no "magic" to learning them. What is unique about NLP skills is that they are very learnable, very hands-on, similar to learning a sport or improving your skills in music, art, or math. In my opinion, the best way to develop your NLP communication skills is to attend a workshop or series of workshops with a reputable NLP practitioner and then *practice, practice, practice.*

Q: What are the learning goals of the *Neurolinguistic Communication Profile*? What can participants expect to learn by taking the assessment?

A: The NCP has two sets of learning goals. The first has to do with content. I wanted to develop an extremely rapid, efficient way for people to learn about the NLP model of learning and thinking styles – what we know as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic ways of processing information. The second goal has to do with context. I wanted individuals to learn about NLP with business and organizational issues in mind. So I teamed up with Dr. William Bearley and the late Dr. John Jones to position NLP in the business context. Prior to the *Neurolinguistic Communication Profile*, NLP was almost exclusively in the province of psychotherapy and education.

By taking the *Neurolinguistic Communication Profile*, participants can expect to gain an overview of the core tenets of NLP and of how this core knowledge applies to both business and interpersonal interaction. Over the past 20 years, I have seen immediate results from taking the *Neurolinguistic Communication Profile*, with individuals instantaneously understanding sources of conflict and confusion, and the opportunities they now have to build trust, rapport, and understanding.

Q: How can individuals apply what they've learned to the workplace?

A: There are countless ways to apply knowledge gained from NLP and the *Neurolinguistic Communication Profile* to work. However, areas of immediate application include:

- Sales and customer relations
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Team building

- Problem solving and decision making
- Innovation and creativity
- Knowledge transfer and developing intellectual capital
- Negotiation and arbitration
- Conflict resolution
- Presentation skills

NLP can provide insight and practical skill building in each of these areas to improve individual and group performance. The NLP emphasis on rapid rapport building to enable trust supports all of the above business situations. For example, in sales and customer relations, rapport and trust are required to close any sale. Even in cyberspace, people have to trust a vendor's payment system or they will not buy. NLP provides systematic, practical tools that enhance the rapport building experience and contribute to everyone's success.

About the Author

Mr. Jim Eicher



A well-respected author and consultant, Jim Eicher is a subject matter expert in the fields of sales, organizational strategy, leadership, and communication. During his career, he held leadership roles at Booz Allen Hamilton, Andersen Worldwide, Symantec, and NetApp. Jim was also the founder of Cognitive Management, a training and consulting firm with worldwide clients such as Xerox, Reuters, Sony, Simon and Schuster, Amdahl, and Nortel.

In addition to the *Neurolinguistic Communication Profile*, Jim is the author of a highly acclaimed book on management communication, *Making the Message Clear*, as well as the assessment tools *The Leader-Manager Profile*, *Post-Heroic Leadership: Managing the Virtual Organization*, and *Rapport: Matching and Mirroring Communication*.