

CLD1-3-ANR



Facilitator's Guide

Communications Essentials for Good Impressions

Communication is the real work of leadership. —Nitin Nohria

Rationale:

Effective communication is the key to effective leadership of agricultural groups, helping them to fulfill their organizational vision and mission.

Program Goal:

To demonstrate the role of effective communication in agricultural leadership development

Program Objectives:

- To recognize the importance of what you are communicating non-verbally
- To distinguish the importance of effective speech for influencing others
- To critique the elements of active listening in an effective communications process

Pre-Program Preparation:

- Study and make copies of the KELD publication *Communications Essentials for Good Impressions* (CLD1-3).
- Practice the role-playing scenario in the second introductory activity.
- Think through and answer the questions that you will be asking the participants.
- If using PowerPoint, make sure all equipment works.
- If using a flip chart, make sure all appropriate materials are on hand.

Introduction

Communication is the key to effective leadership of agricultural groups. It is essential in building relationships and trust. A person will not be able to do what's needed in an organization—fulfilling a vision,

carrying out goals, delegating responsibilities, and managing the day-to-day functions—without effective communications with farmers and other stakeholders. Nitin Nohria, dean of Harvard Business School, says, “Communication is the real work of leadership.”

Effective communication does not necessarily come naturally to a leader of a farm or agri-business group. It can take some effort. The program covers some hints on how to be a more effective communicator.

Understanding and learning the specific skills that are essential for effective communications will allow an agricultural leader to:

- **Project an image of confidence.** Whether you are confident or not, these skills will help you project that image, and over time, it won't be just an image, but rather you will have a true confidence in yourself and your abilities.
- **Demonstrate power or influence.** A good communicator has influence over others, and with that influence comes a certain level of personal power. It's as simple as that.
- **Express sincerity, interest, or cooperativeness.** Effective communication shows a level of personal enthusiasm toward what you are doing as well as an interest in the other's viewpoints and passions.
- **Create trust.** When you are communicating, you are building a level of trust in and with each other.

This leadership curriculum was developed by Agriculture & Natural Resources (AG) agents along with University of Kentucky specialists. Therefore, the examples used in the facilitator's guides are geared toward an ANR/Horticulture audience, such as Master Gardener groups. Please feel free to modify and reproduce the facilitator's guide for any appropriate educational or training purposes with other audiences.

- **Recognize personal tension.** As mentioned earlier, recognizing tension doesn't come easy to some folks. By knowing the skills, you'll know the areas that are particularly problematic for you and will be able to focus on improving them.

When someone is identified as having "good people skills," it's just another way of saying that they have good communication skills!

Use PowerPoint slides 1 and 2 to cover the points in the introduction. Speaker notes included in the PowerPoint are the same as these introductory comments. If the meeting event is not suitable for electronic equipment, the PowerPoint can be adjusted to be used as a flipchart.

Introductory Activity 1:

Read the Emerson quote on slide 3 (whether or not you use the PowerPoint). Ask the audience, "What does this quotation say to you?" Use this question as a means to help to get the audience in a frame of mind to make this a discussion rather than just a lecture.

Introductory Activity 2:

Use the scenario on slide 4 on the PowerPoint to set up a role-playing situation. This slide shows an example of a person who is leading a meeting who is using a multitude of poor communications methods. The leader would need to role-play this out, based on local conditions in county or community. Be careful not to exaggerate to emphasize a point, as this could actually be counterproductive ("You don't want to do that, but that doesn't happen here.") If any of the points in the scenario too readily remind the group of a specific person in a leadership role in the county or community, prudence would suggest that that particular point should be played down.

After going over this role-playing exercise, ask program participants to give their specific evaluations of the speaker, and ask what aspects made a negative impression. You will be looking for the following comments: unprofessional, unprepared, inappropriate language, demeaning to others, annoying body language, unappreciative of other's time and efforts, wasting participant's time, interjecting personal concerns in a public setting, and inappropriate interruptions.

There may be other things that the instructor could add to the scenario to help make an additional point needed in that particular locale.

Objective 1: To recognize the importance of what you are "saying" through non-verbal communication

Communication is much more than what we say. How we say it is what creates an impression about ourselves to others. Non-verbal communication includes tone of voice, how we position ourselves, how we act, even our appearance. In fact, UCLA research suggests that the words we speak are only about 7 percent of the whole communication message.

Learning Activity 1:

Use the PowerPoint slides 5 through 9 to introduce non-verbal communication and show the examples of different forms of body language and what they tell people. On all learning activities, speaker notes are included in the PowerPoint. If the meeting event is not suitable for electronic equipment, the PowerPoint can be adjusted to be used as a flipchart.

Learning Activity 2:

Use the PowerPoint slide 10 to focus on tone of voice. Ask someone to read the question on the slide, with an emphasis on the first word. Ask the audience what their impression is of what's really being asked. Have someone else repeat the question with the emphasis on the second word, asking the same thing about their impression of what's being asked and how that emphasis makes the question different than the first reading. Continue this process through the whole sentence. (Don't include the word "the.")

If PowerPoint is not being used, write the question on a flip chart and use the same discussion.

Continue with slide 11 to show how tone of voice affects communications.

Objective 2: To distinguish the importance of effective speech for influencing others

The way you speak has a powerful effect on the impression you make on others and consequently on your ability to lead and convince them to accept your point of view.

Effective speaking falls under two main categories: one-on-one conversations and more formal speaking in front of groups. Strategies to improve effectiveness are not necessarily exclusive to each category; skills developed in the area of individual conversations can improve your effectiveness in speaking in front of groups and vice versa.

Learning Activity 3:

Use PowerPoint slide 12 to introduce the role of speaking in communications. Ask if anyone ever had the idea that they “just didn’t connect” with someone in a conversation? Assuming you get some head nods, ask why. Try to get the audience to analyze why they did not make that personal connection. Write these points on a flip chart. The range of answers you get will likely boil down to the overall idea that a good rapport was not built between the two individuals. Use the answers to help introduce the next slides.

Use PowerPoint slides 13 through 15 to discuss building rapport and public speaking.

Objective 3: To critique the elements of active listening in an effective communications process

True listening is a skill that most people have not developed very well. Listening is not the same as hearing. Hearing is the passive reception of sound; listening is an active process of attaching meaning to that sound. It is an essential part of effective communications.

An effective communicator listens *through* the words. They try to understand what the speaker is trying to communicate.

Listening well is a skill that requires some preparation. It is hard work.

Learning Activity 4:

Read the Epictetus quote on slide 16 (whether or not you use the PowerPoint). Ask the audience, “What does this say to you?”

Learning Activity 5:

While you are still on slide 16, ask for two volunteers. If possible, choose two people who do not know each other, or at least don’t know each other very well. Ask one to introduce him or herself, taking no longer

than a minute to do so. Tell the other one to listen closely, because after the first one introduces him or herself, the second one will reintroduce them, using the same information the first presented a minute ago. This second person is not allowed to take notes.

After the reintroduction, have the group critique. (Recognize that they will likely go pretty easy on the second person, even if the re-introduction was pretty bad!) Ask the second person how he or she thought they did. They likely listened more closely than they typically do. Use the comments to lead into the next discussion on listening skills.

Learning Activity 6:

On the PowerPoint, use slides 17 through 20 to explain how to develop better active listening skills.

Summary:

Use the final PowerPoint slide (or a flipchart) to summarize the key points of effective communications skills for favorable impressions.

References:

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Kline, J. (n.d.). Listening Effectively [training chapter in manual for US Air Force]. <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/kline-listen/b10ch3.htm>.

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Nichols, R. G. (1957). Listening is a Ten Part Skill. Enterprise Publications, <http://d1025403.site.my-hosting.com/files.listen.org/NicholsTenPartSkill/Mr39Enf4.html>.

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