

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT BOARD TRAINING



Participant Manual

Prepared for:

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Communications and Public Relations

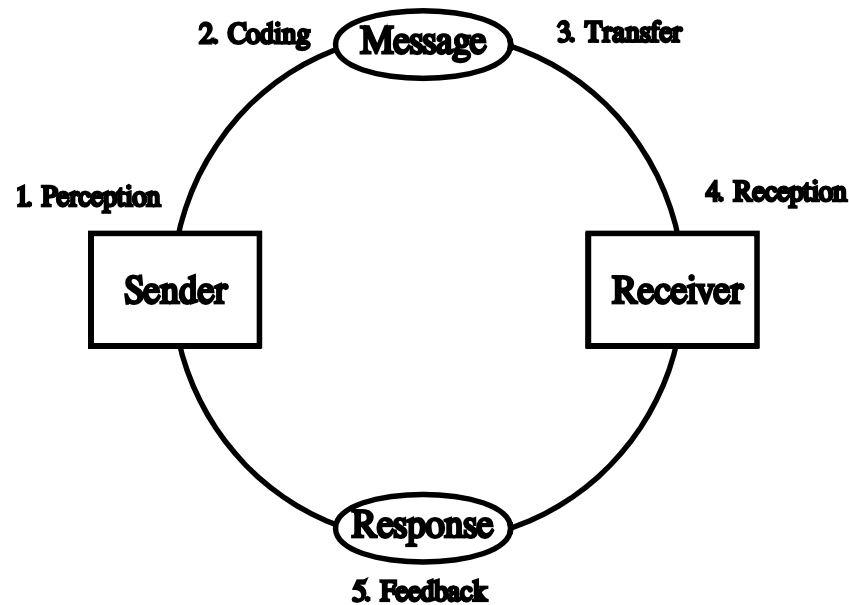


The Cost of Poor Communication



- ⌘ Researchers report that poor communications waste 14% of each forty-hour workweek
- ⌘ Without a downward flow of information, morale deteriorates among group members
- ⌘ For adult-to-adult interchanges, there is no substitute for open, straightforward, face-to-face communications

A Communications Model



A Communications Model

Perception



- ⌘ What the speaker has to say is based on his/her perception which is:
 - ☑ Limited to his/her experience
 - ☑ Focused on what he/she values
 - ☑ Interpreted through his/her filters of past, present, and future.
- ⌘ The problem is that the speaker can forget these limitations and act as though he/she is infallible

Coding



- ⌘ The ideas and feelings of the speaker are expressed through his/her:
 - ☑ Vocabulary (verbal or non-verbal)
 - ☑ Style (formal or informal)
 - ☑ Intent (to inform, entertain, persuade, or convince)
- ⌘ The problem is that the speaker can use vocabulary that is unknown to the listener or a style and intent that are unclear

Transfer



- ⌘ There are always two levels to every message: *cognitive* and *emotional*
- ⌘ The cognitive level is expressed by words; the emotional level is expressed by:
 - ☑ Tone of voice
 - ☑ Intensity level
 - ☑ Force in gestures (body language)
 - ☑ Stress and inflections in voice
- ⌘ The problem is that the emotional message may not always jibe with the cognitive (e.g., "I'm NOT mad!!!")

Reception



- ⌘ The listener operates with the same set of limitations as does the speaker:
 - ☑ The listener interprets the message against the background of his/her own experiences
 - ☑ The listener pays attention only to what he/she thinks is important in the message
 - ☑ The message comes to the listener through his/her own set of filters
- ⌘ The problem is that the listener does not hear what was said, but what he/she *interpreted* was said (e.g., the parlor game)

Response



- ⌘ For a dialogue, the listener must make a response that gives the speaker some feedback via:
 - ☑ Questions for clarification
 - ☑ Restatement of what was received
 - ☑ Confirmation (I agree) or challenge (I disagree)
- ⌘ The problem is that the listener does not respond, leaving the speaker thinking that the message was understood and accepted

The Need for Active Listening



- ⌘ Hearing someone merely means that I am aware that he/she has said something
- ⌘ Listening to someone means that I:
 - ☑ Give him/her my open and complete attention
 - ☑ Try to make sense of what he/she is saying
 - ☑ Let him/her know that I am trying to understand
- ⌘ It is said that because God gave us two ears and only one mouth, we are supposed to listen twice as much as speak!

Six Active Listening Techniques



- ⌘ Attitude
- ⌘ Attention
- ⌘ Request
- ⌘ Restate
- ⌘ Interpret
- ⌘ Agreement

Attitude



- ⌘ Remain neutral (non-judgmental) as you listen
- ⌘ Don't give advice, criticize, or interrupt --- unless you are asked
- ⌘ Try to see the point from the speaker's point of view

Attention



- ⌘ Give the speaker your complete attention, i.e., DON'T timeshare!
- ⌘ Unless your culture frowns on it, look the speaker in the eye as he/she is speaking
- ⌘ Let the speaker know that you are listening by nodding your head and/or saying that you are following what he/she is saying

Request



- ⌘ Ask for more information about some point that you don't get
- ⌘ Ask the speaker to give an example of what he/she is saying
- ⌘ Ask the speaker to clarify some point that is not clear to you

Restate



- ⌘ State in your own words what you think is the speaker's *cognitive* message
- ⌘ Introduce your restatement as *your* interpretation, NOT as what the speaker said
- ⌘ Try to show that you are working to understand, not to point out where he/she is wrong

Interpret



- ⌘ State in your own words what you think is the speaker's *emotional* message
- ⌘ Tell the speaker how strongly he/she feels about the point being made (often expressed by his/her intensity level)
- ⌘ Give the speaker a chance either to agree with you or to temper his/her feelings about the point he/she just made

Agreement



- ⌘ First try to get agreement from the speaker that you have heard and understood him/her correctly
- ⌘ Then summarize the points that he/she has made during the conversation
- ⌘ And summarize the points with which you agree and those with which you disagree, emphasizing your common ground

Communications Activity



1. In your team, discuss the five processes of the communication model.
2. Brainstorm for possible ways to overcome the dangers associated with each process.
3. Discuss the six active listening techniques.

Communications Activity



4. Brainstorm for possible “triggers” your Board can use to remind one another to use these techniques.
5. Report to the whole class your group’s discussions and suggestions during this activity.

The Need for Public Relations



- ⌘ The Board has a responsibility to inform and motivate the Empowerment Community audience
- ⌘ Without information and reinforcement from the Board, the audience will invent their own interpretations of what you are doing
- ⌘ You can not assume that your audience will automatically make a positive interpretation because of your “good intentions”

Three Public Relations Techniques



- ⌘ Giving interviews on local television or radio stations
- ⌘ Writing articles for publication in local newspapers or in your own newsletter
- ⌘ Writing and sending press releases to all newspapers, radio, and television stations regularly

The Parts of a Press Release



⌘ A press release doesn't have to be elaborate, but can be made up of three parts:

- ☑ The Announcement Statement

- ☑ The Elaboration Statement

- ☑ Regular "Boilerplate" Text

The Announcement Statement



- ⌘ The general form: (Who?) did (What?) (When?) (Where?)(Why?[For what reason?])
- ⌘ Write a sentence answering the above “wh-questions” in whatever order reads best.
- ⌘ For instance: “On September 21 and 22, members of the Franklin County Enterprise Community attended a three-day training session in Bay City to improve their skills in carrying out their duties as board members”

The Elaboration Statement



- ⌘ This can be a sentence or paragraph that tells more about what you presented in the Announcement Statement
- ⌘ Usually the Elaboration Statement will give more information about the “What” and “Why” in your Announcement Statement
- ⌘ For instance: “To help the Franklin County EC Board function better, the U.S. Department of Agriculture sponsored training in leadership, teaming, communications and public relations, strategic planning, management and governance, fund raising, and community involvement”

Regular “Boilerplate” Text



- ⌘ This may be two or three paragraphs of standard text that you always include in a press release
- ⌘ This text should tell people about what your Empowerment Community is, why it was formed, when it was formed, and what its goals and objectives are (in your Strategic Plan)
- ⌘ In addition, you may want to describe what are its major difficulties and what have been its proudest accomplishments

Press Release Activity



1. In your team, select an event or accomplishment about which you can write a press release.
2. Working together, answer the “wh-questions” in the Announcement Statement.
3. Then write an Elaboration Statement for this press release.

Press Release Activity



4. Decide what three things you would want to have in your “Boilerplate” text.
5. Report to the whole class the press release your group composed during this activity.