



Killer Communication Skills



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Mr. Darnell has been teaching critical people skills and emotional intelligence to engineers since 2000. In 2012 he was awarded Engineering News Record's top 25 newsmaker's award for his record breaking program that "transforms Alpha males into service focused leaders". His bestselling books, *The People Profit Connection* and *The Tough Guy Survival Kit* along with online courses are helping to transform the industry.

Poll Question



How important is good communication skills to your everyday life and work?



Poll Question



How good a communicator do you think your are?



Changing Industry Requires New Skills



- ASCE Engineer of 2025
- NAE Engineer of 2020
- SPE Annual Conference: "Roundtable topics included nonverbal and spoken communication, the choice between the technical and the managerial career track, and developing emotional intelligence."
- JPT: "There are two major challenges for SPE to help these professionals achieve the expected levels of soft competencies: Applicability of the identified attributes at the global level. Effective expansion of soft skills discussions and training around the world."



Vocabulary, Enunciation and Volume



- Enunciate
- Speak in a hearable volume
- Use the RIGHT word
- Avoid long or unnecessary words
- Use fewer words



More Tips



- Sign up for a vocabulary builder app or email. You can build your vocabulary quickly!
- For volume and enunciation, you can record your own voice and play it back and make improvements based on what you hear.
- Are people constantly asking you to repeat yourself or do they say, "Huh" often? You likely aren't speaking clearly or loudly enough. If you aren't sure about your volume and enunciation, ask for input from your peers.
- You can also join toastmasters.org and practice speaking in front of others. Toastmaster meetings are helpful and the other folks there are very supportive.



Body and Face



- Watch facial expressions and body language
- "Resting Engineer Face" REF
- Smile more



What does this face convey?



Be Fully Present



At the Playground with Mom



Status



- Ace to King



Listen, Listen, Listen



- What do you remember from the story I told about the mom and the kids at the playground? Did you really listen?



Verify Understanding



- Tapping Exercise



The Ladder



- Stop and take a breath.
- Challenge the assumption.
- Ask questions and gather information.
- Find out what is really going on.
- Act accordingly on the information.



The Cabin in the Woods



POLL QUESTION



What's the MOST EFFECTIVE way to communicate?



Use Compassion to Connect



- “Just like me, this person is trying to find happiness and meaning in his/her life.”
- “Just like me, this person is trying to avoid pain in his/her life.”
- “Just like me, this person has known heartache, loss, loneliness and despair.”
- “Just like me, this person wants to be loved and connected with others.”
- “Just like me, this person has people in his/her life who care about them.”
- “Just like me, this person is trying to get his/her needs met.”
- “Just like me, this person is trying his/her best to complete this project, make a profit, etc.”
- “Just like me, this person is trying his/her best to make this project successful.”
- “Just like me, this person wants to excel and be good at what he/she does.”
- “Just like me, this person is learning about how to navigate through this sometimes difficult life/project/work environment.”

Avoid Destructive Communication



- Gossip
- Edification or Tearing down?



Diplomacy



- Avoid absolutes: I need it, I want it now, I have to have it, There is no alternative, It must be this way, etc.
- When appropriate:
- Use
 - Qualifiers (might, perhaps, maybe, could be, might be)
 - What if . . .
 - Yes, and (instead of No, But)
 - I would like that if possible



Communication Killers



- Why?
- Always, Never, Nobody, Everybody



Use VM Wisely



- As a marketing tool
- As a way to communicate
- Give the answer, don't just return a call.



Tell Stories



Emails



- Don't attach any files unless absolutely necessary.
- Write only the amount of text that the recipient can read without scrolling down.
- Put something interesting in the Subject line.
- Don't write emails that say "thanks" and "you're welcome"
- Minimize Forwards and Copying Everyone (third forward rule)



Exercise



This letter is in response to your letter dated January 19, 2015. Contrary to your referenced letter, we never “promised” that complete Phase I by the date referenced in your letter. We suggest you review our contract rider dated January 4, 2014 so that you can see for yourself the details of the project schedule. The proposal also outlines what your company agreed to. This doesn’t surprise us as we have always known that your company has very poor internal communication. If you had good communication, you would know what was agreed upon.

We intend to complete Phase I as agreed to by your company with the details as outlined in our proposal dated January 4, 2014. Anything above and beyond that will be additional cost, and we will bill you per the attached schedule of values.

Resolve Conflicts



1 Assess: Take in everything that is going on. Truly listen to the other person, ask questions and note the responses. Gather the facts without judgment.

2 Put on your empathy cap: How is everyone feeling? Is there anger, frustration, impatience, or joy? Assess the feelings of others and yourself and acknowledge them. Expressing these feelings and asking others what they are feeling creates vulnerability and connection.

3 Figure out what each person wants and be specific. Again, ask and assess without judgment. Don’t negate the needs of others or yourself at this point. Explore the possibilities.

4 Make a request. Be specific. Based on all that has gone before, make a request that you think takes into account all of the information. If there isn’t a resolution, start again at the beginning. Each attempt will lead to a greater understanding and more resolution possibilities.

Resources



- The People Profit Connection
- The Tough Guy Survival Kit
- The Tao of Emotional Intelligence book and APP
- www.brentdarnell.com/whitepaper



Reflection



- What did we do?
- What did you learn?
- How will you apply the learning?
- How did it make you feel? (excited, uncomfortable, anxious, happy)
- What do you feel changing within you?
- What if . . . ?



Questions?

