Effective Oral Communications

Presented by:
Hannah F.G. Singerman, Esq.

June 2015

Introduction

- Explore the importance of effective communication
- Describe the advantages/disadvantages of oral communications
- Identify the flow of communication in a municipality
- Technology concerns: Oral Communications-the new written communications
- Discuss “Implicit Bias,” “micro-aggressions and EEOC concerns
- Evaluate effective presentation skills, including best practices for power point(ers)
Fundamental Principles of Public Speaking

• **Public speaking** is the process of speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner intended to inform, influence, or entertain.

• Five basic elements
  – who is saying
  – what
  – to whom
  – using what medium
  – with what effects

Effective Delivery of Oral Presentations

• A common fear of public speaking is called glossophobia (or, informally, "stage fright")

• “The soul of delivery is in the manful assertion of the orator's personality, in the revelation of the high purpose by which he is actuated, in the profound conviction of the truth of his course, in the firm resolve to establish it, in the dauntless spirit that faces all obstacles, and, conquering them, sweeps onward to the desired goal.”
Importance of Effective Communication

- Communication is one of the basic functions of management in any organization and its importance can hardly be overemphasized. It is a process of transmitting information, ideas, thoughts, opinions and plans between various parts of an organization
  - For manager – employee relations
  - For motivation and employee morale
  - For increase productivity
  - For employees performance and reporting

- Can make the difference between business success and business failure

Advantages of Oral Communications

- High level of understanding and transparency in oral communication as it is interpersonal
- Flexibility for allowing changes in prior decisions
- Feedback is spontaneous in case of oral communication
- Time saving, and saves upon money and efforts
- Best in cases of problem resolution. The conflicts, disputes and many issues/differences can be put to an end by talking them over
Advantages of Oral Communication

- Essential for teamwork and group energy
- Promotes a receptive and encouraging morale among organizational employees
- Best used to transfer private and confidential information
- Great for the segment of the population who are “oral learners”

Disadvantages of Oral Communication

- Can be less authentic as informal and not as organized as written communication
- In case of meetings, long speeches consume lot of time and can be unproductive; travel expensive
- Not easy to maintain and thus can be unsteady
- Can have misunderstandings as the information is not complete and may lack essentials
- Requires attentiveness and great receptivity on part of the receivers/audience
Disadvantages of Oral Communication

- Lower ability to keep records
- True “oral learners” are rare
- Technology is blurring the line between written and oral communications

Ethical Considerations

- Ethics are an important part of public speaking
  - An ethical speech includes sincerity, no falsehoods or half truths, presentation of the truth as the individual perceives it, and supplies necessary facts as basis for proof
- Ethics in communication could include different components depending on the type of communication: whether it is between persons, in business, communication which includes media or whether it concerns international relationships
Professional Considerations

- Professionalism – competence, civility, integrity, and commitment to the occupation, to justice, and to the public good
  - Communication encourages the habit of reflection

- 7 C’s of communication
  - Completeness
  - Conciseness
  - Consideration
  - Clarity
  - Concreteness
  - Courtesy
  - Correctness

Professional Considerations

- Completeness
  - Complete communication develops and enhances reputation of an organization
  - Moreover, they are cost saving as no crucial information is missing and no additional cost is incurred in conveying extra message if the communication is complete
  - A complete communication always gives additional information wherever required. It leaves no questions in the mind of receiver
  - Complete communication helps in better decision-making by the audience/readers/receivers of message as they get all desired and crucial information
  - It persuades the audience
Professional Considerations

• Conciseness - wordiness, i.e., communicating what you want to convey in least possible words. It is a necessity for effective communication. Concise communication has following features:
  – It is both time-saving as well as cost-saving
  – It underlines and highlights the main message as it avoids using excessive and needless words
  – Concise communication provides short and essential message in limited words to the audience
  – Concise message is more appealing and comprehensible to the audience
  – Concise message is non-repetitive in nature

Professional Considerations

• Consideration - implies “stepping into the shoes of others”. Effective communication must take the audience’s view points, background, mind-set, education level, etc. into consideration. Features of considerate communication are as follows:
  – Emphasize on “the audience” approach
  – Empathize with the audience and exhibit interest in the audience. This will stimulate a positive reaction from the audience
  – Show optimism towards the audience. Emphasize on “what is possible” rather than “what is impossible”. Lay stress on positive words such as jovial, committed, thanks, warm, healthy, help, etc.
Professional Considerations

• Clarity - implies emphasizing on a specific message or goal at a time, rather than trying to achieve too much at once. Clarity in communication has following features:
  – It makes understanding easier
  – Complete clarity of thoughts and ideas enhances the meaning of message
  – Clear message makes use of exact, appropriate and concrete words

Professional Considerations

• Concreteness - Concrete communication implies being particular and clear rather than fuzzy and general. Concreteness strengthens the confidence. Concrete message has following features:
  – It is supported with specific facts and figures
  – It makes use of words that are clear and that build the reputation
  – Concrete messages are not misinterpreted
Professional Considerations

• Courtesy - Courtesy in message implies the message should show the sender’s expression as well as should respect the receiver. The sender of the message should be sincerely polite, judicious, reflective and enthusiastic. Courteous message has following features:
  – Courtesy implies taking into consideration both viewpoints as well as feelings of the receiver of the message
  – Courteous message is positive and focused at the audience
  – It makes use of terms showing respect for the receiver of message
  – It is not at all biased

Professional Considerations

• Correctness - implies that there are no grammatical errors in communication. Correct communication has following features:
  – The message is exact, correct and well-timed
  – If the communication is correct, it boosts up the confidence level
  – Correct message has greater impact on the audience/ readers
  – It checks for the precision and accurateness of facts and figures used in the message
  – It makes use of appropriate and correct language in the message
Identify the Flow of Communication in your Municipality

• Downward
  – Downward communication flows from people at higher levels to those at lower levels in the organizational hierarchy

• Upward
  – Upward communication travels from subordinates to superiors and continues up the organizational hierarchy

• Crosswise
  – Crosswise communication includes the horizontal flow of information, among people on the same or similar organizational levels, and the diagonal flow, among persons at different levels who have no direct reporting relationships

Identify the Flow of Communication in your Municipality

• Downward
  – This kind of communication exists especially in organizations with an authoritarian atmosphere
  – The kinds of media used for downward oral communication include instructions, speeches, meetings, the telephone, loudspeakers, and even the grapevine
  – The skill needed here is to never to be harsh. In downward communication the “last laugh” should always be the speaker. The speaker should be empathetic and friendly
Identify the Flow of Communication in your Municipality

- **Upward**
  - To convey important messages
  - Ensure the information is accurate and complete
  - Messages should be brief and concise
  - Can be used for both good and bad news
  - When presenting a problem, suggest potential solution
  - Make an agenda; providing a list of topics to discuss in advance so everyone can be prepared

- **Crosswise**
  - Get to know as many people in the organization
  - View peer communication as a chance to establish relationships that work for both parties
  - Share information; nobody wants to talk to someone who doesn’t share in return
  - Constantly look for overlapping areas of responsibility or interests that might help improve your interaction with other managers
  - Give sincere and positive feedback when asked
  - When appropriate, offer help or insight
Technology: Blurring the Line

- Security, cell-phone, laptop, and iPad cameras along with the internet help shape the new “privacy”
- From Britt McHenry to Mitt Romney, audience limiting has become difficult
- Ease and flexibility of recording turn oral communications written
- O.R.C. §2933.52
- Ease and flexibility of communication via the internet make the private public

Technology: Blurred Lines

- Technology heightens ethical concerns
- Work place compliance with Federal laws is key
- Making the most of the “R” in “HR”
- Double-checking accuracy
- Double-checking compliance
EEOC Compliance

- Know your protected classes
- Know and obey the law
- Know and obey inter-office policies
- Understand the consequences

“Micro-Aggressions”: Defined

- What is a “micro-aggression”
- Term coined in 1970 by Chester M. Pierce of Harvard
- Current definition: “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership.” - Prof. Derald Wing Sue of Columbia, Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation, (John Wiley & Sons, 2010).
“Micro-Aggressions”: Defined

- Important: “micro-aggressions” are non-intentionally offensive and are often not outside social norms

- Very controversial theory—See Prof. Amitai Etzioni of George Washington University’s April of 2014 piece in the Atlantic “Don’t Sweat the Micro-aggressions.”

“Micro-Aggressions”: Communications

- In his book, Prof. Sue divided offensive communications with minorities into three categories:
  - Micro-assaults: Conscious and intentional discriminatory actions: using racial epithets, displaying White supremacist symbols – swastikas
“Micro-Aggressions”: Communications

- Micro-insults: Verbal, nonverbal, and environmental communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity that demean a person's racial heritage or identity

  Sue’s example: “an employee who asks a co-worker of color how he/she got his/her job, implying he/she may have landed it through an affirmative action or quota system”

“Micro-Aggressions”: Communications

- Micro-invalidations: Communications that subtly exclude, negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of color

  Sue’s example: “white people often ask Latinos where they were born, conveying the message that they are perpetual foreigners in their own land”
“Micro-Aggressions”: Why they are Important

- Commonality
- Creating a happy work environment/community
- Potential legal issues

Implicit Bias – Definition and Overview

- What is “Implicit bias?”: “An implicit bias is a positive or negative mental attitude towards a person, thing, or group that a person holds at an unconscious level.” defined by Stanford University
- Implicit Association Test (IAT): 
  https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/background/index.jsp
Implicit Bias: Overview

- Why is it important?
- Who does it affect?
- How can “implicit bias” hurt an organization?

Implicit Bias – Problem Solving

- How to guard against “implicit bias”
- Recognizing
- Guarding
- Leading by example
- “Doing” not “saying”
- Reaching Out: “Project Implicit”
Implicit Bias – Legal and Ethical Concerns

- EEOC obligations
- Leadership vs. policy
- Ideals vs. policy

Evaluate Effectiveness/Best Practices

- Introduction
  - Speaker engages audience attention and interest (relevance, importance, timeliness, etc.)
  - Speaker clearly identifies thesis, purpose, or central question (focus)
  - Speaker clearly previews presentation's structure or content (scope and sequence). (If thesis or preview is withheld, is this appropriate and effective?)
Evaluate Effectiveness/Best Practices

• Development
  – Points are clear and arranged in logical order
  – Speaker provides appropriate transitions between points
  – Speaker adequately clarifies terms and concepts
  – Speaker adequately explains points and supports arguments
  – Speaker restates or summarizes points as needed
  – Speaker cites sources appropriately (orally or on visuals)

• Audiovisual Media
  – Media make sense and enhance the presentation
  – Speaker effectively integrates media with what is being said
  – Speaker provides appropriate transitions between media clips or PP slides
  – PP slides are effectively designed (clear, uncluttered, adequate size, good contrast, consistent)
  – PP slides are correct in terms of spelling, grammar, citations, etc
Evaluate Effectiveness/Best Practices

- Conclusion
  - Speaker summarizes as needed
  - Speaker reinforces or re-establishes the thesis, purpose, or central question
  - Speaker closes appropriately

Evaluate Effectiveness/Best Practices

- Delivery
  - Speaker uses clear, appropriate language
  - Speaker uses appropriate rate and volume
  - Speaker uses few "uhs" and "ums"
  - Speaker uses voice expressively
  - Speaker makes sufficient eye contact
  - Speaker uses nonverbal behavior that supports the message
Practical Pointers

- **Control the body.** Refrain from swaying, batting arms, or nervous twitches
- **Control the eyes.** Even if reading from a script or notes, make eye contact with the audience as often as possible. Note, the more stories told from personal experience, the less the need to refer to notes, and the more the speech becomes a comfortable situation to really relate to the audience
- **Control your voice.** Refrain from speaking too quickly, too indistinctly, or too quietly. Use speed and tone intentionally

Questions?
Thank You

Hannah F.G. Singerman  
Attorney  
Commercial Collections

email  
hsingerman@weltman.com

phone  
216.685.1162

www.weltman.com