

## AMA Communication for Managers Text Notes

### Chapter 1: Communication: The Key to a Manager's Success

#### 1. p. 3: Why managers communicate:

- a. To pass on and receive information.
- b. To establish, nourish, and maintain relationships.

Relationships are the glue that holds groups and organizations together [see article **AMA 13** Brief group cohesion discussion 2 pp.] and that help form friendships, colleagues, mentors, and respectful and useful superior/subordinate relationships [see article 59 Social values, 2 pp.] for components of relationships.

- c. To pass on orders, requests, and agendas.
- d. To provide feedback and criticism.

See article **A34** Constructive Criticism 3 pp. in regards to this topic.

- e. To encourage, motivate, and influence.

**Influence** is the ability to get others to do as you wish or need. Influence takes many forms including persuasion, argument, coercion, reward, and threats.

- f. To help others solve problems and develop action plans.
- g. To work with others to come up with new ideas

New ideas can be generated by **brainstorming**. To elicit new ideas, one must feel unencumbered, unthreatened, and free from ridicule for putting forth new thoughts.

#### 2. p. 4 bottom: Obstacles to clear communication:

- a. Lack of time and planning.

Rushed communication is frequently incomplete, not well thought out, error prone, harshly phrased, less credible [see article **A37** Credibility, 2 pp.], and reduced legitimacy.

- b. Competing messages

Message competition refers to attention given to and anxiety concerning past and anticipated messages other than your own present ones; and to what is called **information overload** [see article (AMA !, Information overload, 1 p.).

- c. Differences in knowledge, perspectives, needs, expectations, status, culture, and gender.

Such differences need not interfere with effective communication if they are known, acknowledged, and worked on in the communication between parties. When such differences are unknown, not acknowledged, or not resolved in communication, confusion, resentment, lack of cooperation, anger, feelings of inferiority, and/or a lack of respect might result.

- d. Assumptions

When communicants enter dialogue with pre-formed assumptions or make hasty conclusions during dialogue, several negative effects can manifest themselves including: lowered attention, decreased interest, missed details, erroneous sequencing, and/or jumbled priorities,

- e. Fears

Fears related to communicant personal and work relationships, work performance judgments, personal credibility, self worth, job security, personal communication skills, and job skills all can negatively impinge upon one's communication in the workplace.

- 3. p. 7 lower part: How well did you fare on this list? What can you do / will you do to improve your communication practice?

## **Chapter 2: Listening: The Foundation**

1. See articles: **A33** Listening: A Vital Skill, 2 pp.[1<sup>st</sup> night handout]; **AMA 19** Critical listening, 1 p.; **AMA 20** Effective listening skills, 3 pp.; **AMA 22** Good and poor listeners, 1 p.; and **AMA 26** Listening variables, 1 p. as an introduction to listening skill development, planning, and assessment.
2. Several well researched generalities relevant to listening are germane here:
  - a. Intense listening is a fatiguing activity.
  - b. Monotone speaking adds fatigue to audience members.
  - c. When note taking is needed/expected, 30 minute breaks are essential to avoid writer's cramp.
  - d. Previews [beginning and internal], transitions, and summaries [internal and final] are essential when speech exceeds 30 minutes.

- e. Volume and pitch variety, a rate between 90 and 120 WPM, and some movement [if standing] are essential to paying attention.
- f. Heavy dependence on notes detracts from audience attention and interest.
- g. Some intentional embedded redundancy helps listeners.

3. Several physical circumstances contribute to poor listening:

fatigue	confusion	fear	time pressure
hunger	anxiety	guilt	evaluation apprehension
full belly	illness	stress	unpreparedness

4. Some atmospherics detract from quality listening:

poor lighting	ambient sound	uncomfortable seating
too hot or cold	audience movement	late comers

### Chapter 3 Getting Your Message Across

1. p. 28 bottom: How to get your message across:

- a. Know your audience [see article **AMA 5** Audience Analysis 2 pp.].
- b. Know what you want to say and say it. Such knowledge stems from research, experience, deliberations, history, and planning.
- c. Keep your message simple and specific. Complexity and abstraction or ambiguity confuse, question issue legitimacy and credibility, and obstructs issue coherence and consensus.
- d. Make eye contact with listeners and speak slowly and clearly enough to be understood. Ideas need a speaker [or writer] who speaks/writes pleasantly, cogently, accurately, respectfully, clearly, and sensibly.
- e. Try to choose the right time and place. Timing requires a working knowledge of history, context, and likely consequences of proposed and current actions.

2. p. 35 bottom: How to make sure your message is received and understood.

- a. Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal responses.

“Verbal responses” include question specificity vs. generality, concreteness vs. vagueness, and tone.

- b. Ask questions as needed to check out your perceptions of the listeners’ understanding.

Such questions need to be carefully asked so as not to seem challenging, demeaning, or testing.

- c. Ask the listeners to summarize what you have said and restate the message if needed.

Such summaries may be in outline form or in paraphrase style.

3. p. 37 bottom: How to influence others:

- a. Know your objective(s).

Within the written or oral message, objectives need to be explicitly stated,

- b. Consider the other party's needs, interests, and concerns.

This requires audience analysis.

- c. Be prepared with specifics to support your position.

This requires details, supporting evidence, relevant private, government, and private documents, and testimony.

4. p. 42: Hints for effective telephonic communication.

### **Chapter 4 The Art of Asking Questions**

1. See article **A57** Questions and Answers: The Substance of Knowledge and Relationships 3 pp.

2. p. 55: Open-ended vs. closed-ended questions -- good summary and examples.

3. p. 56: Clarifying probing questions -- good summary and examples.

4. p. 59: Key strategies for asking useful questions:

- a. Know why the question is asked.

- b. Ask the right type of question

Types include questions of; clarification, qualification, degree, kind/category, nomenclature, specification, verification/validation, permission, amplification, magnitude, and motive.

- c. Be sure the question is relevant, necessary, and appropriate.

- d. State the question clearly

- e. Give people time to respond.

- f. Listen attentively to responses.

5. p. 65: Interviews: See article **AMA 25** Interviewing 2 pp.
6. p. 67: See article **AMA 14** Regarding Meetings and Committees 1 p.

### **Chapter 5: Helping People Learn**

1. p. 75: Adults learn best when they:
  - a. Are active participants in the learning process. Being an active learner is explained in some detail in article A26 What is meant by active learning? On Ken Petress' website.
  - b. Are respected for their experience and knowledge. People come to new learning settings with experiences, insights, and previous knowledge which needs to be taken advantage of by teaches, tutors, and mentors.
  - c. Have clear, achievable learning goals and understand the relevancy of what they are learning. Learning and teaching goals must be congruent for optimal learning to occur. When learning seems irrelevant by learners, it is soon extinguished or ignore.
  - d. Lean by doing – have opportunity for practice with immediate feedback. This is called **application** or performance. In many learning situations, partial performance is helpful along the way. Feedback comes in varying forms such as encouragement, motivation, direction, appraisal, and instruction reminders.
  - e. Are allowed to make and learn from mistakes. Mistakes are part of learning; we learn to anticipate errors after a while. Error reduction is caused, in part, by increased confidence, competence, and increased skill.
  - f. Receive reinforcement and support. These can take the forms of pay increases, diplomas/certificates, peer/superior recognition, and upgraded job assignments.
2. p. 77 bottom: Retention rates depend on delivery methods, learner experience and preference [see (AMA 39) Learning styles and strategies 2 pp.], instructor style, learner motivation, and perceived worth of material.
3. p. 78 [E 5-3]: How are **you** best supported, encouraged, motivated?
4. [E5-4]: Do **you**
  - a. Work best alone or in groups?
  - b. Do tasks from start to end [when possible] or in chunks?
  - c. Need quiet or a noisy atmosphere?

- d. Talk to yourself while learning/doing?
  - e. Need written, oral, diagrammatic instructions/guides?
  - f. Want/need someone with you as you practice or be left alone?
  - g. Prefer to interrupt/be interrupted mid sentence or idea for questions or wait till a sentence/concept is complete for questions?
  - h. Prefer to learn one-on-one or in groups?
5. p. 79 middle: “Learning objectives” and instructions here are synonymous. They need to be explicitly clear, unambiguous, relevant to learners’ skills, knowledge, and job description.

### **Chapter 6: On your feet: Making successful presentations**

1. Start by reading article **AMA 40** Making presentations 1 p.
2. Successful presentations occur when they:
  - a. are purposeful
  - b. are clearly focused
  - c. are audience entered
  - d. are well organized
3. Read article **AMA 5** Audience analysis 2 pp.
  - a. It is essential for presenters, audience members, and organizational management that presentations be perceived as useful.
  - b. Why are people primarily attending your presentation?
    - (1) to gain information / insight relevant to their ongoing job.
    - (2) to gain information about a possible/assigned new task/job.
    - (3) to learn new rules/expectations from employer.
    - (4) to learn new/improved ways of doing tasks.
    - (5) because they are told to be there.
4. p. 88: Presenters frequently include too much in presentations [see article **AMA 1** Information overload 1 pp.
 

Using handouts, multi-user PowerPoint files, data bases, websites, or other post-presentation accessible sources can reduce the inclination to put too much into presentations.

Rely on audience questions to fill in details.
5. p. 89: Starting and ending on time is an important feature of presentations.

Presentation duration is also vital to hardworking employees.

6. p. 90 bottom: See article **A57** Questions and answers: The substance of knowledge and relationships 3 pp.
7. p. 91 top: Managing Q & A sessions.
  - a. Anticipate questions – this can be accomplished by taping a presentation practice session and having knowledgeable friends/colleagues act as audience members and help anticipate questions.
  - b. Leave enough time – nothing is more frustrating to audience members than to be told that Q & A will be allowed and then no time is left at the end.
  - c. Answer only relevant questions – sometimes very technical, small point, private questions are asked; these need to be delayed until later so as not to prolong the session.
  - d. Focus responses – responses to questions ought not result in a mini added presentation; they need to be pointed and terse.
8. p. 92: see articles **AMA 6** Speech and presentation delivery modes 3 pp.; **AMA 31** Speaker apprehension control 1 p.; and **AMA 32** Speech presentation modes 3 pp.

### **Chapter 7: One the Page: What Is Good Writing?**

1. p. 98: Writing is advantageous in that unlike speeches, telephone calls, or blackberry messages, they offer a more permanent record.
2. Writing offers message makers to revise thoughts prior to delivery to readers.
3. Writing limitations are less inhibitive than are those for alternate communicating modes.
4. Writing allows for detail, parallel structure, and greater fluency.
5. p. 101 and p. 102 center: See article **AMA 27** Memoranda 1 p.
6. Remember, writing requires/suggests reading; the more content, more detail, more complexity, and more topics in your writing, the greater the time and effort is expected/demanded of readers.

Busy managers or subordinates need terse messages when possible.
7. p. 103 bottom = good writing suggestions.

8. See article **A5** How to Write an Essay: Some Suggestions 9 pp. for longer, more formal writing tasks.

### **Chapter 8: One the Page: How To Write Well**

1. p. 114: **Previews** are a way to alert readers [or audiences to oral messages] to what is coming.
2. Read articles **A64** The Value of Precise Language 3 pp.; **AMA 2** Naming 1 p.; **AMA 5** Audience analysis 2 pp.; **AMA 23** Evaluating facts and figures 1 p.; and **AMA 24** guidelines for the ethical use of evidence 1 p. relevant to idea construction.
3. pp. 127-128: Proofreading your work is vital!
  - a. Proofreading eliminates errors.
  - b. proofreading upholds writer's reputation regarding neatness and correctness in language.
  - c. proofreading eliminates potential disastrous reading errors.
4. Technical language is sometimes needed and at times cannot practically be avoided [see especially legal documents, military or medical descriptions]; however, avoid in-house terms or acronyms when possible.
5. Whenever possible, put your writing down and return to it in hours or days. Then try to read it as if someone else wrote it. When possible, have a friend or colleague read what you write.