Communications Demands Technique, Too

Coming to a Quick, Acceptable Decision Through Effective Communications is the Result of Good Techniques

by Ernest W. Fair

The time spent with each business contact has a bearing on whether or not worthwhile results will be achieved. Proper communications technique can also help to assure greater accomplishment in each case.

They can also free up many additional hours in any contractor’s week for other business items which he may now have to neglect because of time. Some simple steps, such as those listed below, can make this possible.

1—Discover as quickly as possible, in each such working contact, the basic point upon which the other person will make his decision. This must be accomplished before any other techniques can have the smallest value in a communication of any kind.

Other persuasion points may be required to reinforce the basic point but none alone can be the deciding element. Going into subordinate details can result in considerable time waste.

2—Limit the number of choices or options that are made available to the other person. Doing so will reduce decision making time, always a big time saver in any communication effort.

Presenting an endless number of ideas, points or choices, often produces confusion rather than acceptable options to the other person.

3—Ask for agreement on the goal you are after in each communication step. This can often save a lot of time and effort that would be expended when the other fellow has already made up his mind.

4—Stick to the points the other person obviously finds of greatest interest. Additional ones probably will not even take his mind off those he has already found to his liking. Watching his reactions closely often will reveal agreement.

5—Keep conversational pleasantries to a minimum during your business communications. Extend them to no greater length than is actually needed because they accomplish very little toward getting agreement. Far too often they are nothing more than time spenders for both you and the other person.

6—Keep attention focused completely on the main point of the communication. Don’t expose side issues for the other person to think about unless it is absolutely necessary to do so in order to achieve success. When the other person’s attention is permitted to wander from one point to another needless time is being wasted.

7—Get yourself well organized to proceed along direct lines the moment that you spot the proper course to take. Ten seconds of such preparation can often save as much as fifteen minutes of your time. It’s a determination that has to be made quickly. The other fellow is not apt to do so under even the best of circumstances.

8—Be business-like always. This assures every individual that you have no time to waste. When ever the average person senses that you are in no particular hurry he will invariably bring up scores of points which he would not have otherwise presented.

9—Avoid time spent in trying to change any individual’s very set opinions about anything. It can seldom be done. Concentrate upon those points that can be more easily accepted. Then achieving the goal

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you are after is not only easier but less time is consumed.

10—Try to avoid those communica-
tion approaches which re-

quire a great deal of explanation or
development. Most such pro-
cedures are valuable only in han-
dling the very tough situation. They

contribute little to any other con-
tact.

11—Use printed material to fur-
nish detailed data and explanations.
Doing so is best where such instruc-
tions are necessary to make the
other person fully aware of what
you are communicating. Printed
material can do the job in a fraction
of the time needed to present it ver-
bally.

12—Be most decisive in what you
present. Confidence is powerful
stuff.

13—Move around as little as
possible while you are in direct con-
tact with the other person.

14—Frame the questions that you
ask in such a manner as to en-
courage very short and simple
answers from the other person.

15—Soft pedal any discussion of
the other individual’s personal
problems (or of your own) for none
of these can be presented simply.
Once you permit a start in this
direction it is always extremely
difficult to cut short the other per-
son’s comments.

Finally, show more and talk less
with your verbal communications.
Time saving will always follow
where worthwhile visual aids of all
sorts are used as an important part
of any such communication effort.