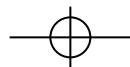


CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

PART ONE
*INTER-PERSONAL
COMMUNICATION*

PART TWO
TIME MANAGEMENT



- The Concept of Communication
- Listening Skills
- Speaking Skills
- Techniques for Achieving Through Inter-Personal Communication

PART ONE **INTER-PERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

Your effectiveness as a leader in a national athletic federation is greatly influenced by how you relate to people. You are, without doubt, in a "people business". You must work with all types of people including athletes, coaches, judges, office staff, journalists, government officials, sponsors and others. The nature of each relationship is unique but in every case communication is a critical factor.

The advantages of developing good communication skills are enormous. If you can make your point or present a case clearly, you have a better chance of influencing people, gaining their support and motivating them. If you can give people clear instructions and information, they are better equipped for the tasks asked of them. On the other hand, many of the problems within organisations arise as a result of poor communication (either its absence, lack of clarity or misperception). If you are sensitive to the challenge of inter-personal communication you can develop your communication skills. The awareness and ability which you can gain by doing so will assist not only in your dealings with individuals but also in communicating with larger groups. This, in turn, will increase your personal effectiveness and the success of your federation.

A

The Concept of Communication

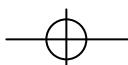
Communication is basically the exchange of information by any means between two or more persons. It includes spoken communication between two people, writing and various forms of mass communication. It has two important aspects: first, the efficient transmission of messages and second, the maintenance of personal relationships .

Communication is at the heart of everything we do, for it is impossible not to communicate. For example, two people together are communicating even when they are not actually talking, as non-verbal messages (eg. body posture, gestures and facial expressions) can be more powerful and more genuine than any words spoken.

We must be aware that just because we send a message does not mean that it has been received and understood. For example, it is said that:

- We hear half of what is said,
- We listen to half of that,
- We understand half of that,
- We believe half of that,
- And we remember half of that!

This means that in spoken communication people may remember less than 4% of what is actually said. There are a great number of barriers to effective communication.



These include:

- An unclear message resulting from poorly structured thoughts, too much information, inappropriate language, jargon or cliché.
- Non-verbal messages which conflict with the verbal message.
- Misinterpretation by the receiver of the content or intent of the message.
- Distractions such as noise or other activities taking place.

In addition, research has shown that communication creates an emotional response – people really do hear and respond to what makes them happy, angry, sad or interested depending on their emotional state at the time. This, of course, affects the efficiency of the communication. Among the specific barriers in this area are:

- A patronising, presumptuous or arrogant manner on the part of the sender.
- Lack of attention or resistance on the part of the receiver due to other thoughts, personal hostility towards the sender, anxiety, defensiveness, fear, frustration at not having the opportunity to talk, etc.

Effective inter-personal communication is an art, a discipline of skills, which everyone can learn. The starting point is the attitude we have towards communication. It is said that meaningful communication is not a competition, it is a game of understanding. We must always be aware of the extra effort involved to ensure understanding, constantly searching for and learning about ways to get around the many barriers that exist, get our message across and see that it is understood.

Though it is not possible to force others to be good communicators, we can give a positive example by demonstrating good listening and speaking skills ourselves. This in itself is communication. It says that we are interested in the other person and in the success of our communication with them. It is surprising how often this alone will increase the interest and communication skills of others.

B Listening Skills

Most people find it a great deal easier to talk than to listen. However, successful communicators know that listening skills are just as important as speaking. Listening and paying attention to others shows that you value what they have to say and the contribution they can make. This is very likely to increase their feeling of self-worth, which is known to be a key factor in effective performance and job satisfaction.

Listening may seem simple but in fact it involves attention, hearing, comprehension and memory. Good communicators develop the skill of *active listening*, showing with their eyes and body parts that they are involved in the communication process.

Active listening skills include:

- Establish eye contact (without staring). Do not look over the speaker's shoulder at something or someone else.
- Lean towards the speaker to encourage rapport.
- Place 100% of your concentration on the speaker. Focus on what is being said and try to block out any distractions from the environment. It may help to think of the speaker as the most important person in your life at that moment.
- Listen for the main ideas.
- Try to understand the message from the speaker's point of view. Try not to judge what is being said.
- Avoid interrupting.
- Do not be tempted to plan your reply while the other person is speaking.
- Be aware of your posture. Do not slouch, an erect posture communicates openness, confidence and energy. However, avoid sitting at attention.
- Encourage the speaker by nodding and smiling when appropriate.
- Check understanding by summarising or paraphrasing what has just been said.
- Ask open questions and invite clarification.

C Speaking Skills

Speaking is a vital means of getting messages across. However, too often ideas, instructions and feelings are expressed less clearly than we think they are.



This, in turn, can affect the understanding of the intended message. Spoken communication must be both effective and efficient.

It is important to remember that transmitting a message effectively is usually not a matter of talking a lot. Try to get into the habit of thinking before you speak, being clear and coming to the point. Avoid verbosity, obscure language and irrelevant details. Tips for improving spoken communication include:

- If possible, choose the location for a conversation or meeting carefully (comfortable place, no disturbances)
- Be honest when beginning a conversation if you are short of time or if there are distractions and plan the talk for a better time and place.
- Be aware of how long you speak. As a general rule, try to express your message in a limited amount of time (no more than 15 seconds in a normal day-to-day conversation) and then switch to listening.
- Focus on one topic at a time.
- Try to separate fact from opinion in your messages. Messages containing your opinion should begin with words like 'I think...' or 'I feel...'
- Be aware of the potential emotional response by the listener. Try to be positive, even when talking about negative situations.
- Make your messages appropriate to the receiver. Use understandable language but not slang.
- If you feel the listener or listeners are losing interest, involve them by asking them what they think about what you are saying.
- Give the listener time to consider what is required of them and ask questions.
- Try to obtain feedback that your message was correctly received, understood and interpreted.
- Be aware of body language (no slouching or sitting at attention).
- Make sure your gestures match your words. Be aware that not all gestures and body movements have the same meaning in all cultures and social contexts.
- Be aware of the distance between you and the listener. Remember that the appropriate personal space often depends on cultural traditions.

Techniques for

D

Achieving Through Inter-Personal Communication

1 Establish rapport

In most federations, a high proportion of an effective manager's time will be taken up with one-to-one communication. The advantage of meeting person-to-person is that you can get instant feedback about plans and ideas. Also, you are better able to generate enthusiasm or commitment if you deal with someone face-to-face.

When speaking with someone a degree of rapport is normally required to ensure receptivity to what is to be communicated. This means you need to set up a common ground or parity on which the communication can be built. There are a number of ways to do this. One of the most common is to find a point of agreement on the weather! But this can be extended to conversational fail-safes such as the journey here, asking after the family, comments on the news or establishing common acquaintances.

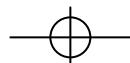
2 Be assertive (and smile)

Being assertive in conversations does not mean being aggressive or arrogant. Assertiveness is being positive, open and frank – yet demonstrating respect for another's view point. This approach helps to:

- Save time.
- Make working relationships closer.
- Establish confidence in others.
- Reinforce your own self-control, sense of responsibility and self-esteem.
- Build a winning image.

Ways of being assertive in one-on-one conversations include:

- **A statement of your position** – 'What I am trying to say . . .'
- **A request for clarification of the other person's position** – 'I am not sure I understand you fully. Could you please explain that point to me again'.
- **Empathy to control the pace and mood of the communication** – 'That must make you feel very . . .'
- **Establishing control** – through clear, unemotional



explanations of facts and consequences.

3 Strokes

A stroke in this context simply means attention.

Strokes can be positive or negative. Positive strokes make you feel good. They include praise, congratulations, gratitude, rewards, respect, joy, etc. Negative strokes make you feel bad. They include criticisms, rejection, suspicion, disappointment, frustration, ridicule, ingratitude. Strokes can be physical – a warm handshake or a deliberate lack of physical contact. On the other hand, strokes can be mental – a smile, eye contact, recognising or ignoring someone, a shake of the head. Although there are clearly times for negative strokes, keeping the balance biased towards the positive is very important. You will be surprised how simple it is to improve communication and help the situation for others by simply handing out a few strokes.

4 "If you are not a part of the solution, you are part of the problem . . ."

When you are having difficulty in resolving a situation, try never to say 'You don't understand what I am telling you . . .' – rather, you should say 'I have not expressed myself clearly' or 'what is it about my point that you are unclear on?'. This is an effective base for building rapport. You are accepting responsibility to find the solution to a communication problem. Changing your own attitude will help to change the attitude of the person you are communicating with. It is worth bearing in mind that the attitude you take is seldom for reasons you are aware of. You have often been angry with someone for reasons quite unrelated to the situation. Try and be honest enough with yourself to find out what the real cause is.

5 Keep the lines open

The last thing you need in communication is for lines to be cut! Without communication most problems cannot be solved – and generally they will get worse. Some ideas for keeping communication lines open are:

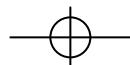
- **Ask general questions** – 'Is this the main issue?'
- **Ask specific questions** – 'What is your bottom line?'
- **Project empathy** – 'I know this must be getting you down.'
- **Request clarification** – 'I am confused, can you reduce this to first principles for me?'
- **Acknowledge experience and expertise** – 'This is really your area, what do you suggest?'
- **Admit if you are in error** – 'Sorry, its my fault . . .'
- **Open the door to alternatives** – 'Let's check our options, are there any we have not explored?'
- **Use time to advantage** – 'What part of the problem can we deal with now?', 'Let's postpone a final decision until tomorrow', 'Can we agree this much in principle and then work on the practical details next week?'

FOUR MINUTES

Research has shown that when people meet, the first four minutes are critical to the creation of an environment for communication.

Great improvements in the quality of inter-personal communication can be made if you can make use of these four minutes to establish a relaxed and positive attitude in others, make them feel important and demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm for the topic under discussion.

Take a moment to prepare yourself before you come into the office, return to your family after the working day or a time away, meet a new person or join a group of colleagues.



- Analysing Time Use
- Causes of Poor Time Management
- Time Wasters and Strategies for Beating Them
- Time Management Action Plan

PART TWO **T I M E M A N A G E M E N T**

As a leader in a national athletic federation it is to be expected that you are a busy person – whether you spend all or just part of your working time on federation business. You have many responsibilities and demands on your time. Like everyone else, however, you get 24 hours per day - no more, no less.

Good time management is a useful personal skill for everybody. For you as a leader it is critical. Your personal effectiveness and the effectiveness of your federation are greatly affected by how well you use your time. If you cannot manage your own time you will have difficulties managing the other people that it takes to run the federation. It is sometimes said that good time management is the single most important factor in managing oneself, one's work and the work of others.

A **A n a l y s i n g T i m e U s e**

No one has total control over a daily schedule – however, most of us have more than we think. Before we can manage our time we have to understand exactly how much time we have and how we use it. Self-monitoring is the way to gain this understanding and is therefore an essential step in time management. By recording how time is spent, problems and opportunities for improvement will become more apparent.

1 Keeping a time log

Top business executives and others who must manage their time effectively often use time logs to record their activities before making an analysis. Many successful time managers make the effort to do a time log analysis three or four times per year.

To do a time log analysis yourself, photocopy the sample time log on the next page and complete one column each day for 3 to 5 days. Select typical rather than unusual days. It is best to record as frequently as possible in order to ensure an accurate analysis. The total time spent recording will probably take about 20 to 30 minutes per day.

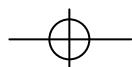
Ideally, you should complete each chart in full to generate the overall balance of your time (eg. home, work and sport). However, you might choose to modify the task in two ways:

- If your work for the federation is on a voluntary or part-time basis you may complete the times during the day when you work on activities for athletics.
- If you work full time for your federation you may want to complete the form for the working day only unless it is appropriate to cover longer hours.

2 Analysing your time log

When you have completed time logs for a number of days review them and ask yourself:

- Which activities took the majority of my time during the day?

**T I M E L O G**

Date		Date	
Time	Activity	Time	Activity
5.30		5.30	
6.00		6.00	
6.30		6.30	
7.00		7.00	
7.30		7.30	
8.00		8.00	
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23.30		23.30	



- Which activities do I need to spend more time on? Less time on?
- What time did I start my number one priority each day?
- What was my longest uninterrupted period?
- What did I do that could be eliminated or delegated to someone else?
- What else should I be doing?
- How do these activities relate to my long term goals and objectives?

You may also want to list activities where you seem to lose time or even waste time and the amount of time lost. Wasted minutes add up. If you could save a few hours per week on unproductive activities, you could free up time for things which are important or which you enjoy.

B Causes of Poor Time Management

Research has shown that poor time managers suffer from one or more of the time management problems listed below. All are internal problems, eg. problems which come from within ourselves and which we can, with effort, control.

- **Relying on mythical time (I will do it later)** – It is easy to put off jobs in the mistaken belief there will be time later.
- **Underestimating demands on time** – Setting priorities is an important element of the effective use of time. However, no matter how effective your planning and organisation, there will always be the unexpected. You must recognise this and realistically evaluate your ability to accept new tasks.
- **Inability to say no** – This is the problem of failing to complete immediate tasks before agreeing to do more. The only way to control this is more use of the word "no".
- **Task-hopping** – This is the result of poor concentration, caused by too many tasks and lack of a sense of priority.
- **Not knowing yourself** – This is perhaps the hardest problem to correct because you must examine yourself with a critical and objective eye. What are your work patterns? For example, do you believe you must always be accessible? Do you know your personal energy cycle and plan the most important tasks for when you are at your best? Are you a perfectionist?

Time Wasters and

C

Strategies for Beating Them

In addition to internal problems there are many external problems or time wasters which could contribute to poor use of time and lack of overall effectiveness. The following list contains four of the most common time wasters and ideas for eliminating or overcoming them which may be useful to you.

1 Telephone interruptions

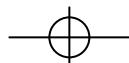
- Keep a clock on your desk and be conscious of the time spent on each call.
- Keep social chit-chat to a minimum.
- Arrange a call-back time.
- Make a list of items to be discussed before returning calls.
- Let colleagues know when to call you, e.g., afternoon only, unless urgent.
- Set a time limit before getting into a conversation.
- Learn to summarise and terminate conversations.

2 Unexpected or drop-in visitors

- Make appointments.
- Keep social chit-chat to a minimum.
- Establish a quiet time with no interruptions.
- Keep a "do not disturb" sign that you can post when necessary.
- Be specific about the time you have available before getting into a conversation.
- Learn to summarise and terminate conversations.

3 Too much information

- Divide mail into categories: 1) top priority, 2) when time is available and 3) throw out.
- Deal with your pending file at a specific time each day, usually when energy is low - be sure to save high energy for top priorities.
- Handle each piece of paper only once.
- Throw out useless documents.
- Put a time frame on your reading pile (if something does not get read within a month, file it or throw it out).
- Review your filing system once a year.



4 Travel

- Clarify purpose of travel.
- Explore alternatives to travel (bringing others to you, tele-conferencing, postponing).
- Have a 'Take With' list and briefcase that contains all the standard items you need, add specific items for particular trips.
- Keep a folder with short tasks and reading that can travel with you.
- Confirm all appointments at planned destination before finalising travel schedule.
- Organise your desk so it is ready for action upon your return.

unless you make a real commitment to achieve them. Writing them down often helps and noting them in a diary will remind you to check your progress at a future date.

12 MORE TIPS FOR GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Keep your long-term goals in front of you at all times.
2. Set your objectives and priorities for months, weeks and days.
3. Plan ahead; start early.
4. Distinguish the urgent from the important.
5. Never take on additional tasks without thinking about the priority compared to your current workload.
6. Work on the top priority first.
7. Unclutter your desk and work area.
8. Concentrate on one thing at a time.
9. Leave 20% of the day unplanned to deal with a crisis.
10. Set realistic time allocations (things usually take longer than you think).
11. Remain calm.
12. Do nothing that you can delegate.

Action Plan

D As you complete your time log analysis and consider the other ideas in this chapter, think if there are any actions you could take to improve your personal situation. Write down your ideas in the form of a time management action plan. This is a very important step as good intentions are unlikely to come to fruition

This chapter contains material taken with permission from home study packs entitled Leadership and Delegation, Personal Effectiveness and Time Management which are part of the English Sports Council and National Coaching Foundation "Running Sport" programme.