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# BUSINESS COMMUNICATION FOR IMPACT

Learn the Fundamentals



# COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1

## KNOW AUDIENCE

Knowing your audience is just as important as knowing your subject matter. Everyone you work with will have different needs, objectives, levels of expertise, biases, etc. You need to adapt your communication accordingly for your message to land.

2

## DEFINE PURPOSE

After you know your audience, you need to define your purpose. What do you want your audience to do after receiving your message? What do you hope to achieve? Once you know your purpose, it should guide all aspects of your message.

3

## DESIGN STRUCTURE

Introduction (10%): State your purpose and preview your key points  
Body (80%): Lay out your key points and substantiate them with detail and evidence  
Conclusion (10%): Restate your key message and finish with a call to action.

4

## CRAFT MESSAGE

Many make the mistake of starting at this step. But you cannot start crafting your message until you understand your audience, purpose, and structure.

# COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

THE COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IS THE FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Increase your impact by following this process for every communication scenario: emails, pitches, letters, presentations, phone calls, etc.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL SKILL TO ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER

Warren Buffett says improving your communication skills will increase your net worth by 50%. Listen to his advice -- invest in yourself!

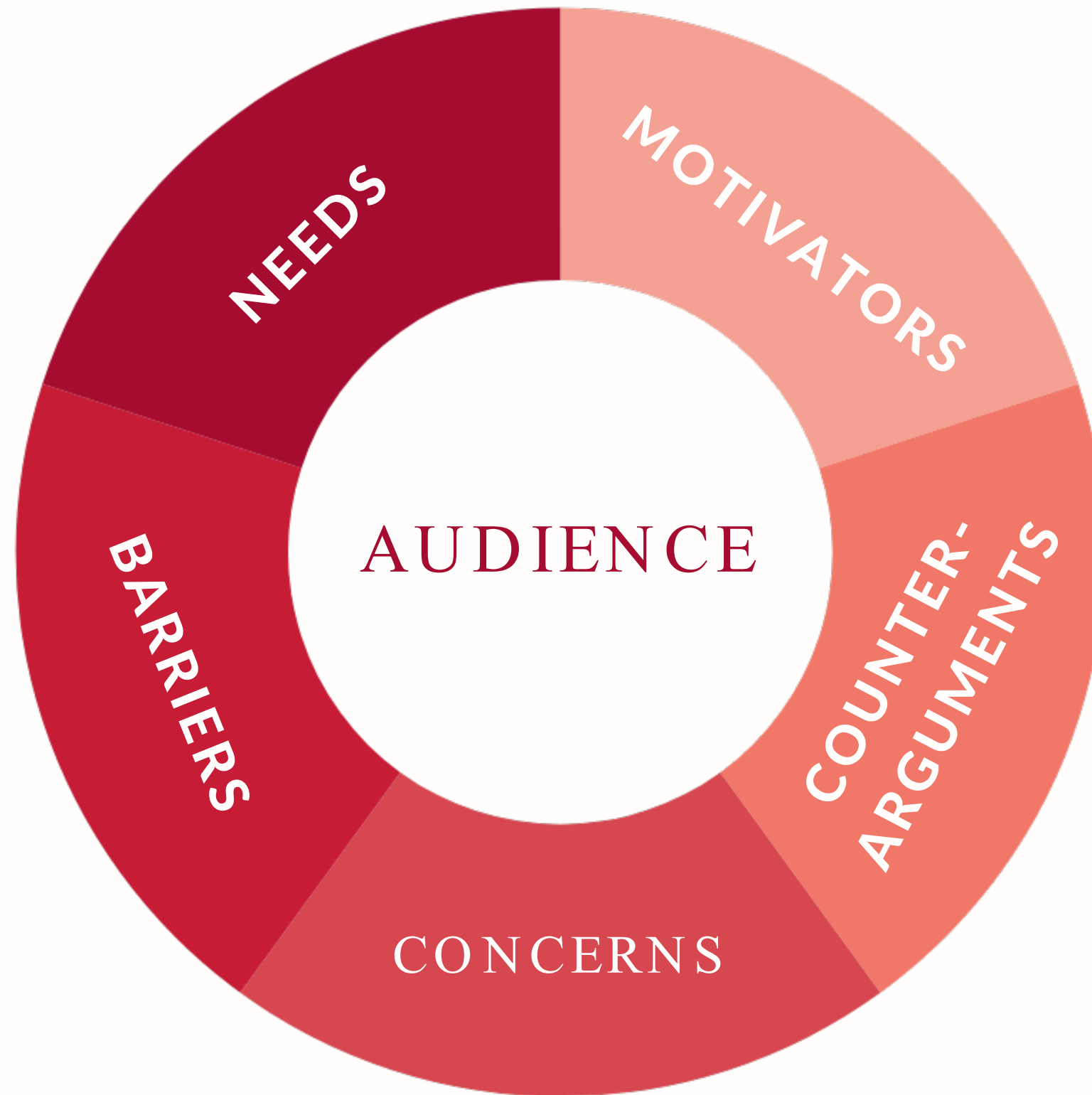
YOU CAN BECOME A GREAT COMMUNICATOR - NO MATTER YOUR CURRENT SKILL LEVEL

Even if you don't believe that you're a 'natural', you can become a great communicator. There are concrete behaviors that will aid you throughout your career.

YOU SHOULD DEVELOP YOUR OWN PERSONAL COMMUNICATION STYLE

Find your own authentic voice! There's no single correct way to speak or write, and everyone has different strengths and weaknesses.

# AUDIENCE ANALYSIS



“

The single biggest  
problem in  
communication is  
the illusion that it  
has taken place.

”

-GEORGE BERNARD  
SHAW

# AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

De-center yourself. Impactful messages focus on what your audience needs to know -- not what you want to share.

WIIFM (What's In It For Me) should be crystal clear to your audience. Why should they care?

WIIFM is the #1 thing on your audience's mind. They want to know why your communication matters to THEM.

# A STRONG PURPOSE STATEMENT SHOULD BE:



## JUST ONE SENTENCE

If you need multiple sentences, then your Purpose is too complicated or convoluted.



## AUDIENCE-FOCUSED

Directly reference the audience. They are an important part of your goal. Why else are you addressing them?



## ACTION-ORIENTED

What action are you trying to get your audience to take? What outcome are you seeking?

**POOR:** Propose a new marketing strategy.

**STRONG:** Persuade management to approve a new marketing strategy that helps us meet our sales goals.

# BASIC STRUCTURE FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS

INTRO 10 %	BODY 80 %	CONCLUSION 10 %
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Start by writing your Body

- Identify your key points, order them strategically, and substantiate with evidence and explanation.
- This will improve your efficiency and effectiveness

The selection of your key points and the order you present them in is strategic

- Structure is not just a template for your content.
- You need to shape your structure based on your audience and purpose.

# INTRODUCTION (10 %)

## Purpose Statement

BLUF: Bottom Line Up Front.  
Your audience needs to understand what you want.

## WIIFM (What's In It For Me)

Persuade the audience that they should care about your purpose. Professionals are busy. You will lose their attention if they don't immediately understand how the message affects them

## Preview

Provide an outline of your key points at a very high level.

A good preview provides a framework for processing the message that follows.

## Engaging Element

Doesn't have to be a "hook" -- be concise and compelling!



These four elements do not need to be discrete (e.g. 1 sentence for each element).  
An artful introduction will include all of these elements succinctly and efficiently.



# BODY (80%)

PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, AND CHANNEL DETERMINE WHICH POINTS TO INCLUDE

## Only One Controlling Idea Per Point

In writing, this means having one idea per paragraph

In speaking, use verbal signposts to guide your audience

## Limit to 2-4 Key Points

## Order Key Points Strategically

There are many structures to use -- chronology, problem/solution, etc. What's most important is that:

1) You are deliberate and consistent in choosing your structure

2) It suits your audience and purpose.

# CONCLUSION (10 %)

## **Summary of Key Points**

Audiences are most likely to remember the last thing that you say.

Be compelling -- not redundant. Highlight the most important points and takeaways in a way that also focuses the WIIFM.

## **Call to Action or Next Steps**

Call upon your audience to take action in a clear and concrete way.

# PERSUASIVE ELEMENTS

## ETHOS

Appeal to Trust

Part of establishing trust comes down to qualifications: years of experience, level of knowledgeable, reputation, credentials, etc.

Another way to build trust is to establish common goals or values: do you want the same outcome as your audience?

Establish Ethos in the introduction

## LOGOS

Appeal to Intellect

You can demonstrate logos with Examples, Analogies, Facts, Research, Statistics, etc.

Use concrete evidence.

Make sure that your logos considers your audience/ purpose and directly supports your key points.

Logos should mostly be in the Body.

## PATHOS

Appeal to Emotion

50-80% of our decisions are driven by emotion.

Use pathos in business persuasion, but be subtle. Appearing overly emotional can damage your ethos.

Consider the issues that matter to your audience.

Pathos can be in the Intro, Body, and Conclusion.

All three elements are critical, but they don't need to be used evenly.  
The correct balance will depend on your audience.

# DELIVERY

FOCUS ON THE 3 Vs

## VERBAL

- Limit your Jargon
- Use Simple, Vivid Language
- Avoid Filler Words

## VOCAL

- Use Strategic Pauses
- Project your Voice
- Vary Volume and Pace

## VISUAL

- Make Eye Contact
- Use Intentional Movement
- Be Mindful of your Facial Expressions and Posture

# INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Language that conveys respect to all people, and avoids alienating or giving offense

Not limited to social issues like race and gender. Includes all elements of diversity: religion, age, physical appearance, culture, etc

## TIPS TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE

Watch for insensitive language  
Avoid assumptions  
Decenter yourself

# CONCISION DOESN'T JUST CUT CONTENT. IT FOCUSES IT.

## CONCISE COMMUNICATION IS:

**SIMPLE:** Use simple words and sentence structures.

E.g. “Utilize an innovative stratagem” → “Use a new method”

**UNCLUTTERED:** Remove extraneous content.

If it doesn't advance your Purpose, delete it.

**SUFFICIENT:** Include enough information for your audience to act.

To achieve concision, make sure every word/ sentence/paragraph is:

- 1 Aligned with audience & purpose
- 2 Having maximum effect

The purpose in business is to get things done

- Your audiences doesn't read; they scan for the bottom line.
- Extraneous content makes scanning difficult

Poor concision will hurt your career

- Professionals receive hundreds of emails a day and juggle dozens of key issues at once.
- If you waste their time with poor concision, you will lose influence and credibility.

# SELF-EDITING

YOUR WRITING/SPEAKING REINFORCE YOUR ETHOS

MISTAKES IN YOUR  
WRITING/SPEAKING  
CAN HAVE SERIOUS  
CONSEQUENCES

- Poor grammar and syntax leads to misinterpretation of the facts
- Poor word choice can cause misperceptions of your tone and intent
- Poor structure (at any level) will lose your reader

YOU NEED A **PROCESS**

TO SELF-EDIT  
SUCCESSFULLY

There's no time for multiple drafts in daily business communication.

Using a process will increase your efficiency and speed (important professional skills)

Review your communication before you deliver

Check for high-level (audience, purpose, structure) and low-level (grammar, word choice) issues

Make a personalized editing checklist, use it consistently

# VISUAL CLARITY

Techniques to achieve  
visual clarity for writing:

- 1 **CHUNKING:** Group similar information together. Use small chunks for best readability.
- 2 **SUBHEADINGS:** Visually reinforce your main points. Your audience can skip to sections relevant to them.
- 3 **BULLET POINTS:** Break up the visual flow of information using short bullet points with consistent structure.
- 4 **VISUAL WEIGHT:** Emphasize elements of your message using bold fonts, italics, different font sizes, etc.
- 5 **WHITESPACE:** Make bodies of text feel less cluttered using white space between headers, paragraphs, and sentences.

# SLIDE DESIGN

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

Slides support your presentation.  
They shouldn't compete with you.

## LIMIT ONE KEY MESSAGE PER SLIDE

Helps your audience focus. Multiple key  
messages are harder to follow.

## USE MEANINGFUL IMAGES

Don't clutter your slides with 'decorative'  
images. Your visuals should convey  
meaning.

## HEADERS = KEY POINT

Strong headers are not just topics --  
they convey the key point. Consider:  
"Financial Outlook" vs "Q4 Revenue  
Higher than Expected"



# STRUCTURE FOR HANDLING Q&A



**PAUSE** to collect your thoughts. Avoid filler phrases like "That's a good question."



**STATE** your answer succinctly.



**SUPPORT** your answer with one or two relevant facts or brief examples



**STOP** talking! Be concise and avoid trouble.