

Communicating and Delegating

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As human beings we communicate all day, every day. We spend over 70 percent of our waking hours sending or receiving messages: speaking, listening, writing, reading, pushing keys on computers, watching the television screen, etc. Since we communicate so much, we ought to be pretty good at it. But we're not. There are probably as many opportunities to be misunderstood as there are people with whom we communicate. Different people interpret what you say in different ways, and not necessarily in the way that you meant, and you do the same with what they say to you. Many of the problems we have on the job—and in our personal lives too—involve some type of communication failure.

No one has yet found a theory or method or set of communications principles guaranteed to be 100-percent effective. Experts know a lot about why people fail in communicating, and they can explain the ingredients for success, but there is no formula that will work everywhere, every time, for everybody. Nevertheless, understanding how communication takes place, why it fails, and what can be done to improve it, will increase enormously the chances for success.

As a leader in a hospitality enterprise, you will be communicating constantly. You will be both a sender and a receiver of messages, and both roles will be very important. You must understand what comes down to you from the top so that you can carry out your supervisor's instructions and the policies of the company. You must communicate clearly with other leaders to coordinate your work with theirs. You must communicate effectively with customers. Most important of all, you must communicate successfully with the associates you supervise so you will have the power to get things done. You cannot manage effectively if you cannot communicate effectively.

In this chapter we examine the communication process and its central role in managing people at work. It will help you to:

- List and describe various types of communication.
- Diagram the communication process and analyze common breakdowns at each step in the process.
- Explain how effective communication skills are important to success as a hospitality supervisor.
- Describe personal characteristics that affect communication skills.
- List examples of nonverbal communication.
- Discuss common obstacles to good communication and recommend tactics to avoid them.
- Compare and contrast effective and ineffective listening practices.
- Illustrate the use of effective communication skills in directing employees.
- Outline common pitfalls of business writing and list guidelines for avoiding them.
- List guidelines for effective business meetings.



Good Communications and Their Importance

Communications is the general term that sums up the sending and receiving of messages. The way employees communicate can make or break a company. Think of the difference between courteous and surly employees and the messages they convey to guests. We want to do business with people who can communicate the company philosophy to guests and give outstanding service. This all takes communication, which is the lifeblood of companies. It is critical that the front-line associates know the company mission and goals and how they are going to meet them. This information is a formal communication and is given via meetings, personal correspondence, e-mail, notice boards, and so on. Supervisors are vitally important as they are the ones who explain the mission, goals, and company policy to their associates.

Communications

The sending and receiving of messages.

Interpersonal communication

The sending and receiving of messages between people.

Organizational communication

The sending of messages from the top of an organization down—usually the same message to everyone.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

A communication may be a word-of-mouth message such as a verbal instruction given on the job or an announcement at a meeting. Or it may be a written communication: a letter, a memo, a production sheet, a housekeeper's report, or a recipe. A message may go from one person to another, as when the sous chef tells the soup cook what soups to prepare for lunch; when the housekeeper tells a maid what rooms she is to make up; or when one person says to another, "It's nice to have you back, we missed you." This is known as *interpersonal communication*.

A message may go down the corporate ladder from the president of the company to the general manager to the food and beverage director to the executive chef to the sous chef to the station cooks to the cooks' helpers. Such a message is likely to be a policy directive or some other matter affecting the organization as a whole. This is an example of *organizational communication*.

This type of message is likely to be reworded at each level, and there is little chance that much of the original meaning will survive the journey. One study of

**Open (or two-way) communication**

The free movement of messages back and forth between supervisor and worker and up the channels of communication as well as down.

Interviewing

Conversation with the purpose of obtaining information, often used in screening job applicants.

Small-group communication

Communication that takes place when two or more group members attempt to influence one another, as in a meeting.

Mass communication

Messages sent out to many people through such media as newspapers, magazines, books, radio, and television.

100 companies showed that workers at the bottom of a five-rung ladder typically received only 20 percent of the information coming down from the top. The chances of messages going up the ladder from workers to top management are even less likely, unless it is bad news.

When messages move freely back and forth from one person to another, or up the ladder as well as down, we say that we have good *two-way communication* or *open communication*. Such communication contributes to a positive work climate and high productivity.

In addition to interpersonal communication and organizational communication, there are other forms of communication that a supervisor may be involved in.

1. *Interviewing* is often defined as a conversation with a purpose. Supervisors use interviewing skills not only to screen job applicants but also to get needed information from workers and their own supervisors.
2. In *small-group communication*, three or more group members communicate in order to influence one another. Meetings are examples of small-group communication.
3. *Mass communication* refers to messages sent out to many people through newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, and other media. Hospitality organizations often use mass communication to advertise for customers as well as job applicants. A restaurant newsletter is another example.

Although each context is different, they all have in common the process of creating a meaning between two or more people.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

In a successful communication, the sender directs a clear message to someone and the receiver gets the message accurately. It sounds simple enough, but the problem lies in the words *clear* and *accurately*.

Let us take the process apart a little bit, using Figure 13-1. The sender has something to tell someone—an idea in his mind that he needs to communicate. The sender knows what he means to say to the receiver, but he cannot transmit his meaning to her directly by mental telepathy. Therefore, he puts his meaning into words (symbols of his meaning) and sends the message by speaking the words to her or writing out the message. That is his part of this communication—conceiving the idea, expressing it, and sending it.

The receiver receives the message by hearing or reading the words, the symbols of the sender's meaning. The receiver must translate or interpret the words in order to understand what the sender meant. Does the receiver translate the words to mean what he intended them to mean? Does the receiver then understand the message that was in the sender's mind before he put it into words? Receiving, translating, and understanding are the receiver's part of this communication.

These six processes happen almost simultaneously in spoken messages, but it is useful to break the process down because something can go wrong in any one of the six steps. From the beginning, the message is influenced by the sender's personality, background, education, emotions, attitudes toward the receiver, and so on. This in turn affects the sender's choice of symbols, how the meaning is expressed in these symbols,

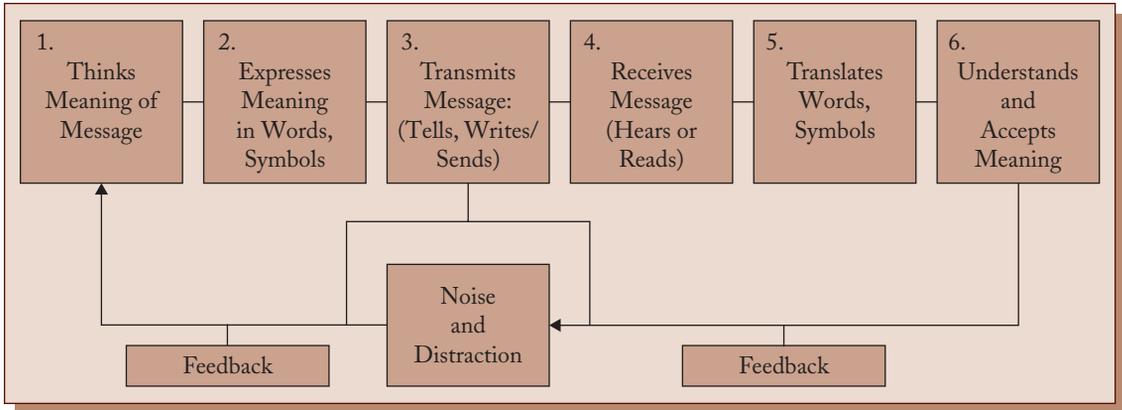


FIGURE 13-1: Six elements of a successful communication.



A communication is an interaction between a sender and a receiver.

and whether he adds nonverbal symbols such as gestures and tone of voice. How he sends the message—whether he speaks or writes it, when, and where—may affect its impact, as well as how the receiver receives it or even whether she receives it. How the receiver translates the symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, will be affected in turn by her personality, emotions, and attitude toward the sender and so will her final understanding and acceptance of his meaning. We will explore all this in detail shortly.

Check Your Knowledge

1. What is considered to be good communication? Why is it important?
2. Explain why communication is important for supervisors.
3. What are the six elements of a successful communication?

You can see that there are opportunities all along the way for things to be left out, misstated, mis-sent, or misinterpreted. Sometimes, messages are not sent or received at all. The sender forgets or is afraid to send the message; the receiver does not hear or read or register it.

Often, people think they have communicated when in fact they have not. The sender may think the receiver has understood. The receiver may think so, too, when in fact this hasn't happened.

WHY COMMUNICATION IS SO IMPORTANT

Most leaders probably think of themselves as senders rather than receivers, and most of the time they are. They direct the work of their subordinates; that is their major function as a manager. They give instructions and assign tasks: who will do this, who will do that, how they will do it, and when it must be done. They provide the information that their people need to do their jobs: how many people are guaranteed for this banquet, who is on duty, who is off, what room the banquet is in. They also train people—communicate to them how to do the work their job requires. They discipline and give feedback on how well or how poorly people are doing. They recruit and interview and hire and fire. Good leaders also talk to their people informally to build working relationships, a positive climate, and a sense of belonging.

All of these messages are vital to the success of any department. It is essential to send your messages clearly and explicitly to make sure that the meaning gets through. Only if your messages are understood, accepted, and acted upon can things get accomplished.

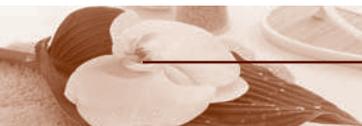
Messages that are garbled, misinterpreted, or stalled along the way can make all kinds of trouble. They can waste time, labor, and materials. They can cause crises, gaps in service, poor performance, and higher costs. Whenever they make something go wrong, they cause frustration and usually hard feelings on both sides. If poor communication is habitual on the supervisor's part, it can build lingering resentment and antagonism, causing low morale and high employee turnover.

Obstacles to Good Communication

We mentioned earlier the many problems in getting the sender's meaning through to the receiver. Figure 13-2 illustrates the most common barriers to good communication and shows how they can influence the message on its journey. In the next few pages we discuss these problems in detail.

HOW THE COMMUNICATORS AFFECT THE MESSAGE

Both sender and receiver can obscure or distort messages without being aware of it. In Figure 13-2, the middle stages list various personal characteristics that can affect communication, especially if these characteristics are different for the sender and



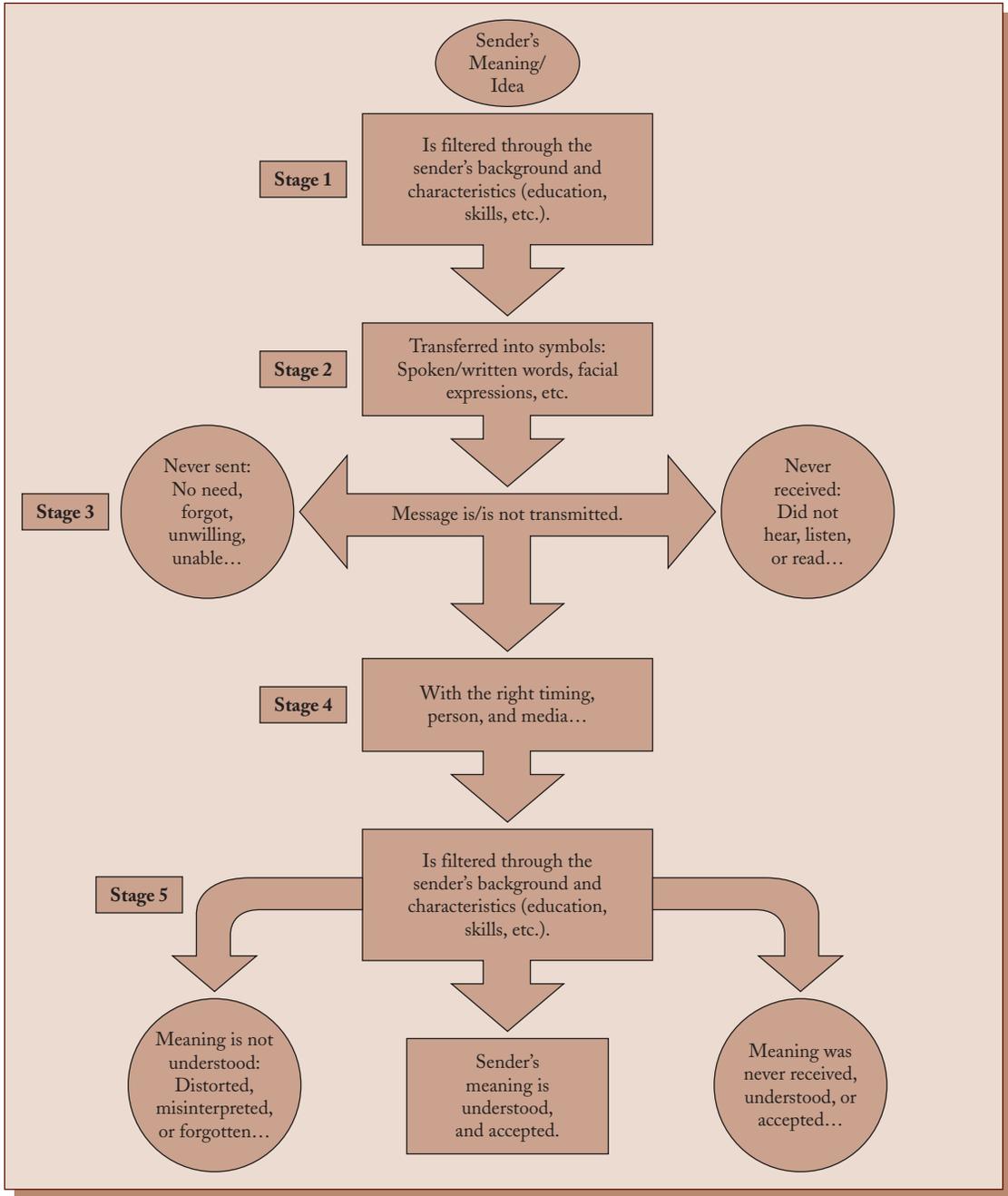


FIGURE 13-2: Barriers to communication.

receiver. Differences in background, education, past experience, and intelligence can often cause communication difficulties. Big words, long sentences, and formal delivery may not get through to all people. Today's slang may not reach someone older than you. Kitchen jargon may not be intelligible to a new employee. As a sender of messages, you need to adjust to such differences. You must be aware of where you are and where the other person is so that you can make your messages understandable to that person.

Associates also differ in *attitudes*, *opinions*, and *values*, and these differences can inhibit communication or garble messages. You may like to swear and tell off-color jokes as an informal and comfortable way of communicating, but some people may find such speech obscure, offensive, and shocking; therefore, they may miss your message entirely. Something that is important to you may mean nothing to your workers if it does not affect them. You care a lot about food costs and waste, but you have trouble getting that message through to your kitchen staff because they don't care—it's not their money going into the garbage can.

Prejudices can distort communication; this includes not only the obvious and, unfortunately, frequent biases, like those against women or ethnic groups but some intangible thing from your past that makes you sure that all men with beards or all tall women who wear thick glasses are not to be trusted. Prejudice can turn up in the words you choose when communicating, your tone of voice, it can make you leave something out of the message or forget to send it at all. If you let prejudice creep into something you say, it is likely to stir up anger and cause the message to be misinterpreted or rejected.



Listening to guests is critical in any organization.

Sender and receiver may have different *perceptions* about the subject of a communication. Nobody can perceive reality directly; it is conveyed to us through our five senses, and its meaning is filtered through our minds and our emotions. Since we are all different, we do not always agree on what reality is. We do not see and hear things the same way. We do not agree on big and small, mild and hot, loud and soft, sooner and later. How many is several? How much is a lot? What does “season to taste” mean?

Everyone perceives things selectively and subjectively. If you are trying to calm down a couple of people who are having a fight, you will get two entirely different versions of the incident, because each perceives and experiences it in his or her own way. They are not lying; they are telling you the truth as they see it.

As you give people instructions and information, they all see and hear you subjectively, and they all tend to magnify what is pleasing to them in what you are saying and to play down what they do not want to hear or know about. Many times your message will be exaggerated out of proportion to the point where you would not recognize what you said if they repeated it back to you.

Often, the sender and receiver of an instruction do not have the same perception of its importance. The supervisor may say, “Will you get this done for me?” and the worker may reply, “Yes, I will.” The supervisor may mean by noon today, whereas the worker is thinking in terms of the day after tomorrow or next week. They are focusing differently; each perceives things according to his or her own needs at the moment.

Assumptions and *expectations* distort communications. We assume that our listeners know what we are talking about, but sometimes they don’t, and the entire message goes over their heads. We assume that our message has been received and we are angry with people when they don’t do what we tell them to do.

One supervisor told a cook, “Cook the chicken.” What he meant was to cook the usual number of portions for a Thursday night dinner, and he assumed the cook would prepare about 20 pounds of chicken. In the cook’s mind the message registered, “Cook all the chicken that was delivered today.” When the supervisor found 150 pounds of chicken ready for service at 5:00 p.m., the predictable heated conversation ensued: “Why in the name . . . ?” “But you didn’t say that!” “Well, you should have known!”

When we make assumptions, we often jump to conclusions. If you see a bellperson sitting with his or her feet propped on a table and eyes closed, you assume that the bellperson is goofing off. If you see the director of marketing in the same pose, you assume that he or she is thinking. Your conclusions may be wrong; you do not know in either case what is really going on.

Often, we think we know what people are going to say, so that is what we hear, even when someone says something entirely different. Sometimes we even finish their sentences for them. Often in listening we extend the speaker’s meaning far beyond what was said, and we answer inappropriately, as when the customer says, “My steak is tough,” and you say, “I’ll get you another one,” and what the customer really wants is your attention to his or her feelings.

We make many assumptions about how people think and feel, what interests them, and what they value. If you assume that all people are lazy, are interested only in their paychecks, and have to be ordered around to get any work out of them (Theory X), you have probably closed the door to all meaningful communication and you will never find out what they are truly capable of.

One of the biggest troublemakers in communicating is the emotions of the people who are sending and receiving the messages. If you say something in anger, it is the anger that comes across, not the message, no matter what words you use. It always triggers emotions in the receiver: anger, hate, and fear. The message is buried under the emotions, and the emotions become the message. The receiver is likely to hear things that were not said, and the sender is likely to say things that were not intended. Communication becomes hopelessly snarled.

Sometimes underlying emotions color all communications between the supervisor and the people supervised. If there is contempt and suspicion on the part of the supervisor, there will be hatred, anger, and fear among the workers. The communications climate is thoroughly polluted, and messages are taken in the wrong way, or are rearranged according to suspected hidden motives, or are totally rejected. *The only healthy climate for communication is an atmosphere of trust.* If people do not trust you, they will not be receptive to anything you have to say. Only if they trust you will they receive your messages willingly, understand them correctly, carry out your instructions, and feel free to send you messages of their own.

The *verbal skills* of the sender will have a lot to do with the clarity of messages sent. Some people have the knack of saying things clearly and simply; others leave things out, choose the wrong words, or tangle up the thought in long, strung-out sentences. Sometimes they mumble, speak too softly, or write illegibly, and the receiver is not interested enough to ask the sender to translate or is afraid to ask.

On the receiving end, accurate reception depends in part on the *listening or reading skills* or sometimes even the *hearing ability of the receiver*. People who cannot read or hear and people who do not listen are not going to get the message.

HOW SYMBOLS CAN OBSCURE THE MEANING

Since we can't transmit messages directly by telepathy, we use various *symbols* to express our meaning (Figure 13-2, stage 2). Usually, the symbols are words, either spoken or written. Sometimes we use abbreviations (symbols of symbols). Sometimes we use pictures: diagrams showing how to operate equipment, posters dramatizing safety messages, movies or filmstrips demonstrating techniques or procedures. Graffiti in appropriate places is often used to send anonymous messages of anger or contempt. The trouble with words is that they are often misinterpreted. Many words have several meanings. The 500 most often used words in English have an average of 28 different meanings apiece; the word *round* has 73 meanings. Many words and the abbreviations are unfamiliar to inexperienced workers. Many words and phrases are vague (*they, that stuff, things, the other part*, and so on). Many words mean different things to people from different backgrounds. Slang expressions from yesterday may mean nothing to the teenager of today. You have to choose words that will carry your meaning to the people you want the message to reach.

If you have associates who do not speak English, you will have to speak in their language or use sign language, gestures, or pictures. Such situations require the sender of the message to watch carefully for signs of the receiver's comprehension. Actually, this is a good idea in all oral communication.

Nonverbal communication

Communication without words, as with signs, gestures, facial expressions, or body language.

Body language

Expression of attitudes and feelings through body movements, positions, and gestures.

Written words have the advantage of being able to read them over to see if they express your meaning clearly. On the other hand, you have no feedback from the receiver unless you ask for a reply.

People also communicate without using words; this is generally referred to as *nonverbal communication*. They can deliberately use signs, gestures, and *body language* to convey specific meanings. Nodding one's head indicates "I agree with you" or "I hear you." A smile says "I want to be friendly" and invites a return smile. Amorous glances extend invitations. Shaking one's fist means "I'm dead serious and don't you dare provoke me any further." A listener pays as much, if not more, attention to nonverbal as to verbal communication.

People also convey feelings and attitudes unconsciously, through facial expression, tone of voice, intonation, gestures, and body language. Receivers often perceive them almost intuitively rather than consciously and respond with feelings and attitudes of their own.

Sometimes nonverbal messages run counter to the sender's words, and a mixed message is sent out. A speaker may tell new employees the company has their welfare at heart while frowning and shaking a fist at them about the rules they must follow. Usually, the action speaks louder than words in a mixed message, especially if the nonverbal message is a negative one. The receiver responds to the attitude or the emotion expressed nonverbally rather than to the spoken words.

PROBLEMS IN SENDING THE MESSAGE

The simple mechanics of sending a message can often stop it in its tracks (Figure 13-2, stage 3). If you send it at the wrong time, to the wrong people, by the wrong means, it may never reach its destination.

Timing is important. For a message to get through, you have to consider the receiver's situation. The wrong time may be too soon or too late or a time when the receiver cannot receive it or cannot do anything in response to it.

If you send it too soon, it may not sink in or it may be forgotten. If you send it too late, there is no time for action. The sales manager, for example, must be able to tell the chef and beverage manager about the convention in time for them to order the food and liquor, hire the extra help, and alert the station cooks. Some people are more receptive at certain times of day. Their body clocks run fast in the morning and slow at night or the other way around. Give an early bird messages in the morning and a night person messages at night.

Sometimes the message is not received because you do not have the receiver's attention. There is no point in telling people anything when they are right in the middle of something else. A switchboard operator is not going to hear his boss tell him to postpone his lunch hour when he is handling 17 calls at once. A bartender is not going to remember what her boss said right after she dropped a jug of wine on her big toe and broke both the toe and the bottle.

To get a message through, you need to send it to the right person. Give it to the person directly; do not ask someone else to relay it. The "right person" always means everyone concerned. Leaving someone out can fail in two ways: He or she does not get the message and therefore does not carry out the instruction, and he or she then feels left out, put down, unimportant, or neglected. Don't let yourself be embarrassed by an employee saying "No one told me."

To get a message through, you must choose the right means of sending it.

- If you announce it in a meeting, a few people will hear it correctly. Some people will hear it but will not understand it. Some people will hear you say something you did not say. Some people will not hear it at all.
- If you send the message in a memo, a few people will read it correctly, some will not understand it, some will misread it, some will read it two weeks later, some will not read it at all, and some will not even get the memo.
- If you post it on the bulletin board, no one will read it. Some people won't even know that you have a bulletin board.
- If you tell people individually, you may get your message through to most people, but some of them will be angry because they were the last to know.

You can't win. Your best shot is to tell each person individually, one on one, which is how most communication takes place at this level in this industry. Most hospitality and foodservice people are better at seeing and hearing than they are at reading, and individual contact reinforces the impact of the message.

Sometimes, messages are never sent at all. Sometimes, managers assume that communication is not needed. They assume that people know things: If they bused tables in another restaurant, they don't need to be told how to do it in my restaurant. They don't need to be told how to put paper napkins in napkin dispensers—even a five-year-old can do that—but on the other hand, it is their fault when customers can't get the napkins out.

There are other reasons why messages do not get sent. Sometimes the sender simply forgets to send the message. Sometimes he or she is unwilling, unable, or afraid to send the message because of the way the receiver might react. Leaders who are uneasy in their relationships with their associates may avoid telling them things they know people will not like, even though the employees need to know. This does no one any good. A manager may be unwilling to send a message when he doesn't want people to know as much as he does. In other words, he feels threatened. At other times, a manager may not send a message because he isn't really sure of the message himself. Sometimes, employees do not communicate with the boss because they are unable, unwilling, or afraid or because they think the boss will not pay any attention. This also does no one any good.

PROBLEMS IN RECEIVING THE MEANING

When the receiver hears or reads a message (Figure 13-2, stage 5), there may still be problems in understanding or accepting it. The meaning may be obscured by the way it is phrased or by something left out, assumptions, and so on. Sometimes the wrong message comes through; sometimes it is meaningless; sometimes nothing comes through at all.

Sometimes the receiver is preoccupied with something else or may not be interested enough to listen carefully. If you want people to listen actively and open themselves to receiving a message, there has to be something in it for them. It may be information necessary to doing their job, or it may relate to changes that affect them. It does not have to be pleasant; it just has to be important to them. If they think it does not affect them, they will not pay attention, or they will half listen and then forget.

Sometimes a message or the way it is delivered will trigger emotions that make it unacceptable, and people will either tune it out or will react negatively. If a leader talks down to them, or talks over their heads, or makes threatening or scornful remarks, or speaks in a condescending tone of voice, or tells them to do something they do not consider part of their job, they are not going to accept the message as it was intended. They will misinterpret the instructions inadvertently or on purpose, or they may find other ways to withhold good performance sometimes out of hostility, sometimes out of inertia. If people do not like the way they are being treated, it is quite literally hard for them to do a good job.

REMOVING OBSTACLES TO COMMUNICATION

To summarize, let's list the many ways of removing obstacles to communication that have been mentioned in this section.

1. Build a climate of trust and respect in which communication is encouraged and messages are communicated with respect. Communicate to employees the way you would like them to communicate to you.
2. Send your messages clearly and explicitly, use language the receiver can understand, don't assume that the receiver knows anything, and take into account the receiver's ability to hear, read, and listen.
3. Send your message at the best time, and make sure that you have the receiver's attention.
4. Send your message to the right person(s): in other words, to everyone concerned.
5. Choose the best means of sending your message.
6. Check that your message has been understood, accepted, and acted upon.
7. Listen, listen, listen. This is discussed in detail next.
8. Be as objective as possible when communicating. Don't let any of your own stereotypes or prejudices shape what you say or how you send your message.
9. Avoid using slang names such as "Honey," "Babe," "Sweetheart," "Dear," "Guy," "Fella." They are disrespectful and annoying. Also, don't tell jokes that poke fun at anybody.
10. Never communicate with someone when you are angry. Cool off first.

Check Your Knowledge

1. List three obstacles when communicating. Explain each one briefly.
2. Why do symbols obscure the meaning of messages?



Listening

If you want your people to listen to you, listen to them. If you want to be able to size them up, to figure out who has potential and who is a bad apple, listen to them. If you want loyal, willing, cooperative workers, listen to them. If you want to minimize conflict and complaints and to solve people problems, listen, and listen well. *Listening* means paying complete attention to what people have to say, hearing them out. It is the second half of the communication process: the most neglected half and sometimes the most important. It is a learnable management skill.

Do You Know?

What are the five principles of active listening?

Listening

Paying complete attention to what people have to say, hearing them out, staying interested but neutral.

What can your people say that is worth listening to? They can keep you in touch with what is going on throughout your operation. They can tell you what customers think. They can suggest ways to make the work easier, improve the product, reduce costs. They can clue you in on trouble that is brewing.

They want you to hear their problems and complaints. And what if you cannot solve them? Never mind; they still want you to listen. This may be the most significant listening you do.

 **BAD LISTENING PRACTICES**

Anyone as busy as a supervisor in a hospitality enterprise is going to have trouble listening. Your mind is on a million other things, and you go off on tangents instead of paying attention to the person trying to talk to you. And *going off on tangents* is the first bad listening practice. You must give the speaker your full attention.

It is hard to do this. You can think four times as fast as a person can talk. People talk at 100 to 125 words a minute and think at 500 words a minute, so you have three-fourths of your listening time for your mind to wander. You may be preoccupied with other things: the convention coming in next week, the new furniture that has not arrived, the tray carts that don't keep the food hot all the way to the last patient at the end of the corridor. You may not really be interested in what the speaker is saying, or it may concern a touchy subject you would rather avoid, so you tune out. You may be distracted by your phone, your beeper, your unopened mail, or some unconscious habit of the speaker, such as pulling his beard or curling the ends of her hair around her fingers. Or maybe the speaker is following you around to talk to you while you do a dozen other things.

Another bad listening practice is to *react emotionally* to what is being said. If someone says something against your favorite person or cherished belief or political conviction, it is very easy to get excited and start planning what you will say to show him or her how wrong they are. That is the end of the listening. They may, in fact, go on to modify their statement or to present evidence for what they are saying, but you will not hear it. You are too busy framing your reply. You may even interrupt and cut the communication short with an emotion-laden outburst and start arguing. The effect is to cheat yourself out of the remainder of the message and to antagonize the person who was talking to you, especially if you misinterpret the message. It is essential to hear the speaker out before you make a judgment and reply.

Sometimes there are words that hook your emotions and make you lose your composure, such as "baby" or "gal" or "dear" to a woman or "boy" or "buddy" to a man, or some of the more vivid four-letter words to some people. Once your emotions flood forth, you can no longer listen and the speaker can no longer speak to you. Chances are that the emotional cloud will also hang over future communications, inhibiting them and fogging the messages back and forth.

You have to stay calm and collected. Maybe the speaker was deliberately trying to goad you. If so, the speaker has won and has found a vulnerable spot or word that can be used again. On the other hand, if the speaker used the fateful word without meaning anything by it, he or she will become embarrassed and defensive and will not try to communicate with you again.

If certain words raise your temperature to the boiling point, try to find some way to word-proof yourself. It makes no sense to let a couple of words interfere with communication between you and your employees.

Still another bad listening practice is to *cut off the flow of the message*. Certain kinds of responses on your part will simply shut the door before the speaker has finished what he or she needed to say.

Suppose that one of your employees is upset about a personal problem concerning a coworker. One way of shutting the door is to tell the person what to do. You may do this by giving orders, threatening consequences, preaching—“You ought to do this; you should have done that”—asserting your power and authority as the boss. Such negative responses not only end the conversation but arouse resentment and anger. They are bad for communication, bad for the work climate, and bad for the person’s self-respect.

Other ways of telling people what to do may seem positive on the surface: giving advice, giving your opinion, and trying to argue them into accepting it. You may think you are being helpful, but you are really encouraging dependency along with feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. When you solve people’s problems for them, you may be plagued with their problems from then on. If they reject your solution, they may resent you for having tried to argue them into something.

Probing, interrogating, or analyzing their motives only complicates your relationship with them. This is not what they came to you for; they do not want to expose their inner selves. They do not want you to see through them, and they resent your intrusion. Besides, your analysis may be wrong, and they may feel that you are accusing them unjustly. Even though they came to you with the problem, they may end up feeling that it is none of your business. They may find your probing scary and threatening, and from then on they worry about working for you when you know so much about them—or think that you do.

Still other ways of responding will also close the door and end the discussion—for example, blaming the person for having the problem in the first place or calling the person stupid or worse for getting into the predicament. Whatever the truth of the matter, this type of response solves nothing and only arouses negative feelings: anger and resentment toward you plus feelings of self-doubt and self-reproach.

Responses at the opposite extreme, although not so destructive, may still close the door on the communication and the problem. You may try to sympathize, console, and reassure the person in an effort to make the feelings go away, or you may belittle the problem by refusing to take either the problem or the feelings seriously. Neither response works. The problem and the feelings are just as big as ever, and you have in effect told that person you don’t want to hear any more about it.

What about cheering this person up with something positive, such as saying what a good job he or she is doing? It may improve the climate momentarily, but it will not solve anything unless it is related to the problem and *unless it is true*. If the worker knows it isn’t true—and who knows this better than the worker?—your praise only raises doubts about your sincerity and increases the distance between you.

All these ways of responding to a worker who is communicating a problem are ways of refusing to listen any more. They are different ways of saying, “Go away, that’s all I want to hear.” The employee stops talking to you, and the problem goes unsolved. Figure 13-3 lists these and other roadblocks to listening.

1. Withdrawing, distracting
2. Arguing, lecturing
3. Commanding, ordering
4. Warning, threatening
5. Diagnosing, analyzing
6. Judging, criticizing
7. Blaming, belittling
8. Interrogating, analyzing
9. Preaching, giving advice
10. Consoling, sympathizing

FIGURE 13-3: Roadblocks to listening.

HOW TO LISTEN

Good listening does not come easily to most busy people in charge of getting things done. You have to learn to listen, and you have to make a conscious and deliberate effort to discard all of the bad listening practices you may have been using. Here are five principles of good listening, along with a few techniques for putting them into practice.

1. *Give the other person your undivided attention.* You set aside everything you are doing and thinking and you concentrate on what that person is saying. You don't answer your phone, you don't open your mail, you don't look at your watch, and you don't let other people interrupt. You don't make that person follow you around while you are tending to something else. You take whatever time is necessary, and you take seriously the person's need to talk. You keep your mind on the message and you don't go off on mental tangents. You look the person in the eye with an interested but noncommittal expression on your face.
2. *Hear the person out.* You don't stop the flow; you don't tell the person what to do, or comment or argue or console or in any way take the conversation away from the person talking. You keep the door open: "I'd like to hear more. Tell me why you feel this way." In this way you acknowledge their right to talk to you and let them know you really want them to.

You encourage. At appropriate times you grunt ("unh," "ummmm," "uh-huh"), you say "Oh" and "Yes," and you nod your head. This lets the person know you really are tuned in and you really are listening. And you really do listen.

This type of listening is known as *active listening*. It is most appropriate when a person is upset about something or has a complaint or a problem. It takes concentrated effort on your part. You suspend all your own reactions, you make no judgments or evaluations, and you do your best to understand how things look from the speaker's point of view and especially, how he or she feels about them. The purpose of active listening is to find the ultimate solution to the problem. Active listening is listening for the complete meaning without interrupting the speaker or interpreting the meaning. Because the average person speaks about 100 to 125 words a minute and the average

listener can understand up to 500 words per minute, this leaves time for the mind to wander. The *active* part of active listening means empathizing attentively with the speaker and, to an extent, putting yourself in their position.

You can raise the level of active but neutral listening by mirroring the speaker's words. When the speaker says, "I don't think you're being fair to me," you say, "You don't think I'm being fair to you." You can go further and paraphrase: "You feel I'm giving you more than your share of the work." You can take the process still further by mirroring the speaker's feelings as well as the words: "You feel I'm being unfair, and it's really making you angry, isn't it?" These techniques, as well as others described in Figure 13-4, used sensitively, will move the flow along until the speaker has said everything that he or she wants to say. Only then do you respond from your point of view as supervisor.

Active listening

Encouraging a speaker to continue talking by giving interested but neutral responses which show that you understand the speaker's meaning and feelings.

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Objective</i>
1. Acknowledgment <i>Examples:</i> "Uh-huh . . ." "Ummm . . ." "I see." "I understand." "Let's look at and discuss your last comment."	To show interest, to encourage an employee to keep talking
2. Clarifying questions <i>Examples:</i> "What exactly do you mean by . . . ?" "Will you explain what you mean by . . . ?" "What I understand you to say is . . . , is that right?"	To clarify and/or confirm a message
3. Mirroring statements <i>Examples:</i> "You feel it was unfair that Jimmy got Friday off instead of you." "You think someone else should help you in the dishroom." "You think you're being treated differently than the other people you work with."	To keep the speaker talking
4. Summarizing check <i>Examples:</i> "Let's hold on for a moment and review what we have discussed so far . . ." "These seem to be the key points you've expressed to me . . ." "To summarize, the key ideas as I hear them are . . ."	To pull together important points in order to confirm understanding, review progress, and possibly lead to more discussion

FIGURE 13-4: Techniques listeners can use to increase understanding.



3. *Look for the real message.* It may not be “Solve my problem”; it may just be “Hey, I need to talk to someone who understands.” Or there may be a message underneath the verbal message. Often, the first spurt of speech is not the real problem but a way of avoiding something that is difficult to talk about. Look for nonverbal cues: tone of voice, anxious facial expression, clenched fists, body tension. If the speaker is still tense and anxious when he or she stops talking, you probably have not heard the real problem yet. Wait for it; open the door for it; use active listening techniques. But remember that interrogating and analyzing are turnoffs, not invitations to go on.
4. *Keep your emotions out of the communication.* You stay cool and calm; you don’t let your own feelings interfere with the listening. You let remarks pass that you are tempted to respond to; you keep your emotions in check and concentrate on the message. You remain inwardly calm all the time this person is talking, and you do not get sidetracked planning a hard-hitting reply. You concentrate on listening and staying neutral so that you can get the message and so this person can vent his or her emotions and clear the air, and maybe you can help keep your own emotions down by looking for the message behind the message that is causing this person to make such remarks to you. You don’t let this person grab you with loaded words; you don’t react. You get the message straight and clear, and then, when the flow stops, you can respond appropriately.
5. *Maintain your role.* You can listen to personal problems, but you do not try to solve them; you do not get involved. You do not boomerang back over that line between manager and worker to help a buddy out. You do not let yourself be maneuvered into relaxing company policies or making promises you cannot keep. You stay in your role as manager; you accept the message with understanding and empathy, but you do not take on anything that is not your responsibility.

If the problem is job-related and within your sphere of authority, and if you have listened successfully, you and the worker can talk about it calmly. Suppose, for example, that the real problem turns out to be something that makes this person—let us call him John—furious at you, and he has been seething about it for weeks. Listening successfully means that you are able to keep your own emotions out of it even though he ends up screaming at you and calling you choice names, and that you manage to refrain from making judgments and jumping to conclusions and telling him off. Because you listen, John unloads his emotions and begins to simmer down, and when you don’t get mad or shut him up he begins to appreciate that you are not using your position of power against him, and pretty soon he comes around to seeing that he has exaggerated a few things and is sorry about some remarks. Now you and John can begin to explore the causes of the problem and perhaps come up with a solution.

To demonstrate to the person that you have been paying close attention, try pausing before giving a response. When you pause, you convey that you have been giving careful consideration to his or her words. Pausing always helps you to hear more clearly what the other person has said. Asking questions is a way to prove that you have concern for the situation at hand. It is important that you ask questions to help you gain clarification. Think about asking open-ended questions such as “What do you mean?” People will often rephrase their words so that you can better understand them.

PROFILE Holly Rielly, Supervisor, Marina Jacks Restaurant, Sarasota, Florida



Courtesy of Holly Rielly

Throughout the past 15 years I have worked in the service industry. My experience in the business ranges from the kitchen of a convent to casual and fine dining. Currently I am employed at Marina Jacks in Sarasota, Florida.

I think a good leader is someone who is fair to everyone and does not have “favorites.” A good supervisor explains what needs to be done, requests input from the team members, and informs everyone of the decision. By gaining input from the team members it encourages their involvement in achieving the goals. Supervisors need to ensure that everyone has the tools necessary to do the job required; we all know how frustrating it can be when a restaurant runs out of supplies on a night when you’re being “slammed!”

Good supervisors are also good leaders who gain respect not for what they are but for who they are. Leaders encourage superior performance just as a great coach does. They also praise and reward outstanding performance and make it a fun atmosphere that makes me look forward to going to work.

A good supervisor develops his or her team by arranging training sessions or offering wine appreciation

sessions so that team members can learn more about wine and how to offer an appropriate wine to complement the meal to the guests. Supervisors should never lose sight of the fact that they need to delight the guest and staff while satisfying the owner. Now *that’s* a tall order. At our restaurant we have preshift meetings to go over the menu and specials of the day, so we are all on the same page. We communicate with each other regularly throughout the meal service. On occasion we also have sales contests. The employees get rewards for the highest sales of a particular item. This increases the overall morale of the team.

In order for a supervisor to be a good leader, and develop a successful team, he or she must know how to communicate well. Communication is essential in the hospitality industry due to the constant interaction with staff and patrons. When a good supervisor communicates they are precise, clear, and they check to be sure that the receiver of information understands what is being conveyed to them. A team cannot be successful unless they communicate well and all work together toward the same goal. Therefore, in my opinion, an overall successful supervisor is fair, considers team input, communicates well, and has respectful relationships with the staff.

Questions such as “how,” “when,” “what,” “why,” “where,” and “who” will prove to be useful. Asking questions will help employees to expand their thoughts and also help you to gain a better understanding of what they want.¹

Of course, it doesn’t always work. But if you stay in the boss’s role and use a positive, person-to-person leadership approach, you have a chance of turning listening into two-way communication that works. Here are the principles of good listening:

1. Give the other person your undivided attention.
2. Hear the person out: “A good listener listens [95 percent] of the time.”²
3. Look for the real message.



4. Keep your emotions out of the communication so that you receive a clear message.³
5. Maintain your role.

This kind of listening is not a skill you can develop overnight. Like everything else about leadership, it takes understanding and awareness and practice and maybe supervised training on the job. It is not common in our industry; there is too little time and too much to do, and we have other traditional ways of dealing with people. But it has tremendous potential for solving people problems if you can learn how to put it to work.

Companies that have trained their supervisory personnel in active listening techniques have found them extraordinarily effective. One manufacturing company that was losing money and suffering labor problems brought in a psychologist to train all its foremen in an intensive two-week course in listening. The investment paid off—grievances declined by 90 percent, and the company began making money again.

Many industries today are paying a great deal of attention to what workers have to say about their work and are finding it very profitable. In our time-pressured industry it is easy to think we do not have time for listening. But often it does not take long to receive a message. What it does take is an *attitude of openness*. A few minutes—a few seconds even—of total attention can pay off in countless ways.

Check Your Knowledge

1. Explain the problems in receiving the meaning in good communication.
2. What is listening? Why is it important?
3. Discuss briefly the principles of how to listen.

SENDING CLEAR MESSAGES

A clear message is one that is specific, explicit, and complete. It tells everything the other person needs to know: the who, what, when, where, how, and why of the information to be given or the task to be done. Most of the communicating you do in directing your employees will be giving instructions and information on the job. It will be very informal, and it will likely be one of those 48-second contacts that make up your day. It will be in the middle of a kitchen, or at the front desk, or out in front of the hotel or the country club, or it will be in the storeroom or the bar or the laundry or wherever the person you need to talk to is working. It will probably be a fragment of conversation, and it may take place under severe time pressure, so it will be very easy to run into all the common obstacles to good communication. But brief as it is, and however difficult the circumstances are, you need to give each person the *entire message*.

“Cook the chicken” is not an entire message. “Cook 30 dinner portions of fried chicken to be ready at 5:00 P.M.” is specific and complete. It makes no assumptions, takes nothing for granted. It tells all. Say it clearly and distinctly, or write it down clearly and distinctly. Or do both. It takes only 25 of your 48 seconds.

A clear message is also one that is *understandable* and *meaningful* to the person to whom it is sent. It must be phrased in terms that *that person* can understand. It must be delivered on *that person's* level. It must be meaningful within *that person's* experience.

Making messages understandable and meaningful requires awareness on your part. It takes awareness of the other person's background and experience and ability to comprehend, awareness of your own assumptions about this person and how he or she

regards you, awareness of your tone of voice and choice of words and how you come across to other people. It means deliberately adapting your message to your audience. It means knowing your people and knowing yourself.

GETTING YOUR MESSAGES ACCEPTED

Of the six steps of communicating (see Figure 13-1 to refresh your memory), you as the sender control only three. The other three are up to the receiver. How can you influence that person to come through on the other three steps: to receive and understand and accept your message?

The first essential here is *trust*. If your employees trust you, they will have a built-in attitude of acceptance, of willingness to do as you say and do a good job for you. If they do not trust you, the message probably will not come through to them clearly.

Their opinion of you or their feelings about you are likely to distort facts and meaning and are also likely to lessen their desire to carry out your instructions.

Building trust takes time. Meantime, in dealing with someone you know does not trust you, you should do your best to maintain a pleasant atmosphere and a calm and confident manner. Be extra careful to send clear, simple, and very explicit messages and to explain why the task or information is important. Then follow up to make sure that the person in question is carrying out the task correctly.

A second essential for acceptance is *the interest of the receiver* in the message: People have to see what's in it for them. Make sure that they understand what your messages have to do with their work, as well as how and why the information or instructions affect them. Perhaps something of value for them is involved: better tips, more satisfaction in the work itself. Or perhaps it is something less pleasant, yet something they must adjust to. Whatever it is, people will pay careful attention to anything affecting them. Look at your messages from their point of view and emphasize whatever is important to them.

A third essential for acceptance is that your *instructions must be reasonable*. The task to be done must be possible to do within the time allowed. It must be within the ability of the person you are asking to do it and within the scope of the job as the employee sees it. It must be legally and morally correct and compatible with the needs of both the person and the organization. If you violate any of these criteria, the worker is likely to balk openly or to do the task grudgingly or leave it unfinished to prove that it is impossible.

When instructions that seem unreasonable to a worker seem perfectly reasonable to you, you need to discuss them—find out why they seem impossible and explain how and why it really is possible to do what you want done. It may be that your communication was poor the first time.

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

If you want people to get your messages clearly and do willingly what you want them to do, your messages must have a positive impact. People must feel like complying. They must not be put off by the way you have delivered your messages.

Many leaders make the mistake of talking to their people from a position of power, authority, or status. In effect, they are commanding, “You’d better hear what

I say because I am your boss, and what I say is important because I say it is, and you'd better pay attention and you'd better do what I tell you to do.”

In this top-down type of communication there is no sense of the receiver as another human being, no chance for question and feedback. The boss has lost sight of the fact that communication is an *interaction* between two people and that the receiver really controls its success or failure. A message delivered in a condescending, contemptuous, or commanding manner and tone of voice can only have a negative impact. The receiver will not complete the communication in the way the sender wants. The more authoritarian and insistent this type of message is, the more negative the impact and the more negative people's reactions will be.

In every instance where you are directing people, you must remember to think, “How are the people I am talking to going to hear me, and how will they feel about it?” Your purpose as a manager, as a supervisor, is not to impress them but to get across the message that you want to give them. So put yourself on their level and talk to them person to person.

The situation affects your style of communication. Sometimes, in pressure situations, it is all too easy to let your emotions take over and to yell and scream orders when the food is not going out fast enough or customers are waiting and the tables are not being cleared. Unfortunately, yelling and screaming sometimes stops the action entirely. Remember that emotion takes over the message: People react to the emotion rather than the instruction, and anger and fear drive out good listening and good sense. In a real emergency a sharp, controlled command may be appropriate, but never one expressing anger, fear, or loss of control.



Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI), often measured as EI quotient (EQ) and popularized by the work of Daniel Goleman, is defined as “the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively.”⁴ According to his research, emotional intelligence is an important influence on leadership effectiveness, especially in more senior management positions. In Goleman's words: “the higher the rank of the person considered to be a star performer, the more emotional intelligence capabilities showed up as a reason for his or her effectiveness.”⁵

The critical components of EI are the following:⁶

- *Self-awareness*—ability to understand our own moods and emotions, and to understand their impact on our work and on others.
- *Self-regulation*—ability to think before we act and to control otherwise disruptive impulses.
- *Motivation*—ability to work hard with persistence and for reasons other than money and status.
- *Empathy*—ability to understand the emotions of others and to use this understanding to better relate to them.
- *Social skill*—ability to establish rapport with others and to build good relationships and networks.

How many emotions are there? Although there are several emotions we could all name, research has identified six universal emotions: anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust, and surprise.⁷ Are any of these emotions used in the workplace? Absolutely! I get *angry* after a bad experience with a guest. I *fear* that I could receive a poor evaluation. I am *sad* about a co-worker who was victimized in an accident. I'm *happy* about being promoted. I'm *disgusted* with the way my manager treats women on our team. I'm *surprised* to find out that management plans to reorganize our department.⁸

We all know that a hospitality business is made up of people with varying emotional dispositions so it is especially important for managers to recognize individual emotions and adapt to situations to maintain a harmonious workplace. Personally, we should all assess our own EI then see what others think about our EI because if we want to advance in our careers we should have good EI.

Human resources professionals and managers work with people. Yet, as simple and obvious as this may sound, it is not always easy to do well.⁹ The emotional awareness of “*reading people*” is a good start, being able to zero in on people and identify emotions is vital to success in interpersonal relationships in the fast-paced hospitality industry. The ability to identify emotions consists of a number of different skills, such as accurately identifying how you feel and how others feel, sensing emotion in art and music, expressing emotions, and reading between the lines. Perhaps most critical is the ability to detect real versus fake emotions.¹⁰ Hospitality companies are using EI in their hiring decisions.

Reading people”

The emotional awareness ability to read people by identifying their emotions.

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Here is a detailed set of directions for giving instructions or orders. Not every step will apply to every kind of instruction or every circumstance, but it is a good standard you can adapt to your own needs. There are five steps.

1. The first step is to *plan*. You plan what it is that you are going to say (the who, what, how, when, where, and why of the task), *whom* you will say it to, *when* you will give the instruction, *where* you will give it, and *how* (orally or in writing or both, with maybe additional materials such as diagrams, recipes, or a manual of procedures).

Generally, an oral order is best suited to simple tasks, to things that people have done a hundred times before, to filling in details, to explaining or amplifying written orders, to helping someone or showing somebody how to do a task (show and tell). It is also appropriate to something requiring immediate action, such as an emergency, or to instances where a written order is not likely to be read or understood. As mentioned earlier, most people in the hospitality business are not great readers; there is nearly always a time pressure; and communication tends to be oral, for better or worse, and with all its attendant risks.

Oral instructions risk most of the common obstacles to good communication: assuming knowledge and understanding, mumbling your words or talking too fast, using unfamiliar words, leaving out important details, telling people too many different things at once, telling them things when they are not paying attention, taking the risk of telling them something important and having them forget it.

Another cause of difficulty is giving orders to someone who is also getting orders from someone else. Everybody tells the busperson what to do, and everyone wants it done right now. Still another problem with oral instructions arises when you give them as commands and people react negatively.

Written instructions are best when precise figures or a lot of detail is involved, such as specifications, lists of rooms to be made up, recipes, production sheets, specific needs. You might need 150 salad plates and 250 dessert plates in the banquet kitchen by 4:00 P.M., and you would write this order out for the dishwashers so that there will be no chance of mistake. It is best to use written instructions when the details of the task are very important, when mistakes will be costly and there is no margin for error, when strict accountability is required, when you are dealing with a slow or forgetful or hostile person with a poor track record, or when you are repeating orders from above or are enforcing company policy.

Written instructions should be short, complete, clearly written or typed, and clearly stated in simple words. You should write them with the reader in mind, and you should read your message over to be sure that it includes everything and says it clearly.

Written instructions are not appropriate when time is short, when immediate action is called for, or when it is likely that people will not read them or will not grasp the meaning. They can cause problems when they are not written clearly, when they are incomplete, or when they are too long or too complicated or when they are poorly organized (such as a recipe whose final instruction is to soak the beans overnight). Most problems with written instructions are likely to come from not understanding them or not reading them at all. Unless you are there to see that they are read, you will not know whether people have read and understood them.

In some cases it is best to give instructions both orally and in writing. Then one method reinforces the other. People receive the impact of the oral directive and have the written instructions for confirmation and reference.

2. The second step in giving instructions is to *establish a climate of acceptance*. This may be something as simple as making sure that people are not preoccupied with something else and are ready to listen. This is the point at which you explain the why of the task (if people don't know) and what's in it for them, to involve their interest and, if possible, secure their commitment. Quiet surroundings free of distractions help to establish a climate of acceptance. But your surroundings and conditions will probably be less than ideal—the typical fragmentary 48-second time-pressured conversation—so you have to make the most of it.

Among the different types of people who work for you there will be those who are cooperative and enthusiastic, with whom you have a relationship of trust and goodwill. They will always be receptive and accepting. There will be other people who just plod along doing whatever they are told to do—no less, no more. You must be sure that you have their full attention and that everything is included in the instructions, because that is exactly what they will do—just enough to get by.

There will be a third type, the hostile workers, the ones who do not trust you and whom you do not trust. There are always a few of these, and they are looking for ways to beat the system, to do as little as possible, to challenge you, to show you

up if they can. If you make a mistake in your instructions to them, they will follow that mistake to the letter and take delight in the trouble it makes for you. An incident at a riverboat restaurant in St. Louis illustrates the point. The manager, appalled at the total disorder of the dish room, told the two dishwashers, “Get this place cleaned up now! I’ll be back in 30 minutes to check it out!” When he came back 30 minutes later the room was totally clean, not a dish in sight—cleaned out. The dishwashers had simply pushed everything into the Mississippi River.

With this type of person, spell everything out—why they are given the task, exactly what they must do, and how, and why, and what results you will hold them responsible for. If it is something important, put it in writing. You cannot expect a spirit of acceptance from these people; you must force acceptance of the instructions to whatever degree you can, using your powers of enforcement as necessary.

3. The third step is to *deliver the instructions*. Your manner of delivery is critical. Gestures, inflection, tone of voice, facial expressions, all the nonverbal ways of communicating come into play here, as well as what you say. Give your instructions calmly and confidently. The air of confidence is critical to giving the order. You can appear confident even when you are not, by acting calm, competent, and collected, speaking lower and slower than you normally do, and talking without hesitation or groping for words. Your image as a leader is involved here, and this is one of the things that make people listen and take your directions seriously.

Where you stand or sit in relation to people you are directing can sometimes have an effect on the communication. Research has established that there are unexpressed zones of comfortable communication between people (*communication zones*): 2 to 3 feet is *personal space*—don’t come any closer unless I invite you; 4 to 7 feet is *social distance*—it’s okay to give me instructions from this distance; 7 to 25 feet is *public distance*, and that’s too far from me—I am not a public meeting you are addressing. These are American zones. People from some other cultures may have much smaller zones, and you can have communication problems when one of these people tries to get close enough to speak comfortably and the other person keeps moving away to maintain personal space.

There are several ways of issuing instructions. You can *request* people to do things. This is an easy method to use, and it works well with most people—cooperative types, plodders, long-time employees, older people, and sensitive individuals.

You can *suggest* actions to certain kinds of people when you want something done and there is no set way you want it done. This is a subtle and more gentle form of direction that you cannot use with everybody because you are leaving up to the worker not only how something is done but whether it is done. It is a method to use with smart, ambitious, experienced people; they will jump on your suggestion and run with it because they want to please or impress you. It is not a good technique to use with inexperienced people or with plodders or those who are hostile.

4. The fourth step in giving instructions is to *verify that the instructions have been understood*. There are various ways of doing this. You can watch for spontaneous signs: the look of comprehension in the eyes, nodding of the head, a verbal okay. This means that the person thinks that he or she understands or at least



wants you to think so. On the other hand, a glazed look in the eyes or a lost expression on the face can tell you that you have not gotten through.

If you ask people whether they understand, they are likely to say yes whether or not they do understand. A better way to check understanding is to ask whether they have any questions. The trouble with this is that people don't like to admit that they do not understand, especially in group situations. Sometimes they do not even understand enough to formulate a question that makes sense. They must feel at ease with you before they can handle asking you questions. Sometimes if you ask them, "Can I clarify anything for you?" they will admit there is something they have not understood.

One way to test understanding is to ask people to repeat your instructions back to you. Some people are insulted or embarrassed by this. Sometimes you can take the edge off this impact by presenting the repeating as a way of checking up on yourself: "Have I told you everything necessary?" People who know they have trouble getting things straight generally do not mind repeating things back to you. It is a technique best used selectively according to the person you are dealing with. The best proof of understanding is seeing people carry out your orders correctly. But it is risky to wait and see, and it is a bit late in the game for corrections.

5. The fifth and final step—*following up*—deals with just this problem. You should not consider that you have carried out your direction-giving responsibilities fully until you find out how your instructions are being carried out. Observe your people at work. Measure results where they can be measured. Give assistance and further direction where they are needed. And check back on your own performance: Did your instructions do the job? Can you do even better the next time you give directions to these unique and diverse people who carry out the work of your department?

To summarize, the steps for giving instructions are:

1. Plan what it is you are going to say (the who, what, how, when, where, and why of the task), whom you will say it to, when you will give the instruction, where you will give it, and how (orally or in writing, or both, perhaps with additional materials such as diagrams, recipes, or a manual of procedures).
2. Establish a climate of acceptance.
3. Deliver the instructions.
4. Verify that the instructions have been understood.
5. Follow up.



COMPUTER AND TELEPHONE-AIDED COMMUNICATIONS

Technology and, in particular, information technology, has totally changed the way leaders communicate in the hospitality industry. Today, vital information can be communicated to and by leaders about the sales and record-keeping far more quickly. Examples include: a chain of restaurants' daily sales and other relevant data may be automatically sent to the corporate office rather than being typed up, faxed, and then entered into the computer system; schedules can be updated with a few clicks of a

mouse; and training programs are now available via CD-ROMs; policy and procedures manuals can be checked online instead of printing and distributing copies.

Networked computer systems link corporate and independent hospitality businesses to one another, the supply chain, and various information sources via the World Wide Web. For instance, if you wanted to find some new recipes it's easy to surf the Web to find several to choose from for any dish.

E-mail is a quick and convenient way for supervisors and employees to share information and to communicate to one or several people. Some progressive companies use *instant messaging (IM)*, which is interactive real-time communication that takes place among computer users who are logged onto the computer network at the same time. With IM, there is no waiting for someone to read the e-mail, but users must be logged on at the same time.

Voice-mail allows information to be digitally stored and retrieved later. Voice-mail is also very useful in the hospitality industry because much of a supervisor's time is spent away from their desks, and messages can be checked periodically and from other locations. However, for fast-paced operations it is necessary to have immediate voice communications, which improve guest service and satisfaction. For example, when guests check out of a New York hotel and need a cab, they don't have to wait around outside in the winter cold. The front desk agent or the bellperson can speak into a microphone to ask the door person to hail a cab. *Fax machines* permit the transmission of text or graphics over telephone lines. The "sending" fax machine scans and digitizes the document and the "receiving" machine reads the scanned information and reproduces it on paper.

Intranets are private, organization-wide networks, similar to Web sites, to which only people in the organization have access. Intranets are being increasingly used in the hospitality industry especially now with *wireless fidelity*, more commonly known as *Wi-Fi*. Wi-Fis provide Internet connections through wireless frequencies that are run

through routers, enabling wireless connectivity within a specific range of the routers. This allows associates to make and receive calls on the same wireless broadband network that the company uses for Internet access. Wi-Fis are good for making employees available no matter where they are on property. Resorts, amusement parks, conference centers, sports complexes, hospitals, and cruise ships all cover huge areas and yet with Wi-Fi, everyone is easily and almost instantaneously accessible.

An *extranet* is the same as an intranet, except that it allows access to specific people outside the company, such as guests or suppliers.

Check Your Knowledge

1. When directing people at work, what leads to effective management?
2. Explain the importance of sending clear messages.
3. Describe the three essential steps of getting your messages across to the people you are directing.
4. What is the importance of making a positive impact?



Business Writing

As a leader you are involved in all types of writing: job descriptions, policies and procedures, memos to employees and managers, performance appraisals, disciplinary action notices. It is crucial for you to be able to express yourself effectively in these different



A server records an order electronically. The order will reach the kitchen before the server does.

Courtesy of Action Systems, Inc.

types of written documents as well as write in a clear, organized manner. Let's first take a look at some common problems, or pitfalls, in business writing:

- Too long, too wordy
- Too vague
- Too much jargon, too many hard-to-understand words
- Poorly organized
- Purpose not clear
- Sloppy, misspelled words; incorrect grammar and punctuation
- Too negative
- Indirect, beats around the bush

You have surely read letters, memos, and policies with some, or even most, of these problems.

Following are 10 tips for better business writing:

1. Pay attention to who the reader will be and write from his or her perspective.
2. Organize your thoughts so that your writing is then better organized and better able to communicate.

3. Use simple words to communicate your message. Stay away from jargon, slang, and big words, as they only clutter up your message and the reader may not understand them.
4. Get to the point quickly. Use only as many words as you need to get your point across. Trim all unnecessary words. Be specific about what you want to communicate. Avoid vague terms and expressions such as somewhat, sort of, rather.
5. Be positive and upbeat. Even when you have to give bad news, provide some good news.
6. Write as though you were talking. Be natural.
7. Write clearly. Proofread your writing for clarity.
8. Show how the reader will benefit from reading your written communication.
9. Keep the document as short as possible.
10. Always check your document for correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and neatness.



Meetings

Mention the word *meeting* to a group of managers, and you might hear a few groans and comments such as “What a waste of time!” Meetings appear to have a bad reputation. Surveys help tell us why. Surveys show that meetings often have problems such as people getting off the subject, no goals or agenda is set, they last too long, people are not well prepared, and important issues are not resolved. Some things you can do to make meetings effective are as follows:

1. Be prepared for all meetings. If you are calling the meeting, plan out, list and share with all attendees exactly what you want to accomplish, and formalize your list of topics to be covered in an *agenda*, a written statement of topics to be discussed. Let colleagues know what is expected of them—if they need to prepare something before the meeting.
2. Start on time and first review the agenda.
3. Summarize at appropriate points and move on.
4. When the conversation goes off in a different direction, bring it back to the matter at hand.
5. Make sure that meeting minutes are kept and followed up.
6. Have some rules of order so that everyone has a fair chance of speaking.
7. Handle differences of opinions with respect.

Check Your Knowledge

1. List the steps for giving instructions.
2. Why is business writing important?
3. List five tips for better business writing.

The agenda should have a time limit for each item to help keep people focused on the topic. There should also be a column for writing the name of who is going to be responsible for ensuring the completion of the item, and by when it will be completed. When run well, meetings really can accomplish a lot, without too many groans!



Delegating

You often hear leaders in the hospitality industry, especially restaurant managers, talk about the 60 or 70 hours a week they put in just to keep on top of their jobs. They tell you about the constant pressures of the job and how you can't get good people today, nobody takes responsibility, they have to do everything themselves, there just aren't enough hours in the day.

There is no doubt that a manager is in a high-pressure position and that the industry is plagued with people problems. But does it have to be a constant, never-ending race between the work to be done and the time there is to do it? In this chapter we discuss one management tool for alleviating the problem—delegation.

Leadership experts always recommend delegation, yet the harassed management people in our industry seldom delegate. It is the leadership tool that is implemented least. Leaders will drive themselves to the point of exhaustion, ulcers, and those little white pills the doctor prescribes rather than entrust their employees with any of their own responsibilities. Why won't they share them? And why won't the people who work for them take on such responsibilities?

In this section we examine the delegation process and suggest how to put it to work successfully in a hospitality enterprise. It will help you to:

- Define the concepts of responsibility, authority, and accountability, and explain their relationship to delegation.
- Explain how delegation benefits the supervisor, the workers, and the entire operation.
- Enumerate and discuss common reasons why both managers and workers avoid delegation.
- Discuss the conditions essential for successful delegation.
- List the essential steps in successful delegation and discuss the importance of each.
- List common delegation mistakes and explain techniques for avoiding them.



What Delegation Means

In a nutshell, *delegation* is a skill of which we have all heard but which few understand. It can be used either as an excuse for dumping failure onto the shoulders of subordinates, or as a dynamic tool for motivating and training your team to realize their full potential.¹¹ Since you are responsible for the entire output of your unit or department, you delegate responsibility for certain parts of the work to people you hire to do certain jobs—you delegate cooking to the cooks, front desk work to the front desk clerks, and so on. Certain responsibilities you keep for yourself: hiring, keeping track of labor and material costs, making key reports, and so on.

Usually, we do not think of giving people jobs to do as delegating responsibility for the work, but it is—or it should be. Supervisors who are on people's backs all the time—telling them what to do, telling them what they are doing wrong, directing

Delegation

Giving a portion of one's responsibility and authority to a subordinate.

them at every turn—have delegated little or nothing. Supervisors who train their people and then trust them to carry out the job have delegated the responsibility for doing the work. Which supervisor has more time and fewer hassles?

In nearly every job there are variations in the degrees of responsibility attached to that job. If the dishwasher discovers that the gauges are registering in the red zone, whose responsibility is it to correct the water temperature? If the manager has delegated this responsibility to the dishwasher and has given the proper training, it is the dishwasher's responsibility. If not, the dishwasher must report the reading to the manager, and the manager must fix it. Who orders the supplies for the kitchen, the cook or the manager? Who receives the supplies? Who stocks the bar? Who closes the cash register? The leader who feels it necessary to attend to every last one of these things personally is the one who works 80 hours a week. In addition, things probably don't run very well and there are constant crises because the leader cannot be everywhere at once. In short, that manager is not delegating; that leader is trying to do all the work. That leader is not leading.



A manager delegating.



Essentials of Delegation

There are three aspects of delegation:

1. Responsibility
2. Authority
3. Accountability

As a leader, you have been given *responsibility* for certain activities and the results they are expected to produce. That is your job, your ultimate responsibility. Your boss delegated this responsibility to you when you took over the job. When you delegate, you give a portion of this responsibility to one or another of your employees—you pass along responsibility for certain activities and the results you expect them to produce. However, you maintain ultimate responsibility.

When you took over the job of leader, you were given the *authority* you need to carry out your responsibilities, the rights and powers to make the necessary decisions and take the necessary actions to get the job done. When you delegate a portion of your responsibilities, you in turn must give the person assuming these responsibilities the authority to carry them out, carefully defining its terms.

If you delegate responsibility without such authority, you make it impossible to fulfill the responsibility. Suppose, for example, that you give Tom responsibility for stocking the bar but you do not give him the authority to sign requisition slips. The storeroom is not going to release the liquor because Tom's signature has not been authorized, so Tom cannot fulfill his responsibility, and there is not going to be enough gin for the martinis when customers come in.

As a leader you are accountable to your boss for the results expected of you. *Accountability* means that you are under obligation to your boss to produce these results. People to whom you delegate are accountable to you for the results you expect. Accountability goes automatically with the responsibility delegated; it is the other side of the coin. Delegating responsibility does not relieve you of either responsibility or accountability. If your worker does not come through for you, you must find another way to achieve the results. You cannot shift the blame even though your employee is at fault. The ultimate responsibility is always yours.

The lines of responsibility and authority in an organization provide the anatomy of its organization chart, its *chain of command*. They are the lines along which responsibility is delegated from the top down to the least member of the organization. The chief executive officer delegates responsibility and authority to senior vice presidents, who delegate to the managers who work for them, who in turn delegate to the people who report to them, and so on, right down to the night cleaner or the person who does nothing but spread mayonnaise on bread. At each level the person delegating has responsibility for the results expected from all those on down the line at whatever level, and the chief executive officer has responsibility for the entire operation.

Accountability moves right beside responsibility but in the opposite direction (see Figure 13-5). All employees are accountable to whoever delegated responsibility to them, so the accountability moves right up to the top along the same lines on which authority and responsibility move downward, and ultimately everyone is accountable to the chief executive officer, who is accountable to the owners or a board of directors.

This organizational anatomy tells who has responsibility at each level for everything that happens or fails to happen. It determines whose head will roll when someone fails to deliver the results expected. If the failure has dire consequences, it may not only be the head of the employee who failed to deliver but the head of the employee's manager who let it happen.

The lines of responsibility and authority are also the *channels of communication* from level to level up and down the organizational ladder. *Going through channels* means that when you send information or requests or instructions to people on levels

Accountability

A worker's obligation to a supervisor to carry out the responsibilities delegated and to produce the results expected.

Chain of command

Lines along which responsibility and authority are delegated from top to bottom of an organization.

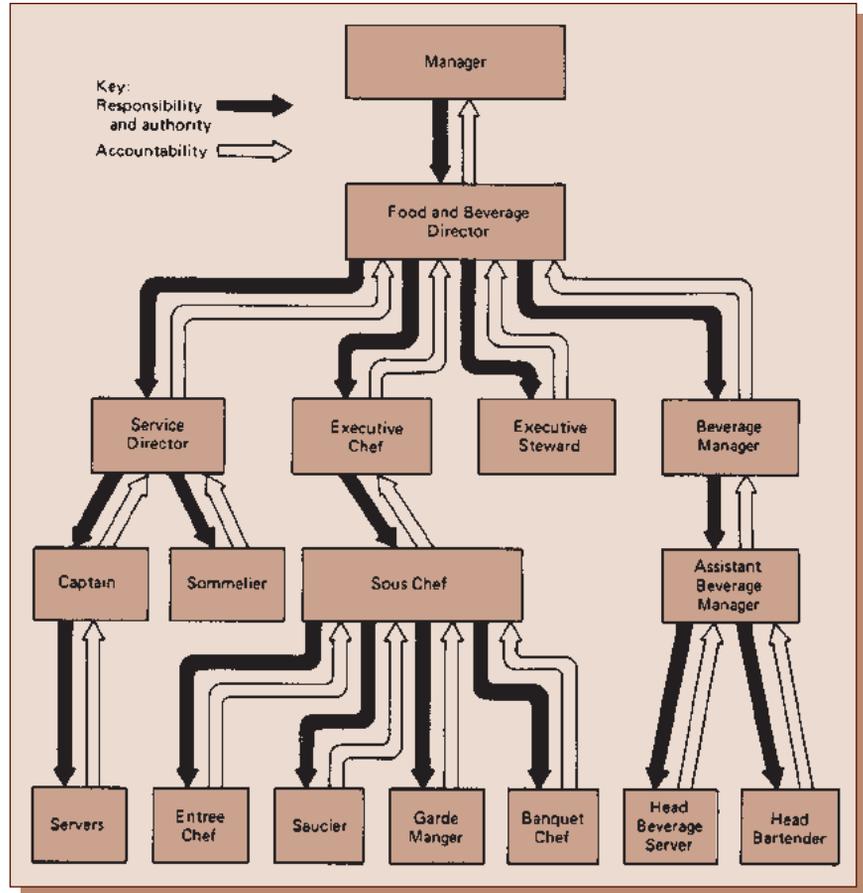


FIGURE 13-5: Anatomy of an organization: the lines of responsibility, authority, and accountability; the chain of command; the channels of communication.

Channels of communication

The organizational lines (corresponding to the chain of command) along which messages are passed from one level to another.

above or below you, you go one level up or down your own channel. You do not ask the chief executive officer for authority to spend company money even if the CEO is your own father; you ask your immediate superior. You do not give the head cook's second assistant instructions about the dinner; you pass them through the head cook.

This keeps everyone informed of what is going on and keeps the lines of responsibility and authority straight. If you violate the chain of command, there is bound to be somebody who doesn't know about the delegation and that person's immediate reaction to someone new giving orders is: "Hey, you're not my boss, you're not supposed to do that!"

It is especially bad to cross channels. You do not give orders to someone on another channel because you do not have responsibility for their work and they are not accountable to you. The dining room team leader cannot give anyone in the kitchen something to do; it has to go up through channels to the manager of the restaurant or the food and beverage director of the hotel and then down through the head cook or the executive chef to the right person. That way everybody knows what is going

on. When you delegate responsibility and authority, you keep your own supervisor informed, because your boss too has responsibility for what you delegate and is accountable for its results.

Delegation, then, is a managerial tool by which responsibility for the work is divided among people, level by level, throughout the organization. Managers are concerned with getting the work done that has been delegated to them and achieving the results for which they are accountable. They have the authority to delegate portions of their responsibility to people who work for them. The question is: what responsibilities to delegate, to whom, and how to do it in a way that will secure the desired results.



Benefits of Delegation

When someone has been hired for a certain job, the supervisor expects that person to do the work assigned to that job classification. What often seems to be missing is the sense of responsibility for carrying out that work. This sense of responsibility does not just happen spontaneously, as the old-style Theory X manager thinks it should (“People these days don’t take any responsibility”). It comes about when the supervisor specifically delegates responsibility to the worker.

In this delegation process the work is spelled out: what is to be done, how it is to be done, and what results are expected—and the worker is trained to do it. Then the worker can indeed be given responsibility for doing the work and the supervisor need not follow everyone around all the time. Responsibility for their own jobs is delegated to the workers, and they are accountable for results. Wherever specific procedures are not required, workers are given authority to do the work in whatever way achieves the best results. They are given the right to make decisions, a certain freedom of action, and the self-respect that comes from taking responsibility for what they do on the job.

The first benefit is that once workers are trained, once they are given responsibility for results, the supervisor no longer has to keep close track and can fall back into a coaching and supportive role. Supervisors who delegate responsibility for the work spend fewer hours watching and correcting worker performance. They can either spend fewer hours on the job, or devote more time to other aspects of supervision, or both.

A second benefit is one that may surprise an old-style Theory X manager: People who are given responsibility generally work better and get more done because the boss is not on their backs all the time. They are happier in their jobs, they are more involved, they take pride in their work, and they tend to stay around longer, so the supervisor does not have to hire and train new people all the time. More and better work is getting done, perhaps even with fewer people.

So far, we have been talking about delegating responsibility to people for carrying out their own jobs. But often, these jobs are narrowly defined to exclude everything with even a whisper of a risk. Many jobs could be broadened to include related responsibilities. The dishwasher job could include responsibility for correcting the water temperature. The bartender job should include stocking the bar. The cashier should close down the register. These things make more sense. Job descriptions and performance standards can be broadened to include these duties so that all workers

in this job classification will be trained and given responsibility for them. The added responsibilities will make the employees in these jobs feel more important and at the same time free the supervisor of still more detail and interruption.

The manager may then see the possibility of giving the more promising people still more responsibility by delegating some of the routine management duties or even some duties that are not totally routine. It would mean careful planning, more training, more follow-up, but it would ultimately relieve the manager of still more time-consuming detail, and it would develop a promising employee in a new direction: more responsibility, new skills, a new interest, a new way of thinking that might produce fresh ideas, and better ways to do the task delegated. This is a third benefit of delegation: *developing your people and multiplying their contribution.*

Developing people is part of a leader's job. It is a way of putting people's capacities and potential to work for the benefit of the operation. Many people in our industry are underemployed, and these workers constitute a valuable untapped resource of ability and intelligence. To such high-potential workers you can delegate small units of your own job (a daily routine, a weekly report, a troubleshooting task). By training them to take over such tasks, you are increasing their skills and opening up their future while giving yourself more time to manage. People given new responsibilities and the opportunity to learn new skills become more motivated, more committed to their work, and they usually do it well, often with imagination and creativity.

In this way you can gradually expand such people's experience and prepare them for promotion. What if you lose them through promotion? You may be promoted yourself precisely because you are doing this kind of thing.

Delegation is a conceptual skill. It requires you to see your own job as a whole and find what parts of it can be delegated. Far from lessening your control over the work of your department, it actually tightens up the operation, leading to greater efficiency. Herein lies a fourth benefit: *Greater efficiency means less waste and confusion, lower costs, less conflict, higher morale, less turnover in personnel. Greater efficiency makes everybody happier, including the customers.*

Finally, delegation will *sharpen your leadership skills*, both conceptual and human. The essence of supervision is getting things done through people. Learning to delegate is not easy, but it will make you grow, both in your job and as a person. Success in delegating will increase your own confidence and your satisfaction in your job, and it will prepare you for advancement.

Delegation not only benefits the leader, but also the people to whom one delegates. Studies indicate that most people want more responsibility, and they want the opportunity to grow and develop. The ways that people to whom you delegate can benefit are:

Check Your Knowledge

1. What is delegation?
2. State the three aspects of delegation.
3. List the benefits of delegation.

- They become more productive and valuable to the organization and team.
- By learning new things, they improve their self-esteem.
- They become resources for people who need help and function as backups when needed.

They become more knowledgeable and skilled at handling the details and problems of running a team.¹²



Why People Resist Delegation

If delegation has so many benefits, why is it so rarely practiced in the hospitality industry? There are two sides to the answer. On the one hand, it is very difficult for many supervisors to delegate, or even to believe that it will work. On the other hand, many workers do not want to assume responsibilities. Sometimes the supervisor's reasons and the worker's reasons feed on one another and make it even more difficult to initiate the process.

WHY LEADERS HAVE TROUBLE DELEGATING

The Theory X leader—and there are still many of them in the hospitality industry—simply does not believe in delegation. Since this type of leader believes that people are by nature lazy and avoid responsibility and must be coerced, controlled, and threatened with punishment to get anything done, the matter ends right there. *They will not believe that delegation, properly carried out, can work and that at least certain kinds of people will take responsibility.* They will not even try it. If they were to try it, they would not do it right, they would not trust their people, they would expect it to fail, and it would.

Many leaders are afraid that if they let go of the work—if they delegate—the work will not be done right. They, too, do not trust their employees. This is why they are on their people's backs all the time, overseeing, correcting, and looking for mistakes. This may be their idea of on-the-job training, but it breeds resentment and causes people to leave. It is true that work delegated may not always be done right; you have to train people carefully, trust them, and expect some mistakes at first. If you don't, delegation will not work for you either.

Some managers believe that their constant presence and their personal control of every last detail are indispensable to the success of the operation. This is an ego problem: They have to feel that without them everything will fall apart, that something terrible will happen if they are not there. Perhaps secretly, even unconsciously, some are afraid that nothing will happen and that things will move right along without them, and they do not want to find this out. For some, this may be the most compelling reason of all for not delegating anything. For such people, power, authority, and tight control are essential to their own security.

Managers who are not confident in their own jobs may be afraid to delegate because workers may turn out to do the work better than they did themselves. This is a very threatening idea. How could they handle this, how could they save face? Would the workers want more money, or even take over their job? Would they lose these good employees through promotion? Such fears are powerful inhibitors.

Many managers do not want to take responsibility for the mistakes of others. They may be afraid to be dependent on others. They may worry about what will happen to their own job if they delegate responsibilities and their people do not come through with the results. They may be afraid of what their boss will do, and in some cases this may be a very legitimate fear.

While fear of one sort or another is a major reason for not delegating, in other cases the reason may be habit or momentum. Some people simply cannot delegate. They have always done things themselves. They have gotten where they are by doing,

not by letting others do, and they cannot let go. You see this sometimes in family corporations or companies where the president is 90 years old and is still running the business. These people cannot let go of the reins and they are still trying to do it all. They do not know how to do it any other way.

Many managers who are newly promoted from hourly jobs also have trouble shifting from doing to managing. We have talked about this boomerang type of management before: Supervisors slip back into doing the work themselves because it is easier and more comfortable than getting others to do it. This may very well be the most common reason for failure to delegate. When you are not at home with your new responsibilities, delegating them can be a scary and painful prospect.

Occasionally, the momentum of the operation takes over common sense. Many supervisors say that it is quicker to do something yourself than to train someone else to do it. A manager will tell you, "I can make coffee in a five-gallon urn in five minutes, but it will take me half an hour to train a worker to do it." The manager never has half an hour to spare, so the manager makes the coffee and it becomes part of the manager's job. But training a worker, a one-time expenditure of 30 minutes, would save some 60 hours a year of the manager's time. Hundreds of such decisions are made in hospitality enterprises because short-term pressures override the long-term gains of delegation, or because the supervisor cannot see beyond the next five minutes, or has the habit of doing rather than delegating.

Sometimes, tasks that could easily be delegated to a promising worker might involve important people in the organization, or perhaps information the manager might not want to share with any of the workers. Or they might be detailed tasks that the manager really enjoys doing. In such cases a manager may decide that the personal gains in hanging onto these tasks outweigh the time saved or other benefit to the organization. This is a decision of questionable wisdom but not an uncommon one.

Occasionally, for both good and bad reasons, supervisors resist delegation simply because they do not want to lose touch with what is going on.

Sometimes, there are reasons more substantial than fears or habits or self-interest that keeps managers from delegating. There may be no workers who are qualified and willing to take on work the supervisor would really like to delegate. The ability and willingness of the workers are of critical importance to the success of delegation, so let us see why workers do not want the responsibilities delegation entails.

WHY SOME ASSOCIATES WON'T ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY

Some associates in the hospitality industry are barely able to do their jobs at the minimum level of acceptability. Others are very dependent people who want to be told what to do all the time and are afraid to make decisions. A few are hostile types who are just waiting for a chance to get a hold of the ball and run with it in the opposite direction; they don't trust you and you don't trust them. None of these are good candidates for delegation beyond the specific bare-bones tasks of their jobs. Even if they were willing, they are not able to assume additional responsibilities.

In delegation, fear plays a part for many associates just as it does for managers. *Fear of failure* is common among people who lack self-confidence; they doubt their own capabilities to carry out new tasks. They do not trust themselves.

Others fear the consequences of the mistakes they may make in a new assignment. They may be afraid of the boss's criticism or anger. Their relationship with the boss may not be good enough to make them willing to risk the mistakes.

Sometimes an associate who is offered an extra responsibility may be afraid of rejection by other associates. If others are jealous, see the new assignment as a defection to the management side, or think it is unfair to themselves, they may give the worker in question a hard time—or at least the worker may think they will. Getting along with one's peers, being part of a group—that feeling of belonging—may be more important than having responsibilities and rewards.

*Many associates will refuse added responsibilities if they see them simply as meaningless extra work that they have to do. If there is nothing in it for them—no interest, no reward, no extra pay, no recognition or independence or challenge or opportunity for growth, just more drudgery—they will perceive the added work as an imposition and they will resent it. They will refuse it outright or find ways not to do it, and the attempt to delegate will backfire. Adding more work without adding interest, challenge, or reward, known as *job loading*, is to be avoided at all costs.*

Finally, there are highly capable associates who are satisfied with what they are doing and *simply do not want to be given more responsibility or to be developed and pushed up the corporate ladder*. Not every cook aspires to be a food and beverage director; some people just love to cook. Most people who are “only working until” are not interested in taking more responsibility; they are only marking time. Some people want a routine job that makes no demands on the mind because they are writing the great American novel. The professional dishwasher we mentioned several chapters back was utterly happy as a dishwasher and refused all offers of advancement. The dish room was his empire, he was in charge, he was proud of it, nobody bothered him, it was where he belonged, and it filled all his needs.

Delegation, then, may be a relationship between two fearful and reluctant parties. How can one avoid its fears and follies and reap its benefits and rewards?



How to Delegate Successfully

Certain conditions are essential to successful delegation. You have met them in earlier chapters.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

One condition is *advance planning*. This should include an overall review of who is responsible for what in your department at this time, what further responsibilities could be delegated, who is qualified to assume greater responsibilities, what training would be necessary, how various shifts in responsibilities would affect others, and when these shifts would appropriately take place. Delegation involves rearranging things, and it brings your conceptual skills into play. You have to look beyond the daily operational detail to the larger picture and get it all into focus. In addition to general overall planning, delegation requires a specific plan for each instance of delegation so that everything is clear to everyone concerned and the groundwork is prepared properly. We will say more about this in the next section.

A second condition for successful delegation is a *positive attitude toward your associates*. You cannot have Theory X beliefs about your people and expect delegation to work. You don't have to be an all-out Theory Y manager, but you must have good relationships with your employees, know their interests and their capabilities, and be sensitive to their needs and their potential. You must respect them as individuals and be interested in developing them, for both your sake and theirs. You need to develop the kind of leadership skill that gives people belief in themselves and makes them want to come through for you.

A third condition is *trust*. There has to be trust between you and the people to whom you delegate: You trust them enough to share your responsibility with them, and they trust you not to put something over on them or get them in over their heads. Only if you both have this trust can you get the commitment necessary to make delegation work.

A fourth condition of successful delegation is the *ability to let go and take risks*, to let your associates make some mistakes and to give yourself the same privilege. Each time you delegate a responsibility it is going to be new for you and new for the other person, and some mistakes are bound to be made; it is not going to be perfect from day one. But when a mistake happens, you don't panic and you don't jump on the other person. You take a coaching approach. The worker learns under your leadership, and you improve your leadership skills, and that is what true on-the-job training is all about. You can both learn something from every mistake, and that is how you both grow.

A fifth condition of successful delegation is *good communications*. You must keep the channels open and use them freely, send clear messages, and keep everyone informed who is affected by the delegation: the person to whom you delegate, the workers in that area, and your boss. Make sure that the people to whom you delegate know the terms of their authority and the extent of their responsibility. The more you delegate—the more people there are who share your responsibility—the more important good communications become.

The sixth condition is *commitment*. If you can involve your people in the planning and goal setting for their new tasks, they will become committed to achieving the results. You, in turn, must be committed to train, coach, and support as needed. You don't just dump the job on somebody else and abdicate.

STEPS IN DELEGATION

The first step in delegation is to *plan*. You need to identify tasks that can be assigned to someone else, and you need to figure out which of your people are able and willing to take them on. You begin by listing all the things you do. You might find it useful to keep a chart for several days on which you note absolutely everything you do in each quarter-hour. Then you sort out your activities and responsibilities into groups, as shown in Figure 13-6. After you have done this, you can arrange things that should and could be delegated in some kind of order: order of importance, or ease of delegating, or time saved, and choose which one or two you will tackle first.

Next you must look at your associates. Choosing the right person for the responsibility is a key ingredient in successful delegation. Motivation and ability are both

Things you must do yourself (e.g., hiring, evaluation, rewards, discipline, termination)
Things you should do yourself that someone could help you with and could do when you cannot be there (e.g., scheduling, data for cost percentages)
Things you now do yourself that someone else could be trained to do (e.g., training new personnel, requisitioning, ordering, receiving)
Things you should have others do with help and guidance from you (e.g., customer counts, time sheets, guestroom counts, occupancy rates)
Things others must do (e.g., their own jobs)
Things no one is doing that others could do (e.g., new menu items, specialty drinks, promotion ideas)

FIGURE 13-6: A way of organizing tasks that can be delegated.

essential to success. Who among your people is both able and willing? If there is no one with both qualities, is there someone you can train, or someone who would be willing if you could overcome their fears or make the content of the task more attractive or offer appropriate recognition and reward?



Successful delegation. One of the conditions of successful delegation is to have a positive attitude toward your associates.

Courtesy of Wyndham Hotels Group.

Once you have identified the task and the person you want to have perform it, the second step is to *develop the task in detail* as a responsibility to be delegated. You define the area of responsibility, the activities that must be carried out, the results you expect, and the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibility. This is all very similar to the procedure you use in developing performance standards. In fact, a system of performance standards is an excellent tool for use in delegating responsibility. You can turn people loose in their jobs because you have told them exactly what you want, have set the achievement goals, and have trained them in the skills needed. They can take the responsibility from there and leave you free to manage. Figure 13-7 illustrates a way of planning the assignment of tasks to be delegated.

In any delegation you do the same thing. You spell out the essential content and detailed requirements of the task, you define the limitations, and you specify the results expected. Within these limits people will be free to do the job in their own fashion. You will also spell out the specific authority that goes with the responsibility delegated: what kinds of decisions can be made without checking with the boss, what money can be spent, what actions they are authorized to take on behalf of the boss or the enterprise, and so on. You figure all this out ahead of time, and then you take the third step—you delegate.

The third step has three parts: you *delegate responsibility* for the task and the results expected, you *delegate the authority* necessary to carry it out, and you establish

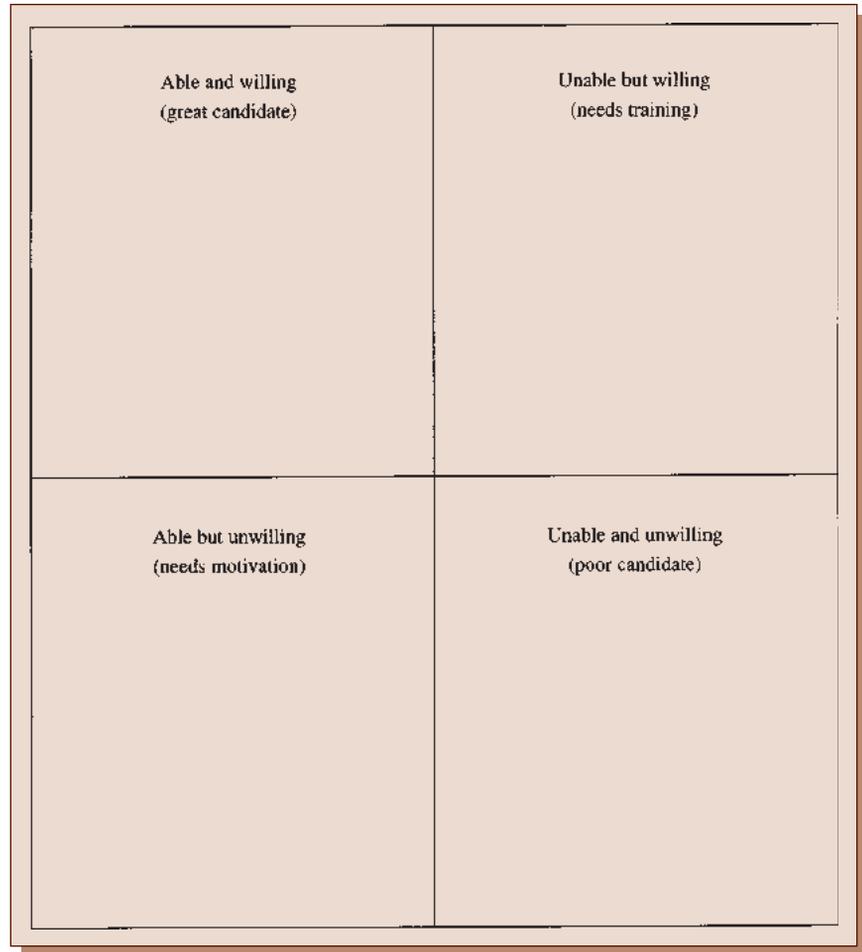


FIGURE 13-7: A way of planning the assignment of tasks to be delegated.

accountability. As we have seen, these are the three interlocking parts of delegation, and they must be spelled out clearly.

When you delegate, you meet with the chosen employee—John and Susan or whoever—in a private interview in which you describe the task, the results you expect, and the responsibility and authority it entails. It should be an informal person-to-person discussion. You should present the new assignment in a way that will stimulate interest and involvement: ask for ideas, make it a challenge, mention its present and future benefits, offer rewards if appropriate, and express confidence. Take a “we” approach, indicating your availability for support and your continuing interest in John’s or Susan’s success. Promise training if it is needed. However, do not put pressure on by ordering, threatening, or making it impossible to refuse. *There must be agreement on the employee’s part to accept the delegation.*

Contract

An agreement between two parties that is fully understood and accepted by both.

Delegation is a *contract*. You cannot just give responsibility to people; they must accept the responsibility. They must also accept the accountability that goes with the responsibility. Unless you have fully given responsibility and authority and the other person has fully accepted responsibility and accountability, true delegation has not taken place.

It is important for your employees to know that you are sharing your responsibility with them; you are not dumping it on them and abandoning them. You, too, are accountable for the results. Give them plenty of chance for questions and plenty of reassurance for lingering doubts.

If you have matched the right person with the right assignment and have communicated it in the right way, John and Susan will be interested, pleased, motivated, challenged, and glad to have more responsibility. If you include them in setting goals for the project, you will gain their commitment to achieving them.

Set checkpoints along the way for following progress. They give you the means of keeping the employee and the assignment on target. You can modify or adjust the assignment, correct mistakes, and give advice at critical points without taking back the entire job. Checkpoints are your controls. If you can't set up controls, either don't delegate the job or redesign it so that you have some other means of tracking performance.

The fourth step in delegation is to *follow up*. Train your people as needed. This is something they have never done before, so you go through the whole story: what you want done, how you want it done, to what standard. If you don't, they will take the easiest way to do it. When they are ready to go, communicate the new status to everyone concerned, following channels, and make good on immediate rewards promised, such as relieving them from other duties to make time for the new ones. Then slip into the coaching role. Stay off their backs: Don't oversupervise and overcontrol; let them work out their own problems if they can. If they have trouble making decisions and keep asking you what to do, turn the questions back to them—ask them what *they* think. Encourage them to go it on their own. Don't let the responsibility you have given them dribble back to you.

When employees try to dump their assignment back to you, it is called *reverse delegation*. It may occur because the employee lacks confidence, doesn't really know enough to do the job, is afraid of making a mistake, or simply does not want the added responsibility. You need to listen to the employee and discuss the impasse, but make it perfectly clear that the task is still the employee's responsibility to complete. If you take back incomplete work, you will support the employee's dependence on you. The best way to handle reverse delegation can be stated as follows: "Don't bring me problems, bring me solutions."

Observe the checkpoints, assess progress, give feedback, and help Susan and John reach independence in their new assignments. Then congratulate yourself on two things: You are learning how to delegate successfully, and you are developing your promising employees. This is genuine on-the-job training (not the magic apron type), and you are developing genuine management skills.

Reverse delegation

A situation in which you delegate a job to an employee and he or she tries to give it back to you.

Check Your Knowledge

1. Certain conditions are essential to successful delegation. What are these conditions?
2. Why do some supervisors have trouble delegating?

ADAPTING DELEGATION TO YOUR SITUATION

There are few universal rules about what tasks you should delegate and what you should keep for yourself. Generally, you should not delegate responsibility that involves your relationship with subordinates, such as hiring, evaluating, disciplining, and terminating. You should not delegate tasks that require technical expertise that only you have, or tasks that involve confidential information, and you should not dump unpleasant tasks on people who don't want them by passing them off as “delegating responsibility.” Other than these, there are few tasks that you should avoid delegating if the delegation makes sense.

It makes sense to delegate time-consuming and routine detail that other people can and will take care of. It frees your time and attention for managing.

It makes sense to train others to take over tasks and responsibilities that must continue when you are not there. You must provide for emergencies and for your off hours and vacations. You must have people who can assume your day-to-day responsibilities when necessary. If your unit or department cannot run without you for a while, you are not doing your job.

It makes sense to delegate tasks and responsibilities that motivate and develop your people. If you know your people and their interests, talents, and shortcomings, you can match the responsibility to the person. You can give them work that interests them, challenges them, makes them feel important and valued, gives them the satisfaction of achievement, and helps them grow.

It makes sense to plan such growth for people of high potential, to add further responsibilities over a period of time, to groom them to take your place someday or climb your company's career ladder or move to a better position somewhere else. Although you may lose them in the end, they will more than repay you in what they contribute to you and your operation as they grow.

You are the only person who can decide what makes sense in your area of leadership. You are the only one who knows the tasks and the people. Taking the first steps of delegating can be scary and even painful, but once you have done it, you are on your way to being a leader in every sense of the word. You do not have to do it all at once; there are degrees and stages of delegation. Take it one task at a time, one step at a time, and start with a task and a person you are pretty sure are made for each other.

Delegating responsibilities, making jobs more interesting and challenging, and helping people grow multiplies your own effectiveness many times over—far, far beyond anything you could do by keeping all your responsibilities to yourself.



KEY POINTS

1. Communication is the transference of understanding and meaning between two or more people.
2. Leaders are involved in interpersonal communication, organizational communication, small-group communication, and sometimes mass communication.
3. Figure 13-1 shows the six elements of a successful communication.

4. Communication is important because leaders spend most of their time communicating, as when directing people at work, giving instructions, training, interviewing, hiring, firing, and so on.
5. Figure 13-2 describes many of the obstacles to communication.
6. The following can be done to remove many obstacles to good communication: build a climate of trust and respect; send your messages clearly; use language the receiver can understand; don't assume anything; take into account the receiver's ability to receive; send your message at the best time; send your message to the right person; choose the best means of sending your message; check for understanding; listen; be objective; avoid slang and disrespectful terms; and don't communicate when you are upset.
7. Listening is the second half of the communication process—the most neglected half and sometimes the most important.
8. Bad listening practices include going off on tangents, reacting emotionally, and cutting off the flow of the message.
9. Five principles of good listening include giving the other person your undivided attention, hearing the person out, looking for the real message, keeping your emotions out of it, and maintaining your role.
10. To direct work effectively, a supervisor must send clear messages, get people to accept the messages, and make a positive impact.
11. The steps in giving instruction include planning, establishing a climate of acceptance, delivering the instructions, verifying that the instructions have been understood, and following up.
12. Tips for effective business writing include paying attention to your reader, organizing your writing, using simple words, getting to the point quickly, being upbeat, writing as though you were talking, writing clearly, showing how the reader will benefit from reading your communication, keeping it short, and checking your document for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and neatness.
13. For meetings to work for everyone, you need to be prepared, have an agenda, follow the agenda, and respect differences of opinion.
14. Delegation is a managerial tool by which responsibility for the work is divided among people, level by level, throughout the organization.
15. There are three aspects of delegation: responsibility, authority, and accountability. As a supervisor you have been given the responsibility for certain activities and the results they are expected to produce, the authority (or rights and powers) to carry out your responsibilities, and the accountability (or obligation to your boss) to produce these results.
16. The lines of responsibility and authority in an organization provide the chain of command. Accountability moves right beside responsibility but in the opposite direction. All employees are accountable to their boss, so the accountability moves right up to the top along the same lines on which authority and responsibility move downward.
17. The lines of responsibility and authority are also the channels of communication.
18. The benefits of delegation include the fact that the supervisor can spend more time coaching and performing other duties instead of watching and correcting performance; the employees can usually work better; the supervisor can develop employees; and greater efficiency results, which means less waste and confusion, lower costs, less conflict, higher morale, less turnover, and happier customers.



- 19.** The Theory X manager does not believe in delegation because he or she believes that employees will not take responsibility and/or the job will not be done right. Some managers believe that their constant presence and personal control of every last detail are indispensable. Other managers don't delegate because they are afraid the workers may do the work better than they did it themselves, or simply out of habit. Sometimes, supervisors resist delegation simply because they do not want to lose touch with what is going on.
- 20.** Employees at times may not accept new responsibilities because of fear of failure or fear of being rejected by coworkers, dislike of meaningless extra work, or simply a lack of desire to be pushed up the career ladder.
- 21.** Conditions for delegating successfully include advance planning, a positive attitude toward your people, trust, the ability to let go and take risks, good communications, and commitment.
- 22.** The steps in delegation include planning, developing the task in detail, delegating responsibility for the task and results expected, delegating the authority and establishing accountability, setting checkpoints along the way for following progress, and follow-up.
- 23.** Reverse delegation is when employees try to dump their assignment back to you.
- 24.** Common mistakes in delegating include not communicating clearly, overmanaging, not taking time enough to train and give support, not setting up controls, job loading, assigning dead-end work without any reward, delegating to the wrong person, delegating unpleasant parts of the job that involve the boss-subordinate relationship, and setting up overlapping responsibilities.



KEY TERMS

accountability	job loading
active listening	listening
agenda	mass communication
authority	nonverbal communication
body language	open communication
chain of command	organizational communication
channels of communication	personal space
communication zones	public distance
communications	responsibility
contract	reverse delegation
delegation	small-group communication
extranet	social distance
interpersonal communication	symbols
interviewing	two-way communication
intranet	wireless fidelity



REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer each question in complete sentences. Read each question carefully and make sure that you answer all parts of the question. Organize your answer using more than one paragraph when appropriate.

1. Define communication and the five types of communication discussed in this chapter.
2. List five obstacles to communication and how to overcome each.
3. You need to give new instructions to the late-shift supervisor about how to close the operation for the night. Describe how you might do so.
4. Discuss briefly three problems you have seen in business writing and how you would overcome them.
5. What can be done to prevent lengthy meetings that don't accomplish anything?
6. The ability to delegate has been called one of the hallmarks of a good manager. Explain its importance to management.
7. Discuss in detail the three aspects of delegation.
8. Why do some supervisors resist delegation? Why do some employees resist delegation?
9. What conditions are necessary for delegation?
10. Describe the steps in delegating tasks.
11. What is reverse delegation?
12. Discuss common mistakes in delegating.



ACTIVITIES AND APPLICATIONS

1. Discussion Questions

- Explain why two people describing the same object or the same situation may give different accounts of it. How does this interfere with communication?
- Comment on the statement, "When emotions are involved, the emotions become the message." Do you agree? Give examples to back up your answer. How does emotion block communication on the job?
- Give several examples of words that may mean different things to different people, such as *fun*, *soon*, *a little*, or *pretty*. Pick two or three words and ask several people to describe what each means to them. Compare the meanings and discuss how the differences could complicate communication.
- The supervisor is responsible not only for giving an instruction but for making sure that it is received and carried out, yet it is the worker who controls the reception. How can a supervisor deal with this problem?
- Do you know people who are really good listeners? What do they do that makes them good listeners? Do you think a first-line supervisor would be able to become an active listener? What is the best way to do this?
- How can a supervisor delegate responsibility, yet retain it at the same time? How does this principle work out in practice? Give examples.
- In what ways do the concepts of a performance standard system apply to the delegation process? How does delegation draw on communication and training skills?
- With what management styles is delegation compatible? Why doesn't delegation work for a Theory X manager?
- Why does delegation so often involve fear; and why does it require courage?
- Have you ever been delegated a task while working? How did your supervisor handle it? How did you feel about it?

2. Group Activity: Communication Methods

Complete a chart listing the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face communication, telephone communication, memos, meetings, and electronic mail. Compare your chart with those prepared by other groups.

3. Memo Critique

Critique the memo in Figure 13-8 using the criteria in the text. What could you do to make this memo more effective?

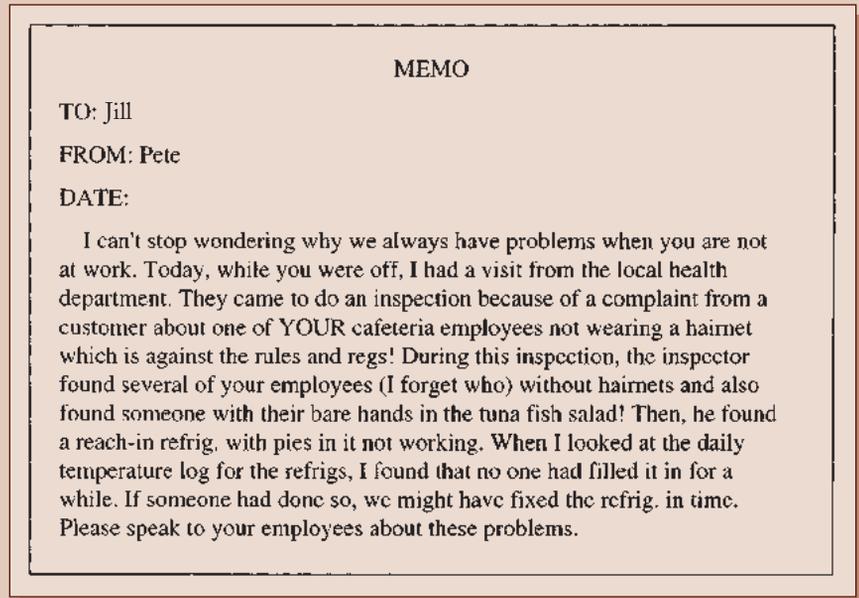


FIGURE 13-8: Sample Memo.

4. Are You Listening?

With the students working in pairs, one student draws two or three shapes (such as squares, rectangles, or triangles) on a blank piece of paper. The other student should not see it. Next, the first student describes what he or she drew to the second student, who tries to draw the same picture on a blank sheet of paper. The second student is not allowed to ask questions or say anything. Once completed, reverse roles. What did you learn?

5. Group Activity: Delegation Role-Play

In a group of four, think of a situation in which a hospitality supervisor delegates a job to an employee. While two students role-play the supervisor telling the employee about the delegated task, the other two students can be observers. When the role-play is done, the observers can take a turn being supervisor and employee.

6. Case Study: Meeting

Once a month, Sue, a district manager for a foodservice contract company, holds a meeting at a single location that is accessible to all the foodservice directors at her six hospital

accounts. The meeting is supposed to start at 2:00 P.M. but Sue waits until the last manager arrives at 2:25 P.M.

The meeting starts as Sue thanks everyone for coming and asks how everyone is doing. Three managers start in at the same time with problems they want Sue's advice on, until one manages to out-shout the others and gets Sue's attention. He complains about problems using the new computers in his hospitals. Once he's done, each manager takes a turn asking questions about concerns in his or her own operation. Their questions are all directed to Sue. By the time Sue has given each question her attention, it is almost 3:30 P.M. Since the meetings are only supposed to go until 4:00 P.M., Sue tries to share her news with everyone in 30 minutes.

After the meeting is over, Sue realizes that she forgot to mention something very important. She becomes angry with herself because she once again ran out of time and didn't write an agenda. The managers grumble and groan about wasted time as they run to their cars to return to their accounts.

Case Study Questions

1. What went well with this meeting?
2. What went poorly?
3. How could Sue make her management meetings more productive?
4. What could the managers do to make the meetings more productive?
5. Did Sue really not have enough time to write an agenda, or did she not make it a priority?

7. Case Study: The Refugee Cleaning Crew

Brian supervises the night cleaning crew at an airport catering facility. The company has always had a terrible time getting help because of its distance from the city, the working hours, and lack of public transportation. Recently, the head of recruiting persuaded Brian to take on six refugees from a country in Southeast Asia as part of a deal with a sponsoring church group that has arranged to transport a busload of people to employers in the airport area. The refugees do not speak a word of English. Brian will have to train them in their jobs. This includes cleaning techniques and routines; using and caring for equipment and utensils; using and storing cleaning compounds, sanitizers, and pesticides; and maintaining standards of cleanliness. He must also teach them the company rules that they must observe. Someone from the church will teach Brian any 10 words of the refugees' language and provide a pamphlet explaining cultural differences that might cause problems (for example, the refugees read and write from right to left).

Case Study Questions

1. What 10 words do you think would be most useful for Brian to learn?
2. What kinds of symbols should he use?
3. Besides the language barrier, what other obstacles to communication may there be?
4. What can he do to create a receptive attitude on their part?
5. Should he try to train all of them as a group, or one at a time? Why?
6. How will he be able to tell whether they are really receiving his messages as he intends them?
7. How can he communicate encouragement and approval?



8. How can he make sure that they will not get the different chemicals confused and that they will dilute them in the right proportions?
9. As a result of learning to communicate with them successfully, what will he learn that he can apply to training his other workers?

8. Case Study: Too Much Too Fast?

Joanne is manager of an in-plant self-service cafeteria for an insurance company headquarters with 1000 employees, most of whom eat breakfast and lunch there. In addition to managing the cafeteria, she is responsible for stocking sandwich and dessert vending machines. She has been supervising all her workers directly but has decided that it would be better if she delegated the major food-preparation responsibilities to her three best workers in order to devote more time to customer relations.

After lunch on Wednesday she calls the three workers together and explains her plan.

"I am going to delegate to each of you responsibility for preparing the food in your department and keeping the counters and steam table stocked during the serving period. Ellen, you will be in charge of salad and sandwich preparation. Michelle, you will do the desserts and baked goods. You two will also prepare the food for vending. Robert, you will be responsible for all the hot food: soups, entrees, vegetables, and so on.

"Your present coworkers—you each have two—will become your assistants, and you will direct their work. I will be on hand at all times, but I will be talking with customers and supervising the rest of the staff: the breakfast cooks, cashiers, cleanup crew, dishwashers, and so on. I will also continue to do the ordering, receiving, staffing, and so forth.

"Now, you all have seen me in action in your departments, and you know what my methods and standards are. Make the usual menu in the usual quantities. Just do everything as I would do it, and come to me with questions. We will start tomorrow."

The first day of the new regime is a near-disaster. No one makes the beverages, and no one stocks the vending machines, although the food is prepared for them as usual. Both Michelle and Ellen prepare the cantaloupe and the fruit/cheese plates. One of Robert's assistants does not show up, and instead of asking Joanne to get a substitute cook, he and his other assistant try to keep up with the demand. The result is a large and growing crowd of complaining customers waiting for the hot food. Ellen's two assistants refuse to take orders from her and go to Joanne saying, "Hey, she's not our boss, who does she think she is, telling us what to do?" One of Michelle's assistants resigns in a huff in the middle of lunch because she thinks she should have had the job instead of Michelle, and Michelle is snapping at her. The other complains to Joanne about Michelle after the serving period is over.

Joanne spends the entire day putting out fires (some of them are still burning), dealing with complaining customers, and trying to find a replacement for the worker who resigned. She ends the day harassed and embarrassed. She is pretty sure that all her workers except those who are mad are laughing at her, and she will probably have trouble with everyone for several days, including the customers. She hopes that her boss at the catering company she works for does not hear about this.

Case Study Questions

1. What basic mistakes did Joanne make?
2. Why do you think she did not foresee what happened?

3. How could she have avoided the reaction of Ellen's and Michelle's assistants? How could she have avoided the reaction of Robert, who tried to work shorthanded?
4. What should she do now? Should she withdraw the delegation or try to make it work? If the latter, make a detailed plan for her to carry out.
5. How will she handle all her other workers tomorrow to keep their respect?
6. What should she do about pacifying customers?
7. Should her boss at the catering company headquarters be involved in any way? Does her boss share the responsibility for what happened?



WEB ACTIVITY

- Go to a hospitality Web site and look for examples of effective human resources communications. Share your findings in class.



ENDNOTES

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