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Communication Strategies for Outstanding Leadership

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Superior leadership requires superior communication. Conveying your message in a clear and convincing manner is the absolute key to inspiring others, fostering commitment, and facilitating profound and enduring change in your organization.

Whether you are a senior executive, a manager or a team leader, you can hone your communication skills with the following tried-and-true strategies:

- *Command the language.* Be articulate, even eloquent, in all written and spoken communication. If your language skills aren't where they should be, improve them! Read every day. Consider joining a local chapter of Toastmasters International. These simple and pleasurable activities will do wonders for your written and verbal communication skills.
- *Be yourself.* If you try to sound like someone else, your message will be diluted or lost. To be sure you're conveying your message in an authentic and convincing manner, run it by a trusted peer, friend or family member before presenting it to your intended audience. Get some honest feedback and then make any necessary adjustments.
- *Invite dialogue.* Speak freely with others and invite them to do the same. Allow them to respond, question and even push back. Remember: Communication is a two-way street.
- *Speak with confidence.* Make sure you believe in what you're saying and let it come through! Your genuine display of conviction and authority will inspire trust, confidence and action.

- *Walk your talk.* Don't just say the words. Live by them. People readily spot hypocrisy. They will discount your message if your words and actions don't match up.
- *Say it again.* And again. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself. Even the most powerful and important message must be repeated to get into the hearts and minds of your listeners.
- *Take a stand.* Better to take an extreme or unpopular stance than to waver from one position to the next.
- *Say it in various ways.* Formally and informally. To individuals and groups throughout your organization. Through powerful memos, crystal clear e-mails and focused discussions. There are countless venues for delivering your message. You really ought to use them.
- *Get input from others.* Ask provocative questions. Learn what's on the minds of your people. Some of the most powerful communication occurs when we simply stop talking and start listening.

Superior leaders recognize that it's not just what you say. It's also how you say it. Communicate with authority, conviction, authenticity and poise. Join the ranks of today's truly outstanding leaders. □



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