

Communication

Effective Communication techniques and skills for
auditors and investigators

Richard Maggs

What I will cover

- What do we mean by effective communication
- General communication issues/problems
- Communicating with clients – delivering to a hostile audience
- Communicating with each other

What is communication

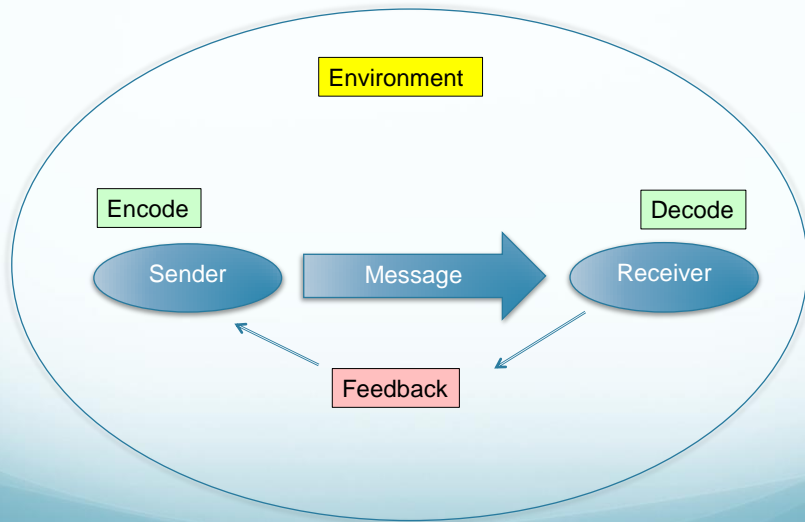
[Interaction with audience on what communication is; how important it is for their work; and what are the major problems faced]

[Outputs – flip charts of results of interaction]

What is communication

- Some definitions:
 - The transmission and receipt of a message or idea.
 - The activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages or information by speech visuals, signals written or behaviour.
 - The meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures
 - a process by which information is exchanged between individuals
 - Information transmitted or conveyed

Classical model of communication



Some things that clever people have said about communication

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

George Bernard Shaw

- *Sending an email is not communicating*
- *Writing a report is not communicating*
- *Even face to face discussion is not communicating if the person opposite you is not listening*

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”

Anthony Robbins

- *The different perceptions of auditors and controllers*
- *Administrative culture*
- *Friends or enemies*
- *Personal animosity*

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”

Leonardo da Vinci

- *KISS – Keep It Simple Stupid*
- *Don’t show off.*
- *Short sentences*
- *No Jargon or acronyms.*
- *Be concise*

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what is not being said.”

Peter F.Drucker

- *First listen – then speak*
- *Be aware of non verbal communication*
 - *Two thirds of the message conveyed is nonverbal*
 - *Impressions are on average formed within the first four seconds of contact*
 - *human faces are capable of more than ten thousand different expressions*
- *When we relate with others our body language will present most of the message*
- **In conclusion** - *mean what you say and look like you mean it*

“The medium is the message”

Marshall McLuhan

- *Use the right vehicle*
 - *Email*
 - *Phone call*
 - *Letter*
 - *Meeting face to face*
 - *Report*
- *Be aware of how to use each medium well*

“Bad news isn’t wine. It doesn’t improve with age.”

Colin Powell

- Good auditors adopt a no surprises approach and keep clients informed of emerging findings
 - This helps people prepare for bad news

Do it twice

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- If something is really important communicate it twice
 - An email to summarise a telephone call
 - An executive summary for a long report
- A lot of what we communicate is redundant – communicating twice helps ensure that the message is actually received

Delivering bad news

- *Never give negative news without packaging it in a sandwich.*
 - *Layer 1 - The good news*
 - *The filling - The bad news*
 - *Layer 3 - The future – what we can do to address the problems*
- *Negative messages will elicit a typical response*
 - *Denial*
 - *Anger*
 - *Depression*
 - *Acceptance*
- *Be prepared to deal with each stage in reinforcing the message*

Communicating with each other

- Remember that auditors Finance staff and inspectors have different backgrounds a different view of the world
- Understand the impact of personalities and competition on the messages conveyed and received
- Find a way to develop a common position on key issues
- Look for the things that hold you together not pull you apart
- See openness and sharing as a win-win for everyone