

Communication Faults: 100

Communication Mistakes People Make

What mistakes are you making when you open your mouth? Here are 100 common communication faults. Use this checklist when working with a client to strengthen their effectiveness, or as part of your own professional development. As you use this list, you will discover that each item—if the client is willing to discuss it—leads to the client's heart and soul. If one's eyes are mirrors of the soul, communication is a mirror of the mind.

1. Lack of Credibility

- ❑ Over-promises results/benefits
- ❑ Overstates facts; hypes
- ❑ Lies, misrepresents; dishonest
- ❑ Sneaky, nor forthright
- ❑ Eager to please, need approval
- ❑ Pretentious, tries to impress
- ❑ Sounds needy, desperate
- ❑ Insincere-sounding; not real
- ❑ B.S.-er, full of it, full of themselves
- ❑ Justifies, over-explains.

2. Disrespectful

- ❑ Critical, harsh, judgmental
- ❑ Insensitive, no compassion
- ❑ One-ups, downplays efforts
- ❑ Ignores what was said
- ❑ Patronizes, parents
- ❑ Sexist, bigoted, intolerant
- ❑ Digs, undermines, barbs
- ❑ Inappropriate comments, humor
- ❑ Stingy with praise or support
- ❑ Hard-sell, tries to convince, trick

3. Disrupts Flow

- ❑ Too positive; pushes mood
- ❑ Too fast, adrenalized/ pushes mood
- ❑ Half-duplex (can't hear when speaking)
- ❑ Inattentive, easily distracted
- ❑ Information-reactive (responds only to information, not person/feelings)
- ❑ Literal, can't get gist easily
- ❑ Keeps making point even after other person 'got it.'
- ❑ Responds with non-sequiturs
- ❑ Interrogates, peppers w/ questions
- ❑ Overly concerned, too significant

4. Lack of Clarity

- ❑ Trite, boring, old, useless
- ❑ Pat answers/quotes, walking cliché

- ❑ Confusing, overly complicated
- ❑ Vague, rambles, repetitive
- ❑ Mishears, mislabels, assumes
- ❑ Consumes info vs assimilating it
- ❑ Dogmatic, righteous, singular
- ❑ Linear, 2-D, flat information
- ❑ Overloads with too much info
- ❑ Too quick with advice

5. No Warmth

- ❑ Cold, icy
- ❑ No personality, flat, no fizz
- ❑ Measured, controlled
- ❑ Suspicious, distrusting
- ❑ Negative, jaded, ascerbic
- ❑ Quickly points out flaws
- ❑ Rigid
- ❑ Highly technical language
- ❑ Analytical, logic-without-feelings
- ❑ Judges, labels, compartmentalizes

6. Weak Listener

- ❑ Listens too hard
- ❑ Listens only for the familiar; misses
- ❑ Can't multi-process (can only hear one idea/subject/problem at a time)
- ❑ Listens blindly (not sure what to listen for)
- ❑ No echo (person doesn't feel heard)
- ❑ Always preparing a response; misses what is being said
- ❑ Reacts negatively, stops listening
- ❑ Interrupts too much
- ❑ Corrects too much

7. Poor Speaker

- ❑ Doesn't condition or contextualize
- ❑ Uses jargon or boilerplate
- ❑ Uses generic, non-specific language
- ❑ Has inadequate vocabulary
- ❑ Doesn't know distinctions

- ❑ Ignorant, uninformed about life or subject
- ❑ Mostly "I/me" oriented
- ❑ Oblivious/unaware of people's reactions
- ❑ Numb, unaware of own feelings
- ❑ Steps over/ignores key clues

8. Wrong focus

- ❑ Symptoms-oriented (vs source)
- ❑ Problem-centric (vs source)
- ❑ Past-oriented (vs present)
- ❑ Future-oriented (vs present)
- ❑ Consequence-oriented
- ❑ Old-fashioned (vs current thinking)
- ❑ Hearsay, gossip (vs fact)
- ❑ Theoretical (vs practical)
- ❑ Tactical (vs strategic)

9. Ineffective Style

- ❑ Oblique, hinting (vs direct)
- ❑ Slow, plodding (vs quick)
- ❑ Draining (consumes space/energy)
- ❑ Coach vs consult
- ❑ Coach vs help
- ❑ Matter vs mean something
- ❑ Intense, over-eager, too on
- ❑ Speaks too slowly
- ❑ Speaks too quickly
- ❑ Bossy, domineering, controlling
- ❑ Sugary sweet, puffery
- ❑ Broadcasts, lectures, speaks 'at'
- ❑ Talks more than listens

10. Annoying Voice/Tone

- ❑ Feeble, weak, doesn't reach/affect
- ❑ Loud, booming, overpowering
- ❑ Nasal, grating
- ❑ High pitch, squeaky
- ❑ Hesitant, tentative, unsure
- ❑ Heavy breather, spitter
- ❑ Shrill
- ❑ Whine-y
- ❑ Negative, doomsday tone
- ❑ Heavy, significant, overacting

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