

What Does Your Communication Style Say About You?

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In today's world, there are communication tips everywhere - in newspapers, on television and on the web. Why? That's easy, because communication goes to the very core of our existence. We need other people to survive. In our personal lives, we need friends, spouses or significant others to enrich our lives. In business, we need people too. Your customers, employees and vendors all combine to interact with you and make up the network of your company. What you say to these people and how you say it determines how successful those relationships and ultimately your company will be.

As a small business owner, you have a unique advantage over owners of larger companies or corporate CEOs. You have a much closer proximity to your customers, employees and vendors. Often times you are even face-to-face with them rather than six (or more) degrees away such as those in larger firms. This means that **your word is a valuable commodity** that if used to its fullest can benefit you a hundred-fold.

Making the most of this valuable commodity – your word either spoken or written – can be accomplished by asking yourself three simple questions:

Is it Relevant?

- Is your message relevant to the audience it is intended for? If you are sending the same message to everyone without differentiating it based on their relationship with you, your message may be lost or worse, perceived negatively. For example, new customers probably need a somewhat different message than existing customers.
- When you adjust your message by audience it says you understand their needs and value them, an especially important aspect in both customer and employee relations.

Is it Concise?

- As a small business owner, your time is valuable to you. The same can be said of your customers. They have a constant overload of information coming at them. Make your communications succinct but impactful and memorable.

Is it Honest?

- A man is only as good as his word, so the saying goes. Honest communications go a long way in building trust because they show your integrity. Your integrity can be as important as the capital you raise for your business because without either one there's no way to grow.
- Don't promise what you can't deliver – always deliver what you promise.

The way you communicate within and without your business can differentiate you from your small business competition and the larger players in your industry. Take the time

to make this simple but valuable commodity work for you by using these three questions to improve your communication style.

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