

4-1967

## Checklist for Communication Ability; Do You Have Bad Communication Habits?

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### Recommended Citation

Stockman, Eunice E. (1967) "Checklist for Communication Ability; Do You Have Bad Communication Habits?," *Woman C.P.A.*: Vol. 29 : Iss. 3 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/wcpa/vol29/iss3/6>

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# Checklist for Communication Ability

Communication is distinctly a personal art; no two people "communicate" the same just as no two people are similar in other respects. This individuality makes it difficult if not impossible to set up a formula for "good communication." Nevertheless, there are certain basic rules of communication that apply to all situations and all persons. How well do you observe these rules?

1. Do you systematically analyze your problem or idea before trying to communicate to others?
2. Have you considered the goals and attitudes of the person who will be receiving your communication?
3. Do you know what you really want to accomplish with your message?
4. Have you identified your most important goal, whether it is to secure information, initiate action or change the receiver's attitude?
5. Are you trying to accomplish too much rather than focusing on the most important factor?

6. Is this the most appropriate time to discuss the problem or idea?
7. Is the environment conducive to understanding by the other person?
8. Are you remembering that the tone of your voice and your expression also help to make your message understood?
9. Did you select the words in your message with the other person's background in mind? Are you "talking down" or "over the head" of the receiver?
10. Do you ask questions and encourage the receiver to express his views?
11. Are you actually listening to the other person's responses? Are you attentive to the meaning he is trying to get across? Are *you* aware of the unspoken words and undertones of the other person's attempt to communicate with you?
12. Do you follow up your communication with "feedback" to make sure that complete understanding exists?

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## Do You Have Bad Communication Habits?

We are listing only some of the mistakes often made in communicating with others. Go over the list and ask yourself "Do I really do this or say that?"

1. Do you always talk about *yourself*, *your* interests, *your* hobbies?
2. Are you impatient with those who disagree with you?
3. Are you sarcastic and unkind when others are disinterested in your ideas or opinion?
4. Do you try to monopolize a conference or meeting by doing all the talking?
5. Do you ridicule or "talk down" the ideas others bring out at a conference?
6. Do you turn away or "make busy hands" when others are talking?
7. Do you let certain words or actions

prejudice you against the speaker or the speaker's ideas?

8. Do you allow your attention to wander from the speaker?
9. Do you use pretentious or uncommon words that others do not know?
10. Do you show that your feelings are hurt when you are asked to change something you have done?
11. Do you lose your temper? When you become angry do you shout at others?
12. Are you annoyed when someone offers constructive criticism?

There are many ways to communicate that you are interested only in yourself. When you do this, you build resentment and when people don't want to listen to you or understand, no one in the world can make them.

Eunice E. Stockman

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### COMMUNICATION—WHAT IS IT?

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8. Yielding to distractions. Poor listeners are distracted by outside noises, appearance of the speaker, personal discomfort. Try to concentrate and shut out the noises. Be courteous enough to tell the speaker you cannot hear him.

9. Pencil and paper listening. Too much concentration on writing notes may cause some

good points to be missed. However, summary notes of ideas can be valuable for future use.

Reading is another of the receptive skills of communication and is something we all do as receivers. It is extremely important for accountants to acquire the ability to get to the gist of the subject matter in a communication quickly to learn what can be put aside or even thrown away. There are many different ways to read, different speeds, different things