Facilitator starts with a self introduction.

Ice Breaker – Two Truths and a Lie

- How it works: Each participant is asked to say three things about themselves, two of which are true and one of which is a lie. Other participants will try and guess which among the three things is the lie.

Activity – The Puzzle

- Use this opening activity to point out to people that it is important to start thinking ‘out of the box’. Reinforce the fact that new learning happens only when you see things from a perspective different from what you used prior.
- This allows you to introduce the fact that the concepts addressed in the training needs to be approached with an open mind.
- This activity also serves to continue as an energy booster and enables people to relax before the program begins.

What is communication? What is the impact of our communication skills on our business?

Most people are born with the physical ability to talk, but we must learn to speak well and communicate effectively. We learn basic communication skills by observing other people and modeling our behavior based on what we see.

You have been communicating all your life. Therefore, you are quite justified in wondering “why do you need to study communication?”

One answer is that formal study can improve skill. Some people have a natural talent for singing or playing cricket. Yet they could be even more effective if they took voice
lessons or studied theories of offensive or defensive play. Likewise, even if you communicate well now, learning more about it can make you more effective. Communication affects all spheres of our lives, and to spend some time perfecting these skills is an investment that pays dividends throughout our life.

Activity:

- Ask participants to draw a pie chart, showing the percentage of time they spend on Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.
- Ask participants to estimate the amount of time they would have spent on clarifying or verifying information.
- Emphasize that apart from building confidence, good communication skills actually save time and energy.

Activity – Focus

Objective – to emphasize the impact of pressure on basic communication skills.

Instructions to Facilitator:

- Hand out the exercise, closed or face down with the instruction that they are to be opened only after you give the signal to start.
- Time limit for this exercise is 3 minutes.
- Facilitator should mark the first two minutes and give a 10 second warning for the last minute.
- At 3 minutes say time is up and insist that participants stop the exercise.

You will find that some participants will actually start working on each of the instructions, ignoring the first instruction which says “Read all that follows without doing anything.” So, you would find that a few act out on the instructions given at the various steps. Some others would have read the first instruction and acted upon it and would be sitting back having written the name of their organization in the lower left-hand corner of the sheet, which is all that this exercise requires anyone to
do. At the end of the exercise, ask those who have completed the exercise, what did they read? Those who have read and understood the first instruction would happily explain what they did and why.

Debrief: Theoretically, all of us know what it is to read and understand a set of simple instructions. But when under pressure, many of us forget the basics. We need to become aware of this fact and be conscious of our own limitations, especially in our business communications.

Although the exercise was a piece of clear written communication, it was ambiguous in nature. Thus, illustrating that all clear or simple communication is not effective communication as communication is a 2-way process. To the speaker it might be clear and simple but it might not be the same for the listener.

Lead a short discussion on what communication is. “What do the participants want the receiver to do once they get the email or phone call?”

Most often participants want some action to be taken by the recipient. Have further discussion on this point to emphasize the importance of communicating effectively.

Explain the standing of Harvard and Stanford Universities among the universities in the world.

© Copyright 2012, MMM Training Solutions
as·cen·dant also as·cen·dent  (ə-sěnˈdant)
adj. Inclining or moving upward; ascending or rising.
Dominant in position or influence.

Background story for Stanford University.
Leland Stanford was born in the East Coast, in the United States and was educated as a lawyer. In 1852, he moved to California during the California Gold Rush and began mining for gold at Michigan Bluff in Placer County, California. He subsequently went into business with his three brothers, who had preceded him to the Pacific coast. During this time he worked with his brothers as keeper of a general store for miners, served as a Justice of the Peace and helped organize the Sacramento Library Association, which later became the Sacramento Public Library. In 1856 he moved to San Francisco and engaged in mercantile pursuits on a large scale. With wife Jane, Stanford founded Leland Stanford Junior University as a memorial for their only child, Leland Stanford, Jr., who died as a teenager of typhoid in Florence, Italy while on a trip to Europe.

Objective: to underline the impact of ambiguity and perception in communication.

Ask the participants to quietly note down the answers in their notebooks. Give them a reasonable amount of time per question. Accommodate slow readers.

At the end, go through the answers one after the other. Participants would have different answers for the questions. Time permitting, you may choose to take a quick tally of each answer. Some participants will point out that, the questions do not specify certain things. For e.g. in question 2, the

6 Simple Questions
1. There are six eggs in the basket. Six people each take one of the eggs. How can it be that one egg is left in the basket?
2. Some months (like October) have 31 days. Only February has precisely 28 (except in a leap year). How many months have 30 days? _____
3. Divide 50 by 1/3 and add 7. What is the answer?___________

6 Simple Questions
• What caused you not to follow the directions given?
• Which of these factors could interfere with the effectiveness of your own communication?
• Did the way the questions were framed affect the end result?
participants will say that months that have 31 days cannot be included as the question refers to months that have only 30 days. It is important to point out that the word only does not exist in the question. With the addition of the word only it changes the answer to include only the months with 31 days.

Debrief: In business, we require specific answers to questions; therefore we need to take time to think about how we frame questions.

The way one perceives a question determines how effectively they answer it. Hence, it is important to make communication specific and accurate.

Before moving to this slide, ask participants to identify the elements of any communication process.

Debrief: emphasize that the communication loop closes only when feedback is received. This is what makes communication a 2-way process.

What is the effect of verbal communication?
Skilled communicators enhance the power of their spoken and written communication by using words that appeal to all the senses. It helps build rapport and persuade others.

Emphasize points 1 and 4.
Participants need to understand that the most critical points of a conversation/e-mail/meeting need to be highlighted in the Introduction first – as it is the first part that the receiver will hear/see and will help create an impression, the summary second – as it will be the last thing that the receiver will hear/see as it will help in retaining information and the Main body should contain the details of the critical points along with other information.

Participants are to be informed that Questioning will be covered first and we shall go into listening in a later section of the training program.

**Activity – Follow the Instruction**

Objective: to bring out the importance of the receivers’ thought process and perception.

Equipment: Old newspapers or any standard sized paper would do.

Please ensure that all participants get the same sized sheet of paper. Instruct the participants to tear out $\frac{1}{4}$ of a double sheet or $\frac{1}{2}$ of a single sheet for this exercise.

Tell the participants that you will give a set of instructions that they should follow. Now, tell the participants that they must strictly follow rules.

The rules are:

- They should keep their eyes closed throughout the exercise, until they are asked to open their eyes.
- The instructions will not be repeated.
- No questions are allowed.

Ways to Encourage Communication

- Effective ways to elicit information:
  - Asking Effective Questions
  - Intently Listening

'Follow The Instruction’ - Exercise
Here is the set of instructions:

1. Fold the paper in half
2. Tear off a piece from the middle of the paper
3. Fold the paper into half again
4. Tear off another piece from the middle of the paper
5. Finally, fold the paper into half again
6. Tear off a piece from upper right hand corner
7. Now unfold the paper completely and hold it out in front of you and open your eyes.
8. What do you see? Identify how many participants have sheets of paper that are exactly the same.

Ask participants: “Did you all receive the same instructions? So why was it that there were different results?”
Participants would say that the instructions were not clear, they did not know which way to fold the paper, the orientation was not clear etc.

Agree with them that though the instructions were simple they were not clear and specific.
So tell them that they can have an opportunity to set this right. Ask each one of them to come up with instructions similar to one that you read out.
Then divide the class into several small groups and ask each person to conduct the exercise with their group members. It is advisable that the instructor works with eyes closed, to prevent any involuntary reactions to mistakes made by team members while following the instructions.
You may give 2 minutes for the instructors to think through their set of instructions. They are allowed to add more information to add clarity, but they are not allowed to practice with their team mates.

Debrief: Receivers (of communication) have their own perception of even basic concepts. Taking the time to think from the receiver’s

‘Follow the Instruction’ - Exercise

- Was there something wrong with the instructions or did our perception and our hastiness cause the error?
- What factors do we need to keep in mind when giving instructions?
- Did the restriction on asking questions during the activity affect the end result?
perspective and investing in preparation time makes communication effective.

Ask participants how the restriction on asking questions affected the end result in order to illustrate the importance of asking questions and clarifications in order to make communication effective.

Use examples relevant to the group such as:

- How can we improve the performance of teams?
- What team do you belong to?

Ask the participants to come up with a couple of open and closed-ended questions that they could use at work.

**Activity – Who are You?**

- Tell the participants to imagine that you are holding a party in which several of the guests are your potential employers. Strike up a conversation with them and subtly lead them to the prospect of broaching the question of potential business.
- Ask participants to think about what questions they are going to ask to find out more about the person. Write them down on the whiteboard, separating out open and closed questions.
- Explore the differences between the types of questions. The hand-out on types of questions may be helpful.

**Types of Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How was your vacation?</td>
<td>Did you go to Spain for your vacation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who Are You?**

- Tell the participants to imagine that you are holding a party in which several of the guests are your potential employers. Strike up a conversation with them and subtly lead them to the prospect of broaching the question of potential business.
- Ask participants to think about what questions they are going to ask to find out more about the person. Write them down on the whiteboard, separating out open and closed questions.
- Explore the differences between the types of questions. The hand-out on types of questions may be helpful.

**Types of Questions**

- Open: How was your vacation?
- Closed: Did you go to Spain for your vacation?
- Multiple: Did you go to Spain, Italy or France for your vacation, how did you travel and did you take your family?
- Leading: You are looking forward to your trip, aren’t you?
Get a couple of participants to role-play the activity. The facilitator can play the role of an HR Manager of a company while the participant can play the role of a potential employee.

Give them feedback on their approach, rapport building and the way they went about utilizing open and closed-ended questions. Focus on whether they encouraged the HR Manager to communicate through the use of questions.

Multiple questions are ineffective because it confuses the receiver, and often, the receiver would answer the last question and forget about the first one.

Leading questions do not give the responder much of a choice and therefore makes them feel uncomfortable.

However, this type of question can be used in situations where there is a clear authority relationship (e.g.) Team leader to team member, parent to child etc.

Before putting up this slide, ask the participants –
“How do you know whether someone is listening to what you are saying?”

Most of them will say – nods, okay, uhuh... etc. Differentiate between sounds that merely fill the air when speaking, and sounds that are used as feedback or acknowledgement of the speaker’s message.