

STRATEGY FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: USE OF 7 C'S



1

INTRODUCTION

The message is said to be effective when the receiver understands the same meaning that the sender was intended to convey. For any communication in business, in order to be effective, it must have seven qualities. These seven attributes are called **seven C's of effective business communication**. (All these attribute starts with the alphabet 'C' so are called **7 C's**)



SEVEN C'S ARE....

- ❑ Clear.
- ❑ Concise.
- ❑ Concrete.
- ❑ Correct.
- ❑ Coherent.
- ❑ Complete.
- ❑ Courteous.



CLEAR



- ❑ When writing or speaking to someone, be clear about your goal or message.
- ❑ What is your purpose in communicating with this person? If you're not sure, then your audience won't be sure either.
- ❑ To be clear, try to minimize the number of ideas in each sentence.
- ❑ Make sure that it's easy for your reader to understand your meaning.
- ❑ People shouldn't have to "read between the lines" and make assumptions on their own to understand what you're trying to say.

BAD EXAMPLE

Hi John,

I wanted to write you a quick note about Daniel, who's working in your department. He's a great asset, and I'd like to talk to you more about him when you have time.

Best,

Skip

GOOD EXAMPLE

Hi John,

I wanted to write you a quick note about Daniel Kadar, who's working in your department. In recent weeks, he's helped the IT department through several pressing deadlines on his own time.

We've got a tough upgrade project due to run over the next three months, and his knowledge and skills would prove invaluable. Could we please have his help with this work?

I'd appreciate speaking with you about this. When is it best to call you to discuss this further?

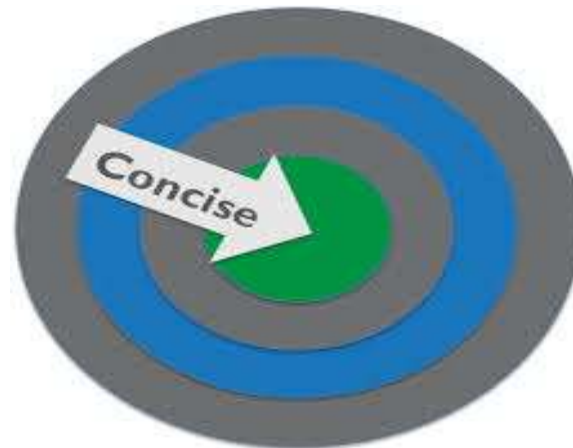
Best wishes,

Skip

This second message is much clearer, because the reader has the information he needs to take action.

CONCISE

When you're concise in your communication, you stick to the point and keep it brief. Your audience doesn't want to read six sentences when you could communicate your message in three.



BAD EXAMPLE

Hi Matt,

I wanted to touch base with you about the email marketing campaign we kind of sketched out last Thursday. I really think that our target market is definitely going to want to see the company's philanthropic efforts. I think that could make a big impact, and it would stay in their minds longer than a sales pitch.

For instance, if we talk about the company's efforts to become sustainable, as well as the charity work we're doing in local schools, then the people that we want to attract are going to remember our message longer. The impact will just be greater.

What do you think?

Jessica

This email is too long! There's repetition, and there's plenty of "filler" taking up space.

GOOD EXAMPLE

Watch what happens when we're concise and take out the filler words:

Hi Matt,

I wanted to quickly discuss the email marketing campaign that we analyzed last Thursday. Our target market will want to know about the company's philanthropic efforts, especially our goals to become sustainable and help local schools.

This would make a far greater impact, and it would stay in their minds longer than a traditional sales pitch.

What do you think? Jessica

CONCRETE

When your message is concrete, then your audience has a clear picture of what you're telling them. There are details (but not too many!) and vivid facts, and there's laser-like focus. Your message is solid.



BAD EXAMPLE

Consider this advertising copy:

The Lunchbox Wizard will save you time every day.

A statement like this probably won't sell many of these products. There's no passion, no vivid detail, nothing that creates emotion, and nothing that tells people in the audience why they should care. This message isn't concrete enough to make a difference.

GOOD EXAMPLE

How much time do you spend every day packing your kids' lunches?

No more! Just take a complete Lunchbox Wizard from your refrigerator each day to give your kids a healthy lunch **and** have more time to play or read with them!

This copy is better because there are vivid images. The audience can picture spending quality time with their kids – and what parent could argue with that? And mentioning that the product is stored in the refrigerator explains how the idea is practical. The message has come alive through these details.

CORRECT

When your communication is correct, it fits your audience. And correct communication is also error-free communication.



BAD EXAMPLE

Hi Daniel,

Thanks so much for meeting me at lunch today! I enjoyed our conversation, and I'm looking forward to moving ahead on our project. I'm sure that the two-week deadline won't be an issue.

Thanks again, and I'll speak to you soon!

Best,

Jack Miller

- ❑ If you read that example fast, then you might not have caught any errors. But on closer inspection, you'll find two.
- ❑ The first error is that the writer accidentally typed conservation instead of conversation. This common error can happen when you're typing too fast.
- ❑ The other error is using weak instead of week.
- ❑ Again, spell checkers won't catch word errors like this, which is why it's so important to proofread everything!

COHERENT

When your communication is coherent, it's logical. All points are connected and relevant to the main topic, and the tone and flow of the text is consistent.



BAD EXAMPLE

Traci,

I wanted to write you a quick note about the report you finished last week. I gave it to Michelle to proof, and she wanted to make sure you knew about the department meeting we're having this Friday. We'll be creating an outline for the new employee handbook.

Thanks,

Michelle

As you can see, this email doesn't communicate its point very well. Where is Michelle's feedback on Traci's report? She started to mention it, but then she changed the topic to Friday's meeting.

GOOD EXAMPLE

Hi Traci,

I wanted to write you a quick note about the report you finished last week. I gave it to Michelle to proof, and she let me know that there are a few changes that you'll need to make. She'll email you her detailed comments later this afternoon.

Thanks,

Michelle

Notice that in the good example, Michelle does not mention Friday's meeting. This is because the meeting reminder should be an entirely separate email. This way, Traci can delete the report feedback email after she makes her changes, but save the email about the meeting as her reminder to attend. Each email has only one main topic.

COMPLETE

In a complete message, the audience has everything they need to be informed and, if applicable, take action.



BAD EXAMPLE

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to send you all a reminder about the meeting
we're having tomorrow!

See you then,

Chris

This message is not complete, for obvious reasons.

**What meeting? When is it? Where? Chris has left his
team without the necessary information.**

GOOD EXAMPLE

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to remind you about tomorrow's meeting on the new telecommuting policies. The meeting will be at 10:00 a.m. in the second-level conference room. Please let me know if you can't attend.

See you then,

Chris

COURTEOUS

Courteous communication is friendly, open, and honest. There are no hidden insults or passive-aggressive tones. You keep your reader's viewpoint in mind, and you're empathetic to their needs.



BAD EXAMPLE

Jeff,

I wanted to let you know that I don't appreciate how your team always monopolizes the discussion at our weekly meetings. I have a lot of projects, and I really need time to get my team's progress discussed as well. So far, thanks to your department, I haven't been able to do that. Can you make sure they make time for me and my team next week?

Thanks,

Phil

Well, that's hardly courteous! Messages like this can potentially start office-wide fights. And this email does nothing but create bad feelings, and lower productivity and morale. A little bit of courtesy, even in difficult situations, can go a long way.

GOOD EXAMPLE

Hi Jeff,

I wanted to write you a quick note to ask a favor. During our weekly meetings, your team does an excellent job of highlighting their progress. But this uses some of the time available for my team to highlight theirs. I'd really appreciate it if you could give my team a little extra time each week to fully cover their progress reports.

Thanks so much, and please let me know if there's anything I can do for you!

Best,

Phil

What a difference! This email is courteous and friendly, and it has little chance of spreading bad feelings around the office.

FEW VARIATIONS OF 7 C'S

- **Credible**— Does your message improve or highlight your **credibility** ? This is especially important when communicating with an audience that doesn't know much about you.



- **Creative** – Does your message communicate creatively? Creative communication helps keep your audience engaged.



KEY LEARNINGS

- ❑ All of us communicate every day. The better we communicate, the more credibility we'll have with our clients, our boss, and our colleagues.
- ❑ Use the 7 Cs of Communication as a checklist for all of your communication. By doing this, you'll stay clear, concise, concrete, correct, coherent, complete, and courteous.

