



COMMUNICATION STYLES AND TIPS FOR WHEN YOU NEED THEM MOST

Leading people and communicating effectively with them is the most sought after skill in management when looking at job descriptions in 2021. Leaders are often a person who has risen to the role they are in is because they are seen to be highly skilled or intelligent. Emotional intelligence (or EQ) is another way of saying soft skills or interpersonal skills. It's become part of the 21st-century management approach. It is an essential skill to be effective when leading your people. EQ is more of an umbrella term than a step-by-step approach. To be emotionally intelligent, leaders need to learn five key characteristics: being self-aware; the ability to self-manage your own emotions; have empathy; build and maintain relationships, and be effective in their communication.

There are different styles, and just like learning a tennis shot or golf swing, we can all learn. Remember, it is not about simply choosing just one and sticking with it; think about having multiple shots or game styles we can use or fall back on when feeling uncomfortable or ill-prepared for a situation. Like any pro athlete, practice for those times of higher stress or anxiety. As leaders, this means managing the impacts of lockdown or even the end of the financial year. It's important to be aware of your style and the situation. Let's look at some best practices and then recap communications styles.

As a leader the best practices are:

- Use fewer words and speak plainly. This helps build a sense of relating and listening. Words can increase the energy and motivation of a team or lose the group and divide them.
- Read the room and know your audience. Do not be conceptual and intellectual with pragmatic employees who like to hear how it is. Do not be verbose and philosophical with a team that have served you well for years. Be authentic, be clear and kind.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say. Do not overpromise and underdeliver, but be honest and explain the why.
- Show don't tell good leadership. Model what it means to communicate well.
- Ask questions to encourage dialogue. Be real if you don't know the answer and be open to the feedback from others, and try not to take it as criticism. Feedback is a gift, and learning from it can mean the difference between good and exceptional leadership.

Communication Styles:

- Assertive communication is the most palatable for the other person that you are speaking with but sometimes the hardest to do when feeling sad or mad. This is the "win-win" approach where all parties needs are heard and discussed. Boundaries, limits and wants are all discussed, and respect is the common thread of the conversation.



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- In contrast, aggressive communication is winning even if it is at the other person's expense. The receiver often reports feeling hurt, humiliated, and defensive of their choices, needs and wants.
- Passive-aggressive is the person who presents as passive on the outside, in meetings and in-person but are indirectly being aggressive. The behaviours are sarcasm, gossiping and complaining. There is inconsistency with their true feelings and often disguise their resentment, anger and/or hurt.
- Submissive communication where people are trying their best to please others and avoid conflict, and putting the needs of others before themselves. This all reads well for the receiver but can lead to resentment and bitterness on the part of the person being submissive.¹

We may use these styles depending on the situation, identify your style and decide what you would like to change. Most importantly – ask for help. We have a Manager/Leader Support Hotline where you can receive a confidential conversation and discuss what you think you are doing well and what other areas you can explore. As always, as your EAP, we are here to support your people whatever the nature of their concerns; please contact AccessEAP on 1800 818 728.

¹ <https://dpspsychology.com.au/5-styles-of-communication/>

AccessEAP acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land we work on and their continuing connection to land, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

