Communication Effectiveness Feedback Report

Sample Report
6/17/2008 12:17:59 PM
Introduction

The following information is provided to help you navigate the information this is included in your Communication Effectiveness report.

1. Overall summary chart
   The summary results chart provides a quick visual representation of your scores in seven competencies that make up the Communication Effectiveness profile. The scores to concentrate on are those above 3.5 (strong) and below 2.75 (need further development). Please note that these competency scores are averages; individual question scores can be viewed by clicking on the individual competency link.

2. Category description pages
   This report contains three sections for each of the seven competencies. The first of these three sections explains the category, lists average scores, and then provides high and low score interpretation notes. The second section provides a graphical representation of individual question scores. The third section provides broadly-based improvement actions for those individuals wanting to develop their competencies.

3. 10/10 Report
   The “10/10” Report page provides the raw scores for the 10 highest scoring questions and the 10 lowest scoring questions out of the 84. It also identifies which competency each question is from.

4. Course and Reading suggestions
   Development suggestions for the two lowest scoring competencies, including training courses and specific books that may provide some useful additional information, are included here.

5. Development Plan
   The development plan aggregates the five lowest scoring questions and puts them into a one page template. Individuals can use this template to record the specific actions they plan to take, as a result of their feedback, over the next twelve months. Individuals may draw upon the general guidance offered in their feedback report, or draw upon the "coaching tips” (see next section).

6. Coaching tips
   The overall output report includes detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions. These coaching tips provide not only information about the particular questions, but provide some specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills or learn new behaviors in the future.
Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.
Communication Effectiveness Profile

EMPATHIZING

This section on Empathizing examines the extent to which you think about the perspectives and feelings of others when they are communicating with you, and the degree to which you adjust your style to accommodate them. This category asks the question: "How well do you create a climate of warmth and sincerity, where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts because they know you will listen?"

AGGREGATE SELF SCORE (2.67)

Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you have a more "transactional" communication style, where a discussion or conversation is only a functional exchange of words. You are not likely to consider any circumstantial context or feelings, and you show a tendency to push your own agenda or communication priorities at the expense of the other party. An individual who scores low in this area will usually keep their communication very direct, putting personal outcomes or needs at the forefront. They tend to interrupt frequently and guess what the other person is going to say before he or she says it. Because of this, they often miss important parts of the overall message and create the impression that they have only a limited attention span for deeper or more complex issues.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you naturally generate a spirit of warmth toward others, and offer lots of help and support in facilitating an easy "flow" of two-way conversation. You usually listen attentively and adapt or adjust your personal style to suit the situation as much as necessary to create the best possible climate. A high score indicates that the individual is likely to spend as much time as necessary engaging in "small talk" or conversation that helps them understand where the other party is coming from so they can offer supportive and insightful comments that can help to open up the discussion. This means that they will seek to establish the most appropriate communication climate for the circumstances, and offer an empathetic ear.
1. I maintain good eye contact and give people my full attention.

2. I smile warmly at people when they appear to want to talk to me.

3. I let people finish what they are saying without interrupting.

4. I think about why as well as what people are saying.
5. I show genuine interest when people are talking to me, whatever the subject or topic.

6. I use a variety of careful questioning approaches to help understand the other person.

7. I generally mirror people's facial expressions when I listen to them.

8. I engage in as much "small talk" as necessary to help people feel comfortable.
9. I like to find out something about the people with whom I talk.

Self Score: [Graph]
Supervisor: [Graph]
Peer: [Graph]
Direct Report: [Graph]
Client: [Graph]
Vendor: [Graph]
Other: [Graph]
Norm: [Graph]

10. I look at the feelings or emotions behind the words people are using.

Self Score: [Graph]
Supervisor: [Graph]
Peer: [Graph]
Direct Report: [Graph]
Client: [Graph]
Vendor: [Graph]
Other: [Graph]
Norm: [Graph]

11. People who know me would say that I am sincere and genuine in my communication.

Self Score: [Graph]
Supervisor: [Graph]
Peer: [Graph]
Direct Report: [Graph]
Client: [Graph]
Vendor: [Graph]
Other: [Graph]
Norm: [Graph]

12. I encourage people to speak their minds openly and share their concerns.

Self Score: [Graph]
Supervisor: [Graph]
Peer: [Graph]
Direct Report: [Graph]
Client: [Graph]
Vendor: [Graph]
Other: [Graph]
Norm: [Graph]

Realm of Best Practice

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.
This section on Empathizing examines the extent to which you think about the perspectives and feelings of others when they are communicating with you, and the degree to which you adjust your style to accommodate them. This category asks the question: "How well do you create a climate of warmth and sincerity, where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts because they know you will listen?"

**Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to develop an ability to generate more warmth and sincerity in all their conversation, and show genuine care and interest in what other people have to say on a consistent basis. This will involve being more patient, taking more time to engage in "small talk," and trying to appreciate the other person's feelings and emotions just as much as the words that they hear.

**Empathizing**

- Try to smile at people more often, and be as friendly and sincere as you can when they are talking to you.
- Make a strong effort to put yourself in the other person's position and to imagine what they might be feeling or where they might be coming from in sending their message.
- Let people express their thoughts and feelings fully without interrupting, as much as you can.
- Discover an area of common interest about the other people with whom you communicate regularly, and use this to help build your relationship with them.
- Openly share your interests with other people, and encourage them to share their interests with you.
RECEIVING THE MESSAGE

This section on Receiving the Message looks at how well you listen to and successfully “process” what others are saying (verbal and non-verbal messages) before you respond. This category asks the question: “How attentive or empathetic are you in a listening situation so that you can fully appreciate what the speaker is trying to convey?”

AGGREGATE SELF SCORE (3.00)

Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (“occasionally” and “almost never”) suggest that you do not always fully appreciate what people communicate, and thus you miss important components of the overall message. You are also prone to being easily distracted, and tend to jump into conversations before the other person has finished speaking. An individual who scores low in this area is likely to find communication frustrating or even confusing. This is sometimes the speaker's fault, but more likely it is one result of poor listening habits—the listener hasn't focused or taken enough time to “hear” the complete message, and the mind has been allowed to wander to other things and other priorities or tasks.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (“almost always” and “very frequently”) suggest that you are an attentive listener and appreciate the “tenor” of most communications, in whatever form they are conveyed. You are genuinely interested and you try to concentrate on what people are saying, maintaining a calm and patient demeanor so people can get their message across without interruption. A high score suggests that the individual is an appreciative and attentive listener who freely gives all their attention to the speaker in order to hear and appreciate the complete message. A person who scores high in this area makes an especially valuable contribution when important or complex information needs to be communicated for insight or comment.
13. I avoid interrupting while the other person is speaking.

14. I make sure that I am in the right frame of mind for all important discussions.

15. I try to find quiet environments in which to talk and listen to people.

16. My body language is positively conducive to attentive listening.
17. I listen enthusiastically and positively.

18. I avoid trivializing the ideas or views expressed by people I am talking with.

19. I look people in the eye and regularly nod in order to demonstrate that I have understood them.

20. I focus my attention on the speaker and concentrate on what is being said.
21. I try not to let my mind wander when someone is talking to me.

Self Score  -  Supervisor  -  Peer  -  Direct Report  -  Client  -  Vendor  -  Other  -  Norm

22. I am calm and patient in conversation and discussion.

Self Score  -  Supervisor  -  Peer  -  Direct Report  -  Client  -  Vendor  -  Other  -  Norm

23. I take information in on several different "channels" where necessary.

Self Score  -  Supervisor  -  Peer  -  Direct Report  -  Client  -  Vendor  -  Other  -  Norm

24. People who know me well would say that I am a good listener.

Self Score  -  Supervisor  -  Peer  -  Direct Report  -  Client  -  Vendor  -  Other  -  Norm

Realm of Best Practice

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.
This section on Receiving the Message looks at how well you listen to and successfully "process" what others are saying (verbal and non-verbal messages) before you respond. This category asks the question: "How attentive or empathetic are you in a listening situation so that you can fully appreciate what the speaker is trying to convey?"

**Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to speak less and listen more. To do this, they need to find more-conducive listening environments, avoid interrupting, and keep their minds from wandering. Most of all, they need to try to quietly hear the whole message being communicated, without jumping in too soon.

**Receiving The Message**

- Nod or show that you have understood in other ways at regular points in any conversation.
- Maintain as much direct eye contact as you can, and show genuine and focused interest in the communication.
- Look to avoid generally showing any distraction, physical or mental, as much as you can.
- Aim to be as calm, quiet, and patient as you can in general conversations (especially with quieter people).
- Focus on and between the words that you hear in order to appreciate the sender's full communication.
CLARIFYING

This section on Clarifying looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully "translate" the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. This category asks the question: "How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?"

AGGREGATE SELF SCORE (3.00)

Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely use questions to increase your understanding, or your questions are somewhat vague or give the impression that you have not been listening or are not interested in all they have to say. An individual with a low score generally engages in highly "transactional" discussions and conversations; questions of clarification are asked only rarely. These individuals are unlikely to summarize or paraphrase the sender's message, thus creating the impression that their mind is elsewhere. They will usually ask questions only when they want more information on subjects that are of interest to them.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are skilled at using a variety of conversational techniques in order to check information without making the other party uncomfortable, or feel that they are being interrogated. You generally adopt a gentle and careful questioning approach whenever you feel unsure and are not clear about the message being transmitted. A high score suggests that the individual is likely to create a climate in which the speaker sees that the listener is concentrating and trying to completely understand the communication. This is achieved by using questions to demonstrate openness and demonstrating a genuine desire to understand, rather than showing off superior knowledge or asking a question for the sake of saying something.
25. I avoid making the other person feel as if they are being interrogated.

26. I look for the underlying message behind people's words.

27. I paint "word pictures" to help describe the sender's message in a different way.

28. I gently gather "missing" information as a conversation flows in order to build the story.
29. I regularly paraphrase to test my interpretation of what is being said.

30. I carefully probe when I do not fully understand something.

31. I use open questions to get people to explain their ideas.

32. I demonstrate that I can be helpful and genuine in conversations.
33. People who know me would say that I ask incisive questions in conversations.

34. I summarize what I think I've heard to make sure that I have understood clearly.

35. I am happy to speak up if I am confused or unsure.

36. I offer my interpretation of what is being said in order to verify my understanding of what is being communicated.

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This section on Clarifying looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully "translate" the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. This category asks the question: "How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?"

**Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to practice asking genuine and sincere questions when their understanding in a discussion is less than it should be. They should also practice asking different kinds of questions and offer simple summaries of key points at appropriate conversational intervals.

**Clarifying**

- Rehearse asking questions in a variety of different ways to get people to say more or to elaborate fully on what they mean.
- Use more paraphrasing, examples, and analogies, or ask the other person directly to explain what they are saying in a different way.
- Summarize points frequently and make sure that you have understood each statement that has been made as a discussion unfolds.
- Look to elicit more information whenever necessary to ensure that your knowledge and understanding about what is being said is balanced and complete at all times.
UNDERSTANDING

This section on Understanding looks at the extent to which you make sense of what you see and hear in order to engage fully in a conversation and respond intelligently, according to the circumstances. This category asks the question: "How well do you reflect and process information while someone is speaking, in order to understand the key aspects of what is being communicated and how you might respond?"

AGGREGATE SELF SCORE (3.33)

Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you tend to be lost in longer or more-complex conversations, and fail to spot the more subtle or underlying messages that are communicated. You do not usually take the opportunity to reduce or eliminate your confusion by asking questions, paraphrasing, or summarizing. A low scorer does not always follow another person's line of discussion or argument and doesn't find it easy to predict where the conversation is headed. As a result, they don't participate as actively in a conversation as they might and their responses are not as helpful and intelligent as they could be.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you carefully sift and sort what you see and hear when individuals are talking, and work hard to understand the entire message and respond in a way that amply demonstrates your understanding. A high scorer uses empathetic listening techniques and recognizes that they should not make judgments regarding how other people think or send their messages. They will progressively assemble the information that is communicated, and look beyond the words to feelings, emotions, and other contextual factors.
37. I avoid assuming that the other person's perspective is the same as mine.

38. I give people time, attention, and encouragement so they can get their message across.

39. I respect other people's feelings when I offer my comments.

40. I piece together all the different parts of what people say and do to make sense of it.
41. I ask the other person to re-phrase their message when I am confused.

42. I suspend judgement about what is being said for as long as necessary.

43. I correctly identify the level of someone's feelings and emotions in a conversation.

44. I am good at "reading between the lines" wherever necessary.
45. I connect what people say to me in order to achieve a better mental understanding.

46. I carefully follow the flow of the conversation so I can respond appropriately.

47. I seek to put what I hear into a reasonable context, based on my experience.

48. I expect conversation and discussion to improve my knowledge and understanding.

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This section on Understanding looks at the extent to which you make sense of what you see and hear in order to engage fully in a conversation and respond intelligently, according to the circumstances. This category asks the question: "How well do you reflect and process information while someone is speaking, in order to understand the key aspects of what is being communicated and how you might respond?"

**Improvement actions**

Low scorers should take all the verbal and non-verbal clues and figure out what is really being said, and why. They also should concentrate more on the overall "flow" or logical development of each conversation, and ask questions and paraphrase to be sure they are not misunderstanding the message.

**Understanding**

- Avoid judging people's messages or intentions too quickly by concentrating on the entire communication over as long a time as necessary.
- Look for key themes or core points in conversations.
- Use questions to confirm your understanding before responding.
- Carefully assess the context in which people give you information, or the entire way in which they communicate with you.
READING NON-VERBAL CLUES

This section on “Reading Non-Verbal Clues” looks at the extent to which you pick up on body language and tone of voice in order to understand the complete communication message. It asks the question: “How well do you assess the other person’s feelings and meaning by looking beyond the spoken words that you hear?”

AGGREGATE SELF SCORE (3.00)

Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (“occasionally” and “almost never”) suggest that you generally miss or misinterpret non-verbal clues given by others because you don't appreciate what they mean. Because of this, you are not likely to be good at reading other people, sensing the climate for communication, or spotting general discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal messages. A low scorer tends to be almost completely reliant on the words that people use in communication (words are only about 10% of the entire meaning) and oblivious to clues from facial expressions, movements of the hands or feet, changes in inflection and tone, and other clues that help paint a complete picture of what people are saying and feeling.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (“almost always” and “very frequently”) suggest that you are tuned in to the non-verbal clues or signals that are deliberately or accidentally offered by other people in different kinds of communication. You are usually alert to the signals and are able to interpret them successfully. A high scorer focuses as much on non-verbal communication as they do on the words being spoken, and constantly looks for reinforcement of underlying feelings or inconsistency. They tend to almost intuitively “read” people and situations, even where words are few or non-existent.
49. I quickly sense when a person's feelings do not match their words.

50. I can tell when the other party is distracted or their mind is somewhere else.

51. I can tell when the climate for open communication is not quite right.

52. I am good at "reading" other people.
53. I watch people’s facial expressions and hand movements very carefully.

54. I adjust my communication style if I feel that I am losing the other person’s attention.

55. I am good at sensing a negative atmosphere when I walk into a room.

56. Inconsistencies between words and body language are easy for me to identify.
57. I quickly notice changes in tone or intonation.

58. I try to pick up on an individual's underlying feelings.

59. I pick up on and understand non-verbal clues and signals.

60. I can easily tell when someone is confused about what I'm saying by observing their body language.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.
This section on "Reading Non-Verbal Clues" looks at the extent to which you pick up on body language and tone of voice in order to understand the complete communication message. It asks the question: "How well do you assess the other person's feelings and meaning by looking beyond the spoken words that you hear?"

**Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to concentrate much more on observing the other person and listening carefully for changes in voice tone or emotional emphasis. This takes considerable practice, as well as commitment and patience, to learn how to do it and then to correctly interpret what is observed.

**Reading Non-verbal Clues**

- Quietly watch for the more subtle signals given by the communicator in terms of their physical actions or the tone of their voice.
- Be silent for much longer than you are used to.
- Progressively learn what the different non-verbal signals mean, above and beyond the words.
- On every occasion, assess whether the entire communication climate or atmosphere offers any extra clues above and beyond the words alone.
GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

This section on Feedback looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: "How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communication from others?"

AGGREGATE SELF SCORE (3.17)

Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are not a frequent giver and receiver of feedback of any sort, and might even go out of your way to avoid making constructive comment to others or letting them offer comment (positive or negative) to you. You might even adopt a silent approach or become evasive when asked to offer or take feedback. A low scorer is likely to adopt a "closed" communication style in which they offer little or no constructive feedback to others and, in turn, do not expect others to offer feedback to them. Conversations will tend to be somewhat "mechanical" and exchange-orientated, with neither party gaining the benefit of useful guiding or coaching communication.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are a frequent giver and receiver of feedback, and you see it as a positive way to improve communication and knowledge (for yourself and others). You are likely adept at giving feedback to others and in inviting others to give feedback to you (and acting on the valuable advice you receive). An individual whose scores here are high is likely to quickly establish as much conversational rapport as possible with the other person. This is usually done by suggesting that they are open to receiving and giving constructive feedback as a means of building strong relationships, as well as by having deeper or more genuinely worthwhile discussions with people.
61. I try to make sure that the "air time" in a conversation is equally shared.

62. I find it easy to get the other person's attention when speaking with them.

63. I believe that feedback is the "breakfast" of effective communicators.

64. I am appreciated for my direct and clear communication style.
65. I openly demonstrate that I appreciate feedback from other people.

66. I avoid engaging in emotional language or negative feedback responses.

67. I am not concerned about the other party's motives for providing feedback.

68. I focus my attention on the key lesson to be given or taken from the feedback.
69. I avoid insults and avoid demeaning the other party when offering critical comments.

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70. I focus on the facts when giving and receiving feedback.

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71. I see every constructive criticism as a positive opportunity to improve.

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72. I am sensitive to my needs and the needs of others in every communication.

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Realm of Best Practice

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.
This section on Feedback looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: "How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communication from others?"

**Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to accept two-way feedback as a primary means of improving the quality of communication. This means becoming less "thin-skinned" about feedback and more open to giving people honest but helpful feedback when it is appropriate.

**Giving and Receiving Feedback**

- Learn to see the giving and receiving of regular constructive feedback as a primary means by which learning and improvement can occur for yourself and others around you.
- Make notes on what you hear, or offer structured and specific feedback to others, and frequently invite people to offer open feedback to you on the same basis.
- Always offer constructive comments, not negative or destructive remarks in taking or giving feedback.
- Be sensitive to people's feelings when accepting feedback or giving it to others (e.g. avoid destructive comments, personal attacks, gratuitous insults, etc.).
TRANSMITTING YOUR MESSAGE

This section on Transmitting Your Message looks at the extent to which you use a range of communication methods and means to get your message across to others successfully. It asks the question: "How well do you ensure that the transmission of information that is important to you is communicated in language that is clear, concise, and consistent?"

AGGREGATE SELF SCORE (2.83)

Interpretation
LOW (less than 2.75)
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are prone to forget the needs of different audiences to which you communicate. You also do not always select the most appropriate communication channels (you use mainly one single communication or delivery style, regardless of the situation). For a low scorer, communication is a challenge-something to get over-and-done-with as quickly as possible. Transmitting your message is regarded as a chore that often yields mixed results in terms of other people listening or understanding and acting appropriately on what they have heard.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you think carefully about the way you transmit your message and the communication style that you adopt in order to communicate effectively. To do this, you try hard to always be clear, concise, and consistent in what you say and do. A high scorer is usually acutely aware of the power to communicate and influence people successfully through good preparation, understanding of the audience's needs, and use of a variety of ways to communicate to ensure that every individual is given the best opportunity to appreciate the message.
73. I communicate feelings as well as ideas and facts.

74. I use multiple channels to get messages across to people.

75. I make sure my deeds match my words.

76. I find that I can lift team spirit and morale through effective communication.
77. I am able to get complicated ideas across clearly.

78. I deliver my communication at a pace and in a way that is comfortable for others.

79. I say things in a variety of slightly different ways in order to reinforce what I mean.

80. I am highly conscious of the other person's needs.
81. I change and vary my communication style according to the situation.

82. I find the "right" words for the circumstances.

83. I select the most appropriate method to transmit my messages.

84. I avoid using jargon, "gobbledygook," and inappropriate language.

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**Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to think more about different individual and group preferences in terms of receiving information, and should think about the impact that different channels and styles can make on the ultimate understanding of a message (and, therefore, the success of the entire communication effort).

**Transmitting Your Message**

- Recognize that your actions are likely to speak most loudly when communicating with others.
- Do things to support your verbal messages to help people understand where you are coming from.
- Practice varying your personal communication approach to suit the different situations that you encounter.
- Avoid complex, jargonized, or overly technical communications to audiences that may struggle to understand or act upon your message.
- Deliver all of your messages in a slow and measured way, taking account of the particular needs of the subject and the audience.
THE 10/10 REPORT

Top 10 Strengths
Receiving the Message
17. I listen enthusiastically and positively. 3.92
Empathizing
9. I like to find out something about the people with whom I talk. 3.77
Receiving the Message
22. I am calm and patient in conversation and discussion. 3.69
Reading Non-Verbal Clues
59. I pick up on and understand non-verbal clues and signals. 3.62
52. I am good at "reading" other people. 3.54
Empathizing
5. I show genuine interest when people are talking to me, whatever the subject or topic. 3.46
8. I engage in as much "small talk" as necessary to help people feel comfortable. 3.46
Receiving the Message
21. I try not to let my mind wander when someone is talking to me. 3.46
24. People who know me well would say that I am a good listener. 3.46
Understanding
43. I correctly identify the level of someone’s feelings and emotions in a conversation. 3.46

Top 10 Development Needs
Empathizing
1. I maintain good eye contact and give people my full attention. 1.62
Receiving the Message
13. I avoid interrupting while the other person is speaking. 1.77
Empathizing
2. I smile warmly at people when they appear to want to talk to me. 2.00
Clarifying
34. I summarize what I think I’ve heard to make sure that I have understood clearly. 2.08
Reading Non-Verbal Clues
49. I quickly sense when a person’s feelings do not match their words. 2.15
Giving and Receiving Feedback
61. I try to make sure that the "air time" in a conversation is equally shared. 2.15
Transmitting Your Message
74. I use multiple channels to get messages across to people. 2.15
73. I communicate feelings as well as ideas and facts. 2.23
Understanding
46. I carefully follow the flow of the conversation so I can respond appropriately. 2.31
Empathizing
12. I encourage people to speak their minds openly and share their concerns. 2.38
COURSE AND READING SUGGESTIONS

The following are general reading and course suggestions that may help you to better understand the two categories in which your scores were the lowest and to assist you in writing your development plan.

Clarifying

Clarifying looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully "translate" the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. It asks the question: "How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?"

Course Suggestion
- Asking Effective Questions/Successful Questioning Techniques
- Praphrazing/Summarizing Skills
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Influencing Others

Other Suggestion
- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion
- Consider the Issues: Advanced Listening and Critical Thinking Skills: Carol Numrich, Dec 1999

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Giving and Receiving Feedback looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: "How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communications from others?"

Course Suggestion
- Giving Feedback
- Receiving Feedback
- Coaching Effectiveness
- Communication Skills
- Influencing Others

Other Suggestion
- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion
- Training With NLP : Skills for Managers, Trainers and Communicators. Joseph O'Connor, and John Seymour:
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Use the space below to write out your personal development plan for the next 12 months based on your results. Draw upon the general improvement actions in relevant areas of the report, and ideas that are suggested in the attached coaching tips.

1. I maintain good eye contact and give people my full attention. Score: 1.62
Action to Take:

13. I avoid interrupting while the other person is speaking. Score: 1.77
Action to Take:

2. I smile warmly at people when they appear to want to talk to me. Score: 2.00
Action to Take:

34. I summarize what I think I’ve heard to make sure that I have understood clearly. Score: 2.08
Action to Take:

49. I quickly sense when a person’s feelings do not match their words. Score: 2.15
Action to Take:
Empathizing

Maintain good eye contact, and give people your full attention.

Making eye contact in some cultures is a way of showing that we are paying attention. Direct eye contact means different things in different cultures, and we need to be careful not to misinterpret this one form of non-verbal communication or body language. For example, people from some cultures believe that if a person doesn’t look you in the eye, he or she is shifty and has something to hide. In other cultures, turning one’s gaze away from a person who is talking is a sign of respect, rather than untrustworthiness.

When we communicate with someone—regardless of where we are from—we want to at least know that the person we are trying to interact with is (a) genuinely conscious of what we are saying, (b) directly aware of our presence as a priority, and (c) will pay us the courtesy of attending to us fully. All three of these steps are best done in the United States with eye contact. If we treat other people the same way, we have gone a long way toward establishing and reinforcing empathy.

Here are some approaches to try:

1. Shift your complete attention and concentration to the person communicating with you and what they are saying. If it is momentarily unsafe or dangerous to do that—such as when you are driving a car—point out to the other person that you have to attend to that matter first. If what you are doing isn’t so important, stop, and give the person your undivided attention.

2. Undivided attention means just that. Don’t fiddle or keep your hands on the keyboard or turn the rest of your body away while you are looking at the other person, and don’t break eye contact by looking at somebody or something else.

3. Concentrate on what the other person is saying or doing. Otherwise,

(a) you will drift off or become distracted and possibly miss something of considerable importance, and

(b) they will know that you have drifted off (your eyes become glassy and lose focus, which they will interpret—correctly—as a sign of extreme rudeness or disinterest).

4. Learn the difference between looking at someone and simply staring. Looking is polite; staring is impolite and disconcerting. When we look at someone, we are ready to engage them non-verbally. When we stare, we’d rather not catch their attention. If you are not sure of the difference, rehearse with a mirror or video camera.

5. Generally speaking, women make better eye contact than men, and assertive people make better eye contact than unassertive people. Learn the lessons from watching others.
Receiving the Message

Avoid interrupting before the speaker has finished communicating their message.

Life is a series of interruptions. Sometimes they are necessary and sometimes they are even pleasant, but all-too-many interruptions are unnecessary and a pain in the neck. Try to be involved in as few interruptions as possible, and this includes interrupting others while they are speaking. Here’s how to do that:

1. Pay attention and get it right the first time. Substantive interruptions refer to those times when we interrupt because we disagree or because we wish to make a point. Procedural interruptions refer to pesky moments when we interrupt because we weren’t paying attention when the speaker was talking, and we think we missed something critical. We ask them to repeat themselves, and this embarrasses and annoys the speaker. It should embarrass and annoy you! Stay awake, and if you must interrupt at some point, make sure that you have a darned good reason.

2. Try to suspend judgment on what you are hearing. Separate in your mind your opinion of the person and the quality or content of what that person is saying. Do you have the patience to listen to a long-winded but ultimately correct opinion from someone you actively dislike? Most of us don’t, but we regret it if we don’t stick it out. To separate the message from the messenger is hard work, but it is a skill well worth cultivating.

3. If you have a reasonably active mind, the ideas expressed by another person should trigger a whole range of thoughts: further examples of what the person is talking about, counter-examples, insights connected to what is being talked about, connections with other topics. All of these things are probably relevant, but do you need to express them now, by interrupting? Make a mental or written note while the other person is talking, and talk to them later on. Don’t be embarrassed if you have to go back over old ground: You’ve heard the other person out, and now they are in your debt because you were patient. The least they can do is hear you out.

4. Silence does not mean consent. Just because you are listening to someone doesn’t mean that you agree with him or her. Make sure you understand that, and definitely make sure that the other person understands the point. Express your disagreement after they have finished talking by using unambiguous body language: Look attentive, but if you dislike what you hear, don’t send out contradictory non-verbal signals such as rapid nodding and smiling. Don’t look stern and aggressive, but rather restrained and neutral.

5. Use the time while the other person is talking to frame good responses. We all sometimes regret speaking too soon because our spontaneous thoughts are ill-formed, disorganized, and lacking in argumentative power and consistency. Better to remain silent and look a fool than speak and remove all doubt! Better still, remain silent and work hard on the words that will show unequivocally just how perceptive you really are.
Empathizing

Smile warmly at people when you see that they want to talk to you.

A smile can break the ice in any situation, especially if it’s genuine and not forced or artificial. Smiles have been defined as everything from the food of love, to the whisper of a laugh, to—less romantically—the most inexpensive way to improve your looks.

A smile costs nothing. It can help humanize the most tense of situations and short-circuit a lot of the nonsense that gets in the way of genuine communication. Even when you are not thrilled with the prospect of interacting with a person, a smile is a message sent out that you are at least willing to listen and to engage in joint problem-solving. A frown or grimace, by contrast, sends out a message that there is no chance of common ground. This signal will surely trigger a matching response from the other person.

Here, then, are some clues to the art and science of smiling:

1. Make sure that your smile comes quickly and leaves slowly. A character in a novel by Sinclair Lewis is described as having a smile that snapped back after use, like a stretched rubber band. This switch-on, switch-off kind of smile is seen for what it really is—insincere and forced.

2. A real smile forces the eyes slightly closed—that’s why those lines around the eyes are called “smile lines.” If your eyes don’t close a bit, you will look as if you are staring. Smile with the eyes and the lips, not just the lips. As the Chinese proverb says, beware of the man whose stomach does not move when he laughs!

3. There are other types of smiles, apart from warm ones: sardonic, sneering, tragic, sycophantic, smirking, bitter, twisted, frosty, toothy (“all the better to eat you with, my dear”), half-smile/half-frown. Make sure that your smile is not one of these.

4. Make your smile part of you, rather than just a mask. Why? Because of one rather corny reason: It suggests that you are a positive person, not only in disposition but in your approach to problems. And positive people are more fun to be around.

There is an interesting story told about President Abraham Lincoln and his Cabinet. It seems that he and his advisors were debating about making a senior appointment sometime in the early 1860s. Most of the men in the Cabinet were in favor of the candidate in question, but Lincoln was not. He told them he “didn’t like the man’s face.” “That’s unfair, Mr. President,” said one of the Cabinet members. “None of us can help the face we were born with.” Lincoln replied, “Every man over forty is responsible for his own face.”

Lincoln believed that the way we meet life’s challenges is recorded by the expressions on our face.

True or false? It’s hard to say, but most of us infer from a smile—rather than a frown—that a person is affirmative, constructive, and optimistic. Positive people tend to only have the enemies that fate throws at them, rather than the enemies of fate and the ones they make themselves.
Clarifying

Summarize what you think you have heard in order to clearly understand the message.

Recapitulating or recapping what you have just heard is a good way to close the communication loop between you and the other person. It is a reality check, confirming that what you have heard is what the speaker intended you to hear.

Here’s how to do that summarizing in the most effective manner:

1. Condense what you objectively heard—the facts, the figures, the names, the dates, the places, the reasons for and against.

2. Summarize the subjective part of what you heard: the overall “gut feel” or intuitions you have about the situation; the constellations of vested interests and biases that seem to be present; the hints of influential players off the main stage that you think you detect; and the true motivations and feelings of the other person that you think you sense.

3. Edit as you go: Exclude what you think is unnecessary in order to boil down the situation to fundamentals. Capture the essence, highlight the underlying patterns, and try to create new perspectives on where you have been. The view in the rear-view mirror of a car is sometimes a strange and new view of territory you thought you knew; so, too, is a summing up by someone who is able to cast a new eye on a situation. It can be a revelation.

4. In some situations, you might want to edit out important factors in your summing up—perhaps to test the other person as to what they think is really important or to de-emphasize or “lose” issues you don’t want to deal with.

5. Always check back with the other person to see if they agree or disagree with your summary. Don’t wait until the end of a long summary to ask—check as you go. Evaluate their response to objective and subjective summaries. Listen to their words, and listen to what is not said. Pay attention to their verbal and their non-verbal responses.
“Reading” Non-Verbal Clues

Try to pick up on whether or not a person’s feelings match their words.

In one of Shakespeare’s most popular works, Hamlet advises a friend to “suit the action to the word, the word to the action.” Consistency between our words and our actions usually signals that the person is being truthful and is free of conflict with others and with themselves. A mismatch between words and deeds or feelings lets us know that all might not be well. Good communicators are always tuned in to inconsistencies and are aware of the importance of conveying a clear, truthful message. Let’s find out just what it is that good communicators do by examining some of their advice:

1. Pay attention—not so much to what a person says as the way that they say it. If a person says, “I’m really happy for both of them” yet their voice contains a ring of sorrow, the listener is more likely to give more credence to the emotional expression than to the words. We need the music as well as the words if we are to know what’s going on.

2. Pay attention to other aspects of voice behavior: Does the person stumble over certain words? Stutter? Pause? Emphasize? Inflect? Increase or decrease the volume? These things might be meaningless, but they probably signify something. Consider how just one of these variables—emphasis—can change the meaning of this sentence: “If only I could do it now, then I would do it quickly.” Say these words several times, emphasizing a different word each time. A different nuance of meaning will emerge, suggesting that there are many different interpretations possible for most sentences when we consider all the variables that affect how we express that sentence. Good communicators are aware of all of these variables and the different outcomes they produce, singly or in combination.

3. Consider the facial expressions and eye contact of someone you know when he or she is speaking. Do they match the words? If a parent says to a child, “That’s wonderful, darling” but looks bored or yawns and continues to look at something else, which message will the child remember?

4. Pay attention to gestures and postures. If a person says, “Yep, it sure is a great party” and you notice that they are slumped over and wringing their hands or fiddling with a ring or a strand of hair, you might reasonably surmise that the party is not too exciting.

5. Look at the orientation of the front of a person’s body—how much they turn or bend toward or away from another. Let’s say you wave to a colleague in the hall corridor, and he slows down as you walk over. His eyes are on you and he smiles when he says, “Hi! How have you been?” His body is turned away, as if he is ready to keep going. What assessment would you make of his interest in staying to have a deep and meaningful conversation with you?