

# Critical Conversations

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TOLEDO**

# Critical Conversations

Without effective workplace communication, conflicts arise, gossip ensues, and performance deteriorates.

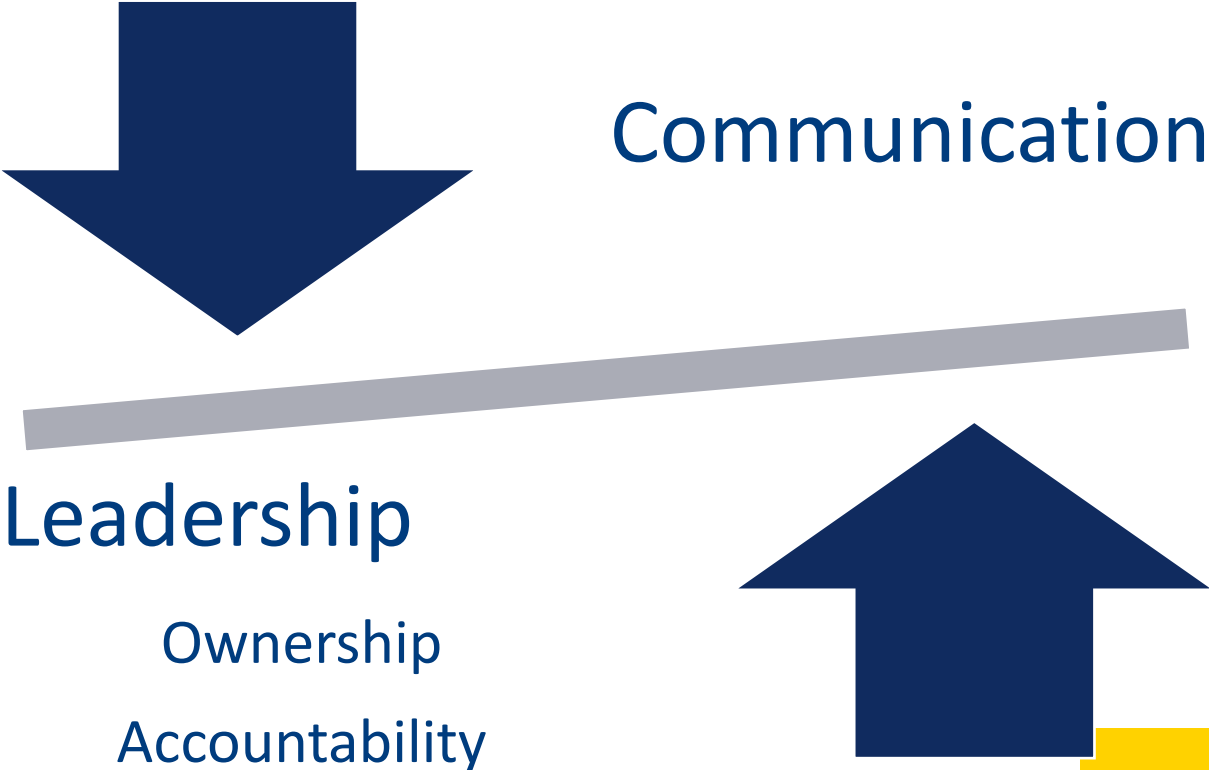
The ability to clearly communicate is imperative. It is so important to always set clear expectations. Employees who know what is expected of them are productive and engaged with the institution. Effective communication enhances interpersonal relationships, builds trust and teamwork, prevents costly mistakes, motivates and gets things done.

Open, effective communication, as well as clear channels for feedback optimizes the opportunity for discussion rather than avoiding conversations.



# Critical Conversations

Balance Between



# Workplace Communication

## Example – Search Committee Training

- I will let you know once I am notified that the assignments have been made.
- The committee members listed below have been assigned the Interviewing Candidates training through EverFi/Lawroom.

# The importance of workplace communication

Creating a dynamic of trust requires managers to hone a very specific people skill – the ability to clearly communicate expectations

When a manager doesn't communicate expectations properly, he or she is left with a group of frustrated employees who don't trust their manager has their back. Thus, they are less motivated and often underperform.

***how often do you check to see if people understand the full picture of what you are asking them to do?***

Clumsy efforts that get problems in the open are almost always preferable to collusive gossip that disavows responsibility; gossip is a form of learned incompetence — an acquired skill that produces poor results

People engage in gossip when they lack trust or ability. We become consumers of gossip when we don't trust formal channels — so we turn to trusted friends rather than doubtful leaders. We become transmitters of it when we feel we can't raise sensitive issues more directly — so we gossip with neighbors rather than confronting offenders. Gossip is not a problem; it's a symptom

Often times, poor performance by a team member can be traced back to a lack of clarity. People may underperform because they are unclear about what their manager expects them to deliver.



# The importance of workplace communication

Without effective workplace communication:

*conflicts arise*

*gossip ensues*

*performance deteriorates*

The ability to clearly communicate is imperative. (Critical)

It is so important to always set clear expectations. Employees who know what is expected of them are productive and engaged with the institution.

Effective communication enhances interpersonal relationships, builds trust and teamwork, prevents costly mistakes, motivates and gets things done.

Open, effective communication, as well as clear channels for feedback optimizes the opportunity for discussion rather than avoiding conversations.

# Workplace Communication

Think about your workplace ~

- Do some employees require more "managing" than others?
- Do some enjoy pushing the limits, while others seem totally clueless about the problems they cause?

# Workplace Communication

Have you ever tried talking to someone at work — only to be met with a condescending response?

Have you ever been assigned a project with little explanation, only to have a manager tell you to figure it out yourself?

These off-putting behaviors can easily be attributed to differences in communication styles.



# Workplace Communication

There are aspects of everyone's communications styles that make for effective communication, but that same communication style might alienate some individuals and create disconnects.

There are four common communication styles:

- the controller communicators
- the promoter communicators
- the analyzer communicators
- the supporter communicators

These four different styles play out very differently in their engagements with others in and out of the workplace.

# Workplace Communication

Everyone communicates differently — and understanding how a person communicates is vital to understanding how they work and operate.

It's also vital to building workplace relationships and successful business endeavors. And it's up to you to figure out how other people's styles mesh or clash with your own.

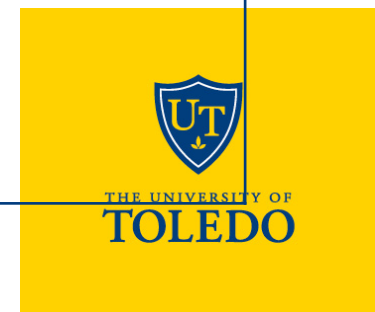
This will ensure you know how to interact going forward and don't get into a situation where your personality and your communication style clashes with theirs.

# The Controller

Character Traits	How they can appear to be
<p>The controller communication style is very direct — demanding facts in a very straightforward and blunt fashion. People who communicate this way tend to have the following character traits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They can be very motivated and dedicated to their tasks.</li><li>• They are very goal-oriented and determined to meet deadlines and objectives.</li><li>• They make eye contact and are often seen as exhibiting an aggressive style and assertive behavior.</li><li>• They are also sometimes seen as aggressive and bossy communicators in their stringency.</li><li>• They are the go-getter types who will jump on a project and spend many a late night in the office working on it until it meets their standards.</li><li>• A conversation with a controller should be short, sweet and to the point.</li></ul>	<p>In the workplace, these people tend to be leaders with <u>communication skills</u> but a tendency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To come off as bossy</li><li>• They are blunt, straightforward and to the point</li><li>• They don't mince words and expect the same conciseness in return</li><li>• They want to know the important factors but don't have time for the small details. Don't waste their time with unnecessary information, as they won't over-explain when giving a project to you</li><li>• When communicating with a controller, expect to figure a lot of things out as you go, as they probably won't spend too much time filling you in</li></ul>

# The Promoter

Character Traits	How they can appear to be
<p>The promoter communication style is enthusiastic and people-driven. The promoter is the person with the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They will spend hours talking about their weekend plans but will also detail a project from start to finish, providing the most intricate of details.</li><li>• They are passionate and engaging and not too worried about taking themselves too seriously.</li><li>• They are excellent at <u>effective interpersonal communication</u>.</li><li>• They are easy to spot as they are usually the social butterflies of the office.</li><li>• Their verbal and non-verbal communication styles are open, honest and enthusiastic. In the workplace, this makes them easy to approach with questions or feedback.</li><li>• They are happy to offer a further explanation of a project or client and love to help where they can.</li></ul>	<p>Their socialness can be a downfall as they easily get sidetracked.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You could go to them with a quick question and lose an hour of time because they've jumped around to an array of different topics.</li><li>• They aren't so much detail-oriented as they are people- and experience-oriented.</li><li>• When engaging with a promoter, ask them personal questions and expect to be asked them in return.</li><li>• Use plenty of tangible examples and get ready to steer them back in the direction you are looking for them to answer.</li></ul>



# The Supporter

Character Traits	How they can appear to be
<p>Calm, cool, and collected is a relatively accurate way to describe the supporter. This personality type has the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are easily likable in their low-maintenance vibes and ways of working and interacting with colleagues.</li><li>• They have excellent interpersonal communication skills and are always open to talk about more personal topics — though they don't seek it out as eagerly as the promoter.</li><li>• This communication type is the most common to find in and out of the workplace as they are eager to succeed, though content and calm in their pursuit.</li><li>• Supporters excel at conflict-resolution as they are usually extremely level-headed. They are great listeners and many go to them with problems and concerns.</li><li>• They are <u>well-liked by most people</u>.</li></ul>	<p>When interacting with a supporter in the workplace, expect someone who is easy-going and easy to approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are very open and welcoming, but it's good not to be too extreme in your approach. They require a kind of communication that falls in between high-context communication and low-context communication.</li><li>• Start slow when getting to know them and expect trust to be earned step-by-step.</li><li>• Supporters are very reliable and efficient so don't over-explain or undermine their intelligence.</li><li>• Talk to them like you'd talk to a new friend — being hesitant with personal stories but open to casual conversation.</li></ul>



# The Analyzer

Character Traits	How they can appear to be
<p>Organized and astute, the analyzer loves facts and intricate details. These types have the following characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are very organized and make organization and understanding all facets of a project a priority before anything else.</li><li>• This type of communicator is deep, thoughtful, analytical, and usually more serious than other communicators.</li><li>• They want to have all the facts before making a decision or pulling the trigger on an idea or initiative which can be frustrating for team members who want to move forward with a project.</li><li>• These types demand high-context communication but do not come off as overly assertive or aggressive. If anything they are questioning and speculative. But their analytical mindset means that they are always looking at the big picture based on an array of intricate details.</li><li>• They can sometimes be seen as pessimistic communicators.</li></ul>	<p>When engaging with an analyzer, make sure you have all the facts and have outlined a project in detail before bringing it to their attention. Also get ready for questions — because they will have them.</p> <p>This might be discouraging. It might make you feel a little silly or dumb because of their hesitancy to fully believe you, your idea, or vision — but this is just because they are trying to understand it as thoroughly as possible.</p> <p>Analyzers require patience, but the payoff is worth it.</p> <p>Similarly, expect an in-depth presentation when given a project by an analyzer.</p>



# Workplace Communication/Leadership

## People want to be heard and understood

- When someone expresses themselves verbally, they want feedback that they have been heard, and they also want to be understood.
- A good communicator makes it his or her goal to listen and understand first, before attempting to be heard and understood.

Accountability can not happen if employees do not know what you expect and how they are impacted.

Do you communicate what you expect?

# Workplace Communication

## Gallup ~ 12 Elements of Great Managing:

- ✓ I know what is expected of me at work.
- ✓ I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- ✓ At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- ✓ In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- ✓ My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a
- ✓ person.
- ✓ There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- ✓ At work, my opinions seem to count.
- ✓ The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.
- ✓ My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
- ✓ I have a best friend at work.
- ✓ In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- ✓ This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.



# Workplace Communication/Leadership

- 1. Focus on what you want to happen,** not on how you feel. The emotional response will kick in first, but the trick is not to act on it.
- 2. Be assertive.** Don't expect an employee to read your mind. Let him or her know when you're annoyed, upset or disappointed.
- 3. Give and request frequent feedback.** Don't stew over what an employee may be thinking. Ask.

# Workplace Communication/Leadership

- 4. Model the type of behavior you want.** Exhibit the kind of upbeat, forward-looking professionalism you expect from your staff or co-workers
- 5. Deal directly and discreetly.** Choose face-to-face talks in private to discuss an employee's attitude or behavior.
- 6. Always document.** Keep a record of all communications to prevent lies or faulty recollections from taking over later.
- 7. Be gracious.** Someone's rudeness doesn't give you the right to respond in kind.

# Communications / Leadership

Accountability can not happen if employees do not know what you expect and how they are impacted.

## Do you communicate what you expect?

- Conflict is inevitable
- Simmering tempers on the job
- Bubbling discontentment

## Keep in mind:

- Opposing views are nothing more than dots of information that need to be connected

# Workplace Communication

Offensive behavior among colleagues carries a high price because being respectful at work means more than just good manners.

Respectful treatment creates the foundation for cooperation between individuals and collaboration among departments.

# What it means to be a Leader

Help others to be the best they can be vs. expect their teams/ co-workers to serve them.

You cannot resolve conflicts or differences in opinion if your relationship isn't grounded in mutual respect and trust.

# Setting Clear Expectations Planning Tool

1. Write down the expectation you need to set. Make sure it is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.
2. What is one open-ended question to ask to make sure the expectation is understood?
3. What is one confirming question you will ask?
4. What support might this person (or group) need from you or others?
5. Why is this project important? What is the impact to the business?
6. When will you follow up? How will you remember to do so?
7. What opportunities do you have to reinforce the importance of this expectation (e.g., next touchpoint meeting)?

# Conflict

When people are rude and disrespectful to one another, they are much less likely to share information, contribute helpful suggestions, or offer assistance with problems.

# What NOT to do when you want to be clear

If you don't take the time to properly explain what you expect, and give them a firm deadline as to when they need to deliver, don't expect things to get done the way – or by when – you've envisioned

**Don't be too brief**

You meet with your team, explain what to do, and since you trust them, you step back

**Don't assume they've got it**

To set things in context and connect it to the big picture

**Don't forget to tell them why**





# Silence & Violence Destroys

Silence	Violence
<p>Avoid people (in-person, phone calls, emails) and situations associated with a challenging or sensitive issue</p> <p>Hold back my opinions</p> <p>Change the subject rather than talk about difficult issues</p> <p>Offer insincere compliments before providing constructive feedback to someone</p>	<p>Control the conversation by cutting people off or changing the subject to what I want to talk about</p> <p>Let people know when you think they make a dumb remark</p> <p>In the midst of the debate, move from arguing the point to making comments that might hurt or insult the other person</p> <p>Get caught up in winning the “battle” versus looking for common ground</p>

# Silence & Violence Destroys

Silence	Violence
Higher risk of failure (project , health, relationship)	Higher risk of failure by silencing other voices
Contributes to miscommunication	Reduces employee engagement & productivity
Lowers self-confidence	Lowers trust
Harms relationships, teamwork, & collaboration	Harms relationships, teamwork, & collaboration



# Action vs No Action

Action	No Action
<p>Improved working relationships, reputation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More productive, efficient, Collaboration</li><li>• Feel – fair process, listened to – valued</li><li>• Develops your skills, increased confidence</li></ul>	<p>Problems escalate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal complications</li><li>• More people get involved</li><li>• Cost of time, money, resources</li></ul>



<b>I feel like saying... (negative)</b>	<b>I should say... (positive)</b>
I'm sick and tired of working 70 hours a week while you guys are playing golf every other day.	I could use more support from my co-workers as I am unable to keep up with this challenging workload.
I should have been put on that project. That person is completely incompetent.	I feel like I could contribute to that project in a meaningful way and would welcome the opportunity to do so.
You are not doing your work for this project on purpose because you dislike me.	I need this project to get finished and your participation is crucial, can I count on you?
You think that this project is impossible and that it can't succeed. You just want me to fail.	I recognize that I am taking some risks with this new project. This is necessary if we want to try something new. I am hoping you can support me with this initiative.
You need to start working harder. You are lazy and I am going to have to fire you if you don't start producing.	I have noticed your production is not meeting expectations. I need you to improve, your performance is affecting our overall team goal.

# Conflict at a Glance

## Types of Conflict conflict is over...

1. Relationship (personal issues, such as how you're being treated)
2. Task (the goal, what you're trying to achieve)
3. Process (the process, how work gets done)
4. Status (your standing in a group or who's in charge)

## Options for handling

1. Do nothing
2. Address indirectly
3. Address directly
4. Exit the relationship.

## Natural tendencies

1. Conflict avoider
  - Shies away from disagreements
  - Cares most about Harmony
2. Conflict seeker
  - Eager to engage in disagreements
  - Cares most about directness and honesty



# Critical Conversations

'You' language (ineffective)	'I' language (effective)
You are constantly asking for exceptions when it comes to proper documentation.	I see the documentation procedures being sidestepped, and I want to explore with you how to make it better. I would like to begin meeting with you once a week to look at specific tension spots and brainstorm solutions
You are continually late and you show up unprepared for your meetings.	I have noticed that your meetings aren't as effective as the rest of the team's, and I want to discuss how we can improve them. What do you think is important for an effective meeting?
You aren't collaborating with the rest of the team and you've managed to make them all dislike you.	I received feedback that team projects aren't getting much of everyone's full attention and I would like to change that so that every team member is helping them. Let's talk about how we should be contributing to these projects.

# Critical Conversations

When talking to someone who becomes angry, your natural inclination may be to try to calm him or her down, especially when other employees are within listening distance. Just be careful with your words. Saying something like “Take it easy” can come across as a warning or reprimand:

“I’m in charge and you’re not, so you need to do what I say.” This tends to make some people even angrier. Instead of trying to force calm on people, seek to clarify the situation.

***Say something like, “Are you angry at something I’ve said? Tell me about it.”***

This response can lead you back to a rational discussion where you can solve problems instead of shouting at each other.

# Critical Conversations

- What do you really want?
- What you really DON'T want
- Reverse what you DON'T want in order to come up with "AND" goal



# Critical Conversations

## 3364-25-01 Standards Of Conduct

### (A) Policy statement

The University of Toledo's goals of excellence are supported by a set of standards of conduct.

The University seeks to encourage a safe and pleasant work atmosphere which occurs when everyone cooperates and commits to appropriate standards of conduct.

(3) General rules of conduct and policies have been established to help achieve the objectives of this policy. The expectation is that all employees are held to the highest standards of conduct in all areas related to their employment.

***Inappropriate conduct of any kind***, including but not limited to, ***disruptive, discourteous, disrespectful, abusive behavior, substandard quality of work, theft, falsifying records, failure to properly record time worked or any other behavior deemed inappropriate*** will be subject to disciplinary action based on the circumstances of the situation

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