What is Leadership Communication?

Lectures Based on
Leadership Communication, 3rd edition
By Deborah J. Barrett, Ph.D.
Discussion Topics

- Leadership definitions and characteristics
- Communication and the positioning of leadership communication
- Definition of leadership communication
- Approaches to ethical decision making
Leaders Inspire, Do, and Connect

- Leaders guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others
- Leaders are the men and women who do some or all of the following:
  - Influence others in an organization or in a community
  - Command others’ attention
  - Persuade others to follow them or pursue goals they define
  - Control situations
  - Improve the performance of groups and organizations
- Leaders connect with others and get results
Leadership is Defined by Traits and Actions

Leadership theorists define leadership by:

- The traits—key characteristics, personality, and charisma—leaders possess
- The tasks they perform
- The positions they hold
- The accomplishments they achieve
Leaders Should Select Their Styles Carefully

### Different Leadership Styles Should Be Used Appropriately

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>How builds resonance</th>
<th>When appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>Moves people toward shared goals and dreams</td>
<td>When changes require a new vision or a new direction is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Connects a person’s wants with the organization’s goals</td>
<td>To help an employee improve performance by building long-term capabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>Creates harmony by connecting people to each other</td>
<td>To heal rifts in a team, motivate during stressful times, or strengthen connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Values people’s input and gets commitment through participation</td>
<td>To build buy-in or consensus, or to get valuable input from employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacesetting</td>
<td>Meets challenging and exciting goals</td>
<td>To get high-quality results from a motivated and competent team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commanding</td>
<td>Soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency</td>
<td>In a crisis, to kick-start a turnaround, or problem employees</td>
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Transformational Leaders are Mostly Visionary and Affiliative

Transformational leaders

- Articulate a clear and motivating vision
- Inspire trust and respect
- Connect with others individually and in groups
- Skillfully motivate and guide others to act
- Possess a positive ethos (authority and credibility)
Leaders Rely on Different Sources of Power to Influence Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimate Power</td>
<td>Recognized title or position in organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Having knowledge, skills, and expertise people think important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Prospect of being able to punish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Prospect of being able to provide benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referent (Ethos)</td>
<td>Personal attractiveness and charisma, able to inspire, seen as credible and trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Interpersonal and network linkages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Possessing need information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders Use all Appeals to Influence Others

Aristotle’s Persuasive Appeals

- **Ethos**: Appeal based on credibility
  - Blue circle

- **Pathos**: Appeal to emotions
  - Red circle

- **Logos**: Appeal based in logic
  - Light blue circle

Diagram: The circles overlap, indicating that leaders use all three appeals to influence others.
But a Positive Ethos is Most Important

**Outward manifestation:**
- Appropriately dressed & behaved
- Charismatic
- Well prepared & knowledgeable
- Documented expertise:
  - Education
  - Credentials
  - Experience

**The inner character:**
- Honest
- Honorable
- Truthful
- Fair
- Ethical

**Communication actions:**
- Skilled speaking & writing
- Empathetic listening
- Appropriate non-verbals
- Sincere connection
- Emotional intelligence
- Cross-cultural literacy

Positive Ethos
Three Primary Methods for Creating a Positive Ethos

Aristotle argued that a communicator can create a positive ethos by

1. Ensuring all messages are “worthy of belief”

2. Making his/her “own character look right”

3. Putting the audience into the “right frame of mind”
Ensuring Messages are Worthy of Belief

- Make messages meaningful, clear, and logical
- Have all of the facts in hand
- Be honest and ethical
- Avoid careless errors
Making Own Character Look Right

- Dress the part
- Project confidence
- Know the subject and be prepared
- Take time to build a rapport
- Avoid common delivery mistakes
Putting Audience in the Right Frame of Mind

- Affirm cultural values
- Be sensitive to context
- Understand their needs and motivations
- Frame messages carefully and target them specifically
Leadership Depends on Communication

“Effective leadership is still largely a matter of communication. . . . An effective leader thinks about what he says, carefully crafting each utterance of any significance.”*

Effective leadership depends on effective communication.

Avoiding Common Verbals that Hurt Ethos

- Presenting statements as questions (up-speak)
- Over-qualifying or providing too much context (Not getting to the point fast enough)
- Explaining too much or apologizing too often
- Speaking too softly or too fast
- Framing in such a way we create doubt
- Hesitating or using fillers

Know what you want to say and say it crisply and with confidence
Without effective communication, nothing can happen in an organization:

- “Communication and action within large and complex organizations . . . are inseparable.”
- “Without the right words, used in the right way, it is unlikely that the right actions will ever occur.”

Communication Seems Simple
Interferences Often Prevent Successful Communication

- Inappropriate context
- No audience analysis
- Muddled thinking
- Wrong medium
- Wrong spokesperson
- Poor usage or style
- Poor timing
- Questionable ethics

- Unclear message
- Illogical structure
- Poor formatting
- Offensive tone
- Cognitive dissonance
- Cultural misunderstandings
- Negative ethos
Leadership Communication is Distinctive

Outside the Academy
- Management Communication
- Corporate Communication
- Organizational Communication

Inside the Academy
- Business Communication
- Technical Communication
- Academic Communication
- Mass Media Communication/Journalism

Leadership Communication
What is Leadership Communication?

- Leadership communication is the controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by which individuals influence a single person, a group, an organization, or a community.

- Leadership communication requires using the full range of communication abilities and resources to:
  - Connect positively with audiences
  - Overcome interferences
  - Create and deliver messages that guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others to action
Leadership Communication Spirals Outward

Corporate
Organizational
Internal Relations
Emotional Intelligence
Cross-Cultural Literacy
Strategy Writing Speaking
Meetings Teams
External Relations
Ethics: Values, Norms, Standards

- From Webster’s:
  “A set of moral principles or values”

- From Trevino & Nelson’s *Managing Business Ethics*:
  Ethical behavior in business is “behavior that is consistent with the principles, norms, and standards of business practice that have been agreed upon by society.”
The Legal System and Societies Help Determine Professional Ethics

- The legal system
  - Laws and regulations
  - International trade agreements
  - Contracts

- Tradition, industry, culture
  - Professional codes of conduct
  - Company codes of ethics
  - Policy statements
  - Company values statements
  - Moral values
The Golden Rule Cuts Across All Cultures

“The Golden Rule is the mother lode of social ethics and appears in the teachings of every major religion”:

- **Buddhism** – “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”
- **Christianity** – “Whatsoever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.”
- **Confucianism** – “Tsze-Kung asked, saying ‘Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one’s life? The Master said: ‘Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.’”
- **Hinduism** – “This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which would cause pain if done to you.”
- **Judaism** – “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. This is the entire Law: all the rest is commentary.”
- **Islam** – “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.”

Standard Approaches to Ethics
Influence Decisions

- **End Results (Consequentialist)** – focuses on harms and benefits to stakeholders to produce greatest good for the greatest number

- **Duty (Deontological)** – emphasizes duties, rights, and justice, based on moral standards, principles, and rules

- **Social contract (Group Virtue)** – bases decisions on customs and norms, the character and integrity of the moral community

- **Personal (Individual Virtue)** – bases decisions on the conscience, what feels right
Hosmer Provides a Useful Approach to Ethical Decision-Making

1. Understand moral standards, and recognize moral impacts:
   - Benefits to some
   - Harms to others
   - Rights exercised
   - Rights denied

2. Define the complete moral problem

3. Determine economic outcomes
   - Consider legal requirements
   - Evaluate ethical duties

4. Propose convincing moral solution

Common Ethical Problems Exist in Most Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definitions and Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human resources issues (60% of the ethical issues managers face)</td>
<td>❖ Question of fairness&lt;br&gt;❖ Privacy, performance evaluations, hiring, firing, discrimination, harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts of interest</td>
<td>❖ Compromised judgment or objectivity&lt;br&gt;❖ Overt or covert bribes, trading influence or privileged information or appearance of doing so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Common Ethical Problems (continued)

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| Customer confidence               | - Providing quality product or service at a fair price, representing both honestly, and protecting customer confidentiality  
                                  | - Product safety and effectiveness, truth in advertising, privacy, confidentiality, fiduciary responsibilities |
| Use of corporate resources        | - Fulfilling your responsibility to your employer/organization                             
                                  | - Truthful, honest, responsible use of corporate resources, care with corporate reputation and financial resources |
Certain Negative Organizational Cultures Influence Ethics the Most

- Lack of the following:
  - Satisfaction with information from top management
  - Trust that top management will keep promises and commitments
  - Satisfaction with information from supervisors
  - Trust that supervisors will keep promises and commitments
  - Trust that coworkers will keep promises and commitments
- Rewards for employees who are successful, even if it is through questionable means

Five Characteristics are Found in Ethical Organizations

1. Honesty
2. Clarity
3. Consistency
4. Transparency
5. Receptivity
Discussion Summary

- Leaders are individuals from all walks of life who inspire others, transform situations, and bring about positive changes for their community.

- Leaders may call on different sources of power and use different styles to influence others and achieve their goals but all of what they accomplish requires effective communication.

- Leadership communication proficiency begins with core skills and expands outward to organizational and corporate abilities.

- A positive ethos is a leader’s most persuasive appeal, particularly if grounded in high ethical standards and integrity.
Appendix – Developing a Communication Development Plan
The First Step Toward Leadership Communication is Improvement Planning

1. Assess your leadership communication skills
   - Use the self-assessment in *Leadership Communication*
   - Obtain input from others

2. Select your preferred leadership communication roles in your career

3. Determine your short-term and long-term leadership communication objectives

4. Outline a communication development plan that includes a list of specific actions
Having a Communication Development Plan (CDP) is Important

1. Provides a clear roadmap to reach defined personal communication improvement goals

2. Identifies targeted improvement areas for oral, written, and interpersonal skills

3. Establishes specific approaches to achieving goals in each area

4. Confirms the commitment to spending time on your specific communication skill needs
Suggested CDP Content

1. Current assessment:
   - List of strengths and weaknesses in written, oral, and interpersonal communications
   - Honest self-assessment with input from others

2. Communication improvement goals:
   - Very specific and measurable
   - With easier-to-reach and stretch goals
Suggested CDP Content (continued)

3. Improvement approach and timetable:
   - Clear and specific actions to reach each goal
   - Deadlines that ensure achieving goals by your established time period

4. Measurement:
   - Built in accountability measures
   - Specific methods for measuring your progress