

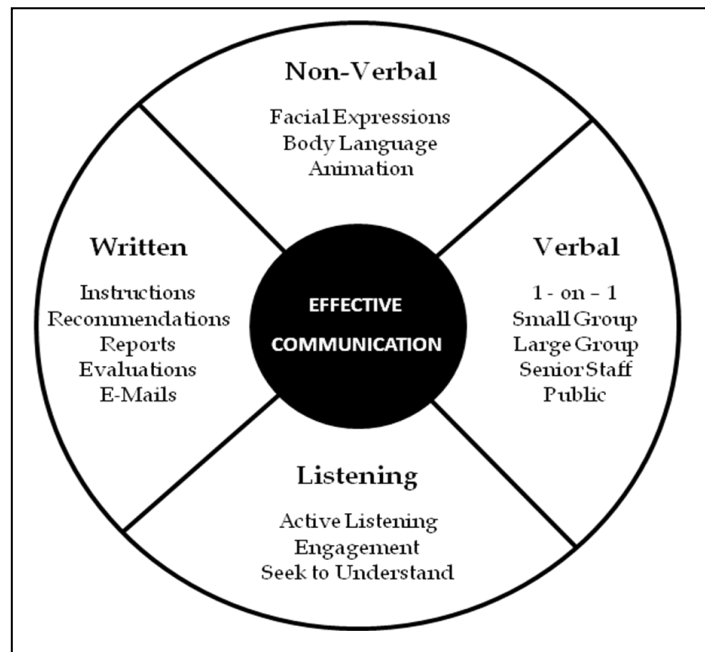
## Communication

At the heart of an successful organization is open and honest communication. How well you communicate, and how effective you are using *all* methods of communication, have a great deal to do with your individual success and the success of your team and organization. When we examine why a manager's career derails, we often find poor communication skills are a significant part of the problem.

Communication is the process by which information and ideas are exchanged and understood by two or more people. In business, the intent is to educate, inform, influence, or motivate. As a manager, you will often use verbal and written communication to prompt another person to behave in a certain way or accomplish a specific task. Or you might be trying to achieve general organizational objectives, meet the mission, or implement some overall strategy. Regardless of your purpose, you want to create, transmit, and receive information as effectively as possible. At the same time, you want to build understanding and enhance your working relationships.

To communicate effectively, you need to be able to balance four major components:

- **Listening**
- **Written communication**
- **Verbal communication**
- **Nonverbal communication**



Since communication is a *shared* process, when one of the parties has limited skills in one or more of these areas, communication may fail.

## Why Communication Breaks Down

Why do people misunderstand one another? We've all experienced the look of confusion, the "40-yard stare" that people get on their face, when they have no clue what you're trying to communicate. Or when we discover that the results produced by a key employee is not at all what was expected. There are all kinds of reasons that communication breaks down. Some of them are:

- We don't ask the right questions of the right people.
- We don't actively listen to each other.
- We have significant personality differences or conflicting values.
- We tend to quickly evaluate and make judgments about what we hear or see.
- We believe the other person understood what was said, but don't check for comprehension.
- We may be reluctant to ask questions when the other person is above us in the organization.
- We give too much information, too many details, too quickly.
- We give vague instructions or deliver them in a way that's hard to understand.

In addition, information can get lost or distorted in the sending and/or receiving. Noisy environments can make communication difficult or interrupt the interaction. But ultimately, misunderstanding occurs because we are individuals and our differences naturally create barriers to understanding each other.

For two decades Midwest Consulting Group has been helping individual managers, executives, teams, and entire organizations to make their communications successful. Contact us today to discuss how we can assist you and *your* organization to become communication winners!