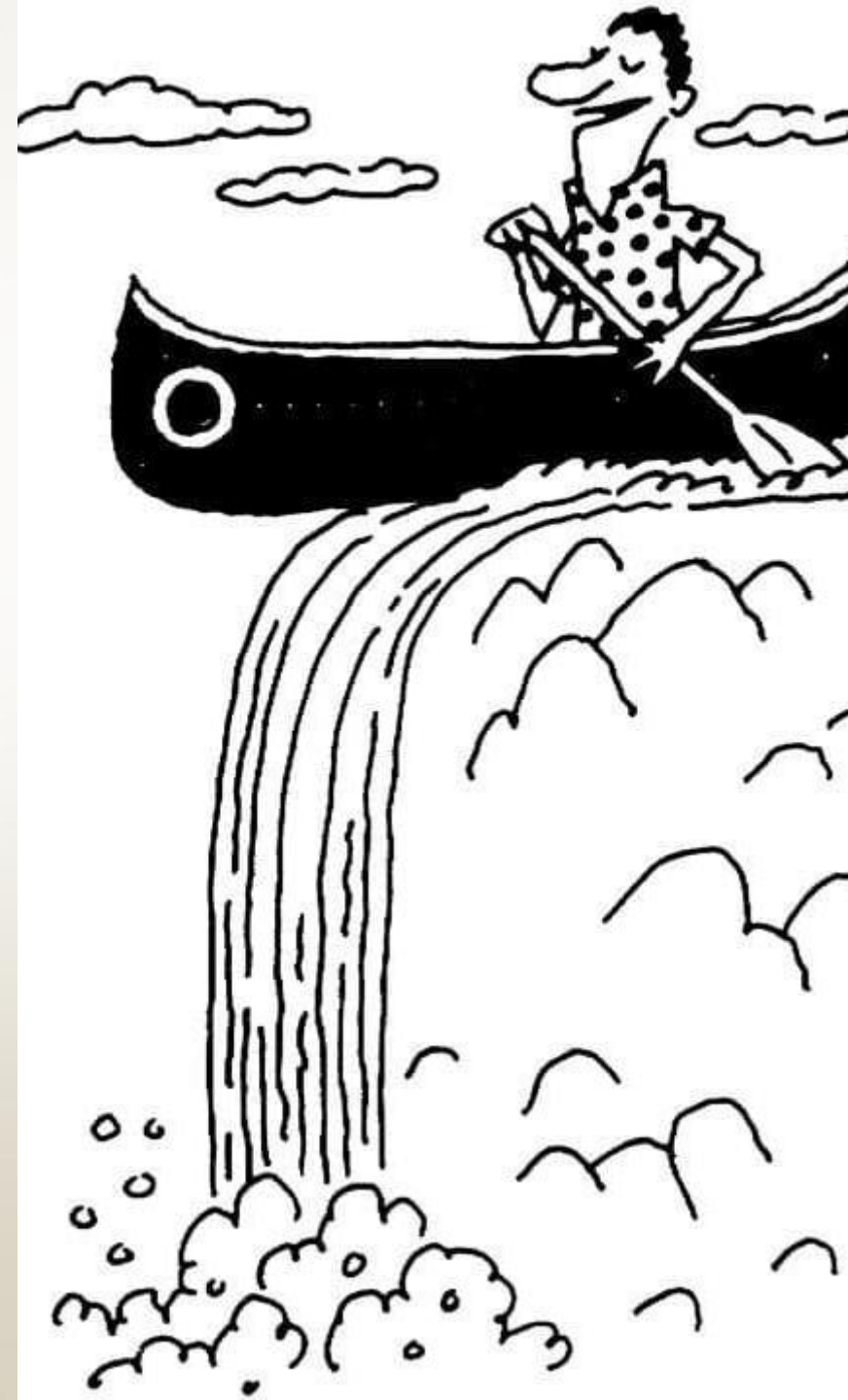


# Up the Creek: Managing Daily Personnel & Public Disasters





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By

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Kara Endicott, CAE, RES, AAS  
RMA



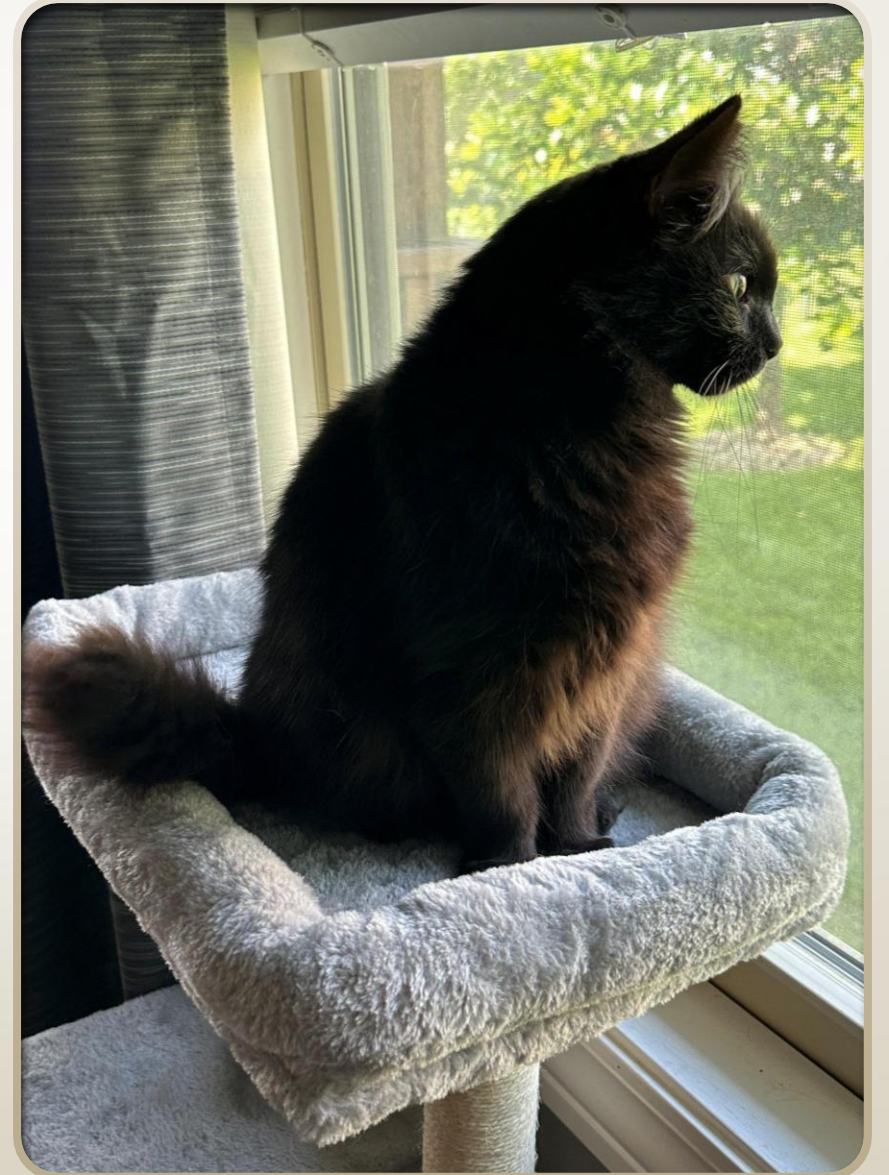
# Section #1 - Introductions & Objectives

# Section #1 - Introductions



## Kara Endicott

- From Lawrence, KS
- One Husband
- No Kids (2 Fur Babies)
- Likes Golf, Running & Movies



# Section #1 – Course Objectives

Learning Effective Communication

Develop Better Listening Skills

Working with & Motivating Difficult People

Public Relations



**Person: What's the  
dumbest thing you've  
ever done?**

**Me: Awfully bold of  
you to assume I've  
peaked.**





## Section #2 – Effective Communication

## Section #2 – Effective Communication

Communication creates an environment  
for healthy professional relationships in  
the workplace.



Effective communication is easier said  
than done but is necessary for everyone  
on staff to know expectations and when a  
task is complete appropriately.

**Section #2 –  
Effective  
Communication:  
What Makes a  
Good  
Manager/Leader**

Make

Make others feel safe to speak up

Make

Make decisions

Communicate

Communicate expectations

Challenge

Challenge people to think

Be

Be accountable to others

**Section #2 –  
Effective  
Communication:  
What Makes a  
Good  
Manager/Leader**

Lead

Lead By Example

Measure

Measure and Reward Performance

Provide

Provide Continuous Feedback

Allocate

Properly Allocate and Deploy Talent

Ask

Ask Questions, Seek Counsel

**Section #2 –  
Effective  
Communication:  
What Makes a  
Good  
Manager/Leader**

Solve

Problem Solve & Avoid Procrastination

Attitude

Have a Positive Energy & Attitude

Teach

Be a Great Teacher

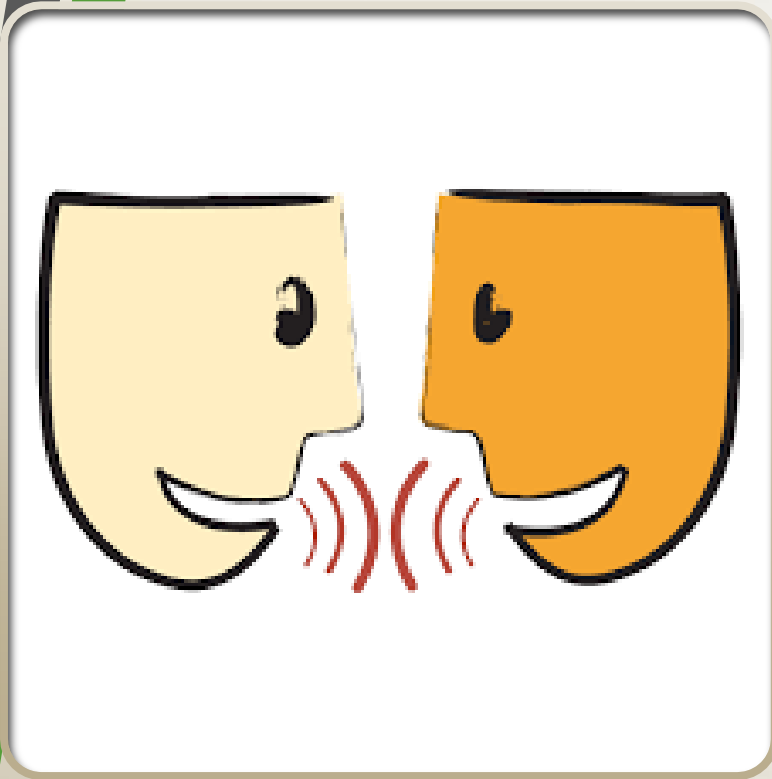
Invest

Invest in Relationships

Enjoy

Genuinely Enjoy Your Responsibilities

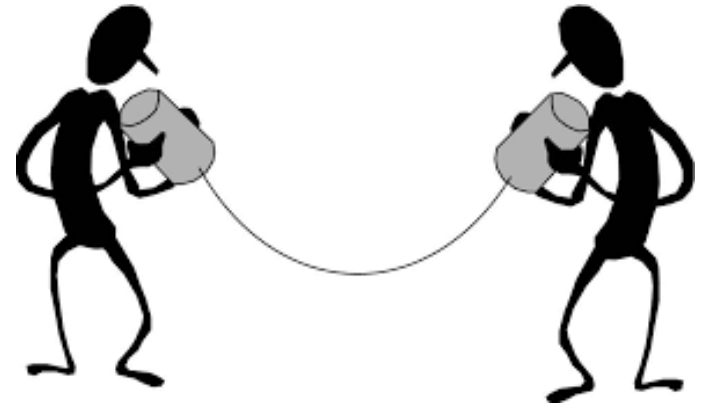
## Section #2 – Effective Communication



- Communication is the foundation to successful teamwork.
- Sometimes, when we communicate, we believe we have been crystal clear in what we want, and how we want it done.
- Often, upon the completion of the project, we find out there was a breakdown in our communication somewhere along the way.
- The job does not get completed, or it is not done in the way it needed to be finished. Maybe your message was misinterpreted.

# Section #2 – Effective Communication

- It falls on you to know how to properly communicate with our staff, the public and other members of the organization.
- It is important that you successfully convey your thoughts and hopes to the receiver of the message concisely.
- It sounds easy but is often a stumbling block.



# Section #2 – Effective Communication



- Most importantly, this is not something you do part of the time.
- You should be consistently working to create open communication lines between yourself and your employees, and the public every single day.
- Certain situations, such as a hybrid work environment, and staggered work schedules have made management extremely challenging.

# Section #2 – Effective Communication: The Communication Process

Communication is a two-way process.

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Communication entails the sending and receiving of information.

A light gray downward-pointing arrow indicating the flow from the second point to the third.

Good communication is a dual process and involves both the ability to articulate messages and the capacity to understand responses to them.

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: The Communication Process

The sender must be able  
to communicate  
accurately and completely.



The receiver must  
understand the message  
and must be willing to act  
on the communication in  
an appropriate manner.

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: The Communication Process

When communication breaks down it typically is because the receiver did not understand the message the same way the sender did.

As the creator and sender of a message, you have the responsibility to express your message in such a way that the receiver will understand it.

# Section #2 – Effective Communication:

## Types of Communication

### Downward Communication

- Job instructions
- Office memos/emails
- Email is now often used as a form of communication.
- Remember that all email can be viewed by the organization so make sure you are using it in a professional manner.
- Staff meetings

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Types of Communication

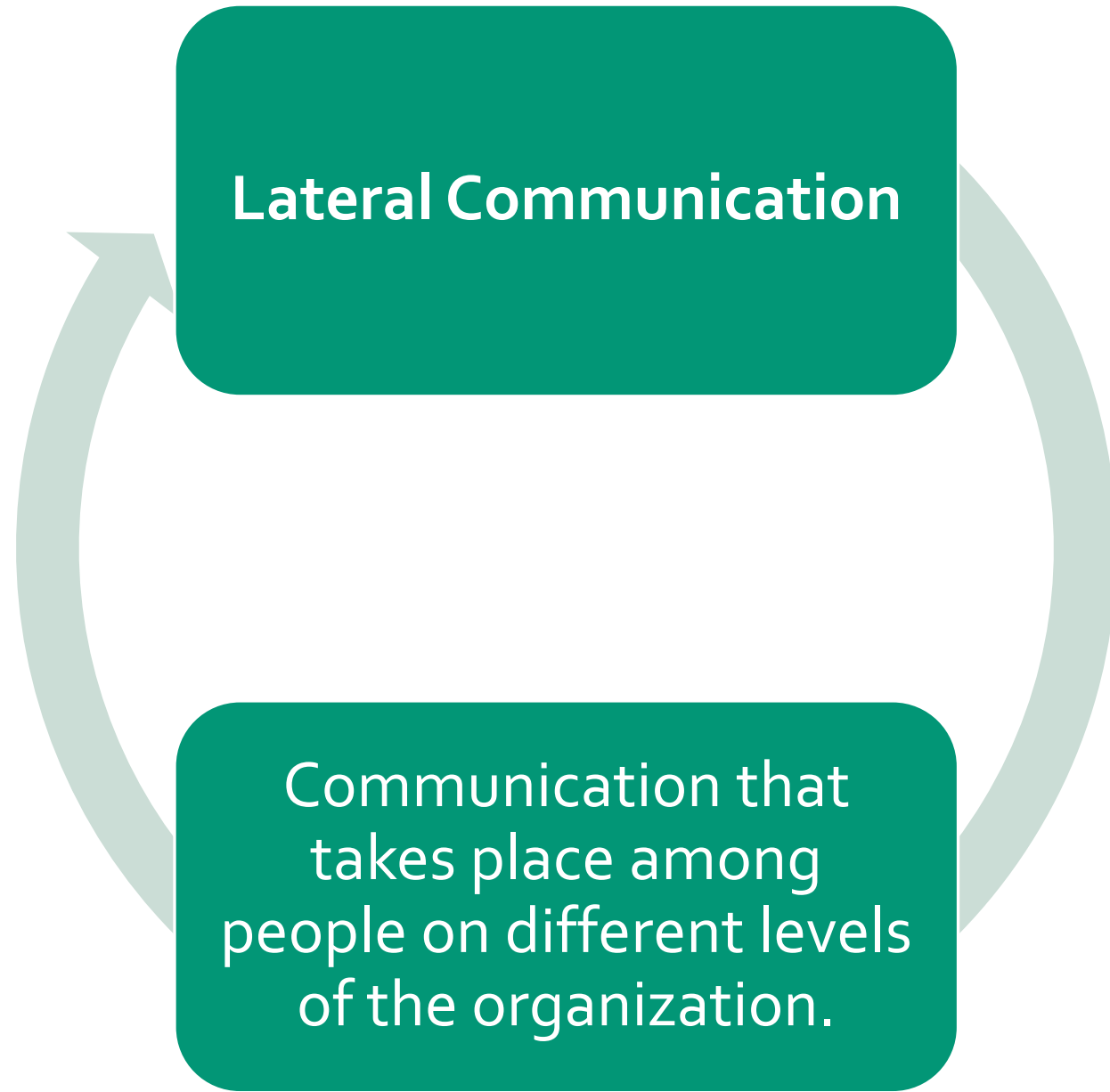
### Upward Communication

- Suggestion Boxes
- Grievance procedures

# Section #2 – Effective Communication: Types of Communication

## Horizontal Communication

Communication that takes place among people on the same level of the organization.



## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Types of Communication

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Types of Communication



### Informal Communication:

- The Grapevine
- Body Language



## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Communication Styles

### Visual Communicator –

These are people who like to see what they are learning. They need to receive the message in writing. This places more emphasis on making written instructions clear.



## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Communication Styles

### Auditory Communicator –

These are the talkers and listeners. They like to discuss work projects. They tend to think out loud and are uncomfortable with written communications. A disadvantage of this style is that words disappear once spoken and conversations are often remembered differently by different people. One way to insure they have properly heard the communication is to have them repeat the message back to you.

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Communication Styles

### Kinesthetic Communicator –

This type understands better when they can handle and examine items and can practice new skills. They learn by doing, not by reading or by listening.

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Other Research

**‘Why’ people** – want all the reasons for doing something.

**‘What’ people** – want all the facts about it.

**‘How’ people** – want only the information they need to get it done.

**‘What If’ people** – are more interested in the consequences of doing it.

## **Section #2 – Effective Communication: Barriers to Communication**

Status

Environmental  
Issues

Background  
Barriers

Personal  
Barriers

Number of  
Links

## **Section #2 – Effective Communication: Barriers to Communication**

Expansion

Contraction

Organizational  
Politics

Economic  
Threats

Hybrid or  
Remote Work



## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Ways to Overcome Barriers

Know Your  
Audience

Emphasize  
Value

Small  
Bites

Consult  
W/Others

Encourage  
Trust

**Section #2 –  
Effective  
Communication:  
Take  
Responsibility**

When communicating with others, you should take 100% of the responsibility for the communication.

**Section #2 –  
Effective  
Communication:  
Take  
Responsibility**

Whether you are attempting to communicate something or listening to something being communicated to you, it is entirely your responsibility to ensure that your message is understood or that you understand the message you are being given.

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: How to Take Responsibility

Avoid

Avoid making assumptions of any kind.



Ask

Ask the other person to repeat what they think you have asked them to do.



Be

Be clear about requirements and expectations. Specifically vocalize anticipated deadlines.

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: How to Take Responsibility

Repeat

Repeat to the other person your interpretation of what they have said.

Ask

Ask for clarification and perhaps examples of what is required.

Ask

Ask detailed questions. The more you talk to everyone the better sense you'll get for whether each person on the team is playing the role they need to.

## Section #2 – Effective Communication: Communication Killers

- Making the other person wrong
- Talking too much about yourself
- Interrupting
- Talking too much about the negative
- Paying more attention to your phone, laptop, etc. than the person you are speaking to.



## Section #2 – Effective Communication

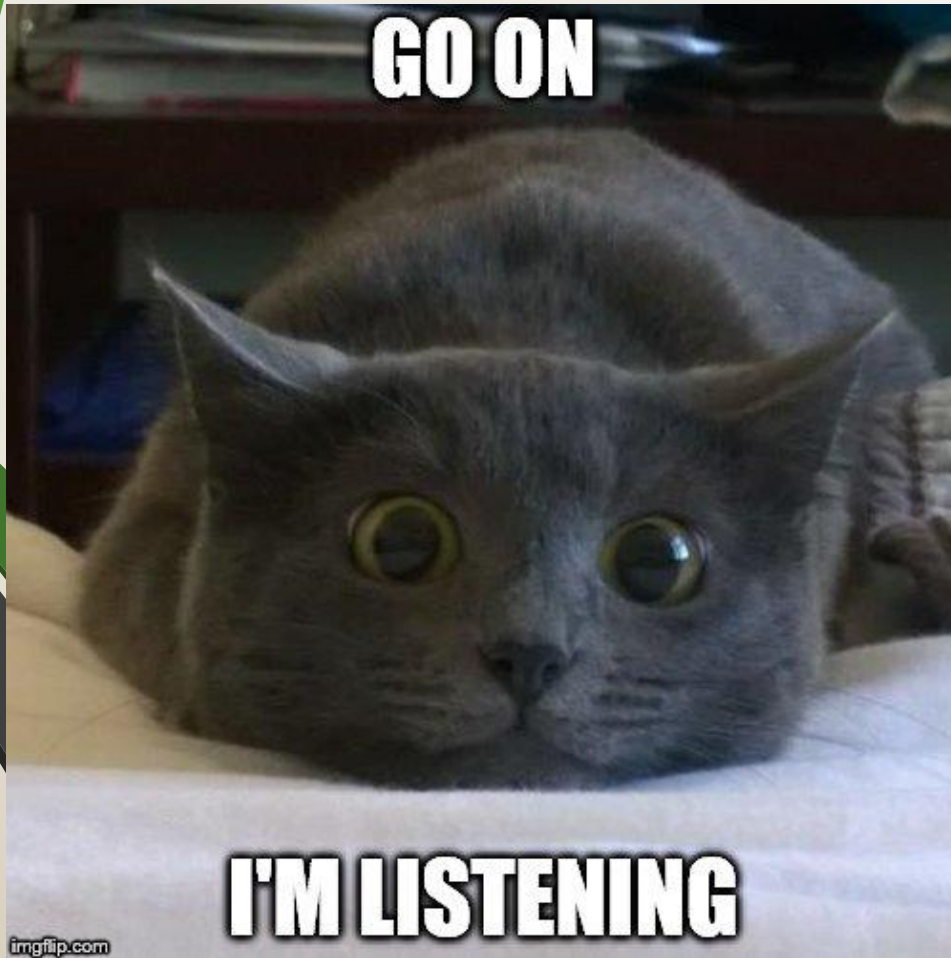


### **Class Exercise: *Remote Work Environment Adjustment***

*Due to unforeseen circumstances, your office has seen most of your employees working from remote locations, instead of coming into a physical environment every day.*

*You have started to see a change in the way your employees work together. The level of collaboration has been decreasing, and it is affecting the quality of work your group is producing.*

*Overall, the team seems less satisfied than they have in the past. You fear the fact they do not see each other everyday is seriously hurting your culture and team foundation. How can you go about improving this situation?*



## Section #3 – Listening Skills

# Section #3 – Listening Skills

Many people seem to forget that being a good communicator is usually more closely tied to being a good listener than just being able to express your ideas verbally.

We have all had conversations with people who communicate through 'monologues', or going on endlessly about their ideas, instead of hearing others as well.

# Section #3 – Listening Skills:

## Listening has 2 Parts

Hearing is the mechanical aspect of being able to hear sounds and messages around you.

A light gray downward-pointing arrow indicating a flow from the first box to the second.

Listening is the process of taking that information and turning it into a meaningful understanding of what is trying to be conveyed.

A light gray downward-pointing arrow indicating a flow from the second box to the third.

Listening helps keep the channels of communication open with your staff. The feedback that is given must be incorporated and used when trying to find a solution.

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: Being a Good Listener

---

To be a good listener, a person must establish and maintain, a positive environment for listening.

---

There are several things you can ask yourself to help you become a better listener.

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: Being a Good Listener

What point are they trying to make?

Mentally summarize what the person has been saying. What points have they already made if any?

Are they accurate?

Do they come from an unprejudiced source?

Am I getting the full picture, or is the person telling me only what will prove their point?

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: Being a Good Listener

Listen Between the Lines

A Person Does Not Always Put Things  
Into Words

Changing Tones & Volume

Watch Facial Expressions & Gestures

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: Barriers to Listening

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Being an effective listener is an active process, one where the listener interacts with the speaker.

---

This requires the listener not only listen to what is being said, but also what non-verbal cues, like tones, gestures and facial expressions are present.

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: Barriers to Listening

Assuming in advance the subject/speaker is not important or interesting.

Mentally criticizing the speaker's delivery.

Becoming too excited when questioning an idea.

Skipping details, listening only for basic facts.

Pretending to be attentive.

Overreacting to certain words or phrases.

Daydreaming while the speaker is talking.

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: Be a Better Listener

To reiterate, becoming a better listener requires a considerable amount of effort on behalf of the person doing the listening. It requires concentration and often time patience.

To become a good listener, it is important to recognize any bias you might have against the speaker or the subject and put those aside, so they do not affect what you are hearing.

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: Be a Better Listener

## Prepare

- Prepare yourself mentally by sitting facing the speaker and making sure you can hear.

## Make

- Make good eye contact with the speaker.

## Suspend

- Suspend judgment while the speaker is talking.

## Avoid

- Avoid distractions.

## Wait

- Wait before responding. Don't interrupt immediately after you hear something you know is incorrect.

## Rephrase in

- Rephrase in your own words what the speaker has said, especially the important themes.

# Section #3 – Listening Skills: The Ten Commandments

**Stop Talking.**

**Put the talker at ease..**

**Show the talker you want to listen.**

**Remove distractions.**

**Empathize with the talker.**



# Section #3 – Listening Skills: The Ten Commandments

Be patient.

Hold Your Temper.

Go Easy On Argument

Ask Questions

Stop Talking.





## Section #4 – Motivating People

## Section #4 — Motivating People

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Many people do not realize just how much of their time will be taken with personnel and the public.

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They work their way up the organizational ladder doing the necessary work and generally going beyond expectations.

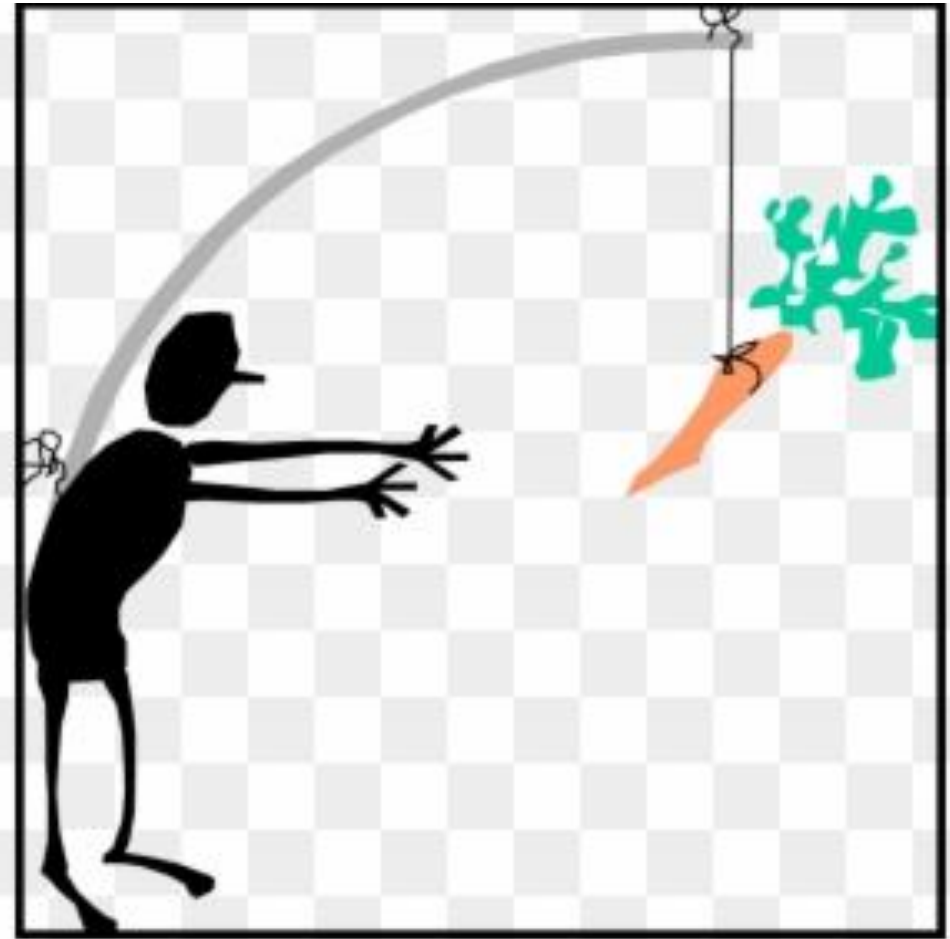
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What they fail to realize is mastering the work was the easy part, the people are the hard part.

## Section #3 – Motivating People: Motivations Vary

Why does one person work harder than another even if both people possess the same talents and qualities?

Some people are motivated by money, while others work harder for reasons such as praise or recognition.



# Section #4 – Motivating People: Motivations Vary

A communicator will discover what motivates their people but will have to at the same time know when some things are out of their control.

For example, an assessor may not be able to use a salary increase as a motivational tool since budget for offices are typically limited.

## Section #4 – Motivating People: Motivations Vary

What you do have control over though, are simple yet meaningful things such as training, recognition and assignment of important tasks.

Motivating is a very complex subject that has been studied by numerous individuals.

## Section #4 – Motivating People: Motivations Vary

One theory alone, however, does not seem to explain human motivations, namely because humans are individuals and not machines that offer predictability.



As a communicator, finding the right motivational tool for each person will have a tremendous effect on how well your organization or jurisdiction meets goals.



## Section #4 – Motivating People: Components of Motivation

**Ability** – the individual's physical or mental power to do something.

**Effort** – the energy, drive and time an individual uses in pursuing a goal.

**Desire** – the want, wish or urge to achieve a particular goal or objective.

# Section #4 – Motivating People: How To Motivate

Great communicators excel at taking their current situation and optimizing it to accomplish their goals.

Leaders on the other hand, challenge their staff and public to achieve the goals by creating a vision of the future and then unlocking their potential.



## **Section #4 – Motivating People: How To Motivate**

Others mirror the behavior  
of their leaders.

In a recent survey, integrity  
was the most desired trait  
in a leader.

## Section #4

# Motivating People: How To Motivate

The best leaders are decisive.



If people have the same complaint over and over, they say the office won't make decisions.



Making decisions is one of the key reasons a person is hired, but too few are willing to take the risk they may be wrong.

# Section #4 – Motivating People: An Assessor's New Year Resolution

Give

Give Credit Where Credit is Due

Spend

Spend Time with Each of Your Employees  
Every Week

Provide

Provide Helpful and Developmental  
Feedback – Outside of Specific Job Task  
Performance

Reduce

Reduce your Priorities List

# Section #4 – Motivating People: An Assessor's New Year Resolution

Base

Base Assessments of your Associates' Job Performance on Direct Observation and Documented Evidence

Ask

Ask Before Telling

Have

Have Some Good-Natured Fun

Get

Get Some Unvarnished Feedback Yourself

Take

Take Time Off to Refresh and Recharge

# Section #4 – Motivating People



*Recently, a new department head has been assigned to your area. They have come from outside your jurisdiction and have several ideas about how to reorganize the office.*

*Currently, you have your department split into different kinds of valuation, meaning, a commercial or income valuation area and a residential or sales comparison area. Your new department head wishes to combine everything under one valuation umbrella.*

*You see both the advantages and disadvantages of the idea, so you are willing to try the new configuration to see if it works. Your staff on the other hand, does not like the idea of this much change. They have been in the current structure for decades and do not believe the new structure will work.*

*Sometimes, whether we like it or not, change is going to happen, so how do you convince your staff to give it a try and see what happens?*

# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People



# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People

In your life as an assessor, you will run into people who seem, for one reason or another, exceptionally hard to work with.

Whether it is due to personality differences, generational gaps or a lack of understanding, it is your job as the manager to work through these issues and help gain a common ground with these folks.



# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People

When you begin your assessment journey, this will inevitably be the most difficult part of your job and as you move up the organizational ladder, it will consume more and more of your time.

With that being said, let's begin by looking at some common causes of these problems.

# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People: Causes of Problems

The people's lack of necessary skills to do the job.

People's inappropriate attitude or difficult personality.

People's personal problems are interfering with their ability to perform the job.

Interpersonal conflicts between people in and with the workplace.

Poor policies, procedures or job descriptions are incomplete or poorly written.

# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People: Causes of Problems

A personality that  
leads to problems.

People who fail to  
communicate

Poor job design  
which leads to  
stress & monotony

Poor design of  
workspace

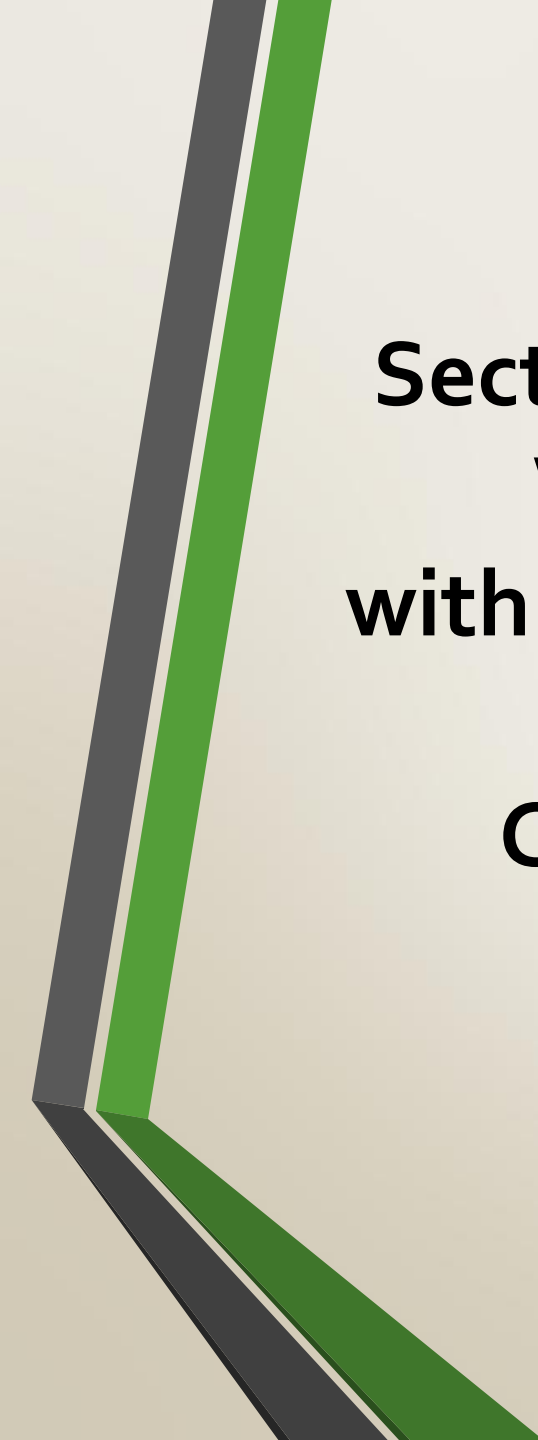
# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People: Coaching

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It may involve on the job training in basic skills, or it may be more subtle motivation like encouraging those around you.

---

All these types of activities should help develop people who are less likely to cause problems.



## **Section #5 – Working with Difficult People: Coaching Tips**

Give the people positive & negative feedback

Be honest with everyone.

## Section #5 – Working with Difficult People: Coaching Tips No Nos

- Threatening
- Commanding
- Attacking
- Demoralizing
- Ridiculing
- Blaming



# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People



## Class Exercise: *10 minutes too late...*

*Jackson is consistently 10 minutes late for work and other employees are noticing. Several of his workmates have come to you to complain that he is coming in late but still leaving at his scheduled time.*

*Everyone else on the team is here when they should be and you are afraid if you do not correct the situation immediately, others will begin to take Jacksons lead. Since they are hourly employees, this is not acceptable in your work policies.*

*What are some things you might talk about with Jackson to correct this situation and what alternatives can you think of to help Jackson out?*

# Section #5 – Working with Difficult People



## Class Exercise: *Where's Walter?*

*Your department has recently started a hybrid schedule for their employees. The employee can work from home three days a week but has an assigned schedule to come into the office for two days for office coverage and team meetings.*

*You begin to notice one of your employees, Walter, calling in sick on each of his office days or finding ways to leave early or go to other appointments. The rest of his team is noticing too.*

*Walter has told others he does not see the need for him to be in the office since he can easily get his work done from home and save gas. He believes his manager should be the one covering the office hours and does not plan on working in the office again if he can help it.*

How would you handle this situation?

## Section #5 – Working with Difficult People



### *Class Exercise: Disgruntled Gus*

*You have recently been promoted to a management position. Gus will be one of your new employees and was quite fond of the way the old manager did things. After observing the group and their work procedures for a bit, you decide there are some changes that can be made to improve the process.*

*When you ask Gus to change some of his usual procedures, he immediately shows resistance and questions all the reasons for change. You do your best to answer all his questions, but he is not budging. You decide to give it some time and ask for only small revisions from Gus at a time.*

## Section #5 – Working with Difficult People



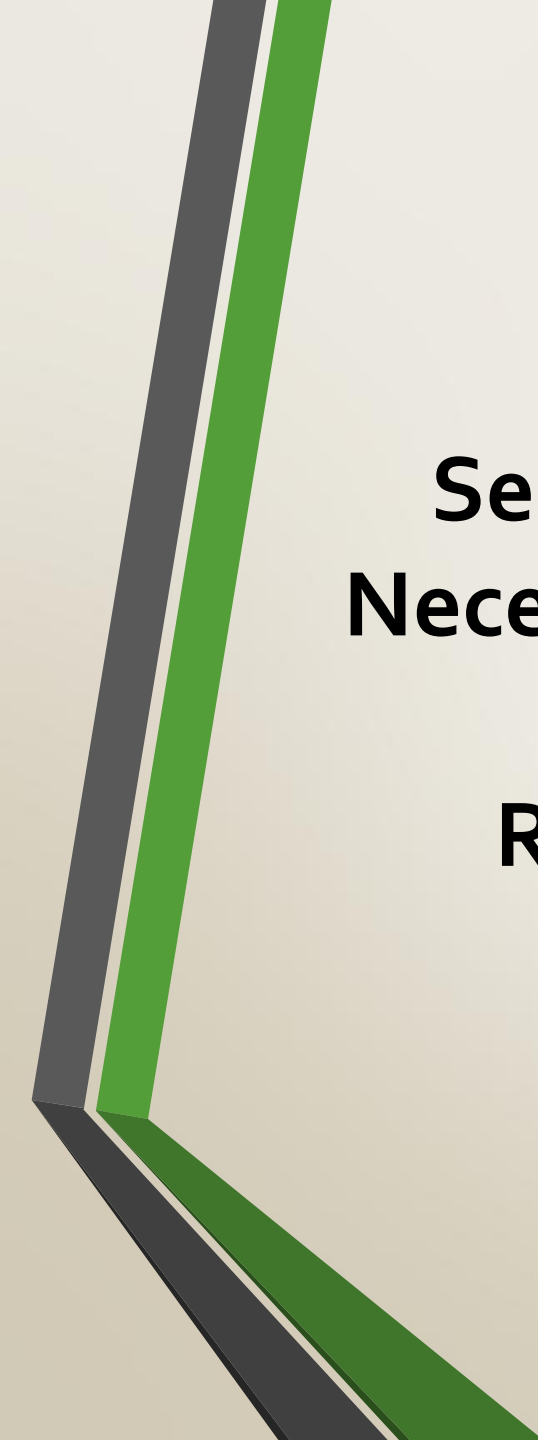
### *Class Exercise: Disgruntled Gus*

*Each time you ask him to make a small change, Gus reports it to the jurisdiction's Human Resources Department and files a complaint. Each time you must justify the change to HR and why you are making it. It is resolved each time, but this is starting to become a major part of your day and you cannot get other aspects of your work done.*

*How might you go about trying to make this a better situation for everyone involved?*

# Section 6 – Necessity for Public Relations





## **Section 6 – Necessity for Public Relations**

So, why do you think we need public relations?

- To avoid ending up in a negative article or tweet?
- To keep our governing bodies happy?
- Maybe to help the office 'fly under the radar' and stay unnoticed?



## Section 6 – Necessity for Public Relations

Public relations can be the first and most effective line of defense against negative public opinion. You will find once something negative is out there about a person or business, it is near impossible to turn opinions back to the positive.

People like to operate on minimal information and make assumptions, and they do not like to be told they are wrong. To change their opinion, they must admit to being wrong, and no one really likes that feeling.

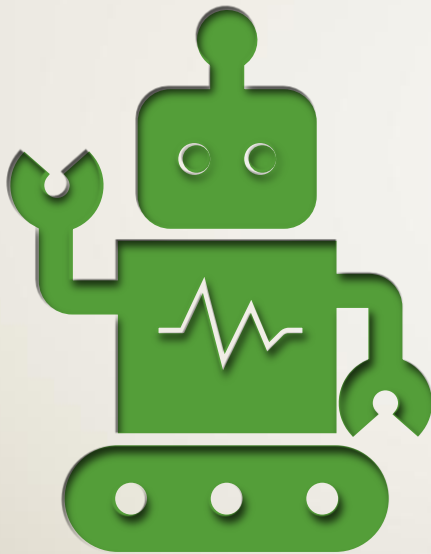


## Section 6 – Definition

A management staff function which seeks to assess and favorably influence public opinion of a person, good, or organization by delivering messages to such public without incurring direct costs.

*“This is not just a management function. All staff should be aware of what effective public relations are and how to communicate it.”*

# What Public Relations Should Not Be



I CAN ONLY PLEASE ONE PERSON  
A DAY AND TODAY AIN'T YOUR  
DAY!

TOMORROW AIN'T LOOKING TOO  
GOOD EITHER.



# Section 6 – Public Relations

We need to create a positive identity. Often, we are lumped into a group of people who do not know what they are doing. We must take the initiative to establish the identity we want and break the perception.



# Section 6 – Consider...



Imagine the public is dipping a brush in a bucket of paint.



They then move that brush across all governmental agencies saying none of these departments are providing good service.



We want to provide such great public relations and customer service, that the public will not move that brush over our office.



# Section 6 – Public Relations

We must be very careful about the identity we create



# **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**BECAUSE SOMEONE  
HAS TO MAKE YOU  
LOOK GOOD**

## **Section 7 – Developing a Public Relations Program**

## Section 7 – Developing a Public Relations Program

We understand now how important it is to get ahead of an image problem. But where do you begin?

### First Steps in Developing a Public Relations Program

- Do not reinvent the wheel!
- Steal from other successful programs – (with their permission of course).

TEAM Consulting LLC



# Section 7

## – Elements of a Program – Public Image

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*"The public relations program should improve the image of the assessment office."*

---

*The initial and probably most difficult task is to determine the public's current image of the department, which can be accomplished by listening to what the public is saying and observing its actions and reactions."*

# Section 7 - Steps

## Phase One: Formative Research

- Step 1: Analyzing the Situation
- Step 2: Analyzing the Organization
- Step 3: Analyzing the Publics

# Section 7 - Steps

## Phase Two: Strategy

- Step 4: Establishing Goals and Objectives
- Step 5: Formulating Action and Response Strategies
- Step 6: Designing Effective Communication

# Section 7 - Steps

## Phase Three: Tactics

- Step 7: Selecting Communication Tactics
- Step 8: Implementing the Strategic Plan

# Section 7 - Steps

## Phase Four: Evaluative Research

- Step 9: Evaluating the Strategic Plan



## **Section 7 - Steps**

Although the items just mentioned may be more directly related to a business operation, government needs to function more like a business at times and use the elements mentioned to improve the office.

## Section 7 – Developing a Program

Think of the taxpayer as a client,  
customer, or constituent.

They really are.

You want them satisfied so they  
feel you have treated them fairly.

# Section 7 – Long Range Planning

Cannot be  
developed over-  
night.

Keep a running  
file.

Make notes in the  
file as thoughts  
come up.

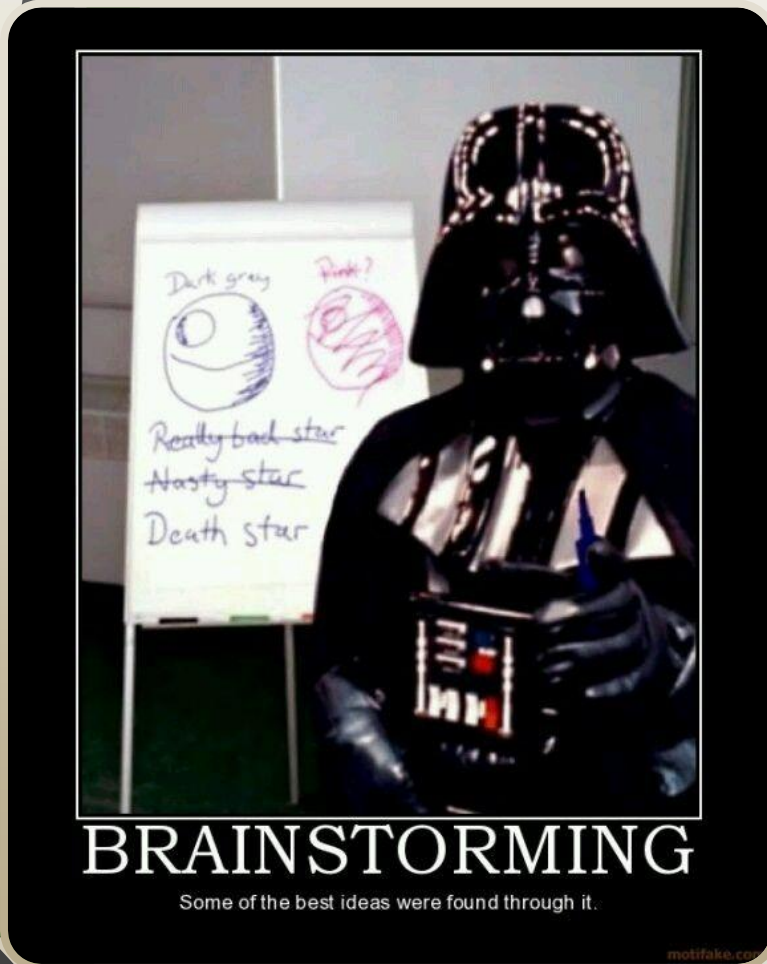
PR is a full-time  
job and not just for  
valuation notices  
or tax bills.

# Section 7 – Long Range Planning

Making PR a full-time job is very important.

Every contact must be considered a PR opportunity.

# Section 7 - Brainstorm



- Write them down no matter how far out.
- Re-visit and work with the best of the ideas.
- BE CREATIVE!!!!!!
- Involve your staff.



Request staff input during PR development and before it is implemented and published.



Staff are on the front lines and may know better how certain remarks will be received.



You may even find a good writer on staff!



Total staff effort!

## Section 7 - Brainstorm

## Section 7 - Brainstorm

---

Must be constantly  
emphasized.

---

One bad employee  
can taint the office.

# Section 7 – Listening to the Public

To develop positive public relations, we must be listening to what is being said.

Listening can be through direct contact such as speaking engagements, hearings or can be indirect through staff and other County officials.

When Jefferson County began photographing properties some opportunities were created for good public relations by listening.





## Section 7 – Listening to the Public

The van drivers stated that as people asked what they were doing, they handed them the brochure explaining the activity and when they mentioned the Sheriff's Department, everyone stated if the Sheriff needed it, then that was great.

As a result of the van drivers sharing these details, the Appraiser then changed the order on the brochure about what departments would be using the photos. The Appraiser was moved from first to last, and the Sheriff was listed first.

## **Section 7 – Listening to the Public**

Some calls had been made to the Appraiser's Office concerned the photos previously, but after the brochure the calls changed - calls began to come into the office of people wanting to know if they needed to set an appointment to make sure the photo the Sheriff had was a good picture of their property. The changes to the brochure came from the drivers listening to the public.

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# Section 7 – Customer Service for Dummies

- 86% of the message the customer gets over the phone is from your tone of voice. By using inflection, pacing, and volume, you can achieve a great telephone voice.
- Telephone etiquette can make or break the service provided on the phone. Knowing proper telephone etiquette such as, how to answer the phone, put callers on hold, and transfer calls puts you ahead of the game.



# Section 7 — Customer Service for Dummies

---

A good technique for improving your phone tone is to record your voice on a tape recorder during a phone conversation and then play the tape back.

---

Telephone etiquette and techniques must be part of any training for new staff.

## Section 7 – Customer Service for Dummies



Develop a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) to provide better and more consistent service.



Do you have a standardized process for answering the phone in the office and if so, what is it?



**“When you download our customer service app, you can throw darts at my picture by tapping the screen!”**



**“Who picked ‘I Can’t Get No Satisfaction’  
to be our on-hold music?”**

# Section 7 - FAQs

One of the first steps in measuring how well the office is conducting their telephone service is the use of the jurisdiction's frequently asked questions section from their website.

A few questions were developed for each job description and then calls were made and responses documented also noting such items such as courtesy.



# Section 7 - FAQs

It was not unusual to see the staff apparently were not given or were not aware of the frequently asked questions list. Answers were often incorrect, or they just transferred to another staff member.



FAQ's are a benefit for the public but they also can be an aid and benefit for the staff and the office.

## Section 7 – Crisis Planning

*“The assessment office should have a written plan for handling crises and coordinating with other governmental agencies. The plan should define roles within the assessment office and all personnel should know their roles.”*

***If someone writes an incorrect and vicious letter to the editor about your office, should you respond?***

# Section 7 – Rules of Communication

- Always be honest in what you say.
- Don't be defensive.
- Ask yourself whether what you are saying or doing will enhance trust or destroy it.
- If wrong, apologize quickly, sincerely, and fully.



# Section 7 – Ten Commandments of Human Relations



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Speak to people. There is nothing so nice as a cheerful word or greeting.

Smile at people. It takes 72 muscles to frown, only 14 to smile.

## Section 7 – Ten Commandments of Human Relations

Call people by name. The sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of his/her own name. **Just make sure you really do know their name.**

Be friendly and helpful. If you want friends, you must be one.

## Section 7 – Ten Commandments of Human Relations



Be cordial. Speak and act as if everything you do is a joy to you.



Be genuinely interested in people. You can like almost anyone if you just try.

## Section 7 – Ten Commandments of Human Relations

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Be generous with praise and  
cautious with criticism.

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Be considerate with the feelings of  
others.

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There are usually three sides to a  
controversy - Yours, the other  
persons, and the right side.



## Section 7 – Ten Commandments of Human Relations

Be eager to lend a helping hand. Often it is appreciated more than you know. What counts most in life is what we do for others.

Add to this a good sense of humor, a huge dose of patience and a dash of humility. This combination will open many doors and the rewards will be enormous.

## Section 7 - Communications

Everyone  
occasionally makes  
a mistake. When  
this happens:

**“If you mess up,  
fess up.”**



## Section 7 – Communication Killers

- Making the other person wrong
- It is not about winning or losing.
- You may win the argument but lose the customer service battle.
- Winning at all costs will create resentment.



## Section 7 – Communication Killers

Talking  
too  
much  
about  
yourself

There is always a fine line  
between establishing rapport  
and dominating a conversation.

It is an easy topic for us to talk  
about.

Remember: we are there to  
listen and assist.

# Section 7 – Communication Killers

## Interrupting

- Try not to interrupt.
- You may not know what they are going to say.
- We assume we know where they are going with their comments.
- We overreact to certain words or comments.
- We daydream instead of listening.

## Section 7 – Communication Killers

### Talking too much about the negative

- The customer hears plenty of negative news from all forms of media.
- They may be approaching you with a negative attitude.
- Never share with them the negative things that are happening in your life.
- Why would you want to add more fuel to the fire?



## Section 7 – Communication Killers

- Treating your technology device as more important than the person you are speaking to.
  - Why is it that we immediately must see who is calling us on our cell phone when only a few years ago we were content with pink callback slips?
  - You are conveying a message of, “I do not care about your concerns.”

# Section 7 – Tech in the office

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Do you have a policy concerning the use of cell phones by the public in your office?

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What is your policy?

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If you have a sign posted asking them to silence their phones, does it work?

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What is your policy for when people answer their phones when you are assisting them?

## Section 7 – Tech in the office

- If someone answers their phone while being assisted, perhaps telling them to go ahead and step aside and you will assist the next person in line. In a polite way, they are given an option and you will win a big thank you from all others in line.
- Even if there is no one else in line, try the same process and tell them to let you know when they are ready and then return to your desk. If someone else enters the office for assistance, then help them first.

# Section 7 – Tech in the office



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Do you have a policy concerning staff use of cell phones in the office?

If so, what is the policy and is it working?

## Section 7 – Review & Evaluation

Continually  
review.

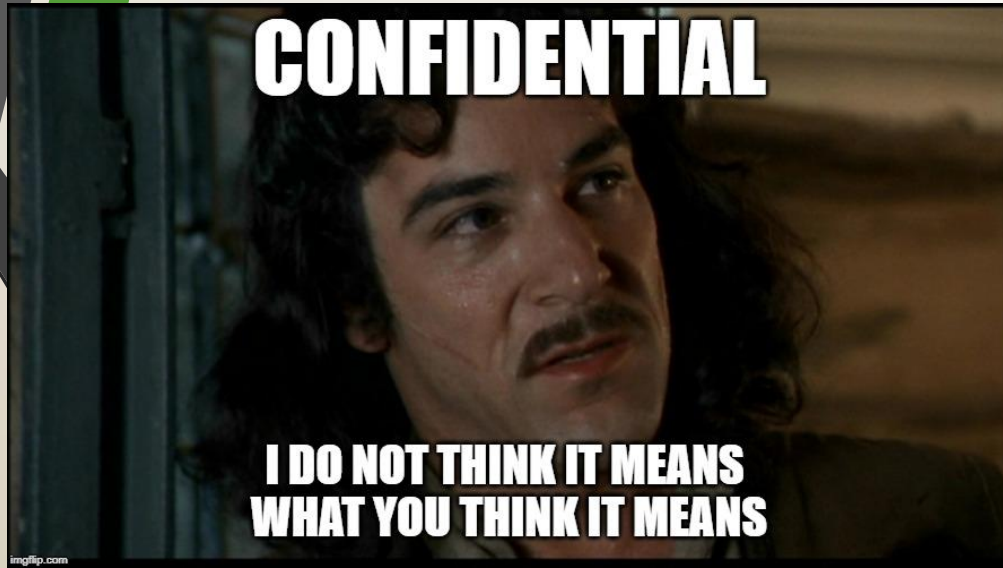
- PR must be continual.
- On the phone, direct contact, etc.
- Always push the positive.
- Even if PR is working well, be flexible and continue to review.

# Section 7 – Review & Evaluation

## Perpetual public relations emphasis

- Never let them say "you failed to tell us".
- Daily phone and personal contacts set the tone.
- A little extra time and patience may pay big dividends.
- Good word - PATIENCE.

# Section 8 – Public Information Plan



## Section 8 – Public Information Plan

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance and reference for building a public relations plan designed for your jurisdiction.

Not all jurisdictions are created equal and the plan for smaller jurisdictions will be relatively simple while the degree of complexity will increase with the jurisdiction's size.

Each of the steps will be shown with a brief explanation and at the end a sample template will help you cover all the issues. The template is designed for the user to type under each of the headers or to copy and paste from another document.

# Section 8 – Public Information Plan

To help create a professional look, place the plan on the jurisdiction's letterhead. Include any jurisdiction logo if not on the letterhead.

It could be beneficial to print and use as a reference the Public Relations Plan included in this workshop.

## Section 8 – Mission Statement

A mission statement describes what the organization wants to accomplish. It sets the stage for planning.

Typically, what the appraisal office needs to accomplish is spelled out in state statutes and administrative regulations, therefore, a mission statement for an appraisal office may contain language from those statutes and administrative regulations.

The statement should be informative, to the point and understandable.

# Section 8 – Mission Statement Examples

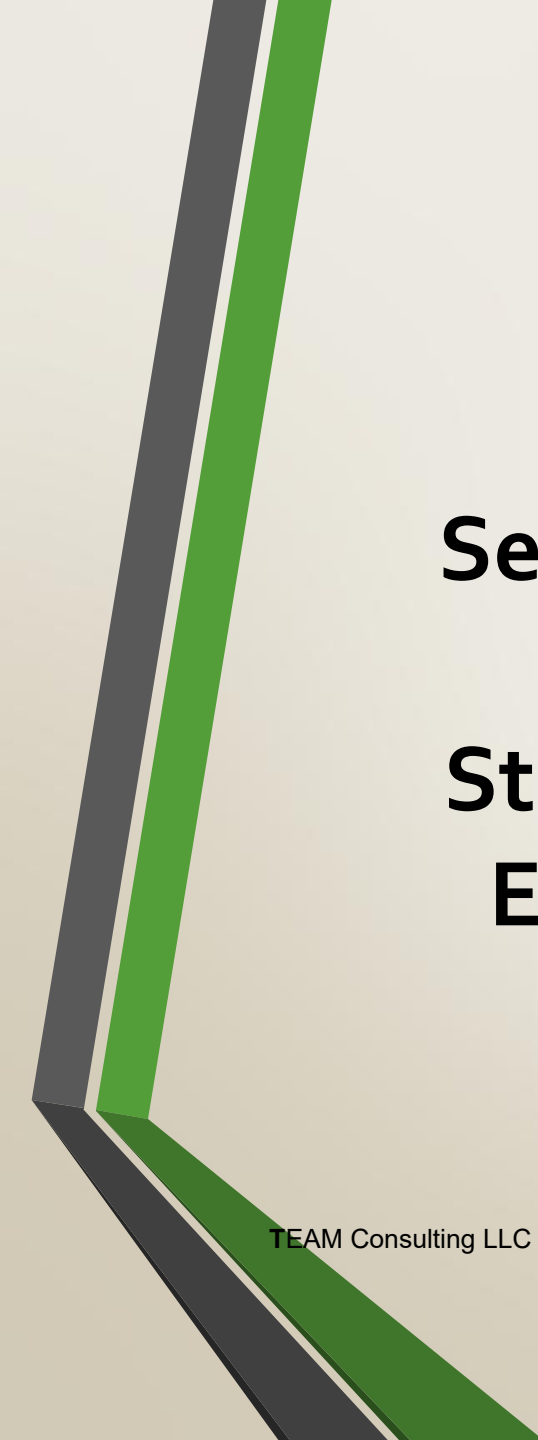
To provide the citizens of XYZ County with accurate appraisals and valuations of both real and personal property.





# Section 8 – Mission Statement Examples

To provide professional service and  
maintain equity in property valuation.



## **Section 8 – Mission Statement Examples**

To provide equitable and accurate appraisals to all property owners in XYZ County and to respond to the concerns and questions of those property owners in a professional and courteous manner.

## **Section 8 – Mission Statement Examples**

To achieve equalization among all classes of property by maintaining the highest standards in appraisal practices and law, guided by the goals of providing quality service to the public, developing high-performance employees and by creation of automated programs which expedite workflow.

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**"It's not a great mission statement,  
but we'll revise it if things get better."**

# Section 8 – IAAO Standard

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There should be a statement indicating that the public relations plan and policies are driven by the IAAO's Standard on Public Relations.

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The developer of the plan may consider including the following quote from the IAAO webpage about what IAAO is and possibly include the web address.

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*"The International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) is the internationally recognized leader and preeminent source for innovation, education, and research in property appraisal, assessment administration, and property tax policy"*

# Section 8 – Assign a Spokesperson

It is crucial that a spokesperson or persons be assigned the responsibility of all communication with the media.

One person would be the preferred choice, but this may not be possible in larger jurisdictions.

The benefit of one spokesperson is the consistency of the message and the person may have a better understanding of each individual media representative.



# Section 8 – Assign a Spokesperson

It is crucial that all staff know who the spokesperson is and that all media requests are forwarded to the appropriate person. Include not only the name but all methods of contact – email, phone, mailing address, etc.

Examples may be: The Chief Appraiser, Assessor, Director of Appraisals, Office Manager, or the Taxpayer Liaison Officer would be good to consider as the spokesperson.



"how was the press conference"  
"fine"



## Section 8 – Plan for Emergencies

Stuff happens.

A good public relations plan  
will address how the office  
should deal with emergencies.

# Section 8 – Plan for Emergencies

- Unfavorable press,
- A public attack by a customer or group
- Or a deluge of complaints and appeals.



# Section 8 – Remind Staff

This can be done by periodic emails, written memos, staff meetings or short training sessions. A periodic review of the office customer service policy is also necessary. Staff should also be instructed about how to handle any new issues or controversies.

An example may be:

- Customer service training courses or programs developed by the assessment office such as appeal board training and others.





## Section 8 – Media Contact List

In a large jurisdiction this can be problematic.

Prior to any mass media release, all media should be contacted or at least view the media sources website to see who the current contact is.

An example of a media contact list may be:

- Local hometown newspapers and radio stations.

Make sure that all releases are placed on the jurisdiction's website.

"A good friend of mine used to say,  
This is a very simple game. You  
throw the ball you catch the ball  
you hit the ball. Sometimes you win,  
sometimes you lose, sometimes it  
rains. Think about that for a while."

# Ways to Contact the Public

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Printed Information

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Electronic Media or Social Media

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Media Contacts

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Speaking Engagements

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Customer Service

# Section #8 – Public Relations Problem



## Class Exercise: Misinformation EVERYWHERE!

*It has come to your attention that a neighborhood website has been posting incorrect information about your office, and it is spreading from their site to many others. You are afraid this may not only mislead the public and tarnish your department's image but might also cause an increase in the number of valuation appeals since you just sent out your revaluation notices.*

*What's your next move?*

# Section #8 – Public Relations Problem



## Class Exercise: Who's that?!

In your jurisdiction, you are preparing to begin your annual field work. You will have multiple staff members interacting with the public and visiting properties for various reasons (permits, sales, etc.).

How would you go about preparing both your staff in the field and the public who will be receiving them?



## **Closing Comments & Questions**

Whatever you  
do, do  
something.

Do not be  
reactive but  
proactive.

# Section #5 Wrap Up & Questions



**THANK  
YOU**