

Communicating with **NANCY STERN**

COMMUNICATION PLUS

Lecture Less Engage More

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"Creative minds have always been known to survive any kind of bad training."

-Anna Freud

Noted psychiatrist Dr. William Glasser is the founder of *Choice Theory* which states people are driven by six basic needs—all of our choices and behaviors are based upon the urgency for survival, power, love, belonging, freedom, and fun. His book *Choice Theory in the Classroom* (1986) was heralded as a landmark book because it gave compelling rationale for the use of learning teams in the classroom.

As Madeline Hunter of UCLA said, *"Working in small teams, students find that knowledge contributes to power, friendship and fun. The dividends are 'turned-on' students and satisfied teachers."*

Glasser wrote we learn 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see/hear, 70% of what we discuss, 80% of what we experience, and **90% of what we teach others.**

Therefore, engaging more and lecturing less is essential learning practice yet, most adult training is conducted by people who



Train the Trainer classroom activity

would rather "slideswipe" you than educate you.

In a recent train-the-trainer program I conducted for a group of nuclear power plant trainers, the assignment was to take a module from one of their classes and present it to the group without using any PowerPoint slides. At first I thought there'd be a mutiny but as my audience began to see the benefit of Glasser's research and their own experiences as students, they got into it.

In the picture above you see a group working together to draw a flow path on the diagram posted on the wall. Not

only did this provide team learning but it got students out of their seats. They were engaged and had a greater chance of learning.

So, the next time you're planning a training class look for ways to interact with the students. Do not start your planning process by opening up PowerPoint, clicking on Auto-Content Wizard and filling in the blanks. Instead, think of ways to provide an experience for the students, think of engaging questions to ask and be willing to discuss the answers.

To Facilitate or Not to Facilitate?

In the last newsletter I mentioned the importance of having an objective facilitator during important meetings. I received feedback from readers asking me to elaborate so I've compiled some tips for effective meeting facilitation.

First, it's important to understand why a facilitator is helpful. If you are going to be discussing anything remotely controversial or anything which might trigger a lot of discussion, a facilitator will be invaluable to keeping you on track. We all have sat in those meetings where the person who called the meeting is also "trying" to keep it moving but because of his/her biases is finding it nearly impossible to stay out of the discussion. Facilitators stay out of the discussion. Their role is simply to guide the conversation and be sure everyone who wants to speak can speak. Meeting leaders focus on content while meeting facilitators focus on process. Therefore, facilitation is:

- guiding without directing
- bringing about change without disruption
- helping people self-discover new approaches/solutions
- knocking down walls which have been built between people
- carefully walking the fine line between spontaneity and structure
- above all, *appreciating people as human beings*

Once you've established the benefit of having an objective facilitator he/she should be sure to start the meeting on the time, lay out the ground rules (often called meeting norms) and begin by addressing the agenda items as they appear. The key to effective facilitation, however, is to be flexible. If someone raises an important issue that is not on the agenda but is necessary to the content of the meeting, the facilitator can determine how to fit it in. Other tips for facilitators include:

- Don't talk much
- Provide energy and direction
- Encourage individual contributions
- Set a positive tone
- Avoid interpersonal confrontation
- Respect silence
- Don't get involved in content
- Avoid defensiveness
- Protect group members from criticism
- Prevent focusing on personalities

Remember, the primary purpose of a facilitator is to serve the group or team and keep the meeting moving toward a purposeful outcome.

Facilitated meetings are more focused, efficient, and productive.

Email Your Questions to Nancy@nancystern.com

Q

I am a manager at a small (150 employees) company. There is a perception amongst my employees that I am condescending, rude and only care about my own career. I know this isn't true but because I am usually rushing from one thing to another, I can see how this perception might be. What can I do?

A

You're on the right track by simply being aware of the perception you wish to change. Your behavior will be the key, and since all behavior changes start with thoughts, think service. How can you better serve your employees?

Internal customer service is critical to an organization's effectiveness and you are one of your employee's customers. It is important for you to think of your employees as your customers, too. Just as you want and expect service providers to be attentive and provide

help, you need to do the same. Take time out from all that running around to follow-up with your employees and ask how you can help them help you.

Often employee exasperation with management can be turned around with simple rewarding behavior. When you notice someone getting things done, probe a little bit and find out how they do it. Show you care and they will care, too. Caring is contagious.

If you don't have a copy of Bob Nelson's *1001 Ways To Reward Employees*, get one now. Keep it on your desk as a reminder. Other great books by Bob Nelson include *1001 Ways to Energize Employees* and *1001 Ways to Take Initiative at Work*.

Recognition is so easy to do and so inexpensive to distribute that there is no excuse for not doing it."

—Rosabeth Moss Kanter

"It's high time that the ideal of success should be replaced by the ideal of service."

—Albert Einstein

Tips to Help You Connect with Colleagues

- Remember people by calling them by name.
- Learn and remember one personal thing about everyone you meet.
- Find one redeeming quality about your co-workers and acknowledge them for it.
- Ask engaging, open-ended questions and listen mindfully to the answers.
- Meet at least two new people each month by introducing yourself with a smile and a handshake

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Whether you're experiencing change, managing people, connecting with customers and co-workers, or making presentations, getting your message across effectively is vital to your success.

Nancy Stern custom designs keynotes, breakouts and educational programs to enhance communication effectiveness; to help increase productivity, profitability and peace of mind; and to impact the bottom line where it matters most—with results.

Programs & Topics Include:

- How You Say What You Say Matters™
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- Connecting with Customers™
- Powerful Presentations
- Facilitate to Motivate and Manage Conflict™
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- Facing the News Media
- Shift Happens: Managing the Dynamics of Change
- Team Building for Productivity
- Generations Jive: Intergenerational Communication Tips™
- Should You Stay or Should You Grow? Reaping the Rewards of Risk-Taking™

Why Nancy Stern?

Nancy Stern, MA is the president/owner and senior consultant of Communication Plus, a consulting firm in San Diego specializing in leadership and employee development. Since 1972, she has taught thousands the art and science of effective communication. She is a former columnist with the *San Diego Daily Transcript* and has taught at the University of California San Diego and San Diego State University Management Development Center.

She inspires managers, employees and individuals of all ages through the

simple, yet powerful, lesson that *how you say what you say, matters™*. Personal experiences form the foundation of her programs, creating presentations that are personal, professional and practical. The result: Improvement of the "whole person" and therefore, the "whole organization."

She is an EMMY award-winner, who produced and appeared in the national PBS television series *Communicating With Nancy Stern* (1990-95) and she is the coauthor of *101 Stupid Things Trainers Do To Sabotage Success*.

Nancy holds a Master of Arts degree in Communication Education from Michigan State University and is a member of the American Society for Training and Development and the National Speakers Association.



Nancy Stern