

## IMPACT

Employee Newsletter

January—March 2007

### Did you know?

- Free "Simple Will" Kits are available from Claremont EAP
- A free credit report is available once per year
- Claremont EAP provides legal referrals for family law, consumer issues, traffic violations, and personal injury
- Referrals are available for child care, adult/eldercare, adoption assistance, school/college selection, and pet care

**Claremont EAP**  
800.834.3773

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We're on the web  
[www.claremonteap.com](http://www.claremonteap.com)

## Communicate for Success

However you try to climb the ladder of success, communication will help boost you to the top.

*"People do business with people they know, like and trust, and communication provides the data that creates rapport," says Susan RoAne, author of "What Do I Say Next? Talking Your Way to Business and Social Success." "Nobody achieves success alone. You need to reach out to others and develop a network of people and resources."*

Ms. RoAne suggests these pathways to increasing your communication skills.

### LEARN TO NETWORK

Befriend people in different departments within your company by introducing yourself to them and by inviting a different co-worker to lunch each week. Meet new people in your community by joining associations, getting involved in community projects and attending social gatherings.

### MAKE THE MOST OUT OF SMALL TALK

"The best mode of communication is plain old conversation. The goal isn't to wow people with brilliant commentary; it's to make them comfortable with us. Finding commonality via conversation is how to do that," says Ms. RoAne.

Ask about people's hobbies, vacations, pets and family. Find out where they're from; you may know people in their hometowns. The object is to find something in common.

### INITIATE

"Good things don't come to those who wait; they come to those who initiate," says Ms. RoAne. If you're shy at social gatherings, introduce yourself to people and make them feel comfortable.

There are two parts to mingling -- being interesting and being interested.



### BE INTERESTED

Listen, listen, listen. Most people want someone to listen to them and make them feel important. Listening demonstrates your respect and admiration.

Show your interest by responding to what's being said with questions such as "How did you accomplish...?" or "What was most exciting about...?"

Use the journalists tools of "Who," "What," "When," "Where" and "How" to keep the conversation flowing. Add your own related experiences.

### SMILE

A smile is the universal body language of acceptance. People don't like to feel rejected, and a genuine smile makes them feel at ease. Add some enthusiasm, and you'll create a spark of positive energy that will be hard to resist.

### KEEP IN TOUCH

Greeting cards, personal notes and short e-mail messages can keep your name in the minds of those you've met. If you keep in touch at least four times a year, you'll be doing better than most. Then, when the need arises, you'll have a network of resources to give you information, guidance and encouragement.

### BE INTERESTING

It helps to be interesting, whether you're talking to one person or giving a speech to a group. Boredom never attracts anyone.

Ms. RoAne suggests you "read your hometown newspaper daily, as well as a national paper. And know what's going on in your industry and your clients' companies."

Give your opinions about something by starting with, "I think," "It seems to me that..." or "My opinion is" so you don't sound dogmatic.

Also, in your conversations, include short personal stories about your own interesting experiences so people can get to know you better.

## Analyzing Your Strengths and Weaknesses

When it comes to communication skills, most people have a good side and a weak side. When you're aware of your weaknesses, you can strengthen them and become a better communicator. Here are some proven techniques for learning more about how you get your messages across. Examine yourself and you can make improvements where needed.



### TAPE RECORD YOUR VOICE

Experiment with different speeds and deliveries until you like what you hear.

- Pronunciation: Is it correct?
- Speed: Is it calm or rushed?
- Tone: Is it high-pitched, nervous or deep and confident?
- Vocal variation: Is it lively or monotonous? Natural or forced?

### VIDEOTAPE YOURSELF

Videotape yourself making a presentation. Is your physical presence sending the message you want it to? The videotape will show you mannerisms and expressions you never knew you had.

- Posture: Is it confident and assertive?
- Body language and gestures: Are they nervous, energetic, serene, natural?

- Eye contact: Is it direct or shifty?
- Facial expression: Is it lively, friendly, emotionless?

### LOOK IN THE MIRROR

Is your appearance conveying the image you want it to? Check out the impact of your:

- clothing and jewelry.
- hairstyle.
- posture.
- facial expressions.

### WATCH YOUR LISTENERS

If you pay close attention, you can gain a great deal of information about your communication strengths and weaknesses just by watching those you communicate with.

- Does their body language show interest and enthusiasm?
- Do they ask appropriate questions?
- Do they tune out, act sullen, suppress yawns?
- Do they seem satisfied? Tuned in?

### ROLE-PLAYING

One-on-one conversation is an important communication tool. To analyze your communication skills:

- Ask a trusted friend to take turns playing the role of someone who goes to a supervisor with a problem or complaint.
- Ask for honest suggestions for improving your communication skills.

### ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Other people's views of you can provide helpful hints on how you can improve your communication skills.

- Ask someone you can trust to be honest with you about all aspects of your delivery and appearance.
- Ask specific questions to get specific answers.



## Getting People to Return Your Calls

Getting people to call back is one of the challenges of our hectic modern world. Here are strategies to help boost your "rate of return."

### LEAVE COMPLETE INFORMATION

Avoid merely asking for the person to call back. Provide:

- your name, company, phone number, extension.
- the reason for your call.
- a reference to a policy, product or invoice number if applicable.
- the best time to call back.
- how soon you need the information.

### KEEP TO THE POINT

Keep messages brief. If you must leave a long message, let the person taking the message know. To make sure your message gets relayed correctly, diplomatically ask the person taking the message to repeat it back to you: "...so I can make sure I gave you all the right information."

### ASK FOR SOMEONE ELSE

If you're having trouble reaching the person you want, ask if anyone else can provide the information you need.

### LEAVE A TEASER

A good way to ensure getting a return call is to provide an incentive to call back. There are various approaches, depending on the nature of the call:

- Offer an incentive, such as earlier shipping, in exchange for a quick response.
- Offer information of special interest to the recipient.
- Appeal to the person's special expertise. Give him or her a positive role to play: "I called because you're the acknowledged expert on..."
- If you can, reassure the recipient that your request won't take too much time or energy: "I just need a few minutes of your time."



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**CLAREMONT EAP**

*Claremont distributes this newsletter to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and family matters.*

**Responding to the Human Factor in the World of Work**