

Is technology turning us into lousy communicators?

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Has technology shortchanged your communication skills?

"I fear the day that **technology** will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots."

There are many who believe this day – foretold supposedly by Albert Einstein – may have arrived. In a world of smartphones, emails and text messages, a unique and negative situation is developing – the deterioration of one's interpersonal, conversational and **social** skills

How important are these skills? Very honestly, if you want to maximize your business and/or career potential they are an absolute necessity. In business you not only need to communicate, but you also have to educate, stimulate and motivate your employees, customers and truly anyone you have interaction with. The obvious positive aspect of face-to-face or at least voice-to-voice is the enhanced ability to read body language or measure tonal response. But there is so much more in developing the skills necessary and how best to use **technology** to accomplish them.

It starts with developing an understanding of the principles and methodology based on human nature that doesn't change. What changes are the tools we use and how we use **technology** to communicate. Understanding what motivates people, how to foster teamwork and collaboration are fundamental needs of any organization. Do you know what "drives" employee engagement? Studies done by training groups like [Dale Carnegie](#) have shown the first and most dramatic finding is that if an employee is dissatisfied with their immediate supervisor, there is an 80 percent chance that they are disengaged. This statistic reinforces the significance of building positive relationships in the workplace. Similarly, having a "caring" manager is one of the key elements to a positive and successful employee engagement strategy. Employees want to feel valued and have their manager take an interest in their personal lives, health and well-being.

I referred to the Dale Carnegie operation for 3 reasons.

- Warren Buffett, said in an interview that he values his Dale Carnegie Course certificate more than his university one and he has that on his wall in his office in Omaha as he credits the course with "changing his life".

- I “graduated” as well from this course decades ago and, although I have not had the success economically Buffet has had, it has been a positive major influence in my life.
- I believe making the effort to develop the expertise and experience in one’s interactions with people professionally as well as **socially** plays a key role in the level of success you will reach in life. In today’s business environment how we communicate, interact and treat employees, customers, vendors and literally everyone impacts the quality of our lives and business.

Who was this [Dale Carnegie](#) whose teachings have been empowering people to have a better life for more than 75 years? I decided to reach out to the DC people in Philly to ask a few questions starting with -- who was Dale Carnegie? Their response was –

Dale Carnegie was a pioneer and the father of the self-help movement and what has now become a multi-billion dollar training industry. He first offered his classes at the NYC YMCA in Harlem and then he went on to become a world-renowned author, speaker and trainer. He was a celebrity during his time having both a syndicated radio show and various newspaper columns. His work was based on his observations of human nature, his voracious appetite for learning and his astute ability to create a training methodology that still exists today and transcends cultures. They also stated that those who go through their training are 69 percent more engaged than the average U.S. employee thus yielding a more dedicated and passionate employee.

Since my focus is on the sales/**marketing** arena I wanted to know where does their training fit into the overall sales/**marketing** scheme? Their answer was a basic ‘truth’ most business understand or should and that is if you are selling or **marketing** your company or its products, you are going to need to establish a relationship with your customer. Relationships are built on trust and things sales people must do such as treat customers with respect, especially as it relates to their time and have the listening skills that project the talent and desire to understand their needs. Obviously there are many more principles one can learn to enhance their leadership, communication, transformational, management, **marketing**, sales and personal skills, but the first thing that has to take place is to have a desire to improve ourselves.

Two stories that came out of my discussion with the DC management highlighted the potential one can generate.

- A participant in a leadership program enhanced her focus on building her confidence, communication skills and strategic thinking, becoming more assertive at work and identified an opportunity that now saves her business approximately \$500,000 per year!
- A leader in IT at a large engineering firm totally reversed the percentage of complaints from 90 percent to 10 percent. This speaks to the transformational experience that individuals have that also transforms business results.

Social media with its rapid growth also needs to focus on encouraging people and companies to post content that engages the reader and "gives honest and sincere appreciation." That's crucial in today's world as posts, tweets, etc. can be easily misinterpreted so it's important to maintain a certain level of professionalism with your online persona and making sure that you

are showing others sincere appreciation in this hyper-connected world.

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