

Is Your REPORT Card Lacking?

Master the Art of Delivering An Effective Report

By Craig Harrison

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Whether you're in a sales or staff meeting, a board or committee meeting, do yourself and everyone a favor by mastering the technique of giving your oral report. This vital form of speaking is often abused, and the ensuing results diminish you and your organization.

Learn to give an effective report!

An effectively delivered report conveys vital information: it can summarize research or past accomplishments, isolate or focus listeners upon key issues and leave everyone briefed and poised to act. An *ineffective* report confuses listeners, muddles situations and wastes everyone's time. Bad report giving also reflects poorly on your communication skills and judgment. It's a signal to all you're not ready for prime time. Whether you're winging it or just betrayed by a lack of organization, poor report giving creates a blemish on your communication report card. Don't be "held back" by poor report giving.

Time and Place Dictate Report Length and Style

Take your cues on report giving from your meeting's leader, the agenda and past practices. Many meetings used timed agendas. Find out in advance how much time will be accorded for your report. Is yours a two-minute report? Three minutes? Five minutes? Know your organization's report protocols.

For Example:

Do you stand or sit while giving yours?

Do you speak from the front of the room? Behind a lectern?

Are visuals like a PowerPoint slide presentation or your supporting documentation expected to accompany (or precede) your verbal report?

Should you expect and allow time for questions and answers (Q&A)?

Are you expected to use a microphone?

Prepare Your Report

Just because your report is spoken doesn't mean you shouldn't prepare as you would for a written report. Outline it. Begin with the end in mind. What is the purpose of your report? To receive approval? Obtain funding? Warn of doom and gloom ahead? Is yours a briefing or status report? A summary report? Each may employ a different format and certainly a different tone.

Consider using one of several common formats, which is popular for written as well as oral reports:

PAPER format: Emphasizes directness

PURPOSE or PROBLEM: Information about why you are speaking.

ACTION: Action you plan to take, OR Action you request.

PARTICULARS: The who, when, where, why, how and how much. Share details here.

EVIDENCE: Optional section wherein you cite or reference documentation.

REQUEST for RESPONSE: What Next? Be Specific!

PRESS format: Builds your case

PURPOSE or Problem: Information about why you are speaking

REASON for suggestion: Information about the subject.

EXAMPLE or Evidence: Information that supports your statements.

SOLUTION: Remedies, solutions, suggestions, ideas, plans, actions already taken.

SUPPORTING Material: Handouts of documents the reader will need or want.

GRACE format: Good for garnering support

GREETING: Be pleasant and positive.

RESTATEMENT of the Problem: Ensures everyone understand the situation.

ACTION: What actions are you taking / have you taken?

CONCLUSIONS drawn: As a result of the aforementioned information, what will you do?

EGG on your listener: What Next? Be Specific! What will you do? What do you need? State it.

Stand (or Sit) and Deliver!

Effective report giving involves more than choosing the right words. It involves credible and compelling delivery. Follow these tips to enhance your report.

Identify yourself by name and title in case others don't know you (especially on conference calls).

Speak confidently.

Enunciate.

Project your voice so all can hear.

Give good eye contact to each participant.

Use shorter, powerful statements.

Avoid "tag" sentences (declarative sentences turned into questions), tentative language and qualifying statements which diminish the strength of your words.

Clearly state what you want!

Clearly state what you need.

Summarize.

Use handouts to convey both summary and detailed information.

Stand Up, Speak Up, Sit Down.

Tips for Improving Your Report Card

Successfully delivering an oral report, like giving a speech, is done best after rehearsing.

Practice giving your report in front of a mirror first

Use a timing device to gauge how long it takes. Modify accordingly.

Craft a strong opening statement.

Consider a powerful concluding statement too.

You can also practice in front of your cat, dog or bird (but think twice about rehearsing in front of your parakeet.)

Next, practice by calling your home answering machine, then listening to where you sound confident, where you sound tentative and where you meander.

Find a local Toastmasters club (www.toastmasters.org) for weekly opportunities to give reports, deliver short speeches and learn to speak off-the-cuff.

Ask a trusted colleague to critique your actual report privately for feedback on how your performance was perceived by others.

Ace Your Report (Card)!

Every form of communication has its prescribed guidelines for length, scope and style.

Your report should be concise, powerful and paint you as the intelligent professional you are. Practice and repetition will improve your report giving skills dramatically. The more reports you deliver the better you'll get. Ace your report and you'll earn extra credit from management and your colleagues!



Professional speaker Craig Harrison's Expressions of Excellence!™ provides sales and service solutions through speaking. For information on keynotes, training, coaching, curricula for licensing and more, call (888) 450-0664, visit www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com or e-mail craig@ExpressionsOfExcellence.com.

Craig Harrison's Most Popular Communication Presentations



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Develop Your Workplace Communication Quotient (CQ)!

Enhance your **credibility** in the workplace through more **confident and credible communication**. Make honesty your policy, learn how to give and receive constructive criticism, learn to turn rejection into redirection, manage upwards and enhance your reputation in the workplace.



Listening — The Forgotten Communication Skill

Miscommunication as a result of **poor listening skills** costs millions of dollars, countless hours of wasted time. Have we gotten your attention yet? Learn about listening vs. hearing, uncover the meta-message in communications and learn how gender and other variables alter listening skills. Learn to become a powerful listener.



Mastering E-Mail Communication

Learn to send **effective, service-oriented E-mails**. Learn its advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses. Develop your checklist for when you should (and shouldn't) use E-Mail, learn the best use of subject lines, signature lines, white space, CC and BCC, and actually edit real life e-mails for readability and simplicity!



Effective Meeting Management Avoid An All-Meet Diet

Whether you're leading, facilitating or just suffering from meetings, this presentation teaches you everything you need to know to plan, stage and recover from **meetings**, be they weekly, board or the shareholder variety. Addresses agendas, rules of order, addressing challenges, and how to manage meeting monsters!

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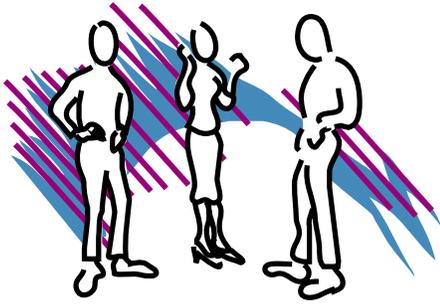
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DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION QUOTIENT (CQ)

EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

WITH CRAIG HARRISON

Communication takes many forms.

In a typical work day you may communicate with customers, clients, co-workers (including superiors, subordinates and colleagues), vendors and city, state and federal representatives. Do you communicate with interns or volunteers? On occasion you're also speaking with the media: members of your association or even competitors. How well are you communicating with each?



Each form of communication draws on different skills, each requires different approaches and sometimes even a different lexicon. Forget GQ! These days it's your CQ that matters...your Communication Quotient.



Learning Objectives



- ▶ Develop techniques for delivering an effective report in a meeting
- ▶ Elicit co-worker support for a project by speaking the language of benefits; learn how to make "the ask"
- ▶ Learn to speak one-on-one with a co-worker regarding a problem
- ▶ Build and motivate a work team
- ▶ Learn the ABC's of written communication
- ▶ Handle difficult questions and difficult questioners
- ▶ Discover how to give instructions that can't be misunderstood
- ▶ Master the apology and the recovery



How The Presentation Is Delivered

Definitions, positive and negative anecdotal case studies, illuminating role playing activities and a practical question & answer session all help attendees DEVELOP THEIR COMMUNICATION QUOTIENT.



About Your Presenter

Craig Harrison writes, trains, coaches and speaks about communication and its vital role in professional success. His articles have appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he has been profiled by *The Wall Street Journal*, and interviewed by 60 MINUTES, BBC RADIO, *Selling Power* and *Business Week* magazines. Craig has trained corporate, academic and non-profit groups to communicate with clarity and confidence. As 2004-05 president of the NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION's Northern California chapter, a past president of the INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSOC. (SF-Silicon Valley chapter), and past District Governor for TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL, Craig has helped thousands improve their communication skills.



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