



TDBoK™ Guide

Talent Development Body of Knowledge

2nd Edition

atd

Association for
Talent Development

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FOREWORD

For 80 years, ATD has served the development needs of learning professionals as the talent development field has evolved to meet the knowledge and skill requirements of organizations, industries, and a dynamic business environment. Throughout our organization's history, what has remained constant is our purpose of empowering TD professionals like you to lead the important work of developing people. We have always worked to help people grow their knowledge, skills, and capabilities so they can help unleash human potential in the workforce and, in so doing, contribute to achieving the strategic goals and success of their organizations. Never has this been more essential than in today's environment as leaders and organizations wrestle with economic, technological, and workplace disruption.

These changes require members of this field to adapt and constantly upskill and reskill our workforce. A recent ATD research report, *The Future of Work: Technology, Predictions, and Preparing the Workforce*, revealed that a majority of organizations (76 percent) are concerned that their workforces may not be properly skilled for the future of work. In the postpandemic era with evolving employee expectations around employment, talent concerns may be the most critical challenge facing businesses today.

Opportunities to harness innovative approaches to planning, managing, and developing talent in organizations are endless. C-level executives can—and must—use their talent development functions strategically. Doing so positions their organizations for growth, creates high-performance workplaces, increases employee engagement and retention, and generates greater profitability. Forward-thinking organizations are forming working groups to plan for the future of work and help leaders think about the organizational changes that need to be made in the coming years. This requires talent decisions to be made based on future needs, and for talent development professionals to be prepared to handle the increasing strategic demands that will be expected of them.

For many decades, ATD has published competency and capability models to help professionals in the field understand what they need to know and do to be successful in their work. ATD introduced the Talent Development Capability Model several years ago to better reflect the current state of the profession—and where it's headed. This modernized model has filled a critical need for the field—a significant shift in focus from competence to capability, which speaks to the expansion of the role and skill requirements necessary to lead talent in today's environment. ATD has structured the Talent Development Capability Model and the supporting Body of Knowledge (TDBoK™) with a broad-based perspective and future-focus because we see the talent development field's growing importance, influence, and impact.

Since its original publication in 2020, the definitive TDBoK has been an invaluable resource for the field, providing global talent development professionals a comprehensive collection of concepts, definitions, methodologies, and examples that help readers understand how to apply the concepts and theories. Inside you will find the knowledge and skill statements for each of the 23 capabilities in the three domains of practice identified in the Talent Development Capability Model.

This second edition of the *TDBoK Guide* represents an exciting new phase for this resource. As our field continuously evolves, so too must the insights and information that equip the profession. We've scanned the environment, curated perspectives from industry leaders, and surveyed those of you who perform the noble work of talent development every day to synthesize the most relevant and up-to-date information on what you need to know and do to guide the workforces you support in these complex times.

The development of human capability, knowledge, and skills is critically important to our society. This is about more than training—it is about fostering cultures of lifelong learning that drive performance, innovation, engagement, and opportunity. As Peter Drucker wrote, “We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn.”

ATD's Talent Development Capability Model and this new edition of the *TDBoK Guide* are a blueprint for your own learning at this crucial time. Please continue to use these resources to help create a world that works better.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Bingham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Bingham
President and CEO, Association for Talent Development

INTRODUCTION

About the Association for Talent Development (ATD)

The Association for Talent Development, formerly the American Society for Training & Development, is the world's largest association dedicated to those who develop talent in organizations. Founded in 1943, ATD's mission is to support those who help others achieve their full potential by improving their knowledge, skills, and capabilities. ATD's members come from more than 120 countries and work in organizations of all sizes and in all industry sectors. This global community of practitioners looks to ATD's publications, digital content, career resources, events, education courses, and professional certification programs to elevate their skills and advance their careers.

ATD also leads the profession by setting standards and assessing competence against those standards. Since 1978, ATD has published nine competency models that have tracked the profession's evolution from training to the broader, more strategic function of talent development. These models have each answered the question: What do professionals in the field need to know and do to be successful? Based on ATD's competency model research and vetted by experts, these models provide a blueprint for individuals to determine their current knowledge of professional concepts and the areas in which they need further development.

ATD offers more than 100 training courses that enable professionals to expand their knowledge and build new skills across the competencies within the talent development industry. The ATD Certification Institute (ATD CI) offers two professional certifications and five assessment-based certificate programs to assess and recognize a practitioner's mastery of the knowledge and skills that make up talent development best practices. ATD's competency models form the foundation of our education and credentialing programs, giving TD professionals the ability to build a structured and progressive pathway for professional development and career advancement.

The Talent Development Capability Model

In 2019, ATD conducted its latest competency research, culminating with the launch of the Talent Development Capability Model. With the intent to establish a new standard for the TD professional, the model is a framework to communicate what practitioners need to know and do to develop themselves, others, and their organizations. The book *Capabilities for Talent Development: Shaping the Future of the Profession* details the trends affecting our profession today, the knowledge and skill areas addressed in the model, and the research behind it.

In 2021, ATD conducted a pulse survey to identify how the perceived importance of the capabilities in the Capability Model has evolved over time, specifically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aimed to

articulate and synthesize the disruptions to how we work and how we develop talent. The results of the study provided insights that were used to inform the modifications and enhancements in this second edition. The core structure of the Capability Model itself remains untouched; however, additional information has been incorporated to reflect the present-day climate of talent development.

The Talent Development Capability Model features three domains of practice:

- Building Personal Capability
- Developing Professional Capability
- Impacting Organizational Capability

Within the three domains are 23 capabilities spanning a broad spectrum of disciplines that, when integrated and leveraged holistically, enable professionals to effectively develop employees in the workplace. Each capability is further broken down into knowledge and skills statements, with the 186 total across the entire model.



Domain 1. Building Personal Capability

- 1.1 Communication
- 1.2 Emotional Intelligence & Decision Making
- 1.3 Collaboration & Leadership
- 1.4 Cultural Awareness & Inclusion
- 1.5 Project Management
- 1.6 Compliance & Ethical Behavior
- 1.7 Lifelong Learning



Domain 2. Developing Professional Capability

- 2.1 Learning Sciences
- 2.2 Instructional Design
- 2.3 Training Delivery & Facilitation
- 2.4 Technology Application
- 2.5 Knowledge Management
- 2.6 Career & Leadership Development
- 2.7 Coaching
- 2.8 Evaluating Impact



Domain 3. Impacting Organizational Capability

- 3.1 Business Insight
- 3.2 Consulting & Business Partnering
- 3.3 Organization Development & Culture
- 3.4 Talent Strategy & Management
- 3.5 Performance Improvement
- 3.6 Change Management
- 3.7 Data & Analytics
- 3.8 Future Readiness



The Talent Development Body of Knowledge (TDBoK)

Information about talent development practices has never been more readily available. In addition to the publications, events, and education products offered by ATD, TD professionals can easily access the latest ideas, opinions, and research from thought leaders and industry experts through websites and social media platforms. As the field continues to transform to match business and organizational strategic priorities, it is important to have a codified set of standards that define talent development.

To support the Talent Development Capability Model and all TD professionals, ATD embarked on researching, documenting, and evaluating the concepts, topics, theories, models, and activities that define the profession. The Talent Development Body of Knowledge (TDBoK) was released in 2020 and is the comprehensive resource for information that guides the work of those who develop talent in the workplace. After two years of extensive use in the profession, the TDBoK has been revised. ATD leveraged more than 100 subject matter expert contributors and curated perspectives from thousands of publications to produce an updated resource for the field.

Although the Capability Model’s core structure was exempt from editing during this standard revision, the entire TDBoK content was reviewed and edited for consistency in terminology, to correct unclear or incorrect content, and to address input received directly from TDBoK users. In addition, six capabilities were targeted for an in-depth review and revised to incorporate updates and changes based on ATD’s 2021 pulse survey and trends in the profession. The six capabilities that received a detailed review were:

- 1.4 Cultural Awareness & Inclusion
- 2.4 Technology Application
- 3.4 Talent Strategy & Management
- 3.6 Change Management
- 3.7 Data & Analytics
- 3.8 Future Readiness

Consistency of terminology throughout this second edition is a priority. For example, we use “talent development” to refer to the profession, “talent development professional” to refer to the associated career, and “facilitator” to refer to an individual who is guiding learning. We recognize that you may use other terms such

as “trainer” to define what you do. Our purpose is to achieve consistency and clarity and to avoid confusion; it is not our intent to eliminate specific terms. The glossary, which has also been updated, provides additional definitions and clarity. Please use it freely.

ATD’s goal is to ensure that the *TDBoK Guide* will:

- **Serve as a definitive, ongoing, centralized source and reference guide** for TD best practices and the knowledge and skills required for success in the profession.
- **Enable easy access to theories, models, insights, and answers** through a structured, searchable publication.
- **Provide an overview of the broad array of disciplines in talent development** (23 unique capabilities) so TD professionals can get exposure to new proficiency areas, identify what more they need to learn, and tailor their future development plan.
- **Give TD professionals a shared set of terminology and definitions** to create a common language.
- **Ensure alignment of professional resources** that TD professionals use to expand and develop their career—from credentials to courses and conferences to publications and online content.

The *TDBoK Guide* also addresses the current needs of diverse audiences. It will:

- Give **individuals who are new to talent development**, or who are looking to formalize their expertise, an understanding of the breadth of knowledge covered within the field.
- Offer **talent development managers** a resource for creating shared understanding and language with their teams.
- Guide **individual and team development planning** by identifying the knowledge and skills required for success.
- Serve as a **source for creating business cases** with leadership to validate appropriate approaches and the benefits of talent development.
- Enable **educators and curriculum developers** to align their offerings to a research-based, vetted framework that defines excellence in talent development.

The Talent Development Capability Model is the foundation for ATD CI’s certification programs, the Associate Professional in Talent Development (APTD) and the Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD). The *TDBoK Guide* can serve as an important resource for exam preparation.

How to Use the *TDBoK Guide*

This book is structured to mirror the Talent Development Capability Model. It comprises three sections, one for each domain in the model, and the 23 capabilities are spread across those three sections. A descriptive paragraph accompanies each capability to establish what TD professionals need to know and be able to do to achieve the standard of performance defined by the Capability Model. Within each capability, TD professionals will find knowledge and skills statements describing the concepts, terminology, and models associated with the topic.

A numbering system allows for quick referencing of the domain, capability, and knowledge and skills statements. For example, 1.1.1 refers to “skill in expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a clear, concise, and compelling manner”—the first knowledge and skill statement in the communication capability, which is the first capability in the first domain (Building Personal Capability).

The *TDBoK Guide* also includes these content elements:

- **Cross-references** indicate where you can find additional information about a topic within another section; for example, [See 5.1.2].
- **References** provide the direct sources cited in the publication.
- **Recommended reading** outlines supplemental resources for further background and knowledge.
- **The glossary** defines key terms.

Feedback and Future Updates

ATD's Talent Development Capability Model and the resources aligned to it are regularly revisited and updated to keep up with with evolutions in society, the workplace, and our profession. The TDBoK's content is periodically reviewed and modified to align with these changes. ATD keeps its members and subscribers informed of updates to its products and invites feedback to ensure we are delivering high-quality offerings. For more information, please visit td.org/tdbok, or contact ATD Customer Care at 1.800.628.2783 or customercare@td.org.

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This publication is possible because of the collaboration, expertise, and dedication of a team of volunteer contributors and ATD staff. ATD is especially grateful to Elaine Biech for the thousands of hours she devoted to the development of this book and its subsequent second edition.

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Domain 1

Building Personal Capability



1.1 COMMUNICATION

Communication is about connecting with others. Effectively communicating requires a knowledge of communication principles and techniques that allows a person to articulate the appropriate message for a particular audience. It requires active listening, facilitating dialogue, and the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly, concisely, and compellingly.

1.1.1 Skill in Expressing Thoughts, Feelings, and Ideas in a Clear, Concise, and Compelling Manner

I. Effective Communication for TD Professionals

As the employee development representative, effective communication is at the base of everything that TD professionals do.

1.1.1.1 Value of Good TD Communication

Good communication is essential to creating a productive and efficient workplace. Effective communication helps build the working team, boost employee engagement, increase customer satisfaction, improve productivity, and grow the bottom line. The cost of poor communication is measureable. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) surveyed 400 companies with more than 100,000 employees and found an average loss per company of \$62.4 million per year due to inadequate communication. The *2018 State of Employee Communication and Engagement* report conducted by an independent market research company surveyed 1,072 US employers and found that 56 percent struggled to keep employees engaged and informed (Dynamic Signal 2018).

The value TD professionals can contribute to improving communication in their organizations should be a priority.

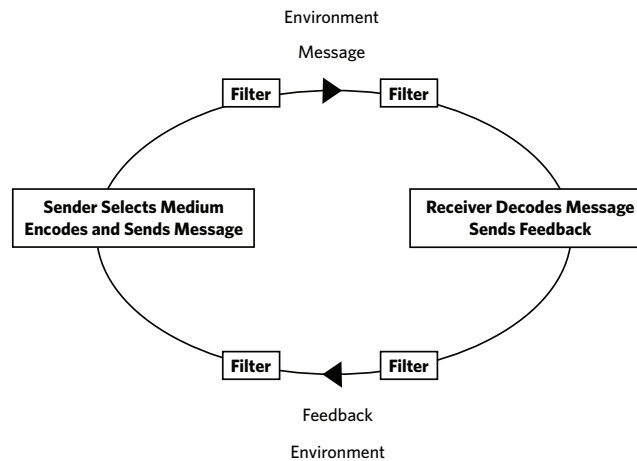
1.1.1.2 The Communication Process

The communication process is the transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver. The sender uses a medium to send the message, which then goes through the sender's and receiver's filters before the receiver decodes the message. The receiver's interpretation of the message then becomes part of the feedback to the sender.

TD professionals should understand the concepts that describe the communication process:

- **Environment.** The conditions or circumstances within which the communication process operates; it may enhance or block communication
- **Message.** The information that is communicated
- **Sender.** The person communicating the message
- **Filter.** A mindset, bias, or opinion that hinders the flow of information between the sender and receiver, usually based on past experiences
- **Medium.** The method used to convey the message, such as voice, reports, or email
- **Receiver.** A person or device that receives the message and decodes or processes it
- **Encoding.** The process of translating the message by the sender
- **Decoding.** The process of translating the message to thoughts and understanding
- **Feedback.** Communication that gives individuals information about the effect of their communication

Figure 1.1.1.2-1. Communication Process



Source: Adapted from a drawing by Elaine Biech.

1.1.1.3 Effective Communication

As the voice of employee development, TD professionals must be able to interpret the needs of the organization, employees, and other stakeholders and communicate with each. Effective communication can be defined by the six Cs of communication; TD professionals should deliver messages that are clear, correct, complete, concise, coherent, and courteous:

- **Clear.** Choose audience-appropriate words that are precise and descriptive.
- **Correct.** Select accurate words and use correct grammar; avoid using the wrong words.
- **Complete.** Articulate comprehensive messages that are transparent and include all the details.
- **Concise.** Use short, specific sentences and phrases; avoid rambling.
- **Coherent.** Maintain consistency, select simple sentence structures, and present in an easy-to-follow order.
- **Courteous.** Form respectful and authentic messages with words that are friendly, positive, gender neutral, and sensitive; avoid accusing or blaming.

1.1.1.4 Create a Compelling Message

A compelling message incorporates four elements. It must:

- Include a benefit to listeners and why they should invest their time.
- Be unique, inspiring, or exciting and answer the question, “What’s different about this message?”
- Be complete with data, examples, or a story that relates the message to what the listener wants to hear or answers the question, “How do I know?”
- Include a call to action or what the listener should do. This could include anything on a continuum from responding to the message to completing a task; it answers the question, “So what?”

1.1.1.5 Selecting Appropriate Communication Media

Communication media—or the method used to convey a message—includes but is not limited to voice, reports, or email. Media can be divided several ways depending on whether the message is meant to be one-way or two-way, with immediate or delayed feedback, or to one person or more. The TD professional should not become overly reliant on one medium. Immediate feedback can be provided using one-to-one, large, or small meetings; video conferences; phone calls; or word of mouth. The delayed feedback media could include intranet, newsletters, corporate communication, social media, infographics, fact sheets, reports, emails, text messages, or mail.

Guidelines to determine the choice of communication medium include:

- What kind of message is it? Is it routine and open to anyone, or is it confidential?
- How long is the message?
- How urgent is the timeline to deliver the message?
- What’s the cost and does the result justify the expenditure?
- Does the message require a record of distribution?
- Is the size and the distribution of the group receiving the message important?
- Who is the audience, and what’s the relationship of the sender and receiver?
- What technology is available to send the message? [See 2.3.5.12]

1.1.1.6 Barriers to Effective Communication

Due to the high cost of poor communication, TD professionals should ensure that they review communication barriers and do what they can to eliminate their personal barriers. In addition, they need to be aware of other’s barriers. Barriers include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical barriers**—environment, location, medium selected, technology, distance between communicators, and disruptive or uncomfortable settings
- **Perceptual barriers**—preconceived ideas, expressed disinterest, behavior patterns, misinformation, uncomfortable previous experiences, conflicting nonverbal and verbal communication, and distractions caused by other’s dress or grooming
- **Emotional barriers**—lack of self-confidence, transparency, trust, or flexibility; information overload; and feelings of defensiveness, superiority, or inferiority [See 1.2]
- **Interpersonal barriers**—inability to connect with others, misunderstood body language, lack of social skills or flexibility, avoidance of others, reluctance, and misunderstanding of importance
- **Inability to listen**—distracting eye contact, thinking of what to say next, impaired hearing, distraction from a more pressing concern, poor timing, and preoccupation with internal dialogue

- **Language**—different languages, differing meanings of words to individuals, generational differences, industry-specific jargon, accent, and distraction from negative or positive trigger words
- **Cultural, gender, or other differences**—lack of knowledge, understanding, or respect

Even with the best intentions, messages can become distorted and confused (Booher 2015). [See 1.1.1.5]

1.1.1.7 Importance of Overcoming Communication Barriers

Effective communication with colleagues, stakeholders, customers, and others is one of the most valuable skills a TD professional can possess. At times they must overcome communication barriers to influence, articulate decisions, motivate team members, solve problems, and complete other tasks to ensure a more productive exchange.

Many things can prevent message reception and interpretation. Miscommunications, censored feedback, and poor listening can diminish a conversation or communication. People may not understand what others mean even if they hear the words being spoken. Communication between two people goes through each person's filters, and the meaning of the message may change as it passes through those filters (mindset, biases, and opinions) of the sender and receiver.

It is important to identify and prevent or eliminate communication barriers, because they can increase accidents, cause unnecessary expenses, limit a company's ability to optimize performance, reduce profits, and lead to the loss of customers. Inadequate communication or misunderstood messages can create a culture of distrust, reduced employee engagement, uncertainty, ineffective customer interaction, increased errors, lack of teamwork, increased conflict, low morale, and dozens of other effects that can reduce job satisfaction.

TD professionals should be prepared to address current barriers and prevent others in the future. For example, if physical barriers make it difficult to concentrate and understand a message, TD professionals may identify a different location. If language, jargon, or clarity is a problem, TD professionals can opt for using an interpreter to help explain what's necessary. If emotions are causing the misunderstanding, TD professionals may have to identify another time that is convenient for everyone involved.

TD professionals should use a process like this one to overcome communication barriers:

1. Identify the barrier and ensure everyone understands and agrees.
2. Enlist those involved to determine the reason it is (or has become) a barrier.
3. Identify resources required to clarify the cause of the barrier (other people, data, or perhaps a survey).
4. Schedule dedicated time and open a discussion or dialogue. Practice the six Cs of communication to create a plan to overcome the barriers. [See 1.1.1.3 and 1.1.7]

Understanding communication barriers and overcoming them will save time, money, and relationships. Excellent communication can heighten TD professionals' productivity, reputation, trustworthiness, and admiration. They will enhance their professionalism and be viewed as respected leaders.

1.1.2 Skill in Applying Principles of Active Listening

I. Effective Communication Skills and Strategies

TD professionals should engage in active listening techniques, strive to understand the speaker's perspective, and clarify information to better understand the message; active listening is the key to exceptional workplace relationships. Active listening is based on work by Carl Rogers, who called it reflective listening. Rogers and Richard Farson (2015) coined the term *active listening* and wrote, "Despite the popular notion that listening is a possible approach, clinical and research evidence clearly shows that sensitive listening is the most effective." TD professionals should use active listening skills in classrooms with learners, in the C-suite with leaders, and externally with vendors and consultants. Honing active listening skills will help them build relationships, understand requirements, make better decisions, gain knowledge, and reach mutual agreements (Hoppe 2014). [See 2.1.3.2]

1.1.2.1 Levels of Listening

Communication is a complex process that involves different degrees of listening. TD professionals should be aware that there are different levels and when to use each. The levels should not be understood as better or worse than the others, but rather appropriate at different times. Listening may include, although is not limited to, these levels:

- **Passive listening**—demonstrating nonverbal behaviors, such as affirmative head nodding, making eye contact, note taking, smiling, or presenting a thinking pose at appropriate moments
- **Listening for knowledge**—listening first for facts and logic, and then mentally listing things in a sequence or pattern to form conclusions
- **Active listening**—demonstrating a high level of interaction with the speaker; for example asking questions to increase understanding of the message, observing the speaker's body language for underlying messages, or showing concern
- **Listening for clarification**—paraphrasing in different words to help increase understanding of previous comments and dialogue
- **Empathetic listening**—identifying feelings by confirming with the speaker if an intuition about their feelings is correct

1.1.2.2 Developing Listening Skills

"Listening, really listening, is tough and grinding work, often humbling, sometimes distasteful," says author Robert H. Waterman Jr. (1987). When TD professionals are on the receiving end of a message, they may come up against barriers to understanding; awareness of them is the first step to avoiding mistakes.

Nichols and Stevens (1957) were the first to establish that the fundamental problem with learning to listen is that most people can process messages much faster than those who are sending them. Although scientists differ in exact speeds, they all agree that listeners can understand at least 275 words per minute, while a typical speaker talks anywhere from 120 to 180 words per minute. If the speaker simply talks faster, however, the words sound rushed or anxious (Wingfield 1996).

Several skills contribute to a TD professional's ability to listen well. They fall into three skill clusters: attending and focusing, following, and reflecting.

1.1.2.2.1 Attending and Focusing Skills

Attending and focusing skills indicate that TD professionals are giving their physical attention to others. They are nonverbal messages that show the TD professional cares and is listening:

- A posture of involvement means inclining the body toward the speaker, facing them squarely, maintaining an open position (arms uncrossed, for example), and positioning themselves at an appropriate distance.
- Appropriate body motion means using receptive body gestures (such as nodding their heads) and not using disruptive body motions (like fidgeting nervously or drumming their fingers).
- Eye contact indicates a desire to listen. It should be consistent but not intense.
- A nondistracting environment requires finding a place away from potential interruptions.

1.1.2.2.2 Following Skills

Following skills are those that help TD professionals stay focused on the speaker. Listeners who ask many questions, interrupt with their own viewpoints, or talk too much miss out on others' perspectives.

- Door openers are gentle invitations to talk and are used when listeners sense someone may want to say more.
- Minimal encouragers are words and phrases that encourage others to continue, such as, "Tell me more" or "And then?"
- It usually makes sense to ask some questions, but they should be infrequent. The idea is to understand speakers, not divert them.
- Listeners should avoid leading questions, which are asked in a way that make others believe they are looking for a specific answer. For example, "You didn't let that upset you, did you?" is a leading question that may influence the person to say they were not upset, even if they were.
- Attentive silence means offering a quiet space to the speaker.

1.1.2.2.3 Reflecting Skills

Reflecting skills are the essential range of skills used when TD professionals are actively listening:

- Paraphrasing is restating the message in the listener's own words.
- Reflecting feelings are statements in the listener's words about the emotional content that is being communicated.
- Reflecting meaning is a response that joins the feelings and the facts the listener believes are being communicated.
- Summative reflections are brief statements about the main themes and feelings that were expressed during the conversation. They are useful to move the conversation along or bring it to a close.

All the skills described contribute to a TD professional's ability to be a skilled listener.

1.1.2.3 Observing and Sending Nonverbal Messages

If nonverbal messages conflict with verbal messages, receivers tend to place more trust in the nonverbal messages. Communication experts believe that more than half of all communication may be nonverbal. Albert Mehrabian (1971), who may have been the first person to study the topic, stated that 55 percent of any message is conveyed through nonverbal elements. Others claim that up to 90 percent of a message depends on nonverbal behavior. Although there is disagreement on the exact ratio, it is more important to remember

that most communication is nonverbal, and nonverbal elements are crucial aspects of any message (Pease and Pease 2006). Vocal clues communicate much of this nonverbal meaning; however, a great deal of meaning is also transmitted physically, including behaviors like patterns of movement, facial expression, and eye contact. TD professionals must be attuned to the nonverbal messages they send and the nonverbal messages others display.

There are three different types of nonverbal messages:

- **Patterns of movement** include gestures, physical posture, and head movement. The appropriate use of gestures can motivate and excite others. Inappropriate gestures can be distracting. Physical posture affects interaction whether it is relaxed or intense, open or closed.
- **Facial expression** can be welcoming or distracted, express feelings, or demonstrate a TD professional's desire to communicate. It can encourage someone to share more or not, to increase trust or not, or to be helpful or not.
- **Eye contact** can send a welcoming or unwelcoming message. Direct eye contact can be intimidating or encouraging. When done well, it demonstrates interest and focus.

When TD professionals communicate, they should consider how their nonverbal message aligns with their verbal message and how it will affect their listeners. Additionally, they should learn to read the nonverbal messages others are sending (Zenger and Folkman 2016).

1.1.2.4 Choosing Responses Carefully

Almost nothing can influence how a message is received by others more than the chosen language. Although this section is about how a TD professional would respond in an active listening scenario, the suggestions here work for any communication situation:

- **Be concise.** Avoid language that is complex or cluttered; use common words and phrases.
- **Be objective.** To keep the language objective, avoid overuse of superlatives and flowery words. Use precise words whenever possible.
- **Be positive.** Whenever possible, express the message in positive rather than negative terms.
- **Use inclusive neutral language.** Use gender neutral and other inclusive words that do not set people apart.
- **Express clear ideas.** To be understood, avoid language that is inappropriate or outdated. If unsure, ask.
- **Use personal pronouns.** Personal pronouns have a special effect on people. Especially when communicating positive information or good news, use pronouns that focus on the listeners (like *you*, *your*, and *yours*).
- **Pay attention to word choice and pronunciation.** Using words incorrectly or pronouncing them incorrectly can significantly limit the effectiveness of a message. When in doubt of a word's meaning, leave it out.

TD professionals who select the right words ensure that those listening will be receptive to hearing and understanding their messages.

1.1.3 Skill in Using Communication Strategies That Inform and Influence Audiences

I. Communicating to Inform and Influence

TD professionals should be skilled at both informing and influencing because they have many opportunities to communicate with others and use the principles of influence.

1.1.3.1 Talent Development's Role in Informing and Influencing

TD professionals are increasingly expected to deliver solutions better, faster, and cheaper. They are expected to interact with executives and articulate how they can help the organization accomplish its goals and objectives. If TD professionals are expected to influence the organization's vision and initiatives, they must be able to customize the message, read and react to a learner's body language, facilitate question-and-answer sessions, handle tough questions, and deliver memorable messages that learners will use.

The first step in effective communication is deciding what to communicate. Begin by making a list of items to address, and then formulate more detailed ideas based on those items. Ensuring that there are logical segues between conversation points helps communication flow in an orderly way. Unmanaged communication becomes diffused and unspecific, and it can be interpreted arbitrarily. Problems occur when people say one thing, but their behavior suggests the opposite. TD professionals must be authentic when communicating to transmit messages that are trusted.

TD professionals will likely find themselves presenting the value of developing talent; supporting management as a consultant, advisor, coach, or advocate; facilitating team meetings [See 2.3.2]; and communicating as a facilitator. Before presenting in any of these instances, they must always be prepared, anticipate questions that will be asked, and think of ways to enhance the presentation through visual aids. These skills will help TD professionals regardless of the communication situation.

1.1.3.2 Principles That Inform and Influence

TD professionals will have many opportunities to inform and influence people at all levels in their organizations. For example, they may ask leaders and managers to use their services, supervisors to coach their employees, or participants to use new skills back on the job. These principles not only ensure that TD professionals influence or inform effectively, but that they also build relationships as a side benefit:

- **Communicate authentically.** TD professionals should say what they mean and mean what they say. It is impossible to be someone they aren't. Influencing others is easier when built on authentic trust.
- **Build long-term relationships.** Those who aggressively go about meeting their own needs without regard for how their actions affect others are short-term strategists and may get what they want this time—but that success probably won't continue in the long term.
- **Clarify the outcomes.** TD professionals need to be clear about the purpose of the communication. Know the goals in advance. They also need to have a positive mindset about the outcomes—attitude affects communication.
- **Speak the right language.** Influencing others depends on speaking their language. Whether speaking to people in the C-suite or on the factory floor, use words that resonate with the audience.

- **Start with the bottom line.** TD professionals who know the outcome they want and present it up front will gain trust and have a better chance of influencing others.
- **Identify and communicate personal value.** Bill Treasurer (2019) says that the most important four words in building relationships and personal value ask the question, “What do you want?” Certainly, TD professionals want and need communication, but when they learn what another person wants first, their chances of influencing them increase.
- **Use data to communicate a relevant story.** Data is important and when used to tell a relevant story, it can be powerfully influential.
- **Reciprocate self-disclosure.** Self-disclosure means sharing information with others. It can be personal or not—but it needs to be related to the communication situation. Sharing something personal sends an invitation to others to do the same. Self-disclosure is an effective strategy for building productive business relationships.
- **Remember the power of language.** Use people’s names when speaking with or writing to them. Tuning into the sensory language or pet phrases of others builds instant rapport. Remember, it’s not only what speakers say, but how they say it.
- **Gain agreement.** TD professionals communicate so that both parties are on the same side of the fence. When there are issues to work through, decisions to be made, or problems to solve, TD professionals will be more effective if they structure communication so that both people are working on the issue together.
- **Communicate understanding, acceptance, and respect.** The best communicators use an approach that demonstrates that others are accepted, respected, and understood.
- **Remain neutral and objective.** No matter how difficult the situation, TD professionals will be more successful by remaining neutral than by challenging the other person.

TD professionals should use these principles to inform and influence. They will see that a valuable byproduct is positive business relationships and the trust good communication builds (Scharlatt and Smith 2011). This makes influencing easier every time.

1.1.3.3 Depersonalizing and Defusing Anger

TD professionals are in an awkward position when they are the target of someone’s anger. Unfortunately, they will likely be on the receiving end of a conversation with a person who is upset. Whatever the complaint or criticism, TD professionals can be prepared with an effective strategy for dealing with angry people.

Defuse anger using these tactics:

- Acknowledge the person’s anger by listening to identify the cause.
- Avoid personalizing the complaint.
- Focus on the facts of the complaint.
- Show empathy and avoid defensiveness.
- Assure them that you want to understand their anger.
- Ask relevant questions to clarify the facts.
- When logic doesn’t work, agree about the facts or the person’s right to be angry.
- Explain what *can* be done, indicating a specific time and date.

- Reach an agreement and confirm the agreement.
- When necessary, defer the conversation.

When people are angry, they don't listen very well. Summarize the agreement and reflect it back to the other person to ensure that both parties heard the same problem-solving information. Both people should be clear about what each must do to resolve the problem.

1.1.4 Skill in Applying Persuasion and Influencing Techniques to Gain Agreement, Commitment, or Buy-In From Stakeholders

I. Using Communication to Persuade and Influence

TD professionals should comprehend persuasion and influencing skills because they will have many opportunities to persuade stakeholders and leaders in their organizations. In addition, these skills help them be more observant of others' attempts to persuade them.

1.1.4.1 Understanding Persuasion Principles

Influence is one aspect of persuasion and can be used to affect another's beliefs, intentions, or behaviors (Gass and Seiter 2010). The Greek philosopher Aristotle identified three essential elements of persuasive communication:

- **Reason** (*logos*)—the ability to articulate points clearly
- **Credibility** (*ethos*)—the ability to convey integrity and goodwill
- **Emotion** (*pathos*)—the ability to create or control emotion in the listeners

A skilled communicator requires these same three qualities to be successful at persuasion. TD professionals can use these methods:

- **Appeal to reason**—logical arguments, data, consequences, or scientific proof
- **Appeal to credibility**—authority, expertise, communication skills, sales techniques, or body language
- **Appeal to emotion**—tradition, mental images, relationships, or stories

Many persuasion theories exist and most are influenced by research that psychologist Robert Cialdini (2006) presented in his book, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. Cialdini's principles are:

- **Reciprocity**—give first without any expectation of return.
- **Consistency**—commit to behave in the same way as in the past.
- **Social proof**—do something because others are doing the same.
- **Authority**—defer to experts or others with credentials.
- **Liking**—find commonalities.
- **Scarcity**—demonstrate a shortage of items or time to act.

In their book *The Art of Woo*, G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa (2008) present an approach to strategic persuasion. They explain that persuasion means to win others over, not defeat them. Therefore, TD professionals must see the situation from different angles to anticipate the reactions of other people. The authors recommend confronting five obstacles that pose the greatest risks to a successful influence encounter: relationships, credibility, communication mismatches, belief systems, and needs.

TD professionals should be prepared to persuade others in many situations, including, but not limited to:

- Briefing as a TD representative to senior leadership
- Getting commitment on a proposed TD budget
- Gaining agreement, commitment, and buy-in for a TD initiative
- Presenting compelling rationales for projects or requirements [See 2.1.4.4]

1.1.4.2 Using Communication Styles to Influence

Understanding basic communication styles is helpful in persuasion—especially as it relates to emotions. Communication style has a direct effect on how employees view every situation. While several instruments exist to determine social styles, the two most well-known are the DiSC Personality Profile and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment. According to David W. Merrill and Roger H. Reid (1992), communicators exhibit four styles. They are listed here with their corresponding DiSC types in parenthesis and demonstrate how communication styles can be used to increase one’s ability to influence an individual: [See 2.3.5.4 and 2.3.5.5]

- **Analytical** (conscientiousness) people tend toward perfectionism and deal in logic and details. They keep feelings to themselves. When influencing them, it’s helpful to prepare the case in advance and be accurate and realistic. Provide tangible evidence to support major points.
- **Amiable** (steadiness) people put a high value on people and friendships. They go out of their way not to offend. Despite having opinions, they are not inclined to say what’s on their mind. To influence them, draw out their opinions by asking “how” questions and showing how everyone will benefit.
- **Drivers** (dominance) can make high demands on themselves and others, and they tend to be emotionally reserved. They are decisive and results oriented, and they like to give guidance to everyone. When influencing drivers, be brief, specific, candid, and pertinent.
- **Expressive** (influence) people are social. They are enthusiastic, creative, and intuitive but have little tolerance for those unlike themselves. Easily bored, they tend to go on tangents. When influencing this type of person, stick with the big picture, avoid details, and create excitement.

Similar examples could also be matched to the MBTI assessment’s 16 personality types.

Although pure communication styles don’t exist, most people have a tendency toward one or two. TD professionals who are skilled in recognizing all four communication and social styles know how to best appeal to each persuasively. Moving into another person’s comfort zone requires flexibility, which is a learned skill. TD professionals should have a working knowledge of communication styles and how they can be used to influence. They should also use a tool to determine their own styles.

1.1.5 Skill in Conceiving, Developing, and Delivering Information in Various Formats and Media

I. Developing Materials for Results

TD professionals must be able to communicate using the six Cs of communication to produce reports, presentations, executive briefings, business cases, and other documents. [See 1.1.1.3]

1.1.5.1 Instances When Conceiving, Developing, and Writing Materials Is Critical for Talent Development

TD professionals have many opportunities to develop content that is critical to their functions and their jobs. They will create longer content such as talent development's business or strategic plans, reports that summarize the success of an initiative, agreements with consultants, requests for proposals, project management plans, and other opportunities for talent development to complete its work.

TD professionals also develop content that is shorter, including business cases, value propositions, job descriptions, work objectives and goals, blog posts, articles, and performance appraisals.

In addition, they may create training materials used to develop employees such as participant manuals, facilitator guides, role plays, case studies, and critical incidents. [See 2.2.12 and 2.3.7]

In some cases, TD professionals need to include information that may not be text based. For example, training materials may require pictures, diagrams, and graphs. PowerPoint presentations require visuals. Infographics and job aids often need both text and visual content. At other times, a video may deliver the message best.

1.1.5.2 Developing Written Materials

Being able to craft clear and concise written materials is an essential business skill. TD professionals must be able to communicate the details of initiatives in a way that states objectives, identifies intended outcomes, and shares all details required for understanding the document.

Guidelines should be followed regardless of the length of the document or report. All written materials should:

- **Have a single purpose.** Every sentence and paragraph should align with that purpose.
- **Be tailored to the reader.** The language must be completely understandable and readable. Do not include jargon, complicated language, or ambiguous, distorted, or conflicting messages.
- **Ensure economy.** Longer documents do not automatically mean better messages. Every word must count. Every point must be necessary in assisting the reader to understand and act. Documents must be complete, yet concise.
- **Be accurate.** All aspects of the content, data, dates, references, and other details should be verified.
- **Be organized.** Materials should be presented in an easily understood and readable way. The language should display the writer's style, authority, and credibility.
- **Be visually appealing.** Use a consistent typeface, layout, and organizational structure. The document should be easy for the eye to follow, with short paragraphs, white space, headings, bullets, numbers, insets, and so forth.

The astute TD professional will share written documents with someone else to read for comment. They will also conduct a self-edit looking for clarity, accuracy, effective sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, titles, correct use of possessives and pronouns, subject-verb agreement, frequently misused words, and typographical errors (Booher 2008).

1.1.5.3 Communicating With Others Through Writing

When crafting written communication, TD professionals must first establish a clear objective: What should the readers take away from the communication? They should streamline written communication

so it states objectives and expectations clearly. Readers must know what their responsibilities are after reading the communication.

Written communication should follow a format that is easy to comprehend: The opening states the facts, the middle provides supportive details, and the closing makes a call for action. Written communication falls into three categories: routine (which is initiated by the writer or in response to another's communication), delivery of good news, or delivery of bad news (Appleman 2018; O'Quinn 2017).

- **Routine correspondence** will cause limited emotional reaction for the reader. There are two kinds of routine correspondence:
 - Routine correspondence initiated by the sender should have three parts. It should open with an introduction, if necessary, and state the inquiry or request concisely, specifically, and courteously. The middle should explain the purpose of the inquiry and provide additional information or details. The closing thanks the reader in advance.
 - Routine correspondence that responds to another's correspondence should also have three parts. It should open by concisely referencing the request and adding a thank you. The middle should answer any questions asked, provide sufficient details about the steps to be taken, and provide additional information that would be helpful. The closing expresses appreciation for the contact, hope that the information is helpful, and a willingness to provide additional information or assistance.
- **Correspondence that delivers good news** follows three steps. The opening paragraph should state the good news and what the reader is receiving that is viewed as good news (such as a discount, acknowledgment of being correct, information, a change, or a job offer). The middle provides supportive details such as reassurance, an explanation of past or future steps, or a description of how the actions will be implemented. The closing should repeat the good news and add a goodwill closing, such as congratulations or another positive statement.
- **Correspondence that delivers bad news** uses a format for softening the message. This format does not delay or avoid giving the bad news, but it presents the news in a way that can be understood. Include reasons why and alternatives. The writer should avoid using words and phrases like *unfortunately* and *because you did not* as they may send the message earlier and stronger than intended. Accordingly, this type of correspondence follows three steps. The opening paragraph refers to the situation by stating the request, advising about any action, and making a neutral statement about the situation. The middle places the bad news between details and alternatives. It begins with the details or reasons (for example, "one of the criteria"), states the bad news as clearly as possible, and adds potential alternatives. The closing incorporates a neutral or positive statement, offers additional information, and expresses appreciation for the recipient's interest.

1.1.5.4 Effective Use of Email

Written communication has degrees of formality, with email being one of the most informal. However, the convenience and ease of email can make it risky. People may be careless with email communications and send messages that can be misinterpreted. Because the reader must interpret the sender's tone, problems can occur when the receiver's interpretation of tone does not match the sender's intention (Booher 2019).

1.1.6 Skill in Applying Verbal, Written, or Nonverbal Communication Techniques

I. Communicating to Be Heard and Understood

Whether communicating verbally or in writing, TD professionals must be skilled in many techniques.

1.1.6.1 Developing and Demonstrating a Professional Presence

TD professionals are only as successful as their ability to communicate ideas, knowledge, and information. Communication skills are essential for developing others' skills as well as for creating collaborative relationships, working in teams, or working across department lines. TD professionals should explain decisions and reasoning and invite questions. They lead meetings, set agendas, and influence others. They communicate to be heard and understood. [See 1.2, 1.3, and 2.3]

All these responsibilities require positive communication that begins with credibility and personal presence. In her book *Creating Personal Presence*, Dianna Booher (2011) writes, "Your presence involves your physical, mental, and emotional essence, as well as character. It encompasses what others think or feel about you, based on their interactions with you over time. When that feeling turns out to be favorable, you earn trust and credibility."

To build professional presence and credibility, a TD professional should begin by knowing how to formulate a strategic message, which entails:

- Stating the conclusion first and then building the case to support it
- Sorting the significant from the trivial
- Delivering the strategic context and specific details
- Using appropriate positive language
- Asking thought-provoking questions
- Taking a point of view
- Making all points memorable (Booher 2014)

Beyond formulating strategic messages, a TD professional demonstrates credibility nonverbally by maintaining a confident posture, following acceptable appearance norms, and practicing deference and respect. The goal is to build rapport with everyone.

1.1.6.2 Giving and Receiving Feedback

Giving and receiving feedback are imperative skills for TD professionals because feedback is a tool for continued learning. In general, when giving feedback, it is important to focus on:

- The issues or behaviors, not the person
- The facts, not opinions
- Sharing ideas and information, not giving advice [See 1.3.9]

Receiving feedback is equally valuable for TD professionals, who will reap more benefits from the feedback if they:

- Respect the person who's offering it, knowing that it isn't easy.
- Listen actively, holding questions until all the feedback is given.
- Define the specific behavior that led to the feedback.
- Identify what could be improved (CCL 2019).

Providing and receiving feedback implies an interest in and concern for the other party, which allows both parties to collect more data about the situation and understand the other party's way of thinking, as well as what can be improved. Feedback is a requirement for continuous open and honest communication.

1.1.6.3 Practicing Questioning Skills

TD professionals use a variety of questioning techniques to stimulate discussion, check for understanding and consensus, and encourage free thinking and brainstorming. Some types of questions that facilitators use are closed-ended, open-ended, and Socratic:

- **Closed-ended questions** require nothing more than a yes or no answer. They may be tacked on to a statement and are often conversation closers. They are most frequently used to get specific information or to reach agreement. [See 2.3.3.10.1]
- **Open-ended questions** are asked when a person needs more than a simple yes or no answer. They are conversation openers and used to understand problems, determine needs, or check for comprehension.
- **The Socratic questioning method** is named for the Greek philosopher and teacher Socrates (470–399 BC). This approach is a form of disciplined questioning when the questioner pretends to be uninformed about a topic to encourage responses. Also known as the dialectical approach, this questioning process can probe for more information, identify assumptions and perspectives, or clarify complex topics. This method generally begins with a statement, claim, or definition that the questioner does not accept as fact or truth. It is followed by additional questions that participants can answer with a yes or no response, combined with supporting data or concepts that uncover contradictions. In the final step, the participants reach the conclusion that what they thought they knew wasn't accurate.

TD professionals can use the Socratic questioning method to help others more clearly state their views and prove the concepts behind their argument. In addition to being a good instructional tool, it helps participants learn to think critically. The goal is to reach deeper understanding because the participants are required to come to their own conclusions.

TD professionals ask questions in many situations, such as obtaining additional information, clarifying a statement, probing for deeper meaning, focusing on the specifics, understanding perceptions, testing for content agreement, planning for implementation, reaching closure, and evaluating a plan or solution. Questioning skills are essential for the TD professional to effectively communicate.

1.1.7 Skill in Facilitating Dialogue With Individuals or Groups to Help Them Identify, Articulate, or Clarify Their Thoughts and Feelings

I. Dialogue for Clarity

TD professionals should understand how to successfully facilitate dialogue. Engaging individuals and groups in discussion is an important aspect of the learning and development process. The rest of their organization is likely to look to them for definition, clarity, and facilitation.

1.1.7.1 Defining and Using Dialogue for Clarity

Dialogue is a discussion between two or more people marked by openness, honesty, and genuine listening. The word comes from the Greek *diá* and *lógo*, which can be interpreted as the “flow of words” or “meaning” from more than one person to clarify all concepts.

1.1.7.2 Principles of Dialogue

Peter Senge (2006) makes a powerful distinction between discussion and dialogue. In *discussion*, opposing views are presented and defended as a team searches for a way to make a decision. People want their ideas to be accepted with an emphasis on winning. In contrast, *dialogue* is “the free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues, a deep ‘listening’ to one another and suspending of one’s views.”

Because people are open to new ideas in dialogue, they can more readily access information. This provides participants with access to knowledge from everyone, allowing them to enlarge ideas, not diminish them. The result explores all options and reaches agreement on what is right.

Senge’s ideas about dialogue draw on the work of David Bohm, a contemporary quantum physicist. In introducing dialogue, Senge (2006) discusses Bohm’s treatment of the subject: “Dialogue, as it turns out, is a very old idea revered by the ancient Greeks and practiced by many . . . societies such as the American Indians.” Besides Bohm, Senge also taps into the work of Chris Argyris and Donald Schon to explain that dialogue requires individuals to be more aware of input and what they do with it, writing that, “All of us have had some taste of dialogue—in special conversations that begin to have a ‘life of their own,’ taking us in directions we could never have imagined nor planned in advance.”

1.1.7.3 Guidelines to Facilitate Dialogue With Individuals

An astute TD professional should be able to facilitate dialogue with individuals. Senge (2006) and Bohm agree on these guidelines. To facilitate effective dialogue, both participants must:

- “Suspend” their assumptions (and actually hold them “as if suspended before us”).
- Regard one another as colleagues.
- Communicate in a private and comfortable location.
- Eliminate all distractions and allow enough time.

1.1.7.4 Additional Strategies to Facilitate Dialogue in Groups

TD professionals have a responsibility to help groups identify, articulate, and clarify their thoughts. Senge (2006) believes that “reflection and inquiry skills provide a foundation for dialogue.” He defines reflection

skills as “slowing down our own thinking processes so that we can become more aware of how we form our mental models and the ways they influence our actions.” Inquiry is the process that starts by asking questions prior to reflecting and interpreting the answers. Senge believes “dialogue that is grounded in reflection and inquiry skills is likely to be more reliable and less dependent on particulars of circumstance, such as the chemistry among team members.”

The same guidelines for dialogue between individuals are required for groups. Additionally, Senge (2006) and Bohm agree that there must be a facilitator who “holds the context of dialogue” for the group.

Other strategies TD professionals can use in facilitating group dialogue include:

- Recognizing that dialogue in groups with more than 30 members is difficult
- Using a space where all participants can have direct eye contact with one another
- Ensuring that everyone can hear each other easily
- Making sure there are no hierarchical differences in the seating
- Remaining neutral throughout
- Formulating questions that open the exchange of comments
- Accepting that they need strong listening, reframing, and summarizing skills
- Understanding group development as a dynamic process (Ropers 2017)

Dialogue can be a powerful tool for enhancing team learning, building teams, and creating a learning organization. When TD professionals facilitate effective dialogue sessions regularly, team members are better able to develop a relationship of deep trust and a richer understanding of each person’s point of view. They know that a larger understanding will often emerge if all members participate. Dialogue leads to learning. [See 2.3.2 and 3.3.8]

1.1.8 Skill in Articulating and Conveying Value Propositions to Gain Agreement, Support, or Buy-In From Stakeholders

I. Using Value Propositions

TD professionals should use value propositions to gain stakeholder agreement and secure leadership support.

1.1.8.1 Defining Value Propositions

The term *value proposition* comes from the marketing field. Companies promise to deliver value to customers who buy their products. For TD professionals, a value proposition represents a promise of value that they will deliver to their leadership, stakeholders, or clients. The value proposition states the results they can expect from a prospective program, TD solution, or even the TD function itself. [See 3.1.2]

1.1.8.2 When to Use Value Propositions

A value proposition is most useful when introducing a new program or effort. It will explain the benefits the program will provide, for whom, and how. It is typically offered during the initial discussions and proposed solution. It may also be a part of a proposal written internally by the TD function or externally by a consultant.

1.1.8.3 Start With the Bottom Line

A value statement starts with the bottom line—the end benefit that is offered. It should address three things:

- **Relevancy** explains how the product or service solves the stakeholders’ problems or improves their situation.
- **Benefit** outlines the quantified value of the proposition (for example, will reduce errors by 50 percent).
- **Differentiation** is what sets this solution apart.

1.1.8.4 Address the Point Quickly

Once the bottom line is presented, the value statement needs to define the supporting points. This could be two to three bullet points that list the supporting benefits or features that make the proposition different from what the organization currently does.

1.1.8.5 Techniques to Present Data and Information

TD professionals have many options for presenting data and information. None are more important than understanding the audience and what they will expect. Generally, it is best to start with the bottom line, and then follow with more information. A TD professional needs to:

- Acquire as much knowledge as possible about the culture of the audience before presenting the information.
- Select media that the audience expects, such as slides, possibly accompanied by identical paper handouts or an infographic.
- Anticipate reactions and questions and be prepared to respond.
- Use line and pie charts, column and bar charts, scatter charts, bubble charts, time series charts, year-over-year comparisons, or any others that clearly make the point. [See 3.7 and 2.8.7]
- If using slides, follow professional guidelines for color, word choice, number of words, images, and other design elements.

1.1.8.6 Tailoring the Messaging to the Audience

The value proposition needs to be written for the stakeholder. It should not use talent development jargon (such as “Level 4 evaluation” or “action learning”) if the audience is a C-suite executive. Speak the language the stakeholder speaks—the value proposition should join the conversation that is already taking place in the stakeholder’s office and in their mind. To ensure the audience consumes the data, the presenter must:

- Consider the timing of the message; it must give the right people the right information at the right time.
- Focus on what’s in it for the stakeholder or listener.
- Start with the end and what the stakeholder needs to hear, and then backfill with the support.
- Use appropriate terminology.
- Create relevant examples.
- Select the best environment and communication medium to reach the intended audiences.

Finally, when delivering a data-rich presentation, don’t forget to consider the human impact of an initiative. Presentations will be more effective if the data is matched with real people. “Research shows that people are persuaded to take action or change their minds when you speak to both their heads, and their hearts” (Evergreen 2017). This could be accomplished by simply displaying a photo next to a graph. Good presenters speak to their audience’s heads and hearts.

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