



Communications 101

Business can always be made better through better communications.

The concept builds on the notion that whatever business you are in, success will be defined by other people seeing the value in what you do. And while some values are intrinsic, most are better recognized when they are positioned, explained or made clear.

All communications are built on the same equation, regardless of scale or circumstances. Effective business connections start with an understanding of this fact. The elements of the equation are intent, interest and the gap that separates the two. The function of communicating is to fill the gap between the initiator of a conversation and the people to whom he or she wishes to connect.

Intent

If you've ever had to figure out why someone was talking to you, you'll understand the importance of this factor. It is socially uncomfortable to be drawn into a conversation with no context or understanding of why. The natural reaction is to try to exit as quickly as possible. People who talk to you without permission or clarity of intent quickly become social pariahs.

The first job in communicating effectively is to share your intent with the other person.

Interest

On the other hand, you've probably wanted to leave plenty of conversations where you've had full understanding of the other guy's intent. Why? Because you weren't interested.

We all have a pre-existing set of interests that define us as individuals. Those interests mark the parameters of likelihood that I'll be interested in what you have to say. The trick is to discover, as quickly and efficiently as possible, our shared interests.

The commonality between your intent and my interests will determine whether a meaningful conversation will happen.

The gap

Bridging the gap between your intent and my interests is a matter of shared culture. This agreement is the stuff of sales, commitment, action or whatever you may have been out to achieve.

It's important to remember that the difference between a transactional exchange and an ongoing relationship generally comes down to how good the other guy felt about putting his money on the table. The quality of your product or service is only part of the lasting experience. The bigger part is sociological in nature and demands more of you than a promise and a price.

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