

How Clear is Your Communication?

by Deborah Chaddock Brown



My son, Ben Brown

Have you ever been sitting with a co-worker, customer or family member and all of a sudden they make a statement that seems like it came out of left field?

"I'd like one like that," my fourteen year old son said to me.

We were sitting at the table having just finished lunch. The conversation had dwindled several minutes before as we were intent on our grilled cheese sandwiches. The room was quiet; no radio, no television and he wasn't reading.

"You want one like **what?**" I ask – totally clueless, as a mother of a teen often is.

"Well, remember yesterday when you drove me to school and that kid crossed in front of car and you honked your horn?" he patiently explains.

"Yes."

"He had on a jean jacket that was what I've been wanting and as I was eating my sandwich I noticed a tear in the grilled cheese which reminded me of the tear in my current jacket which reminded me of that kid we saw yesterday. I want one of those," he concluded, quite satisfied that he'd made perfect sense.

"Oh."

Sometimes business communication is like that: perfectly clear to the communicator and thick as mud to the reader.

Are you communicating clearly or do your communications need a translator? Take a moment, the next time you are sending an email, memo, direct mail postcard or newsletter and look at your communication from the reader's perspective.

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Happy New Year!

Welcome to 2006 - a fresh slate where anything is possible. Fred Pryor of Fred Pryor Seminars tells us this about goal setting:

"One reason we don't attain our goals is that we often focus on how far away we are from feeling satisfaction rather than how far we've come."

This new year - divide your goals into "bite size" pieces. You are more likely to feel successful and ultimately achieve your goal if you concentrate on each tasty morsel.

Happy Communicating!

Who is Your Reader?

Writing with the reader in mind – it is blazoned across the top of this newsletter each edition, but what if you don't know who you are writing to? (Or "to whom you are writing") For example, say you want to create a marketing mailing for an unknown audience.

Keep these tips in mind:

- Picture someone "like" your reader – what motivates them?
- Speak to the reader's values and priorities – yours may be bottom line profitability, but theirs may be keeping their job.
- Write conversationally – it's easier to read and will engage the reader.
- Take the time to explain but do it quickly. People don't have the patience for an epic when a paragraph will do.

Quote for Thought

W. Steven Brown, author of *13 Fatal Errors Managers Make & How You Can Avoid Them* says,

"Communication does not begin with being understood, but with understanding others."

Ahhhh.

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