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FINANCIAL FOCUS



Lane Gorman Trubitt, L.L.P.
Accountants & Advisors

Your Accounting for a New Economy

Communication: The Lost Art

Over the last ten years communication has changed more swiftly and dramatically than any other time in history, with the possible exception of the invention of the telephone. The rapid adoption of the internet has led to family, friends and business associates texting, tweeting, writing emails, facebooking, and instant messaging at the expense of face to face personal communication.

As technology has shrunken our world and made it easier to communicate and conduct business across oceans and continents it has also served to disconnect us from those we live and work with. Communication is like any other skill, it requires practice and discipline to remain sharp. With the rise in the popularity of cyberspace we've seen a decline in personal communication which has led to the deterioration of the art form.

However, communication is a vital component to the success of any not-for-profit organization. It's how they raise funds, organize events and even share information within their organization. If it seems like your staff has been a little 'lost in translation' lately we've got an exercise that can get them talking (and listening) to each other again.

Active Listening

The most common roadblock to communication is a lack of listening. When participants are more concerned with thinking up what they're going to say next rather than listen to what the other person has to say, communication breaks down.

The Active Listening Exercise can be practiced with a single partner or in a group and sharpen almost anyone's listening skills.

There are three ways to demonstrate active listening:

1. Verbatim – Repeat back what the other person said to you word for word.
2. Paraphrasing – Repeat what the other person said in your own words.
3. Asking open-ended questions – Ask the other person questions designed to get them to explore what they shared in more depth. “Open-ended questions” can be any questions that cannot be answered in a simple “yes” or “no”.

While active listening may sound effortless, its implementation is anything but. However, with practice, everyone will be able to hone their listening skills.

For more tips on improving both your internal and external communication skills contact Scott Cote, Director of Practice Growth at 214-461-1467 or by email at scote@lgt-cpa.com.

Jason Leary
Marketing Manager

Lane Gorman Trubitt, L.L.P.