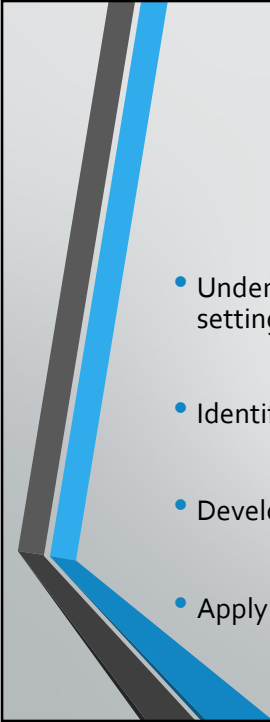


# Business Communication

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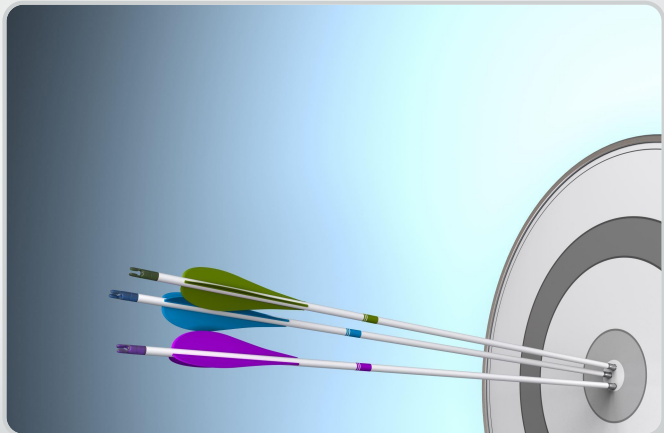


## Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of communication and networking in professional settings
- Identify key communication skills for effective workplace interactions
- Develop strategies to reduce miscommunication and misunderstandings
- Apply networking techniques to build and maintain professional relationships

Strategic priorities for the profession to address in the coming year:

1. Influence people to become and remain CPAs
2. Foster connections and prepare the CPA for the future
3. Pursue business model innovation



Foster connections and prepare the CPA of the future:

Build a connected community of professionals to encourage relationship-building, mentoring, networking, and public service.

As the future CPA skillset evolves, prepare the profession to become leaders who are strong relationship builders and stellar communicators.

Connect with each other and other key stakeholders for the profession.

Volunteer and engage in a meaningful way with the community.

Engage in learning and leadership development opportunities for the evolving CPA skillset to enhance people and communication skills.



WHY should we spend any of our valuable time on communication?

What is your primary means of workplace communication?



The lines are blurring...



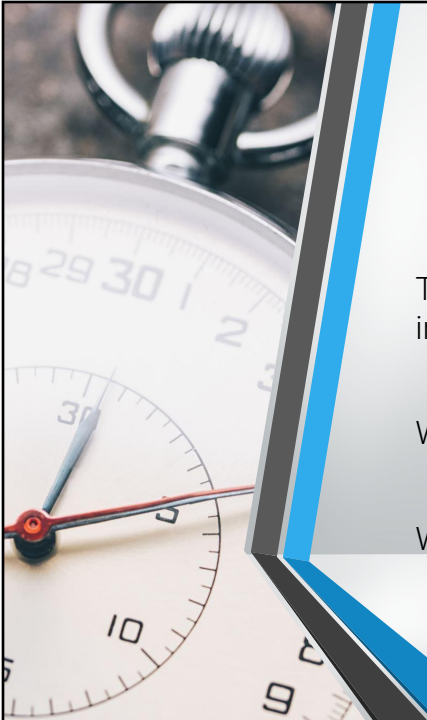
Business



vs.



Personal



Our Society has developed an instant gratification mentality

Think of a communication situation in which a client / internal or external customer wanted instant service:

What did you do?

What do you wish you would have done differently?

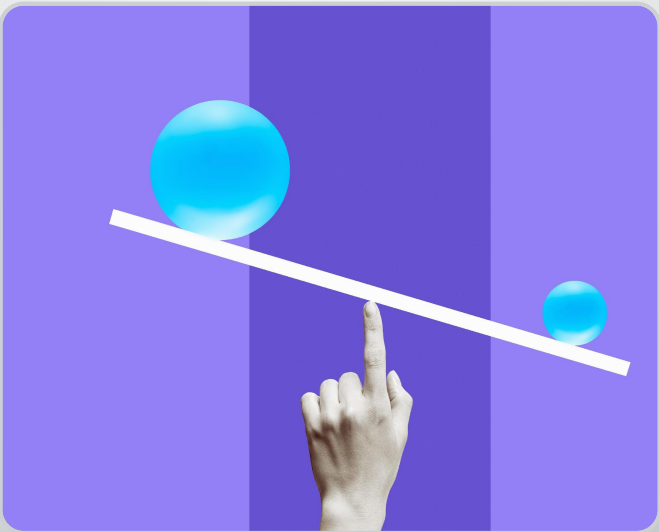
Empowerment

On a scale of 1-10:

- 1 = Highly self-managed teams
- 10 = Highly controlled teams

Where would you place your organization on the scale?

What role does communication play in team empowerment?



The image shows a hand pointing at a scale with two blue spheres. The scale is tilted, with the left side being higher than the right side. The background is a gradient of purple and blue.



The organization must support interaction for effective communication within teams to develop.

Diversity is one of the strengths of a team

Can you think of a time when someone brought something unexpected to the table?

What steps can you take to avoid groupthink?





## Case Study

Your organization hosts a networking event to foster connections among employees.

What are the communication considerations?



What communication behaviors push your buttons?

Why do you think people engage in these behaviors?

What can you do to change the situation and make it better?



## Difficult communication behaviors

The Tank

The Sniper

The  
Know-It-All  
|

The  
Grenade

## Difficult communication behaviors

The  
Think-They-K  
now-It-All

The Yes  
Person

The No  
Person

The Maybe  
Person



## Hostile-aggressive communication patterns



Verbal attacks



Sarcasm & ridicule



Interrupting or  
talking over others



Blaming &  
accusing

## Hostile-aggressive communication patterns



Shouting or  
intimidation



Defensiveness  
disguised as aggression



Domination or control  
tactics

## How to respond

Stay calm & composed

Set clear boundaries -  
"I'm willing to talk  
when we can do so  
respectfully."

Use assertive language  
- "I understand you're  
upset, but yelling won't  
solve this."

Redirect the focus to  
problem-solving

Don't escalate

## Passive-aggressive communication patterns



SILENT  
TREATMENT



BACKHANDED  
COMPLIMENTS



INTENTIONAL  
FORGETFULNESS



SARCASM WITH  
HIDDEN MEANING

## Passive-aggressive communication patterns



AVOIDANCE & INDIRECT  
COMMUNICATION

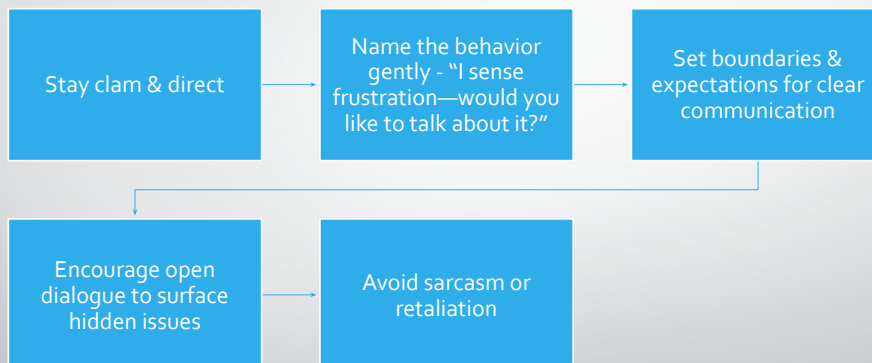



AGREEING OVERTLY BUT  
RESISTING COVERTLY



SUBTLE UNDERMINING  
OR SABOTAGE


## How to respond





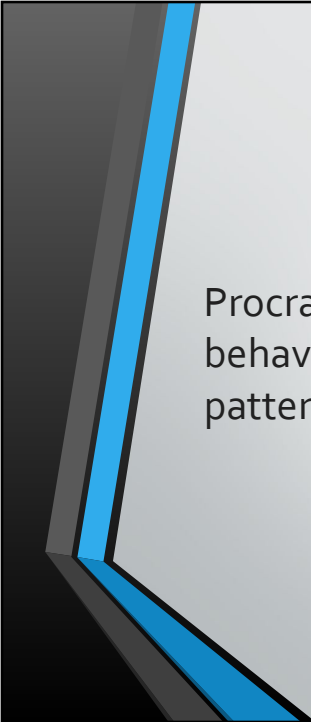
## Procrastination behavior patterns

- Perfectionism
- What to Look For: Missed deadlines, excessive time spent revising
- Your Response:
  - Reframe "done" as better than "perfect"
  - Set clear, time-bound expectations
  - Encourage iteration over perfection: "Submit a first draft, we'll refine together."



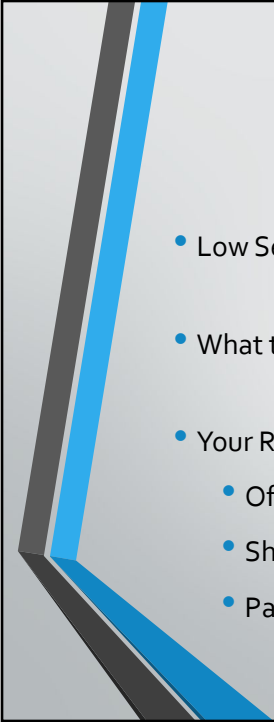
## Procrastination behavior patterns

- Avoidance
- What to Look For: Dodging certain tasks, chronic delay on unpleasant work
- Your Response:
  - Break projects into bite-sized steps and assign due dates
  - Offer support and clarification to reduce overwhelm
  - Ask directly: "What's holding you back from getting started?"



## Procrastination behavior patterns

- Impulsiveness / Easily Distracted
- What to Look For: Lack of focus, jumping between tasks
- Your Response:
  - Encourage use of focus tools (time-blocking, turning off notifications)
  - Help them prioritize key tasks each day
  - Check in frequently but briefly to keep them on track



## Procrastination behavior patterns

- Low Self-Confidence / Fear of Failure
- What to Look For: Avoiding high-visibility or challenging work
- Your Response:
  - Offer coaching and reassurance: "I trust your judgment on this."
  - Share examples of past successes
  - Pair with a mentor or peer for support

## Procrastination behavior patterns

- Decision Paralysis
- What to Look For: Stuck waiting for more info or direction
- Your Response:
  - Set clear parameters and expectations for decisions
  - Reduce options when possible
  - Encourage progress with the “80% rule” – make a decision when 80% confident

## Negative-complaining communication patterns

Chronic  
complaining

Blame-shifting

Pessimism or  
catastrophizing

Victim mentality

Passive  
complaining  
(sighs, sarcasm,  
eye-rolling)

Repeated  
complaints  
without action



Acknowledge the concern briefly, then ask:  
"What would help fix this?"



Shift the focus: "What's one thing we can do  
differently?"



Set boundaries: "Let's focus on solutions  
during this meeting."



Encourage ownership: "How would you  
approach this differently?"

How to  
respond

Discussion

How can you effectively manage  
interactions with challenging  
personalities?



## PLUS Ethical Decision- Making Model applied to communication

Define	– Step 1: Define the problem
Seek out	– Step 2: Seek out relevant assistance, guidance and support
Identify	– Step 3: Identify alternatives
Evaluate	– Step 4: Evaluate the alternatives
Make	– Step 5: Make the decision
Implement	– Step 6: Implement the decision
Evaluate	– Step 7: Evaluate the decision

## Miscommunication

How much of the communication breakdown that occurs in your organization happens because of differing perceptions or misinterpretations?

Do you automatically blame your staff person for a misunderstanding without considering your own potential role in the communication breakdown?



