

# 1



## MANAGING WITH COMMUNICATION

Organizations are created to get results. A sports equipment manufacturer, for example, seeks to make products that people will buy so the company can make money. Because of the complexity of manufacturing and marketing sports equipment, the company hires numerous people to help with the process. Someone designs the products, someone creates assembly lines with proper equipment, someone buys supplies, someone arranges financing, many people work on the assembly line, someone advertises the product, and someone ships the product. Each position is expected to get results, and all the small results combine to achieve the overall organization results.

How does everyone get results? Mainly, with effective communication! Communication is the most vital skill of managers. Good planning, organizing, monitoring, and leading all depend on good communication. Financial management, marketing management, operations management, human resource management, and research and development all depend on good communication. Communication is the means by which managers manage.

Management communication encompasses how well you speak, write, listen, read, and interact with your fellow professionals, both inside and outside the organization. As

a result, your communication skills will greatly influence your advancement, your salary, and your job security. Communication affects everything in your career.

The first part of this chapter discusses important interpersonal knowledge and skills you need for succeeding in professional organizations. The second part of this chapter concentrates on the management skills you need for getting results through others.

After you have studied this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate effective social skills, including conversation, listening, and networking skills.
- Demonstrate commonly expected manners and professional etiquette.
- Apply your knowledge and abilities in working with and achieving success through others.

## INTERPERSONAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTIVENESS

Employers consistently rate interpersonal effectiveness as a high priority in hiring new employees. Interpersonal effectiveness is critical at all levels of an organization. This section discusses the importance of social intelligence, trust, conversation and listening, networking, and manners and etiquette.

### SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

The academic and technical knowledge you gain in college is important for performing your specific tasks, but the relationship aspect of your work must never be overlooked. In fact, Goleman (1995) states that interpersonal and social skills will have a greater impact on business success than academic knowledge. Further, Gardner (1993) suggests four abilities to be socially effective—self abilities, including self-awareness and self-management, and other abilities, including social awareness and relationship management (see Table 1.1). In other words, you need to be aware of and manage yourself and to be aware of and manage your relationships with others.

**Table 1.1** Gardner's Four Social Effectiveness Factors

	What You Sense	How You Respond
Self	Self-awareness	Self-management
Others	Social awareness	Relationship management

**SELF ABILITIES.** The “self” row in the matrix indicates that you should be aware of your own emotions and manage them appropriately. For instance, if you’re in a meeting and someone criticizes an idea you have proposed, your natural tendency is to become angry and lash back at the person. But you can’t do that without social consequences. Instead, just say to yourself, “I know I’m angry right now, but I must stay calm and act rationally.” By being aware of your own emotions and keeping them under control, you prevent negative consequences and enhance your credibility with your peers.

people can become prideful and defensive, human relationships can be severely damaged, and morale can be destroyed. Therefore, work to create a safe, positive climate, using your own emotional optimism and influence to enhance the emotions of others.

### MANAGING A TEAM

During your career, you will have multiple occasions to work with teams, some involving only a few people and some, many more. Some of your teams will be in the same department and work face to face, others will be cross-functional teams from different departments, and still others will be virtual teams working across different time zones and in multiple countries with different cultures. Careful management is required for team success. Simply assigning a team to work on a project does not guarantee good results.

Teams typically navigate through four stages of development: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman 1965). Figure 1.7 identifies these four main stages and summarizes what happens in each stage.

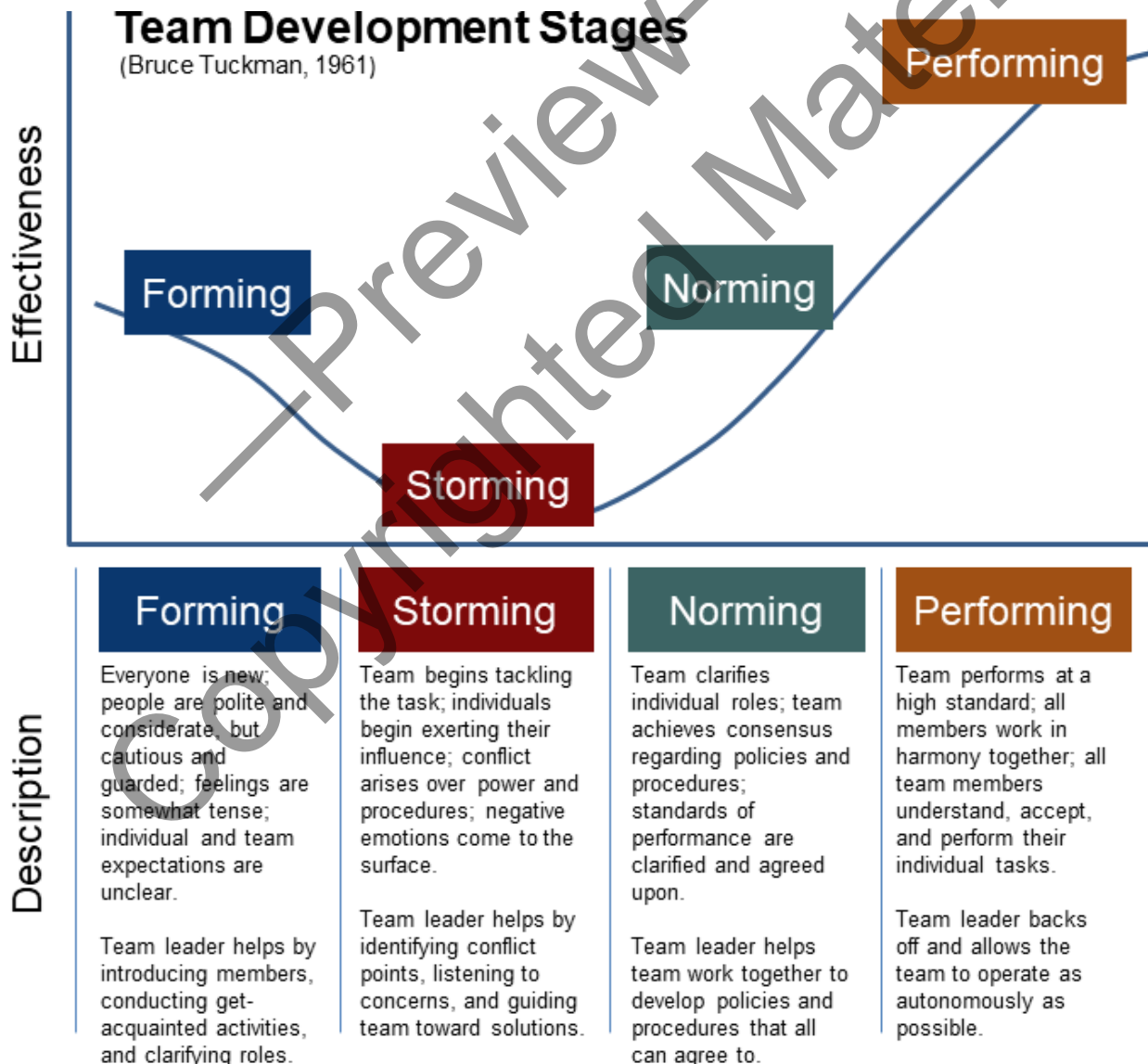


Figure 1.7 Teams progress through four stages of development.

Avoid becoming too rigid in your thinking, because in most management situations there is no one right way. Bring out people's talents and abilities so the people and the organization achieve the best results possible.

You must also be sensitive to the unique communication needs of individuals, both those within your stewardship and those with whom you deal as customers or clients. Two types of communication needs are those pertaining to people with disabilities and international audiences—people from different areas of the world.

**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.** Be sensitive to those who have special communication challenges, such as visual or hearing impairments. In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination based on disability. The legislation to help anyone who has “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities” (Department of Justice 2003). The following quotations highlight the critical elements of this legislation regarding communication-related aspects of work.

Title I of the ADA requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide qualified individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from the full range of employment-related opportunities available to others. For example, it prohibits discrimination in recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, pay, social activities, and other privileges of employment. It restricts questions that can be asked about an applicant's disability before a job offer is made. . . .

Section 255 and Section 251(a)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, require manufacturers of telecommunications equipment and providers of telecommunications services to ensure that such equipment and services are accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, if readily achievable (Department of Justice 2003).

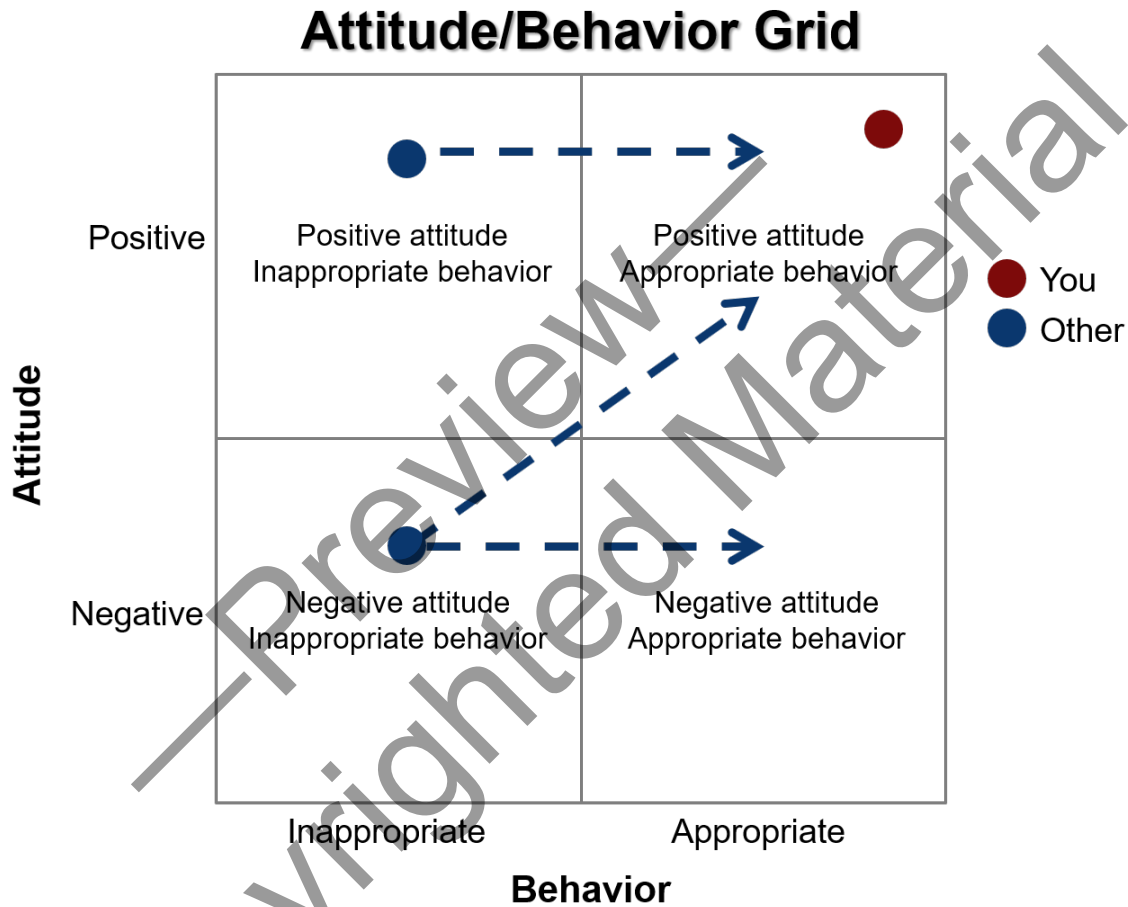
As you work with individuals qualifying under the ADA, some may need special communication accommodations (see Figure 1.8). With visually impaired workers, for instance, you may have to use braille. With hearing-impaired workers, you may have to arrange for a sign-language interpreter. Whenever a new person with disabilities is hired, ask about accommodations that will be needed.



**Figure 1.8** Strive to meet the communication needs of employees with disabilities.

happen. In fact, sometimes difficult conversations make matters worse, rather than better. The following information may help increase your chances of success in your own difficult conversations.

**FACTORS INVOLVED IN DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS.** Two fundamental factors are involved in most difficult conversations—the attitude and the behavior of the two people involved. The two-by-two grid in Figure 1.12 shows how these two factors affect the conversation.



**Figure 1.12** Focus on changing the behavior rather than changing the person.

First, as the red dot indicates, maintain a positive attitude about the other person. Even though the person has behaved inappropriately, don't think of the person as being bad or having bad motives. Rather, focus on changing the behavior, not on changing the person. Further, always behave in a calm manner, never allowing yourself to become angry or defensive or to make negative, demeaning comments.

Table 1.4 lists examples of negative and positive communications that can occur in difficult conversations. Because difficult conversations often involve heightened emotions, both you and the other person can easily slip into the negative column and become angry or defensive.