

## Communicate effectively and convincingly – what else?

Everyone's talking about communication: "Communication is everything!" "Communication is the most important soft skill!" "Communicate and win!" Here are a few 100% tried and true tips from probably the best-structured communication-training seminar by HPS, which has been translated into English for this HPS Know-how letter.



### 87 ONE message – but FOUR approaches

"Hey, the light is green!" – "Are you driving or am I?!" This is one of the best examples of the 4-ears model (Schulz von Thun) that can help avoid many misunderstandings.

As a sender we must realize that when we ask "Where did you get this figure?" we're not only asking about the source (content level), but we may also be sending the message "I don't trust you!" as well (relationship level). And as the receiver we must ask "With which ear do I hear this?" Do I feel they are critical or are they calling for some kind of action? What can help?

- **As the speaker, try** to make your message as clear as possible
- **Recognize** that the message may be received very differently
- **As the listener, check** your perception: Was that really criticism – or is your "relationship ear" a bit too large? Is the other person telling you something very important about himself (self-revelation) and I only hear the content?
- **Ask** if you don't understand

HPS treasures the intellectual property of others. In our seminar, the book "Miteinander Reden", which defines the 4-ears model, is given to each participant.

**"Nothing is absolute" in communication**, but whoever listens closely and checks his understanding often has got the better hand.



### 88 Inform or Question? It's the balance between the two!

Do you complain about too much information? How much of your preparation time is spent with "How do I say this?" as compared to "How do I ask this?"

In a seminar, the trainers counted how much of the material was information-giving and how much was information-seeking. The result was 9:1 – It's no wonder that we often pass right over the interests of the other party in our discussions.

**But these questions help:**

- **Give some room at the beginning:** "What do you expect to get out of this discussion?"
- **If something is unclear:** "What do you suggest?"
- **With resistance:** "What do the alternatives look like?" "What's important to you?"
- **At the close:** "How do you feel about the discussion?"

Asking and answering questions are key aspects in running a dialogue successfully and effectively.

A question doesn't only look for the factual solution, it also signals at the relationship level **"I take you seriously!"**



## 89 Leading critical discussions – clearly, but constructively

“Criticism” often means “That’s not right” and is unpleasant for both the boss and the employee. But without clear criticism, correction is impossible!

The 5 steps to carrying out an appraisal discussion is an example of the kind of structured communication that is used in all HPS trainings.

Certainly, it’s a question of packaging - “It’s not what you say but how you say it.” But we also need to look at the structure: How do you prepare yourself for an appraisal discussion; how do you run it so that it finishes clearly and constructively?

1. **Opening:** Create rapport, set the climate “I want to find a solution with you!”
2. **Inform:** Offer the criticism clearly – describe the behaviour and discrepancies, use facts and concrete examples
3. **Discuss:** Ask for a response – find out the background – clarify!
4. **Agree:** Work out improvements together, agree to changes. Concretely: As of when, how often, how to be measured?
5. **Closing:** Formally agree on a “contract.” Paraphrase the measures you’ve sketched out. Close on a positive note: I look forward to working more closely with you!”

The accompanying principle “Tangible Appreciation” legitimizes the criticism for the other person: BECAUSE I appreciate you so much, I want to...”



## 90 English Tips

Clearly state the topic and the objective of your discussion. Treat the listener as an individual, show them that you care about their individual needs.

Our international English seminars focus on the non-native speaker of English. The goal is to forget the grammar and concentrate on the message, while giving you the tools to make you fluent.

Talking about difficult Issues – Here’s some vocabulary and phrases to help you when you are dealing with difficult appraisal discussions. Read the following sentences and learn the verbs marked in **bold** to help you talk about difficult issues more effectively.

- I think we first need to **identify** the problem.
- Of course we’ll have to **clarify** a few points first.
- We have to **deal with** the problem before anything else.
- How shall we **cope with** unfair business practices?
- The question is how we **tackle** the production problems!
- If you don’t **solve** the problem now, we’ll get into serious trouble.
- When can you **take care of** that issue?

By using these verbs, you’ll sound more professional and focused on the issues at hand.

## Questions, Ideas & Tips ...

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Owner & Publisher: HPS GmbH

Editor: Charles La Fond, [charles.lafond@hps-training.com](mailto:charles.lafond@hps-training.com)  
Adresse: HPS Hierhold Presentation Services GmbH  
Mariahilferstrasse 34, 1070 Vienna  
Tel: +43 1 522 40 50 - 0  
Fax: +43 1 522 40 50 - 50

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