

Training and Risk Management Newsletter



Harvey B. Lermack & Associates

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- Use a simple risk management model to improve your training.
- More about leadership training for your managers and supervisors.

Improve everyone's communications skills with ... **Listening Skills Training, Part 2**

Everyone recognizes that ineffective listening can result in overlooked hazards, in accidents and injuries, in service and quality errors, and in productivity problems.

But most people don't consider themselves to be good listeners. Some are "bad at remembering names," others "have too much on their plate to take the time to concentrate." But everyone has some reason (excuse?) to offer for being a poor listener.

In our last issue, we addressed the fact that most of us have never been trained to be effective listeners. Our schools expect that if we pay attention and learn to read, we will become effective listeners. But this is not the case.

Listening requires a different set of skills—a set of skills that can be improved through

proper instruction and practice.

While the average person can speak at about 125 words per minute, the average listener can absorb 600 words per minute. No wonder our minds often wander! I call this the "listening gap" - time wasted daydreaming, or thinking about what we'll say next. This time is available to be put to better use.

Further, each of us processes the information we receive through certain filters that are based on our prior experiences, such as previous knowledge, biases and stereotypes, cultural differences, and preconceptions about the topic. All of us need to recognize the impact these filters have on the messages we send and receive.

An effective listener recognizes that the sender's message is made up of two components:

- The message itself

- The emotions surrounding the message
He or she acknowledges and tries to understand the emotional content of the message, as well as the verbal component.

Further, an effective listener:

- Shares equal responsibility for the communication process
- Asks questions, paraphrases and gives feedback to confirm understanding
- Watches for cues such as body language
- Is aware of their own listening filters

Remember — the goal of all communication is mutual understanding, which can only be accomplished through effective speaking AND effective listening.

Focus on the People Who Are Most Responsible for Your Success by...

Training Your First Line Supervisors and Managers

In most cases, your first line supervisors or managers are the people who are most responsible for successfully translating the company's strategic plans into action.

While these people often hold the key to strategic success or failure, they are frequently overlooked when it comes to providing the necessary knowledge and leadership skills.

In order to understand and carry out their responsibilities, the first level managers must receive training and information in a

wide variety of areas, including:

- Alternative leadership styles, and how to adopt the one that suits them best
- Effective communications, including speaking, listening, and coaching and counseling skills
- Planning and organizational skills
- The business environment within which the organization operates, and how the organization competes within that environment
- How to identify, prevent and manage

business risks and hazards

In summary, effective supervisors and first line managers must have a wide range of information, resources and tools available to help them lead implementation of the company's strategies.

In the next issue, we will discuss how you can help your supervisors and managers to become effective leaders through effective leadership training.

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For more information, or for copies of recent publications or handouts which describe our products, services and projects in more detail, send me an electronic mail message. Include your electronic and business address, and phone number.

Harvey B. Lermack & Associates is a professional education, training and consulting firm. Our mission is:

- *To help organizations improve risk management, environmental, health and safety performance through innovative training and education programs. The key result—your employees know how to identify, assess, and manage the risks at their workplace, reducing incidents and costs and improving productivity.*
- *To help organizations develop leaders at every level by delivering effective professional development training. The key result—leaders who bring a strategic focus to their daily and long-term activities.*
- *To ensure the success of these and other training and development efforts by utilizing innovative performance management techniques, working with individuals and small groups to ensure changed behaviors. The key results—safer operations, better performance, and reduced costs.*

My associates and I bring extensive industrial, academic, training and consulting experience to this unique mission.

How Can We Make The Ethical Issues Relevant to First Line Supervisors and New Managers? **Business Ethics and Values in the Classroom**

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Training and Consulting Services

Risk Management Training
Behavioral Safety
Environmental, Health & Safety Programs
Strategic Planning and Management Skills
Leadership Skills for the 21st Century
Managing Change
Performance Management
Effective Networking & Alliances
Cultivating Influence
Coaching and Counseling Skills
Facilitation Skills for Teams and Meetings
Developing & Delivering Effective Training Programs
Balancing Work, Family and Career, and Time Management
Personal Skills Development

The phrase “business ethics” is on everyone’s mind these days, especially in light of the recent scandals that have affected companies such as Enron, Tyco International, and Adelphia Communications.

Yet I am finding it more difficult to teach business ethics at the university, and in my industry leadership courses. The signals that our young people are receiving from their senior officers tell them to “Get all you can today.” Yet we expect them to make ethical decisions in that work environment.

Surely such instructions as “Be sure not to misstate \$4 billion in expenses when you become Chief Financial Officer of your company” are not relevant to their everyday business lives. They need guidelines for making their everyday decisions.

This situation is exacerbated

by the changing social contract between employees and companies, demonstrated by the fact that companies and employees are demonstrating a diminished level of loyalty to each other.

Such forces as globalization, domestic deregulation, and information and telecommunications technologies are resulting in shrinking workforces, more outsourcing and shorter employment tenure.

Many younger employees today expect to spend no more than two or three years with each company before moving on. Where will their personal values and sense of ethical and moral behavior have an opportunity to develop and emerge?

It seems to me that, as professional educators and trainers, we have an obligation to help build the bridges that will help younger man-

agers to develop an appropriate value system.

To do that, I try to provide them with opportunities to resolve real life issues, using cases where they must make decisions about how they will address risk reward tradeoffs to their organizations and themselves. Some of the issues I address include the ethical aspects of not only financial issues, but human resources, environmental, safety, and other risk management – related decisions as well.

The ethical dimensions of business decisions must be integrated into every course on leadership, risk management, and communications skills if we are to help today’s and tomorrow’s leaders address these tough issues.

I’d be interested in your views on this subject.