

When Leaders Think Big (And Act Small)

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Behind every great leader is a great communicator. Or several.

Each day leaders choose how to think and how to act.

When leaders choose to think big but act small, stakeholders disengage, and the communicator is caught in the middle.

As communicators, our job isn't simply to craft the words, it must reach to how we help craft the actions, and how we help coach the behavior, and influences the choices that leaders make.

We have long sought ways to influence a leader's words. Today it's essential for us to be just as diligent in how we influence a leader's actions.

In this session, through a series of actual CEO case stories, we will learn how the communicator can create this most important influence.

Following are worksheets we will use for exercises in the session. We will provide additional materials at the session, as well as a printed version of these sheets. In the meantime, this will give you an idea of what we'll cover.

This session will be provocative, timely and a lot of fun.

Looking forward to seeing you at the conference!

Exercise #1: The Basic Facts About Leaders

- **Leaders have the potential to think big**
 - Why we exist*
 - What we believe in and value*
 - What we need to accomplish*
 - How we are going to get it done*
 - What the results mean to stakeholders*
 - “What’s in it for me” for employees*

- **Leaders have the capability to act small**
 - When political priorities take over*
 - When personal vendettas influence*
 - When perspectives are thrown off balance*
 - When egos grow beyond natural boundaries*
 - When there are, simply, too many mirrors in the office*
 - When listening ends*

- **Leaders can’t hide from their actions**
 - How transparency rules*
 - How actions speak louder than words*
 - How substance is a requirement*
 - How credibility disappears in a moment*
 - How people feel before they hear*
 - How people watch (and listen) before they feel*

- **Leaders must satisfy a new “leadership consumer”**
 - How the consumer’s habits have changed*
 - How the consumer’s patience has shortened*
 - How the consumer has become more judgmental*
 - How the consumer is less trusting*
 - How the consumer, however, remains hopeful*
 - How the consumer can be reached*

Exercise #2: When Leaders Think Big

○ “Big thoughts”

What defines “big thought”

Why “big thought” is needed

Why the thought, no matter how big, must remain simple

What can be a “big thought” (and what doesn’t qualify)

Why a “big thought” shouldn’t be openly self serving

What should be remembered about a “big thought”

○ Leaders who think big

How a leader establishes the permission to think big

How a leader can/should reveal the “big thinking” process

How a leader can/should share the “big thinking” experience

How a leader can/should savor the “big” moments

How a leader must feed and nurture the “big thinking” reservoir

When a leader should turn it all off

○ Stakeholder access to big thoughts

What the view can be like from the cheap seats

Why a stakeholder is less interested in the censored version

Why it’s essential to connect the thought to stakeholder priority

What a stakeholder wants to view and experience

How a stakeholder wants to be involved

What it takes for a stakeholder to understand, believe and do

○ Leaders need to share

What a leader should want to share

How to avoid the “hear myself speak” syndrome

How to determine what levels of interest can/should be

How to edit thoughts

How to avoid spin

How to engage stakeholders

○ Communicator contributions

What the communicator’s role must be

How to connect to the big thought

Why it’s necessary to create the context for the thought

Why the communicator must participate in the thinking

How the communicator can contribute to the thinking

What can make the communicator essential

Exercise #3: When Leaders Act Small

- **“Small actions”**
 - What defines “small action”*
 - Why “small action” is to be avoided*
 - Why the action, no matter how small, can be damaging*
 - Where small actions often originate*
 - What can be a “small action” (and what doesn’t qualify)*
 - What (unfortunately) usually is remembered about a “small action”*

- **Leaders who act small**
 - How a leader never establishes the permission to act small*
 - How a leader simply cannot reveal the “small acting” priority*
 - How a leader simply cannot share the “small acting” experience*
 - How a leader must avoid the “small” moments*
 - How gossip (and online chat) will feed the “small acting” reservoir*
 - When a leader should turn it all off*

- **Stakeholder access to act small**
 - What the view can be like from the cheap seats*
 - Why a stakeholder is less interested in the censored version*
 - Why it’s essential to connect the thought to stakeholder priority*
 - What a stakeholder wants to view and experience*
 - How a stakeholder wants to be involved*
 - What it takes for a stakeholder to understand, believe and do*

- **Leaders needs to share**
 - What a leader must share when small acts are discovered*
 - How to avoid the “hear myself speak” syndrome*
 - How to determine what levels of interest can/should be*
 - How to edit thoughts*
 - How to avoid spin*
 - How to engage stakeholders*

- **Communicator contributions**
 - What the communicator’s role must be*
 - How to connect to the small action*
 - Why it’s necessary to create the context for the action*
 - Why the communicator must participate in the reacting*
 - How the communicator can contribute to the thinking*
 - What can make the communicator essential*

Exercise #4: Why It Matters

- **What happens when leaders think big and act small**
 - How stakeholders notice*
 - Why stakeholders disengage*
 - How technology keeps the action alive*
 - How everything is remembered*
 - How reality television is open to everyone*
 - How leaders live in a transparent world*

- **Why leaders can't hide**
 - How the basics of effective communications are still the basics*
 - How "no news" is, simply, no news*
 - How people fill the "vacuum" themselves – and get help*
 - How people love (and need to) blame*
 - How people must believe "why" before anything else*
 - Why trust is everything*

- **What people must experience with leaders**
 - Authenticity*
 - Transparency*
 - Informality*
 - Fairness*
 - Consistency*
 - Humility*

- **What people must see in leaders**
 - Vision*
 - Caring*
 - Social responsibility*
 - Character*
 - Commitment*
 - Openness*

- **What people don't want to see or experience**
 - Ambition*
 - Vanity*
 - Pettiness*
 - Selfishness*
 - Nepotism*
 - Cronyism*

Exercise #5: What Is Our New Real World

○ Consumer

Who the new consumer of leaders is
How this new consumer thinks
What this new consumer values
How this new consumer uses media
How this new consumer makes choices
What this new consumer remembers (and refuses to forget)

○ Content

How the insignificant becomes significant
How the news cycle keeps the trivial alive
How any moment can be repeated
How no one has to “wait for the movie version”
How fast bad news travels
How unforgiving the world can be

○ Chaos

How trickle down only happens in waterfalls
How we can't control the rumor mill; only plant it with truth
How grapevines are ripe to be fed
How formal media has its limits
How everything is remembered
How everyone has 15 minutes of fame (or shame)

○ Concern

Favorable scorings of perceptions of senior management among global workers:

- 49%: Senior management actions are consistent with our values
- 44%: Senior management tries to be visible and accessible
- 40%: Senior management communicates reasons for business decisions
- 38%: Senior management is sincerely interested in employee well being
- 38%: Senior management communicates open and honestly
- 37%: Senior management treats us as valued, respected contributors
- 15%: Senior management treats us as if we matter
- 10%: Senior management treats us as if we're the most important part of the organization

Source: 2007 Global Workforce Study, Towers Perrin

Exercise #6: What a Communicator Can Do

- **Collaborate**
 - How to prompt big thoughts*
 - How to shrink big thoughts*
 - How to personalize big thoughts*
 - How to market big thoughts*
 - How to protect against small actions*
 - How to handle small actions when they occur*

- **Conscience**
 - How to facilitate the process*
 - How to build the relationships*
 - How to discover the core*
 - How to protect against intrusion and small thinking*
 - How to keep a leader connected to truth*
 - How to bring truth into reality (and vice versa)*

- **Coach**
 - How to establish coaching trust*
 - How to help a leader to “be what you say”*
 - How to help a leader avoid being visibly needy*
 - How to help a leader look good from every angle*
 - How to help a leader listen for every voice*
 - How to keep the coaching fresh*

- **Competencies**
 - How to establish competencies for leadership*
 - How to tie these competencies to the organization*
 - How to make these competencies relevant to stakeholders*
 - How to make these competencies real to leaders*
 - How to assess leaders for competencies*
 - How to connect competencies to message*

- **Consistency**
 - Why trust is not a one time thing*
 - How repetition is essential to accountability*
 - How to keep a message alive when frequent*
 - How to keep the media fresh*
 - How to ensure consistency across the world*
 - How to consistently listen to many voices*

Exercise #7: How to Consider Social Media for Leaders

- Conversation
- Insight
- Inspiration
- Casual
- Personal
- Targeted
- Fresh
- Transparent
- Frequent
- Human
- Bonding
- Chatty
- Voice
- Reveal
- Listen
- Take lumps
- Differ
- Feed

Care

Awake

Exercise #8: What to Remember

- Denial only works in families
- Illusions are only for magicians
- Hiding in the sand is only for birds
- Bad news never goes away
- Secrecy simply is over
- Trust of someone of the 'closed' does not happen
- Private is the new public
- Once people show interest they are more willing to offer support and help
- Nothing disappears
- Look people in the eyes
- Spin is dead
- Every epic can be summarized in five sentences
- After two emails, have a chat
- The Internet is inescapable
- Reputation is everything
- Social media should be social
- Start with truth – and then edit
- Embrace new ways to do old things

- Be a sponge – no cats ever died from curiosity
- People hope, endure and want to trust

Exercise #9: What This Means to the Communicator

○ Shape

How to create an experience
How to facilitate a dialogue
How to position a point of view
How to create a relationship
How to endure any challenge
How to make a contribution

○ Collaborate

How to ensure all voices are heard
How to broaden the ownership
How to share the toys
How to focus on the result
How to celebrate the experience
How to reach out and engage

○ Value

How to listen (and be heard)
How to engage (and be engaged)
How to satisfy (and be satisfied)
How to recognize (and be recognized)
How to share (and be shared with)
How to connect (and feel connected)