

There Are **Three** Kinds Of **Communication**

| Do you use them effectively?

By **Evan Hackel**

I find it helpful, and efficient, to understand that there are three different types of communication and to use them intentionally and strategically in interactions with other people.

Type 1. Evasive Communication

The word "evasive" sounds negative. And perhaps it is. This kind of communication is inauthentic, and the less you do it, the better the connections you will have with others. Generally speaking, anyway.

Evasive communication should normally be avoided, but it is something we all use to save time, avoid conflict, and reach our goals.

Here's an example . . .

You ask one of your reports whether he has called to place an employment ad. He says he did (even though he didn't) and then goes right to his office and makes the call. He's fibbing to save face and cover his back. Is his dishonesty causing any harm? If

it is a pattern he uses habitually in many workplace settings, it probably is.

Not sharing information is also a form of evasive communication.

Here's an example . . .

A member of your team learned about a negative review that your company just got online. In order to avoid ruffling feathers, he doesn't mention it to anyone.

That kind of evasion can be very harmful to the organization. People tend to do it to protect themselves, but in more cases than not, it will harm you.

We also use evasive communication because it can be efficient or polite. The best approach is to use it intentionally, which means that we are aware that we are doing it to achieve a specific outcome.

Here's an example . . .

Before a meeting, your supervisor asks you, "How are you today?"

And you say, "Fine," even though you have a headache and your knee is hurting because you played tennis yesterday. In the interest of saving time, you lie a little.

Type 2. Conclusive Communication

People use this form of communication to direct a conversation toward the outcome that they want. Sometimes they want to seem open to new ideas and suggestions, even though they really aren't.

Here's an example. A department manager tries to convince you that your company should begin to order supplies from a vendor he used when he was working for a different company. There are many reasons you can't do that. One is that your CEO is a close friend of the vendor you are currently using. But instead of going into all that, you pretend to listen and say something like, "Thanks, I am glad to know about them." And you reach your goal, which is to continue to use your current vendor.



You are not being completely honest when you use conclusive communication. But doing so, again, saves time. The problem is that if you start to use it habitually to reach your desired outcomes, you will cut yourself off from good ideas that you should be considering.

Type 3. Openness and Honesty

Yes, open and honest communication really can happen in business. But there are different ways of doing it, and different levels of openness. At times, you listen openly in order to gather information, but are not completely willing to change your mind. At a slightly higher level, you have an opinion, but you are willing to listen and possibly change it.

And at other times, you maintain a completely open mind and listen to what someone else has to say, without letting your own opinions color your thinking at all. You are only looking for the best outcome, not to advance a plan or agenda of your own. This is communicating at a very high level.

The highest form of this communication that I have found is what I call "Ingaged Listening," which happens when you constantly listen for what another person is saying that is right and valuable and exceptional, not for what is wrong. And when you hear a golden nugget of wisdom, a great idea, you follow up by asking questions to cultivate it further.



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