

For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: CONSISTENCY

Being Consistent with Your Mission

Consistency builds respect. When people know what to expect from you, your department, or your company, they become more comfortable doing business with you. Consistency can begin with your key message.

A key message is precisely stating what you want people to remember. Companies of all sizes create mission statements to help their employees, customers, and vendors understand and remember what the company represents. What is your mission statement?

If it is not on the tip of your tongue, it could signify that the statement is too complicated to remember. If you cannot recall it, your customers won't either. Too many mission statements are mission essays. Most people use the same 1500 words every day. Some mission statements contain at least one fourth of those.

Another explanation for not remembering it could be that your company does not live their key message. After all, actions speak louder than words. Begin your road to consistency by ensuring that your mission statement is your key message and that everyone that represents you lives it. Every one. Every time. That is consistency.

How do we create that consistency? It starts at the top. Communication departments cannot create the key message. What they can do quite well is to listen to the top leadership and help them to re-craft the message using as few words as possible. They can create the signage that will help all employees to be reminded of the message in every interaction they have.

Leaders can set the example by making decisions and taking actions that support the mission statement. To reinforce its consistency, they can mention it frequently as their guide. When was the last time you thought about how your actions and decisions balanced with your company's mission statement?

Your key message is the heart beat of the organization. Choose it wisely. Live it hourly. When you become this consistent, people will know what you represent. That brings trust and confidence. What a wonderful foundation for business! ❖

Routines

If you really want to step up your consistency, build routines. Extroverts, that means you! This doesn't mean you have to forego all spontaneity in your life. It does mean that planning your time will ensure that you get the right stuff done. It builds consistency.

Many people have good intentions at the beginning of the year but don't build these into routines. Here are some steps that can aid you in building routines so you can successfully be consistent in the areas that matter:

1. Set aside the same time each day or week to plan the following day/week.
2. Allow margins in your day (unplanned time) to handle unexpected situations.
3. Be prepared before you start. (If you want to eat healthier, buy the groceries and bring lunch to work.)
4. Ask someone to encourage and remind you.
5. Reward yourself on a regular basis.
6. Keep your commitments as though you were keeping a promise to your best customer.
7. Continue to analyze your progress. (You may need to revamp or adjust your plan.)
8. Realize that one failure does not lead to giving up. (Instead of giving up, get up!) ❖

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Hiring Their Potential.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in our [Promoting Yourself and Your Business](#) or read other [previous issues](#) of The Exchange.

"Without consistency there is no moral strength."

Owen

"There are those who would mistake us that to stick in a rut is consistency – and a virtue; and that to climb out of the rut is inconsistency – and a vice."

Mark Twain

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Listen Up and Follow Through

Vincent Phipps

When it comes to consistency in communication, often the only thing that is consistent is that people are inconsistent.

To be an effective communicator, one must consistently listen. Listening is our most important communication skill, yet it is the skill we consciously practice the least. Improve your consistency to become a better leader. The following is a four-step process for listening to and following through with others.

Step one: Ask open questions.

Open questions contain “what” or “how”. Open questions generally get you more information than closed questions.

For example, instead of asking, “Do you agree?” ask, “What do you think about this?”

Step two: Listen without interrupting.

Remain consistent in your approach to learning. Avoid cutting off the other person in mid-sentence. Avoid stifling their communication flow with a negative comment or gesture. Let them finish their complete thought before dissecting or rejecting their ideas.

For example, while the other person is talking, use neutral comments such as “uh-huh”, “oh”, “ok”, “really”, “hum” and “huh”.

TLC’s Mission Statement

TLC exists to promote the importance and use of effective interaction among people through our seminars, coaching, speaking, and materials.

What Our Clients Are Saying

“Thank you for your presentation of the Interviewing seminar last Wednesday. I must say it was the most enjoyable learning experience for a professional topic that I have encountered ... We have benefited from the one-on-one attention and we hit the ground running Thursday by implementing the techniques covered in the material. Our interviews have begun and I believe that they are more productive using our new knowledge. Practice will hone our skills. Again, thank you for your help.”

Theresa Bailey

Step three: Confirm clarity.

After the other person has finished sharing, make sure you understand their viewpoints and needs. This allows the other person to know that you were actively listening. Include all the specifics of what is being requested or stated. Ask a closed-ended question that gives you a definitive answer to establish continuity.

For example, after the other person has stopped talking, you say, “So if I can get this reduced by 5% and get it to you by March 10, we have a deal, right?”

Step four: Establish the next steps.

Determining the next steps can prevent a communication break down. Knowing what is needed and who is to provide what, ensures that everyone is on the same page. You do this by asking an open-ended question to gather any additional information about what is needed for closure.

For example, “I will call you in 5 days to give you a status report of our progress. What else can we do to keep you informed?”

Approximately 30% of the population will have poor follow through. As our workloads increase, our listening and follow through will decrease. Follow these four steps to be consistent in your communication. This can help you be consistently successful. ❖

Quick Tips

- ✓ Be prepared before you start.
- ✓ Keep your commitments as though you were keeping a promise to your best customer.
- ✓ Realize that one failure does not lead to giving up.

“I have no consistency, except in politics; and that probably arises from my indifference to the subject altogether.”

Lord Byron

“Inconsistency is the only thing in which men are consistent.”

Horatio Smith

“Our children are counting on us to provide two things: consistency and structure. Children need parents who say what they mean, mean what they say, and do what they say they are going to do.”

Barbara Coloroso

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Exceptions to the Rule

Therese Padgett

One of the attitudes that TLC consistently teaches is that life is positively in the present.

An affirmation, to be effective, is to be stated in the first person present tense and is to contain only positive words. For instance, "I wake up early and in a good mood!" is much better than saying, "I will try getting up early, hoping to be in a good mood."

What do you think of this situation? I have a note card on my desk that reads, "Kiss me! I don't smoke!" I ask you, would that be as funny and inspiring if it read, "Kiss me. I am smoke-free"?

There are several quotes sitting around in my office. One of my favorites is this one attributed to Dorothy Day: "No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do." It reminds me of a childhood story about the little engine that struggled to climb a steep mountain. Do you remember how he finally made it? By repeating to himself, "I think I can! I think I can!"

I served as guardian to a youth at risk for several years. She was constantly telling me, "I can't!" and each time that came tumbling out of her mouth I would immediately say to her, "Can't never could!" To this day, some fifteen years later, she tells me that was the one lesson that helped her more than any other.

"Can't never could" is neither in the present tense nor positive, much less personal in nature. I'm not sure it's a proper sentence (at least my spell/grammar checker did not flag it). In fact, this article is not really about affirmations at all, but rather about exceptions to the rule.

So, as you write your personal mission statement (see Beverly's challenge this month), remember to include those maxims and cute/funny quotes that inspire you to be the best that you can be! Even if they are improper in grammar, tense or sense, what counts is how effective they are in influencing your life.

I love this job! Beverly asks me to write on "featured services" in this column each month and she allows me so much free range, as you can see from this article. However ("however": a word similar to "but" in that it has negative overtones: to be avoided if at all possible), if your organization or department needs an attitude adjustment, pick up the phone and ask today about TLC's short course, "Success Over Stress!"

Call us at 1-888-BECAUSE (because you always communicate!). ❖

"Part of courage is simple consistency."

Peggy Noonan

"But change must always be balanced with some degree of consistency."

Ron D. Burton

Happy Birthday!

To clients celebrating in January and February, TLC wishes a Happy Birthday!

January

- » Donna A. Suter
- » Algia May
- » Mary McRae
- » Todd Wiedman
- » Joyce King-Lavinder
- » Wayne Lockhart
- » Greg Johnson
- » Dave Morehouse
- » Rick Hatfield
- » David Siler
- » Rick Perry
- » Kathy A. Cline-Dote
- » Rosanne Gambill
- » Beth Swayne
- » Sharon Petry

February

- » Johanna Renee Baum
- » Rona Pohl
- » Terry Nolan
- » Rob Healy
- » Eleanor Cooper
- » Anthony Henson
- » Ashlee Pitzl
- » Jeff Goebeler
- » Amanda Perl
- » Nancy Long
- » Festus Akindele
- » Erica Jizmejjan
- » Kevin McClary
- » Candice Dettloff
- » Dirk McGullion
- » Marty Miller
- » Dana Dial
- » Craig Swafford
- » Keith Henry
- » Billy Mullins
- » Dave Kanoy
- » Sheri Amante
- » Glenn Berry

You can't be consistently fair, consistently generous, consistently just, or consistently merciful. You can be anything erratically, but to be that thing time after time after time, you have to have courage."

Maya Angelou

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CEO Corner

Beverly Inman-Ebel

“Consistency is Personal”

I dabble in quite a few hobbies. Hobbies are very personal. Two of my numerous hobbies include stamping home-made cards and art quilting. Today these two crossed paths once again. In my art quilting class, the instructor had us make stamps to use with paint on fabric. I was quite proud of my creation. I made a happy face with freckles and my initials in cursive underneath (ie). This has been my personal logo for well over two decades. It's personal.

The smiling face represents a positive attitude and outlook on life. The freckles make it my smiling face. The initials of my last name translate to, “in particular”. My friends tell me I am quite particular and know what I want in life.

My personal logo compliments my closing signature on emails and the occasional letter, “Smiles, Beverly”. My personal mission statement is: Look for joy. I'm rather consistent, aren't I?

Some days it is difficult to live up to these reminders of positive attitude. Life happens. I have had a few of those days lately. When I am sad, angry, or worried, it truly helps to live my personal mission. I find it almost impossible to smile and worry at the same time. Try it. Claiming joy, even and especially in times of great sadness, consistently chases away the demons. Worry is such a negative use of imagination.

I have often said to my clients that we cannot keep negative thoughts from coming to our minds, yet we do have the choice to dwell upon them or shut the door in their face. A wiser person than I wrote in the New Testament that we should keep our mind on things that are pure, excellent, and just. When times are tough, consistently think of these things.

I encourage you to create a personal logo and a mission statement and then live it. Even when you slip, just having it will get you on your feet faster. Just like the Olympic skaters, staying on your feet is the first goal. Regaining your stance is important if you fall, because there is more to do.

Take the challenge. Create your own personal mission statement. Live it. Rely on it when you are challenged by life. Live your dreams! ❖

“Look to make your course regular, that men may know beforehand what they may expect.”

Francis Bacon

“A good boss makes his men realize they have more ability than they think they have so that they consistently do better work than they thought they could.”

Charles Erwin Wilson

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by e-mail tlc@talklisten.com or phone 1-888-232-2873. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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