



# What You Need to Know to Get What You Want

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## Emmet Ore

Hello, everyone, welcome to part one of our February Wednesday webinar series, Expert Communication for Every Level of Employer. My name is Emmet. I'm a marketing specialist over here at Vensure and I'll be your host for the next hour. Today, our panelist, Robin Paggi, will be talking about communication and what you need to know to get what you want. As always, there will be a Q&A session at the end. We'll do our best to answer all the questions you have. But if we don't get to them, we'll respond to those individually. This webinar is brought to you, as always, by Vensure Employer Services. Vensure is the leader of 20-plus PEO partners with clients in all 50 states. Today's agenda includes some basics of communication, how personality impacts communication, how gender impacts communication, how age and culture impacts communication, and how to become a better communicator. And lastly, we'll have our Q&A session at the end. If you hear a topic that you want a little bit more clarity on, feel free to submit a follow-up in the Q&A box. And I am joined today by Robin Paggi. She's a seasoned human resource practitioner specializing in training on topics such as harassment prevention, communication, team building, and supervisory skills. So with that, I'll hand it over to Robin.

## Robin Paggi

Thanks, Emmet. A little bit more about myself. I have a bachelor's and master's in communications studies and I have taught communication classes at the college level and workshops and hard to believe for almost 30 years now. So, I really applaud my 21-year-old self for choosing the major of communication because it has served me well. And the thing that I realized when I furthered in my career and started teaching a lot of different topics is that it's all about communication. Communication is the basis for everything that we do. And so, the more effective communicator we are, the better our life is.

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What is the definition of communication? Well, this is what I learned in my college classes. It is the process by which individuals use symbols, signs, and behaviors to exchange information. The better definition is when the sender of the message and the receiver of the message have the same understanding of the message—that is communication. How often do you think that happens? Not very often at all. But this quote by George Bernard Shaw, I think says it very nicely, “The biggest problem with communication is the illusion we have achieved it.” All too often when we’re talking with people and they’re nodding their head, looking like they’re listening to us, we think that we are communicating, that we have a mutual understanding of the message and will even ask them, “Do you understand?” And often they nod their heads. Yes. Do you have any questions? And they say, “No.” And off we go, thinking that we have communicated. And then we find out that we didn’t that they didn’t do what we wanted them to do. We didn’t get the results that we needed from them. And that brings us to why we communicate. It is to get a desired response from our audience or results that we want every single time. So, here’s an example. If I say, “Hello,” to you, I want you to say hello back. If I ask you a question, I want you to answer it. If I tell a joke, I want you to laugh. And I’m not unique in this. We all want a specific response when we are communicating with people. And the more effective communicator we are, the more likely we are to get those responses. Now, if people are not giving you the responses you want, what do we typically do? We blame them. Don’t blame them. A lot of the responses we get are simply a reaction to how we communicate. And so, that’s one of the things I really want you to consider, as I’m telling you about how our personality, and gender, and age, and culture impact our communication, is that how we send our messages determines in large part how the responses we’ll get from people. And so, if you don’t like the responses you’re getting, think about how you’re sending the message. Now, I want to tell you, one of the things that happens with miscommunication is that it impacts the quality of our life. And the best example that I can give you right now is the COVID vaccine distribution. It’s not going so well. And what are some of the reasons that people have cited? Miscommunication. So, miscommunication can be annoying—it can also cost people their lives. And miscommunication can certainly cost you and your employer money. Because when we don’t communicate well, people make mistakes and mistakes often cost money. So, hopefully I’ll provide you with some information today that will help you save yourself some time, some money, and who knows what other impacts you can have on the people around you.

And we’ll talk about how our personality style impacts our communication. Now, people have been studying personality styles for thousands of years. Hippocrates, as a matter of fact, the father of medicine, put people in for different personality styles. And those four personality styles have remained largely the same throughout centuries. And one of the things that I like to do is use the DISC personality profile. And if you’re not familiar with it, it was developed by a gentleman named William Marston in the 1940s and he was a psychology professor. He also created the Wonder Woman character. So, that’s a fun fact. So, the DISC personality profile says we are all a mixture of these personality styles: dominance, influence, steadiness, and conscientiousness. We are all a mixture of those, however, we tend to have a predominant style that comes out when we’re communicating and we want to know about that style because it determines in large part whether we get the responses we buy we want from people or whether we don’t. So, let’s take a look at that dominant personality style and think about people you know who tend to be very direct. I mean, they don’t use a lot of words, but those words sometimes make them sound very blunt or harsh. They tend to be brief. They don’t want to spend a lot of time talking. They want to spend time doing things. And so, especially at work, they’re very task-oriented. They just want to get the work done. So, sometimes they forget to say, “Good morning,” or, “Goodbye,” or, “How are you,” or those types of things, because it’s all about getting the task done. And so, as a result of that, sometimes they appear a little rude to other people. Now, here are some things about our personality styles. We don’t get them by accident. Part of our style is caused by our DNA and then part of it is also caused by our upbringing. And people who study this say it’s about 50/50 nature and nurture. Now, the dominant personality style usually is a dominant personality style, in part because they’re oldest children. So, not always, but a lot of times oldest children are put in charge of younger children and they tend to boss them around because if they don’t, they get in trouble. And so, sometimes your dominant personality styles were created to be

that way because of their parents putting them in that position. Also, things that happened to us when we're children sometimes creates our personality style. And one of the things that probably happened to dominants is that they were controlled by people who they didn't necessarily feel should be in control. So, dominants really fear a loss of control. And that's one of the reasons that they like to take charge and take control is because they don't like being controlled. Chances are, because of the people who are controlling them and they don't like being taken advantage of. And so, that's one of the reasons they're not very vulnerable to people. And so, what that means is that they usually don't tell you that you've done a good job, or how they feel about you, or anything like that, because that puts them into a vulnerable position. If they tell you they like you, you might not like them. And they certainly don't want that. So, the dominant personality style is prevented from getting the results that they want sometimes because their directness sounds rude, it sounds harsh, they don't play by the social niceties that we are mostly taught to play by, and they don't give a lot of positives to people. So, if you identify with the dominant personality style, and here's one of the things, how we see ourselves is not necessarily how other people see us. And so, you might think that, "No, I'm not like that at all," but other people might think you are. And that's the most important thing. I know how we see ourself is very important. But for our purposes, how others see us is more important because they can see what we're doing that's preventing us from getting the results that we want. Often we're blind to it, and that's one of the reasons that feedback is so important. The dominant personality styles usually don't like people to give them feedback, and when people are critical of them, they tend to argue back. And so, that's one of the reasons that people tend not to give feedback to dominants is because of the reaction that they get. So, if you do identify with the dominant personality style in order to get better results, I suggest that you engage in the rituals that we have been taught for our society. You say good morning, goodbye, please, thank you. You exchange pleasantries before you get down to business. Unless, of course, you're talking to another dominant and then you don't have to worry about any of those things. So, the influence, they communicate through jokes and stories and tangents and they're very relationship-oriented. So, that means it's relationship first and task second. So, when you meet somebody who has this personality style and again, we're a mixture of all of these, but we have a predominant style that comes out. When you meet someone like this, it's usually pretty easy because they joke around a lot and they like to tell you about themselves and they want to get to know you. So, sometimes very personal questions. But when you're at work, it is relationship first. "Hey, how are you? How's it going? How's that movie you saw over the weekend?" And then get down to work after that. So, that's one of the things that I have learned when I'm meeting somebody for the first time, especially when we're going to conduct business, is that if I asked them how is your day going? And they say, "Fine," now what I want to talk about is this. Okay, they're a task first person. So, we're going to talk about the task and then if there's time leftover, we'll talk about the relationship. But if I ask him, how's your day going? They go, "Oh, my day, my goodness." And they tell me all about it. Okay, we're relationship first. So, we're going to talk about the relationship and then we'll get down to business. Now, why would we change gears like that? Because when we talk to people in the way that works for them, we're able to connect, and we're able to get along, and we're able to get things done. So, what prevents the influencer from getting the results that they need from people? Well, sometimes they joke so much, people don't know whether they're being serious or not. So, here's an example. Let's say you come in late to work. The dominant personality style will say you're late. The influencer will say, "Hey, thanks for showing up." And you don't know that they just told you you're late. And so, that joking sometimes gets in the way of the results that they need from other people. So, they need to sometimes be a little bit more serious, a little bit more direct, dependent upon who they're talking to. And that's the key factor in everything that we're talking about here. Now, the steadiness tends to be very people-oriented also. So, it's people first, task second, but they're much quieter than the influencer is—very polite. They are very much the people who want to say good morning, and goodbye, and please, and thank you. And if you don't, then that's a strike against you. And they tend to be very agreeable on the outside and just want everybody to get along. And that's one of the things with the steady, they are very much motivated by stability. Don't rock the boat, just everybody play nicely, get along with each other. They tend not to like change, or conflict, or offending other people. And so, one of the things about them is that they sometimes are

misunderstood because they're so indirect because they don't want to hurt people's feelings. They don't want any kind of conflict going on. And so, you're late, the dominant says, "You're late," the influencer says, "Hey, thanks for showing up," the steady says, "Was there a lot of traffic on the way to work today?" And that's their way of telling you that you're late. And so, a lot of times people don't understand what they mean because of that indirectness. So, what do they need to get better results? Be a little bit more direct, and with this style being direct sounds rude to them. It feels rude to them. But sometimes that's what you need to do, not be rude, but just be more clear in what you're talking about. And then finally, the conscientiousness. Also quiet, very reserved. They don't like to chit-chat about their personal life, especially at work. But when they are talking about work, they will be very detailed and go into a great amount of information, sometimes too much information. And one of the reasons for that is that they very much want things to be done right the first time. And so, they will take their time and examine and analyze and think and rethink and do everything that they need to do. When they put something out there for the first time, they want it to be perfect. And that's really what they're looking for. So, they are very motivated by quality. And something that really bothers them is just slapping something together and calling it good. Just throw some duct tape on that and we're fine. That does not work for them. They're really searching for perfection. And so, again, you're late. So, the dominant says, "You're late," influencer says, "Thanks for showing up," steady says "Did you have a lot of traffic getting here today," the conscientious will say, "You are three minutes late today, you were two minutes late yesterday, you were one minute late the day before that, and so, therefore, I'm writing you up and I don't know why you're upset about all of that, because it's just facts." So, our personality style isn't in a neat category like this. Again, we have all of these in us, we just tend to be more one than the other. Once again, the only reason we want to know how we communicate, well not the only reason, but the main reason we want to know is what am I doing that's preventing me from getting the results that I want? And when we can figure out, "Oh, okay, I think my personality has something to do with it," then you can make the small modifications in order to get better results from the people you interact with. Okay, let's move on and talk about how our gender impacts our communication.

Now, when we're talking about gender, sometimes people think that this is a very archaic topic and they think it's just based upon stereotypes, and those stereotypes need to go, and all of that. And to a certain extent, I agree. But I will tell you this, and I have done a lot of research on this topic. If you are not aware, there are brain differences between males and females. And so, men's brains tend to be larger and women's tend to have more gray matter. And I'll let you make of that what you will. But, there are differences. And one of the things that I also know is our culture has a big impact on our gender roles. So, one of the things that's really popular right now is gender reveal parties. And I don't like gender reveal parties for a couple of reasons. Number one is because we had a lot of fires in California last year and one of the biggest fires was set by an explosion from a gender reveal party. So, I'm against them. I'm in California and it was pretty scary last year. The other thing is that so what do we do in gender reveal parties? Well, if your device explodes and it's all blue, then you're having a boy. If it's pink, you're having a girl. Well, one of the problems with that is that our gender is not binary. Alright. There where, we don't have just two genders. We have more than that because people are much more complex than that. So, that's the first problem with it. The second problem with it is that we are grooming that baby before they're even born on what their life needs to be like. And you go to buy clothing and you've got blue stuff for the boys and it's all sports and trains and all of that kind of stuff. And then you've got the pretty frilly stuff, pink stuff for the girls, and all of that. So, from the get-go, we are grooming people to either be male or female. And again, life is more complex than that and I think that we might be doing some damage as a result of that. For example, one of the things that our culture still tends to tell little boys is don't cry, boys don't cry. Well, that does them a disservice because they then learn to suck it up, don't express your emotions, and then when they're older and married and their wife thinks they're unemotional, then they've got a problem—or their husband. So, that's one of the damages that we do. Having said all of that, there is a more masculine way of communicating, but people of all genders can communicate in a masculine fashion. And there is a more feminine style of communication and all genders can communicate in that feminine style. And so, we just give you an example there

of men are more face-to-face communication, where women are more side-by-side communication. And here are some of the things that have gone along with descriptions of the masculine style. They're more direct, logical, quiet listeners, and more of a feminine style, they're more indirect, emotional, verbal listeners. Well, those are masculine and feminine styles. That's not to say that women are indirect, emotional, or verbal listeners. I'm a woman and I am very direct. But the problem is that when you're female and you communicate in a masculine style, that sometimes presents a problem for you in our society. And when you're male and communicate in a more feminine style, that sometimes presents problems for you in our society. So, society is loosening up a little bit more. And so, that's good. We don't have these strict gender roles, but I think we will always have a masculine and feminine communication style. So, is just something to recognize. Now, one of the things that I do want to tell you about knowing this information that has helped me tremendously. And so, I had a male supervisor a long time ago in a job far, far away. I had a male supervisor and we had some problems with our communication. And when I learned more about gender communication, I understood what our problems were. So, let me give you a couple of examples. One of the things that is said about the masculine style is that they make statements of fact and they are trying to demonstrate that they are competent when they are communicating. One of the things that's said about the feminine style is that they are very comfortable asking questions, and so one day my male supervisor said to me, "Okay, we're going to be changing how we do this." And I said, "Really? Why?" I thought I was just asking for information. But from his response, I think he thought I was questioning his competence because his response to me was, "Hey, I know what I'm doing." And okay, so my feelings were hurt over that exchange because I thought I was just asking why we're changing something. And he seemed upset with me in his response. But when I learned that sometimes asking questions doesn't sound like it's asking for information, it sounds like you're questioning somebody's decisions and that doesn't feel good. Then I learned how to ask it differently. Now, here's the other thing. One time I was talking with my little team of folks and the male supervisor was there and I was letting them know that I was going to be off work because I was going to have a particular kind of surgery. So, the women in the group turned to me and they said, "Oh, are you okay?" And my male supervisor said, "Alright, next topic on the agenda." How rude, he does not care about the surgery. Well, one of the things that is said about the masculine and feminine style is that feminine styles are more personal, reveal more personal information. Masculine style is more impersonal, and they don't. And so, what I took away is, wow, that was really rude. He doesn't care about me. I then had a different thought. Perhaps I made him uncomfortable with the personal information I revealed. So, the moral of all of this story is that the more we understand about these different styles, the less hurt we can be when we don't communicate the same way. And also, again, we make small modifications in our style. What I learned is don't ask why in a particular tone and also don't reveal too much personal information because it makes some people uncomfortable. And when I make those small modifications, I get better responses from the people I'm interacting with.

Age. Alright, so this is one of my favorite topics right now, and one of the reasons for that is because I co-authored a book about managing Generation Z that is going to be available on April 6th. So, there's a little plug for that. But, if you're not really familiar with the different ages or the age groups, let me take you through them. Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964, and one of the reasons they're called, or the reason they're called Baby Boomers, is because the previous generation went through World War II and after World War II, a whole bunch of babies were born. And so, there was a baby boom. And actually, somebody who works for the federal government who was doing the census remarked upon the baby boom that had happened. Well, that baby boom went on for 18 years. And without going into too much detail—because we got a whole other webinar just about the ages in the workforce without going into too much detail—the baby boom stopped in 1964, primarily because the birth control pill was released to the general population. So, with Baby Boomers, they tend to be very competitive and very direct in their communication. Next came Generation X. And with this generation, one of the things that they are marked by is that they were in the right place at the right time, at the exact right age for technology. And so, Gen X usually is very adept at all of technology, not just the new stuff. And so, that's one

of the things a lot of people say that about Millennials and Gen Z is that they're so tech-savvy. Well, only on their phones and current stuff. So, Gen X lived through all of it. Now, the Baby Boomers did, too. But I'm a Baby Boomer. I was born in 1962, so I'm at the tail end and the technology boom was just after I became an adult. And so, like a lot of adults my age never jumped on to the whole thing. And so, not that technologically adept. So, Gen Xers, and also with Gen X they tend to want shorter conversations and because they were often latchkey kids taking care of themselves until the parents came home, they tend to be very independent and don't want people to tell them what to do. So, Gen Y came next and somewhere along the way somebody wrote a book about them and renamed them Millennials. And so, you can see the age group there. And they very much did grow up with technology and texting and created a whole nother language as far as texting is concerned. And then Gen Z, a lot of people think that GenZ is just more Millennial. It's really not, especially because generations are created based upon what happens to us during our formative years, which is primarily high school. And think of what Gen Z, who is in high school, is going through right now. So, they're going to be really different from Millennials as a result of living through COVID during this time, all sorts of stuff. However, again, they do like a lot of jargon in their communication. So, some of the differences in how we communicate is jargon. And one of the things that I tried to do the other day is I tried to say how "woke" I am because of all the things that I'm learning. My older brother said, "You're woke? What does that mean?" Well, those of you who are younger, you know what "woke" means, but I'm probably not, but anywho. So, jargon prevents us from being able to communicate very well. Taboos, and so one of the taboos for older generations, and I include myself in it, is a masculine and feminine communication. And one of the things is that women were not really supposed to curse and men were not supposed to curse in front of women. And so, there was definitely specific times when specific communication was okay. So, quick little story. I was driving down to Hollywood to see a play with a friend of mine who is a little bit older than I am. And we were talking about work on the way down and we were using the F word all over the place because of what work was bringing us that time. So, we got into Hollywood, we went to a restaurant and some people much younger than us were seated at a table right next to us. And one of them said the F word. And my friend looked at them and then she looked back at me. And she said, "Can you believe how disrespectful they're being?" Okay, "Well, we were just saying the F word all over the place on the drive down," "Yeah, but we were doing it privately in our vehicle." When you get into an open forum like a restaurant, you don't use words like that. So, yeah, that those kind of rules have kind of gone out by the wayside. What else eye contact. So, it's one of the things older generations usually were taught in America. Look at me when I'm talking to you. And if you didn't, that was a sign of disrespect. I have a very difficult time when I'm in workshops and people don't look at me when I'm talking to them. I feel extremely disrespected as a result of that. But I have to remind myself, not everyone was taught that. And the next thing we're going to talk about is culture and some cultures were definitely taught making eye contact as a sign of disrespect. Perception. Perception is how we see the world and we need to remind ourselves we see the world very differently as a result of our age. And one of the things I really caution older managers about is don't think that younger people know what common sense is because what is common sense to you is not common sense to them. Doesn't mean that younger people are ignorant. It means that they have a different experience of the world. And we tend to think that our experience is common and it's not. And then hearing is the final one. And I put that there because I'm losing my hearing. I do not hear very well. And so, that's one of the things that we have to remember when we're talking. When I go over to my parents' house, my father's 84, and I talk like this the whole time, which wears my throat out. But if I don't, he'll constantly say, "What?" And so, that's one of the things we have to remember about different ages as well.

Alright. So, a lot more information in a couple of upcoming webinars on that. But, let's finally talk about how our culture impacts our communication. And just some cultural differences. So, first of all, what is culture? It's learned a system of thought and behavior belonging to and typifies a relatively large group of people. So a simpler way of saying that is that it is the norms—what we consider to be normal behavior—the norms, the values, the traditions that a group of people share. If you don't know this, your culture really does a number on you, making you believe that what you were taught is

the correct way of doing things. And a lot of times we don't even know. When I'm in a workshop with people, I will say, tell me three things your culture taught you about communication. And most of the time, people can't come up with three different things because the transfer of culture is something that is not obvious to us. We are taught how to behave. We are taught what is normal behavior. We are taught. If somebody is not engaging in this normal behavior, then something's wrong with them. And most of the time we're oblivious to all of this. So, that's one of the things that we really need to understand if we're all going to get along with each other, is that people's perspective is based upon these cultural rules that are invisible. And we typically clash with people when they're playing by a different set of rules. So one of the things that we do is we learn how to communicate by our culture and also we express our culture through our communication. And sometimes we are taught these things on purpose and sometimes these things are taught by accident. So, I'll give you an example. On purpose, I was taught look at me when I'm talking to you. But by accident, what happens with a cultural exchange is something like this. When my oldest granddaughter was three years old, she was in her car seat in the back seat of my car, and I was stuck at a red light and I was trying to turn left and that red light would not turn green. And unfortunately, I was late to wherever I was going. And so, to encourage that light to turn green, I yelled at it. I said, "Come on." So, my three-year-old granddaughter is in the back seat and her little car seat and she yells, "Come on." So, that's one of the things she learned for me, is to yell at red lights in order to get them to change. Didn't mean to teach her that, but that's what she picked up on. So, be careful with your teaching around your children, especially because you're teaching them how to do things that you had no intention of doing. Alright, so let's talk about these different types of cultures. A high context culture is where communication is indirect, use of non-verbal communication is significant and there's lots of unwritten rules. Everybody knows as long as you were brought up in that culture how to do things, you don't state them explicitly. And a lot of information is conveyed through nonverbal communication and directness. So, countries that tend to have a high context culture are Japan, China, France, Spain, and Brazil. Low context is, like in America, is that there the communication is direct so that there are no misunderstandings. So, you don't need to know the context of what is being said. You believe the words that you are saying. And so again, the United States, Australia, United Kingdom...usually have low context. And so, how might we misunderstand each other through that? Well, if you are low context and you say what you mean and you mean what you say, you might sound a little rude to somebody from high context. In the meantime, they might be trying to convey something to you and you don't know what they're talking about because you don't understand the context in which it's delivered. Collectivist. These are cultures that stress the importance of the group and social cooperation. And when they're talking, they usually talk about us and we. Individualist is more autonomy and dependence, self-sufficiency, uniqueness. And when people communicate, they talk about I, me, mine. And so, even when people are describing themselves, you can tell their culture sometimes. If you said, "Tell me about yourself." I am analytical, sarcastic, and athletic, probably from an individualist culture. If they say, "I am a good husband and a loyal friend," then they describe themselves based upon their relationship with other people, then that's a collectivist way of communicating. And then we have uncertainty versus tolerance. There are cultures who have a very high tolerance for uncertainty and they just go with the flow and just see what happens. Cultures that have a very low tolerance for uncertainty, need things planned out. So, American society is considered uncertainty accepting. We have a high acceptance of new ideas, innovative products. We like what's new and we want new stuff. But then you have cultures like Saudi Arabia and they need rules. They don't like situations that are uncomfortable, that are unclear. They need to reduce uncertainty. And so, they have a lot of rules, laws, policies, and regulations. Well, you can tell individuals who have a low tolerance for ambiguity because they like tradition. They want things to stay the same. They say this is the proper way of doing it. This is how we've always done it. And so, you can see that in individuals as well. So, then we have the masculine and feminine again, and cultures that reflect a masculine culture would be Japan or Hungary and a feminine culture would be Thailand and Scandinavian countries. Power distance is the way in which power is distributed in a culture and how unequal distribution is perceived by people. So, when you have a high power culture, class could be inherited at birth, such as India, where you have a caste system and that impacts your communication when you're in a caste system and you know upon your birth, this is your place and

this is where you're going to stay. I strongly encourage you to read a book called Caste by Isabel Wilkerson. So caste, C-A-S-T-E, a great book about the caste system we have in the United States and also India. And so, you can see how communication is affected by people such in India who are born in a caste system. And it is rude to make eye contact with someone higher up on the caste chain and all sorts of things. So, very interesting information. Time orientation. Older countries with centuries of history, such as India and China, are generally past-oriented. And so, they think that minutes and hours are really not important because we have all this history, and so rushing to meet goals it just isn't part of their world like it is in newer countries like America. And one of the things about newer countries like us is that we tend to be future-oriented and so we've got lots of goals, and are always looking toward the future, and the clock is ticking, and if you're five minutes early, then you're really late, and all of those things. So, how we are oriented toward time. And then finally we've got emotional expression, and that is how much you're allowed to express your emotion. So, one of the things research has shown that countries like the United States are not afraid to express negative emotions in public, such as fear, anger, disgust, that kind of thing. But in other countries such as Japan, people are much less likely to express those emotions in public. And so, our culture very much impacts our communication.

Now, one of the things I want to say, as we are moving along, is that these are not the only four things that impact our communication. Everything that we are impacts our communication. And so, how do become a better communicator? First of all, you need to know how you communicate. So, I've just given you a brief overview of some of the things, but you really need to dive in deep and find out how you come across to other people. How has your culture impacted your communication? So, again, feedback is really important on that. And the people who usually give us feedback are people that we live with and know us really well. And a lot of times we don't listen to their feedback and we really should. And one of the reasons we don't listen to it as often, it's expressed in a negative fashion. Example, my husband said to me one time, "Robin, you push and push and push." Okay, so if he thinks I'm pushy, who else thinks I'm pushy? Probably everyone. And if everyone thinks I'm pushy, then how is that preventing me from getting what I want? And here's the irony. Sometimes our communication ends up getting us exactly what we don't want. So, that's one of the reasons we need to know how we communicate. And we need to listen to those people who know us and love us and will tell us the truth about ourselves and make small modifications. So, a modification I have had to learn is to back off a little bit and not try to press for answers and action right away. So, know how you communicate. Know your audience. And the reason you need to know your audience is because when you're communicating with them, the reason is to get a desired response. Well, if you communicate how you always communicate, if you are left unfiltered and unchecked and just do your thing, chances are that's not going to work for people when their communication style is different than yours. So, that's one of the reasons we like people who are like us because it's so easy to communicate with them. We don't have to watch what we say. For the most part, we can just be ourselves and that feels good. And I'm not suggesting that you be inauthentic. You need to be true to yourself. But remember, we all have inside of us the ability to be all of these different communication styles. So, normally I'm very direct, but I have inside me the ability to be less direct. If I just dig deep for it, it's in there. I just need to dig deep. And so, tailoring your message for your audience means making those small modifications in how you deliver messages that works better for the people that you are communicating with. And it's not being inauthentic and it's not trying to manipulate them because you're not tricking them. You are just trying to be very mindful of how you send your message so that you get the response back that you want. And again, that's the reason that we're communicating. That's how we get work done. And then finally checking for understanding. I think this is the most difficult part of the entire process, because how do we tend to check for understanding? We say, "Do you understand?" And people say, "Yes." And we say, "Do you have any questions?" And they say, "No." And we think that we've checked for understanding and we haven't. So, how do you make sure that people understand what you have said? You need to get them talking back to you. And so, ask open-ended questions such as, so how would you go about doing the task that I've just given you? I mean, of course, you're going to word it differently, but that's the gist of what you're trying to ask them. So, don't

ask yes or no questions, because that won't help you understand. If they understood, you get them talking back to you, and then you can tell through what they say, whether they have truly understood you or not. Alright. Just a couple more things to tell you about before we go on to our question and answer. Typical communication is what the speaker thinks he said versus what he actually said. And then there's what the listener thinks he said. So, I don't know about you, but every once in a while, somebody repeats back to me what I've just said. And I said, "I said that?" So, we really have to listen to ourselves talk. But when we're talking, we know what we're trying to say. But then the listener puts their own twist and turn on it based upon who they are. So, let me give you an example. Once upon a time, I was interviewing people for a legal secretary position, and I interviewed a young woman who lived in Sacramento, which is the capital of California. You probably know that, but she's interviewing for a job in Bakersfield. And so, I told her what the pay would be, and she said, "Well, I make four dollars an hour more now." Well, the cost of living is higher there than it is here. And she said, "Is there any way that I can make more money?" And I said, "Well, at the end of your three-month introductory period we will do an evaluation, and depending upon your success, perhaps you will see an increase." So, I know that's what I said. What did she hear me say? That in three months she was getting a raise and not a little raise, like 25 cents an hour, a significant raise. So, on her three-month anniversary, she appeared in my office and she says, "It's my three-month anniversary." I said, "Congratulations." She said, "I'd like my raise now." And I said, "Well, we need to do an evaluation and perhaps you will receive an increase." Well, she told me, "No. You told me I was going to get a pay increase today." That's not what I said. So, she thought I lied to her, that I had tricked her and she did not like me. And she let me know that every time I encountered her at work. So, I learned a little lesson from that, that when I say things like that that are really important and we need to make sure there's no misunderstanding, I follow up with writing. So in that case, I would have followed up with an employment offer that specifically said in writing what I had just said, but you can do that, too, by following up on conversations with an email. Just want to make sure we're on the same page. Is this your understanding? And if the reply is yes, then you're good to go. And if the reply is no, then you need to continue the conversation. Alright, two final words of wisdom here, communication works for those who work at it, and it is work. It takes thought, it takes energy, but it's worth it. The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives. The more effective communicator you are, the better your life is, it's just that simple. Alright. I think it's time for questions.

### **Emmet Ore**

Awesome, thanks so much, Robin. So, our first question here is, how can I become a better listener?

### **Robin Paggi**

Well, it's one of the things is that to be a more effective communicator, you really have to be a good listener. And we're not very good listeners anymore. First of all, we're not usually taught how to listen in school. And the second thing is we have so many distractions that is preventing us from listening. And so, I've got some specific things that you can do. First of all, when somebody wants to talk to you, you need to prepare yourself to listen. And that means putting away all the distractions. One of the things a lot of people think that they can do two things at one time. Okay, well, maybe you can walk and chew gum at the same time, but you can't send an email or a text and really listen to somebody at the same time. So, when somebody needs your attention and for you to listen to them, put away the distractions and give them all of your attention, watch for their nonverbal communication because that's one of the things is that are nonverbal...our facial expressions, our body language really communicates the message. So, sometimes people say one thing, but their facial expression or their tone of voice says something else. And that's what you really need to watch for because that will give you the true message. You also need to pay attention to your nonverbal communication. So, when somebody tells us something that we don't want to hear frequently, we frown, or we might roll our eyes, or we cross our arms, and all that's doing is putting a barrier up. And so, when people are telling you things, especially things you do not want to hear, be careful how you're nonverbal communication is communicating because you want people to tell you things you don't want

to hear. You might think you don't, but you really do, because the other choice is that they won't tell you things that you need to know because of your reaction. So, pay attention to your nonverbal and remain nonjudgmental of the speaker. And that's really difficult to do. But sometimes we don't hear things because of who is saying them, and they're very important things to hear. So, try to just keep an open mind when people are talking and listen with empathy, try to put yourself in their shoes so that you really understand what they're trying to tell you, and remind yourself that everything you are is altering that message. And so, you need to make sure that you clearly understood what people said. So, that's when you ask questions or paraphrase what they have said or just repeat what they said just to make sure that you've got it. So, doing all of those things again takes a little thought and energy. But when you're a better listener, people like you better. And so, if you want people to like you and trust you, then that's an easy way to do it.

### **Emmet Ore**

Excellent. Okay, so what resources are available for improving my communication?

### **Robin Paggi**

Well, I told you at the start of the hour that I have a bachelor's and master's in communication, and a lot of the information that I gave you is not stuff that I learned in school. So, that doesn't mean it was a waste of time, but it just means that there are so many resources out there available for people. So, I'll give you a couple of my favorite books. And that's one of the things if you go into a bookstore, there's always a communications section. And so, when we get to go to bookstores again, do that, although I know a lot of people like to order online or have a Kindle or something. And so, there's so many books to download. So, two of my favorites are People Styles at Work that go more into the different personality styles. And then one that goes into gender communication is Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps, and yeah it sounds a little sexist, but it's a great book. It's very funny, very informative. And so, again, if you just go to the communication section online or in a bookstore, there are just so many books available for you. The other thing is, is that you might look into one on one coaching and I'm available resource for that. I frequently provide one on one coaching for people who need to improve their communication skills in order to be more effective or sometimes just to remain employed.

### **Emmet Ore**

Alright. Yes, we do have one more here. In what way have you seen communication for work, personal, or just in general change during COVID-19?

### **Robin Paggi**

Well, certainly we're depending a lot more on electronic communication—we all know that. And one of the things that has been difficult for a lot of people is just trying to communicate so much through technology because it's exhausting and it leads to miscommunication. So, that's one of the things that I think is great about everything that we're going through right now is that people, I think, have a better understanding of how important communication is and how important face-to-face communication is in a lot of respects because we do pick up so much of our communication through facial expressions and body language. And when we are concentrating so much on Zoom and that type of thing, that's one of the things. People don't make eye contact with us on Zoom unless they're looking directly into the camera and they're usually not doing that. They're trying to make eye contact with the people on the screen. So, we're missing all of this eye contact, which in America is very important. So, I think that the thing that has changed is people's appreciation for in-person, face-to-face communication and how important it is not only to feel connected but to just make sure we're on the same page.

### **Emmet Ore**

Okay. How should you communicate with people that don't want to hear you?

**Robin Paggi**

The way that they like to communicate. So, that probably sounds like an ambiguous answer, but the thing is, is that when we communicate how people like to communicate, they're more receptive to us. So, pay attention to how they're communicating and try to communicate like they do. I learned a very valuable lesson 30 something years ago when I was a waitress. The golden rule is treat people how you want to be treated. Better rule is treat people how they want to be treated. And that especially comes with communication. Watch them, pay attention to them, communicate to them like they communicate, and you'll be surprised at how receptive they are to listening to you.

**Emmet Ore**

Okay, let's see, here's a good one. I've had many e-communications where much was lost in translation. How do I work to prevent that type of miscommunication?

**Robin Paggi**

Well, I think especially bullet points is really important and just trying to limit the words, because that's one of the things that we knew even before all of the pandemic stuff, is that people don't read long emails. And so, you really have to format them in a way that is appealing to people and bullet point as much as you can and be as direct as you can with what you need because that's going to help us. And electronic communication especially.

**Emmet Ore**

Okay. Most of the time, we face a bad listener. How can we convey the message, or communicate successfully, or satisfactorily with those people?

**Robin Paggi**

With bad listeners? Follow up in writing especially. And another thing, too, is checking for understanding. And so, you relay some information and you ask open-ended questions to ensure that they've got it. And if they're really bad listeners, again, follow up with writing so that whatever they didn't get during the verbal exchange, they can reflect back on the writing.

**Emmet Ore**

Thank you. How do you communicate with someone who is more confident in a lie than you are with the truth?

**Robin Paggi**

One of the things that people who are confident in a lie, if you are confident that they are lying, then you let them know that you know that they are lying. And so, that is my best understanding of it sorry, I'm really fumbling on this one because I just don't have a full understanding of what the question is trying to ask. But, if you think somebody is lying to you, I would just call them out on it. And that's the best I've got for that one.

**Emmet Ore**

Okay, so apparently the word was supposed to be competent. So, let me see, how do you communicate with someone who is more competent in a lie than you are with the truth?

**Robin Paggi**

Then you are with the truth? Again, just call them out if you think they're lying.

**Emmet Ore**

Excellent. Okay, here's another one. Sometimes candidates don't have time to listen to the content, then what do we need to do? Yeah, this one may need a follow-up or a bit more context here. Sometimes the candidates don't have time to listen to the content. Then what do we need to do?

**Robin Paggi**

If candidates don't have time to listen to the content, so I'm assuming this is somebody who is interviewing and if the candidate doesn't have time to listen to the content, then I would move on to a different candidate.

**Emmet Ore**

Excellent. Okay. Sometimes individuals will tell you what they think you want to hear, hence a lie being rather truthful.

**Robin Paggi**

Is that a question?

**Emmet Ore**

I don't know, this one may be a little more context as well. So again, please reach out to us at [webinarHRhelp@vensure.com](mailto:webinarHRhelp@vensure.com) if you need a little bit more of a conversation or clarity on some of these.

**Robin Paggi**

Yeah, you bet. And we're at 12:04, so we should probably sign off anyway.

**Emmet Ore**

OK, yeah. Great, thanks. That's it for today. And thank you everyone for being here and join us next week for part two.

**Robin Paggi**

Thanks, Emmet.