



Can You Hear Me Now?

Communication is a remarkable occurrence. Could any business survive without it? As owners or representatives of an enterprise, we spend countless hours, funds and energy to be heard, to craft our messages, policies and behavior in a way that will truly express our intent – to our customers, prospects, suppliers, employees, shareholders, the bank, the press; in short, to everyone who can have an impact on the health of our business.

Many will tell you communication is a 2-way street: you say your piece and then they say theirs. I think there's a crucial 3rd step. Watch:

- 1 - You craft a message and distribute it through appropriate venues –sales people, advertising media, website, sponsored events, service statements & policies. (This is expression)
- 2 – Your message is received – or maybe 'a' message is received; could be it's not the message you were delivering. (This is comprehension – or not; who knows?)
- 3 – Your customers and others respond to what they believe they heard (not necessarily what you intended) which might be no response at all. And this is where they show if they 'get' you, if you truly communicated.

With these 3 steps in mind, this is how I see communication working:

Expression+ Comprehension = Communication.

Without keeping track of that middle step –what they actually received and comprehended - you may never understand what happened to step 1 and what prompted step 3.

How can you ensure your tracking service is on? Keep communication open to always hear your customers, employees, vendors, etc. Their feedback and comments have a fundamental impact on how we run our business, develop policies or create product. These messages, when heard, provide the tweaking process that allows us to always respond to changes in our marketplace. When you involve all your constituents in the health of your business and they believe you value their opinions, they take a more active interest to ensure your success, because it represents theirs, as well. The desire to contribute, to make a difference, is a powerful motivator. Allowing this to occur for your customers & employees, simply as a result of hearing them, will give you access to one of your strongest and most underused assets –knowing what people think. Or, find

out, as former NYC Mayor Koch used to ask, “How’m I doing?”



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