

**Self-Assessment of Communication Style and Strategies for Improvement**

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**AIML 500 Assignment 4.1**

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## **Self-Assessment of Communication Style and Strategies for Improvement**

### **Communication Style Reflection**

Reflecting on my communication style, I recognize that I tend to be factual and to the point. This approach was shaped by my background as a military pilot and a leader in an aerospace engineering environment, where brevity and clarity were essential. Over time, however, I realized that this directness was not always effective in every context. When I began public speaking on the topic of prophecy, it became clear that audiences vary in needs, expectations, and background knowledge. This realization encouraged me to adopt different communication strategies, tailoring my delivery for professional environments versus broader public audiences.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses as a Communicator**

In professional settings, especially when addressing military officers or technical teams, my direct style is effective and well-received. It facilitates quick decision-making and ensures clarity. However, in public speaking contexts, this same directness can unintentionally come across as overbearing or as assuming too much about the audience's existing knowledge. This disconnect occasionally diminishes engagement and may create barriers to understanding. The ability to recognize this pattern has helped me become more adaptive in how I present and engage with different audiences.

### **Communication Challenges and Lessons Learned**

A notable example of poor communication occurred during the 1993 sale of General Motors' Allison Gas Turbine division. The acquisition process lacked transparency, leaving

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employees confused and demoralized. In an effort to reduce costs and make the company more appealing to potential buyers, new investors cut expenses in visibly disruptive ways, including turning off lights and limiting basic supplies. Employees were left to gather fragmented information through informal conversations around coffee machines or water coolers.

This experience highlighted the importance of treating employees as key stakeholders in times of organizational change. A more effective approach would have involved viewing employees as intellectual assets and providing them with timely, accurate information. Moving forward, such situations can be mitigated through structured change management communication plans that ensure clarity, transparency, and open channels for feedback.

### **Ensuring Clarity in Communication**

Clarity in communication is critical to success in both written and oral formats. Effective written communication involves the use of topic sentences, consistent terminology, and accessible language (Ivory, 2021). Overly complex phrasing can hinder understanding, particularly when addressing diverse or non-specialist audiences. In oral presentations, clarity is reinforced through the use of vocal modulation, pacing, tone, and visual aids. Preparation and rehearsal are essential techniques for reducing anxiety and ensuring a confident delivery.

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### **Communication Considerations**

#### **Audience Analysis**

Understanding the audience is the foundation of effective communication.

Audience segmentation studies show that people differ in their knowledge levels, attitudes, and behaviors, particularly in risk communication contexts. Tailoring communication to address the specific concerns and comprehension levels of different groups, especially those who are vulnerable or less informed, enhances engagement and understanding (Metag & Klinger, 2024).

#### **Message Clarity**

Clear and concise messages are essential in all professional domains. Avoiding technical jargon, especially when speaking to general audiences, helps prevent confusion. Structuring messages logically and anticipating the audience's needs significantly improves communication outcomes (Ivory, 2021).

#### **Verbal and Nonverbal Cues**

Effective communication requires attention to both verbal and nonverbal signals. Verbal cues such as tone and pace convey confidence and clarity, while nonverbal cues—such as facial expressions and body language—reinforce these messages (Kurien, 2010). A balanced use of both is essential for maintaining credibility and ensuring messages are accurately interpreted.

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### **Feedback Mechanisms**

Feedback is a vital component of communication. It enables continuous improvement and ensures that the message was understood as intended. However, it must be interpreted carefully to avoid miscommunication, especially in sensitive environments like healthcare (Adkoli & Parija, 2020).

### **Active Listening**

Active listening enhances mutual understanding, reduces conflict, and fosters respectful dialogue. It is associated with greater emotional intelligence and improved organizational outcomes. By asking clarifying questions and acknowledging diverse perspectives, communicators build trust and collaboration (Khanna, 2020).

### **Cultural Sensitivity**

In diverse workplaces, cultural awareness is essential for promoting inclusion and cohesion. Recognizing differences in communication styles and cultural values ensures respectful and effective dialogue (Sutisna, 2024). Consistency in messaging, paired with flexibility in delivery, can enhance understanding across cultural boundaries.

### **Timing and Delivery**

The effectiveness of communication is often tied to its timing. Research indicates that individuals are more cooperative and responsive when communication occurs closer to the time of action (Bhattacharya et al., 2017). Strategic planning and timely delivery of information increase engagement and the likelihood of desired outcomes.

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### **Tone and Emotional Intelligence**

Tone and emotional intelligence play central roles in interpersonal communication. Empathy, open dialogue, and awareness of others' emotions contribute to stronger relationships, improved conflict resolution, and overall communication success. Developing emotional intelligence supports clearer, more respectful interactions in both personal and professional settings (Rachmi et al., 2024).

### **Conclusion**

Over the course of my professional and public speaking experiences, I have learned to adapt my communication style to various audiences. While my direct, fact-based approach remains a strength in technical and military settings, I continue to work on refining my tone and delivery for broader audiences. Clear, audience-sensitive communication—supported by effective timing, feedback mechanisms, and emotional intelligence—enhances organizational cohesion and personal influence. These lessons guide my ongoing development as a communicator and leader.

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