

Sideline Management Skills: Communications

Perhaps no management skill is more deceptively simple than communicating effectively. We all communicate repeatedly every day, but its only when under pressure that we can spot some of our weaknesses and deficiencies. Time to Test your Communication Skills Effectiveness.

TEST YOURSELF

[For definitions of each of these 8 attributes see the Studio Section description of the Skills]

Directions: 2 Communication Incidents [select best skill]

From the following list of 8 Communication skill attributes, identify the attribute that appears to best address the Incident, and if you choose, write a brief explanation about why your preferred alternative is likely to produce a better result. Then please do submit your answer to the Forum for anonymous community discussion. If you need to review the attribute options before responding, click on **Sideline Skills in the Studio**.

Eight Sideline Communication Skill Attributes

- 1 Avoid the Dirty Dozen – don't kill with words**
- 2 Be "present" when listening – not interrupting or problem solving**
- 3 When requesting, state what you do want, not what you don't want**
- 4 When feeling interrogated, provide only "info" not "ammo"**
- 5 In giving criticism, focus on fixable problems, not the person**
- 6 Pass the 3-way test: is your communication true? kind? necessary?**
- 7 In giving instructions, state what you want, not necessarily why**
- 8 It's easier to understand, than to be understood**

Communication Incident #1: You tutor students for your Sideline and one of your clients is chronically late by 20 minutes but expecting you to stay the full hour or his mom instructed him to prorate your pay based on time spent. You assumed they would be courteous and arrive on time and pay you for 60 minutes of tutoring. Its not working out and you are really frustrated.

Which one of the 8 Sideline Communication skill attributes do you pick, and why?

Ans: 7 – State What you want – hard to fix the past behavior but time to clarify what you want, something like “I want to start and stop our tutoring sessions on time since we both have busy lives, that require us to be other places after finishing each tutoring session.” Avoid stating what you don’t want. To some extent your reasons why don’t add to the understanding – you have a right to manage your own time. See follow-up **Communication Skill References** in Studio.

Communication Incident #2: You’re having a great time with your Sideline – building two-story dollhouses for young girls and boys and selling them through community centers. You originally built 4 for fun in the basement and your mom donated one to a school auction without your knowledge and it sold for \$750, which amazed you. So now you let her sell more of them and people love them. Problem is your buddies at school found out about your craft and are giving you a hard time about doing something so “girly”. Its really embarrassing you with your group at school and you’re not sure what to say or do – but doing nothing hasn’t made it better.

Which one of the 8 Sideline Communication Skills do you pick, and why?

Ans: #4 – Provide information, not ammunition. When talking to your friends about your choice of Sidelines you could simply state “I enjoy constructing small houses, that might someday be big houses – both boys and girls like playing with smaller houses, not necessarily with dolls but any kind of toys and decorations that they enjoy using to make their pretend place. And as it turns out I can sell them for over \$1,000, which is a lot more than I make working at a deli. “ Avoid the “girly” issue since it has nothing to do with your interest.