



Issue 252 - July 2025

COMMUNICATION THAT LANDS

NAVIGATING STAKEHOLDERS WITH CLARITY AND CONFIDENCE





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POWER WITH WORDS:

INFLUENCING WITHOUT AUTHORITY

True leadership isn't defined by job titles—it's about the ability to move people with your words. When formal authority is missing, strategic communication becomes your superpower. Here's how to master influence through intentional language:

THE PERSUASION TRIAD: LOGOS, PATHOS, ETHOS

Great communicators blend three elements to build compelling arguments:

- **Logos (Logic):** Use hard data and clear reasoning
- **Pathos (Emotion):** Connect through shared values and human experience
- **Ethos (Credibility):** Demonstrate expertise and build trust



Real-world script:

"Our customer satisfaction data shows a 25% drop (Logos). I know how hard everyone's been working on this (Pathos). Based on my experience with similar issues (Ethos), I suggest we..."

READING THE ROOM

Exceptional influencers tune into subtle cues:

- Body language (crossed arms, nodding, eye contact)
- Shifting energy levels or disengagement
- Tension, enthusiasm, or resistance



Pro tip:

When you sense resistance, pivot to a question: "What would make this work better for your team?"

BUILDING CREDIBILITY WITHOUT AUTHORITY

You don't need a title to build trust:

- Share relevant experience or credentials naturally
- Reference respected sources or data
- Show humility: "I don't have all the answers, but..."
- Most importantly—follow through consistently



Practice Scenarios

Challenge: "This isn't our priority right now." Response: "I completely understand that priorities are tight. If we could demonstrate a 15% efficiency gain in two weeks with minimal disruption, would that be worth exploring?"

Proven Techniques to Try

- Use the "Yes, and..." approach to acknowledge and expand
- Employ strategic silence to add weight to key points
- Tailor messages for each stakeholder's mindset and needs



Key Takeaways

- Structure your communication using logic, emotion, and credibility
- Read group energy and adjust in real time
- Build trust consistently—even without formal authority



In today's collaborative workplaces, the ability to influence without authority is one of the most powerful leadership skills you can develop. Start practicing these techniques in low-stakes conversations today—and watch your impact grow.



Jojo Wang
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Bridging Gaps: BALANCING TEAM AND LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Middle managers operate in one of the most complex spaces in any organization: between top leadership and frontline teams. They're expected to deliver on strategic goals while ensuring their teams remain motivated, aligned, and supported. Often, this dual responsibility leads to tension, overload, or a sense of being "stuck in the middle." But what if middle managers could see themselves not as stuck but as strategic translators?

Here's a look at what each side typically expects and how middle managers can bridge the gap:

LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

- Translate strategy into execution
- Drive productivity and results
- Adapt quickly to changing business needs
- Push performance and accountability
- Align with organizational direction and vision



TEAM EXPECTATIONS

- Provide psychological safety and empathy
- Advocate for realistic goals and workloads
- Offer mentorship and growth opportunities
- Communicate transparently and frequently
- Shield them from unnecessary pressure

To succeed, middle managers must learn to move fluidly between these two worlds. This means **strategically negotiating with leadership while emotionally supporting their teams**. It's about communicating the "why" behind leadership decisions in a way that motivates, not demoralizes. And it's about advocating upward—translating team needs into data-backed insights leadership can act on.

The most impactful middle managers don't just manage, they interpret, balance, and lead with context. By understanding the tension between performance and people, they become the connective tissue of an organization, turning pressure into purpose.



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COLLABORATION WITHOUT POWER PLAYS:

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL
INFLUENCE DONE RIGHT

A successful cross-functional collaboration is built on a foundation of trust, not control. Authority and power might create compliance in the short term, but they cannot yield the kind of engagement and drive that are fueled by trust, credibility, and respect.

I've observed that collaborations become even more crucial as teams get leaner. That also means our focus should be on the collective goals, working together to reach the peak and win. By bringing different functional teams together, we can achieve so much more! Different expertise and experience bring insights, skills, knowledge, and strength to the team to create success.

Knowledge, commitment, respectful communication, alongside responsible behaviors, are what truly build a happy, collaborative cross-functional influence.



HERE ARE USEFUL TIPS YOU CAN USE TO ENHANCE COLLABORATIONS:

1. HAVE A CLEAR PLAN

Decide on the shared objectives and results that the team wants. Once decided, you can work on the details, such as timeline, tasks, people to be involved, and assigning them to tasks.

2. LEAD WITH CURIOSITY

When you come from a place of curiosity, you open doors for discussions, allow ideas to flow, listen with empathy to understand the other party's challenges, and are open to negotiate.

3. RECOGNIZE CONTRIBUTIONS

Give credit where it is due, recognize team members' contributions and achievements, and celebrate the overall team's success.



HERE'S WHAT YOU WANT TO AVOID:

1. NOT BEING TRANSPARENT

Lack of information on progress or data needed for the project will hinder delivery and success. Ensure you have a clear dashboard to show progress and relevant data. Use a shared cloud system to ensure everyone in the team has access to the information that helps them carry out their tasks.

2. NOT BEING ALIGNED

When team members are not aligned, mistakes can happen. It is important to ensure everyone in the team is aware of any new updates, processes, and procedures involved, announcements, and what information can be shared or kept confidential within the team.

3. MAKING SILO DECISIONS

Decisions made without discussing with the parties involved will create conflict within cross-functional teams. It can be seen as undermining the roles and influence of the other party.



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WHEN TALKING BECOMES DRAINING

In today's digital workplace, do you often find yourself constantly "on" from the endless stream of emails, messages, and calls? This pervasive communication overload isn't just a minor annoyance; it can profoundly affect leaders, sapping mental energy, leading to stress, and even burnout. To navigate this challenge and recalibrate your habits, engaging with thoughtful reflection prompts can provide the clarity needed to regain focus and well-being.

Take a moment to consider these powerful questions to assess your communication patterns:

- Do I feel an incessant need to respond to every message or email instantly, regardless of its urgency or time of day?

This prompt helps uncover over-responsiveness, a common habit that prevents focused work and blurs the lines between professional and personal time, even when immediate replies aren't necessary.

- When was the last time a series of communication exchanges left me feeling profoundly drained, mentally fatigued, or emotionally exhausted?

Reflecting on this reveals the emotional and mental toll of excessive communication, helping you identify specific interactions or channels that contribute most to your energy depletion.

- How frequently do notifications interrupt my deep work or personal moments, and what is the immediate emotional impact of these interruptions?

This question addresses notification burnout, highlighting how constant pings fragment attention, reduce productivity, and often lead to feelings of being overwhelmed or "cringing" at new alerts.

- Am I often context-shifting between tasks due to incoming communications, and how does this affect my overall efficiency and the quality of my work?

This prompt uncovers the impact of constant interruptions and context-shifting on productivity and decision-making, showing how important information can get buried.

- What communication boundaries have I established for myself and others, and how consistently do I uphold them in practice?

This reflection is crucial for assessing your proactive strategies, from choosing appropriate channels to booking "detox days," in managing communication demands and protecting your time and energy.

Pick one of these reflections that resonates most deeply and commit to acting on it this week. Remember, creating clear and consistent boundaries in your communication isn't merely a form of self-care; it is, in fact, a crucial and strategic element of effective leadership in our hyper-connected world.



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