

E6.4 #390 Assess Your Communication Style to Elevate Your Success

Bernadette [00:00:00]:

Are you ready to elevate your leadership style and at the same time enhance your overall team's performance? Great leaders know that effective communication is the cornerstone of success, and yet many of them really don't have a clear understanding or self awareness of the impact their communication has on those around them, whether it has to do with engagement, connection, or even influence, and how their communication is going to impact their opportunities as they move forward and up. So today I really want to talk about how you can assess your own communication style and approach and also identify those areas that you might want to be focused on so you don't miss opportunities as a result of how you're connecting and how you're relating and how you're communicating with others. And I'm also going to share with you, stick around a gift of how you can start that assessment today and at the same time share it with team members. So then you all, as a collective, can be working on ramping up your effectiveness as a powerhouse communicator. All right, so we're going to break down in today's discussion how to uncover your strengths and areas for improvement, as well as steps to take to really define an actionable plan that you could be working on immediately to make those shifts and those changes. And lastly, what you could do to really support your team in also making sure that they're focused and intentional about how they are connecting and engaging and influencing those around them. Because whether you're a seasoned leader or you're just starting out on your journey, understanding how you can communicate can make and will make actually a significant difference in your leadership effectiveness. So stay with us.

Bernadette [00:01:59]:

Let's dissect communication more. So assessing your own communication style and how it is the biggest factor to your overall corporate success. So there are a lot of benefits to being an effective communication, a powerhouse communicator, as well as there's some negatives, and I really want us to highlight and discuss both of those. So then you could see whether or not, and really understand whether or not how you're communicating with others, how you're connecting, how you're influencing, how you're engaging, how you're relating is helping you or hurting you. And then we'll walk through exactly what you could be doing to assess where you stand today. So then you could create benchmarks and baselines for making shifts and becoming that powerhouse communicator in the future. So

let's first talk about the benefits. You probably can think of them right off the top of your head, though many of us really don't sit around and say, all right, what are those benefits? If I were to go into this meeting, if I were to go into this one on one, if I were to go into, you know, a town hall, what are those benefits to ensuring that I am getting clear and I'm getting effective in how I'm communicating and connecting with those around me.

Bernadette [00:03:23]:

But if you could keep these things in mind, then maybe it'll have you making small changes and shifts your approach so you can ensure that what it is you're setting out to do or what it is you're setting out to communicate, in this case, written or verbal or even body language, is going to land effectively and get you the result that you're looking for. All right, so put your benefits hat on and let's think about what are those things that make for powerful and powerhouse communication? So communication really enhances clarity and understanding that your team members or those around you have. If you've ever sat there and really, you know, kind of walked out of a meeting or a conversation and been like, I really don't know what we just talked about, what was accomplished. I don't understand that feedback that I was just given. I'm not sure what decisions were made that'll come down to your own and others communication style and communication approach. And so one huge benefit of you really focusing on becoming a powerhouse communicator is that enhanced clarity and understanding, and that will ensure that your own people, let alone others, aren't left confused, aren't left not kind of supporting what it is that you want them to be doing and not feeling frustrated and stressed out and discouraged in the role. All right, so enhance clarity and understanding. The other one, obviously, is communication has 150%, if there's such a thing, impact on relationships, whether or not you're going to relate to someone or not, whether or not someone's going to lean into what it is that you have to say or they're going to kind of withdraw.

Bernadette [00:05:20]:

So focusing on your communication style and approach and effectiveness will really ensure that you are building the type of relationships, having that collaboration in those relationships you need in order to achieve the goal that you have for yourself. And then, of course, the more effective you could be as a communicator, the increased engagement you're going to get from your employees. So if you've ever had an employee, a team member, really not showing up, not delivering on what it is that you need them to be doing if they're coming, just coming into the workplace, disgruntled or frustrated or stressed and

conveying that in their own communication and their own body language and behavior. Well, before you look at them, you might have to look at yourself and say, is this as a result of how I'm communicating with them? How I'm connecting and relating to them? Or is this about them? But I want you focused on yourself because a benefit, a huge benefit beyond clarity and understanding and beyond really having those relationships, is to ensure that your employees are fully engaged so they get done what they need to get done, okay? And then of course, better decision making, you know, is a result and a benefit of communication, as well as resolving conflict and dealing with difficult conversations. Innovation, creativity, brainstorming, masterminding, is all a benefit of really clear and strong and powerful communications, as well as getting the organization aligned to what it is that is being tasked or accomplished or worked on, and as well as ensuring that you are focused on satisfying your customers. And your customers could be internal or external, and those could also include vendors, partners, whatnot. So it increases customer satisfaction while really tightening the organizational alignment to what it is that needs to get done. And then of course, communication is pivotal, pivotal to change management.

Bernadette [00:07:42]:

If so, if your company is going through a merger acquisition, if your company is going through a transformational change of any kind, if your company is going through, you know, a team, restructuring communication, again, is the cornerstone of ensuring that those things come out with the goal and the outcome that you're looking for. Now, of course, there's many other benefits, but I wanted to highlight them because too often we just show up at work. We all of a sudden get tunnel visioned into what it is that we need to get done on our long laundry list of to dos. And we don't consider intentionally, consciously, how it is that we are showing up and communicating, whether that is verbally, in writing, body language, tone and whatnot. So consider and really think about the benefits that you working on your communication style and approach could have on those around you, on the business, but also on yourself. Now, lastly, what I want to mention too is the greatest benefit. The ones that oftentimes my clients are more focused on when it comes to really wanting to uplevel their communication, is the opportunities that it provides them for advancement and for new projects and new initiatives and exposure and recognition. And so if that's your motivation, if that's your aspiration for really focusing and working on elevating your communication style, so be it.

Bernadette [00:09:26]:

But one of the big areas and benefits of effective communication is the fact that you'll be seen as competent and confident competent and confident, and therefore set yourself apart from those around you when it comes to opportunities that might be coming down the pipeline. So, a critical conversation that we're having and an opportunity for you to take some time for yourself and even with team members, but for yourself to really assess where you stand today as far as some key communication skills that you really need to master in order to become that powerhouse leader you're meant to be. Now, of course, we can't go without highlighting the negatives, and it's even more critical to focus here as well, because again, even many of my clients, they really aren't self aware or conscious of just how their communication, how their words, how their body language, how their approach is impacting those around them. Because one, they don't ask and therefore they don't get that feedback in regards to their own behavior and their own experience that they're creating or impact they're creating for others around them. But it's imperative that you do, because by not knowing, you don't want to all of a sudden be kind of surprised and taken aback when you don't get that opportunity, when you aren't offered that promotion, when you are overlooked time and time again, or in my situation many years ago, about 16 years ago now, is that my communication was so damaged and so ineffective that it, that it ended my career, my corporate career. So you really want to ensure that you're also paying attention to how a negative experience by one's communication can really impact those around you. So one, poor communication breaks down. Everything we just talked about is benefits, but initially breaks down one's really clarity and understanding of what it is that you need from them and creating misunderstanding or creating confusion or uncertainty or just kind of a sense of doubt and insecurity as a result of poor communication can be really disruptive to a team member, but the entire team, the business and yourself.

Bernadette [00:12:20]:

So really think about how you can improve in ensuring that your communications are clear, concise, understood and supported so you don't fall into the trap of creating negative impact, of misunderstanding and confusion. Because what that will lead to ultimately will lead to is a severe lack of morale or motivation or desire to not only do their job, but also to support you in getting your goals and objectives taken care of. And so poor communication can really break down a team talk about creating a. A toxic. The next one would be mistrusting. So it really kind of breaks down trust and credibility of yourself, but also of what is and needing to be done. And so you. So again, these are things that you really need to be focused on and understand that the words that you're choosing to use, the way that

you use those words, the presentation, you know, of your body, your tone, your eyes, your features all play a part in whether or not, again, someone leans in or they withdraw.

Bernadette [00:13:46]:

And you do not want people withdrawing if you're looking to really be that powerhouse leader, but also to really accomplish your goals and objectives. So some other negative impacts, obviously poor communication leads to lack of or decreased productivity, effectiveness, efficiency. It will definitely elevate conflict if, especially going back to misunderstandings and confusion. If people walk away and they aren't really clear, they misunderstood or they're, and they're confused, they don't agree, that's going to create some chaos, that's going to create some conflict, say, when they come back and they don't deliver on what it is that you thought you clearly conveyed to them. Well, again, the immediate reaction of a manager would be blame that person, blame that person. As opposed to asking them and yourself, was I clear? Was I concise? Was I providing enough detail for them to understand what it was that I was expecting of them? All right. And of course, you know, looking at the benefits and flipping them on their head, breakdown of innovation, breakdown of creativity. When you do have lower morale, lower productivity, lower effectiveness, lower employee satisfaction, lower sense of belonging and recognition, you're definitely going to increase that turnover.

Bernadette [00:15:18]:

You're going to increase those disgruntled employees who then decide that it's the, it's not worth the stress and the frustration that they're feeling and experiencing. Obviously, again, flipping things on its head, poor decision making. So all of a sudden, if you aren't a really good communicator, the collaboration on any decisions that need to be made can all of a sudden create risk to whatever it is that needs to be worked on. So definitely, you know, a breakdown and good decision making, prioritization, delegation, accountability. And lastly, it will, you know, also do some severe damage or could do some severe damage to the reputation, the branding of not only yourself, but the team, the business unit and or the overall business as a whole. If, if leaders could understand that their behavior, their words, their actions, their attitudes aren't isolated to just the four walls of their business that they work in, that it, you know, that, that all of that is also being represented as the business, as the company, as the logo of the company, then if they could really understand that, then you might also see some changes within an organization when there is a poor communicator leader that is creating some of the drama, the dysfunction, the chaos, the

conflict, the confusion, the misunderstanding, so forth and so on. So the bottom line would be the overall reputation of an organization, let alone all those other negative impacts. So too much to risk when it comes to not focusing on your communication style and approach.

Bernadette [00:17:32]:

And yet a solution to it is so simple and so easy and can literally take you five minutes to get an understanding of and then a little bit more time to put together a plan for yourself. This leads us to how can you get a really good handle? Create a baseline for where you are in your own communication style or approach. And it's real simple. It's an assessment. Now, there are those assessments like a 360 that you can go and seek feedback from other people, but there's also very simple self assessments that you can do for yourself to really kind of one, one on one yourself with yourself or yourself with like a coach to where you can see how you measure yourself, how you assess yourself when it comes to any particular type of quality or characteristic or trait or skill that you have and that you want to focus on. And in this case, we're talking about communication. And so I use self assessments with my clients so they can, on a regular basis or, you know, an infrequent basis, get in, handle, and really become self aware and conscious of just how they're showing up and engaging and relating and connecting with others around them. And so in this case, when it comes to communication, the communication assessment, I want to provide you for you to be able to take advantage of for yourself and even with your teams, will really kind of look at eight of the most important traits and qualities that I have found when it comes to the overall skill of communication, that if you could get a handle on understanding where you are, and I look at it from novice, you haven't really worked on it, you haven't really focused on it.

Bernadette [00:19:40]:

You know, you feel a little bit kind of on the fence about your strength in that particular quality or trait or skill to all the way to master to where you're extremely effective. You've even received feedback that you're effective in this area. That's a beautiful thing. So the eight areas that the assessment would walk you through would be how you adapt in communicating with others, and then it looks at and how you assess yourself when it comes to giving constructive feedback and coaching. The next one would be about empowering questions, how, you know, how effective are you in asking empowering questions. And active listening would be the fourth one. And then, of course, there's a lot of considerations you should make for yourself when it comes to how well planned out and

prepared are you when it comes to critical communications. There's one thing about planning and preparing in an ad hoc hallway water cooler type of conversation, but then there's a whole different level and expectation when it comes to something that should be planned out, thought out, prepared and practiced and so forth and so on.

Bernadette [00:21:05]:

So it looks at that. It looks at how you would assess yourself when it comes to dealing with conflict. And at the same time, how effective are you when it comes to communicating your vision, your goals, the expectations that you have and how others might receive it? Do they understand it? Is it clear? Is it understood? Is it supported? And then lastly, it looks at how well aligned you are with your team and how well you know them and what they need from you as a leader, let alone as a powerhouse communicator. So looking at those eight things, assessing yourself as to whether or not you're on the novice side or the master side, really, again, provides you that baseline to say, okay, in the area of empowering questions, I'm really not effective. I'm not really strong in asking a lot of questions. If you're anything like me, years ago, I just made statements all the time and I would just out what it was that I needed, what it was that I wanted, so forth and so on, without really engaging and asking very powerful questions. And so maybe you say to yourself, okay, I'm a two or three. Well, what that allows you to do is no criticism or judgment at all.

Bernadette [00:22:33]:

It allows you to say, all right, well, that's not really where I want to be, especially if I do want to elevate throughout the company, throughout my career. I definitely don't want to be a two or three. I want to be more in the five or six and then work my way higher. So where do I, you know, where do I stand and then what do I need to do and what can I be focused on to take that more to the right toward being a master at dealing with, in this case, asking empowering questions so that it's really that simple is, you know, looking at these eight areas, assessing yourself. It's actually assessing yourself from one to five, one being novice, five being a master, and then coming up with a plan as to what you could be doing. And, and also it includes giving you the opportunity to think about, take some time and consider what could be holding you back from being a master in any of these areas and being a master in overall communication. There's, for me at least, you know, through my journey of shedding, as I call it, over the last 16 years. You know, it was certainly history, my backstory.

Bernadette [00:23:51]:

There was a lot from my past that caused me to be the type of communicator and leader that I was for many decades. And so identifying that and really being honest and truthful with myself, I was able to say, okay, so this is where I'm at. It's not where I want to be. And I want so many, you know, other goals to be accomplished in my career, and therefore, I need to do X, Y and Z. So the assessment will have you looking at those eight areas. Assess yourself, identify the three top areas that you want to focus on, identify the actions you're willing to take, and at the same time, what are the barriers to you being successful in making those changes that are needed. And so again, five minutes to take the assessment. A little bit more time to really be considerate as to the next steps and what you're going to do about it.

Bernadette [00:24:49]:

But then you, you'll be ready to, you know, go and take action and make those changes and have others recognize it, even though they may not say anything directly, but recognize it in their relationship back with you. So, again, if they have all. If they've been, you know, kind of leaning back or withdrawing in the past, they might be leaning in. As you make those changes that are necessary, you can download your complimentary powerhouse communication assessment at tiny CC communication assessment. Again, five minutes of your time to take the assessment, maybe another ten or 15 to really lay out kind of the top areas you want to focus on, the actions you're willing to take and really consider the barriers that may get in your way of making the changes and the shifts that you want to make to be that powerhouse communicator. If you should need some further assistance to really lay out your plan and understand what that assessment telling you, and therefore, how can you or what actions you can take in response to it. Then don't hesitate to schedule some complimentary time with me. Go to coachmebernadette.com discovery call, and I'd be honored to spend 30 minutes with you, look over your assessment, discuss those barriers, those top three focus areas, as well as the actions you're willing to take.

Bernadette [00:26:22]:

Or I can help you define what those should be in order for you to then accomplish the goals that you have for yourself. All right, I thank you so much, and I feel so honored to have you join me for an episode of shedding the corporate bitch, and I'll look forward to you for the next one. Take care. Bye.