

# Communicating Up

“When I meet with my manager to provide an update or discuss a project, I never feel like we’re really connecting. I always leave those meetings wishing I were better prepared so that we could accomplish more together. It really becomes a major problem when I need some help problem solving or I have to deliver bad news.”

## Impact

**Managers and team leaders will be able to:**

**Understand** the importance of framing all communication with their manager in terms of his/her self-interest.

**Enter** meetings with their manager armed with a well-thought-out and clearly stated objective.

**Clearly** link their objective with facts that support their plans and goals.

**Work** with their manager to uncover any questions or reservations he/she may have concerning their message.

**Move** conversations toward agreement with questions that focus on benefits to be gained when the objective is reached.

**Clearly** and concisely restate the decision that result from *Communicating Up* and insure that those decisions are mutually understood.

To best carry out your management or supervisory responsibilities, you work hard to position and frame your communication whenever you meet with members of your team. By taking the time to plan and by thinking about the best approach for each team member, you ensure that your message will get through and drive the performance you’re after. Meeting with your manager requires similar preparation as well as the appropriate application of your communication skills.

Communicating up is not difficult, but it does demand that you temporarily put yourself in your manager’s place to understand his/her specific style and work challenges. Managers live with the same time pressures you do, so any time you spend with them must be focused on giving them the information they need to support problem-solving and decision-making for you and for the rest of your group or company.

Our experience has proven that managers who prepare properly in advance leave meetings with their managers with their goals accomplished. In addition, their managers are in tune with what’s really happening in the organization, and any decisions reached are mutually understood and accepted.

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For over 20 years, Vital Learning’s Supervision Series has helped thousands of organizations equip managers with the tools needed to succeed with their teams and with their own managers. We know that managers who don’t have the skills required to lead or contribute to the leadership of others will have a negative impact well beyond their work teams. In fact, their inability to effectively communicate can limit the success of an entire organization.

The ability of first-line managers to effectively communicate up the line affects team-member retention, overall productivity and even profitability. *The manager must properly represent the team’s efforts and challenges so that issues and problems can be addressed before it’s too late for corrective action.* An important part of that communication is mutual agreement on

what needs to be done, why it’s important, and when it will be accomplished. That fundamental agreement is what **Communicating Up** helps managers to achieve.

**Communicating Up (CU)** provides the tools necessary to align the individual with communication requirements of his or her manager. With its focus on preparation and clear commitments, CU can help even experienced managers build a more effective process for communicating and collaborating within the organizational hierarchy.

## Program Description

**Communicating Up** helps managers learn the process required for informative and productive dialogs that will be valued by more senior managers. Throughout the workshop, they will review video presentations and case studies, participate in group discussions, practice new skills, and receive immediate feedback. Managers leave with implementations tools, troubleshooting guides and additional resources to help them apply the skills they have learned on the job. The 4-5 hour workshop is designed for 6-18 participants and includes the following:

- Understanding Your Manager's Communication Style
- Delivering Bad News
- Communicating Your Group's Accomplishments
- Getting Your Manager's Time and Attention

## Course Materials

### **Facilitator Guide**

- Complete instructions on how to conduct the workshop.
- Explanatory text for the trainer, sample trainer narrative, transcripts of video segments and facilitation notes.
- Facilitator Resource CD-Rom containing PowerPoint presentation, additional resources, and reproducible pages from the facilitator guide as well as entire participant workbook.

### **Participant Workbook**

- Exercises, forms, skill practice aids, and a video synopsis.
- Job Aids section with tools and resources for applying the skills learned in the workshop.
- Memory Jogger Card providing a handy reminder of the workshop's skill points.

### **Video**

- Introduction followed by a scenario displaying positive use of the three skill points discussed in the program.
- Video segments focusing on modeling positive behaviors for skill practices.
- Scenarios in both office and industrial settings.

*\* Available in Classroom, Web-based, and Blended Solutions.*