

Communicators

There is no doubt that technical skills are not enough to succeed as an executive in a company or in business in general; Knowing how to communicate is key when it comes to climbing the ladder, inspiring a team, attracting investors or selling yourself to potential customers.

The way in which we communicate determines to a large extent our career and our commercial relationships, and more and more companies that integrate the capability of effective communication between the skills required for their workforce. According to Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Group, the ability to communicate well is the most important that an entrepreneur or leader can have. "Communication makes the world turn round. It makes human connections easier and allows us to learn, grow and progress. It is not just about talking or reading, but about understanding what is said and, in some cases, what is unsaid," he says. Another billionaire who considers that communication is essential is the American investor and businessman Warren Buffet; once when addressing a graduate student who was obtaining his MBA at Stanford, he advised him: "At your age, the best way to improve yourself is to learn to communicate better. Your results in life will be extended if you can communicate

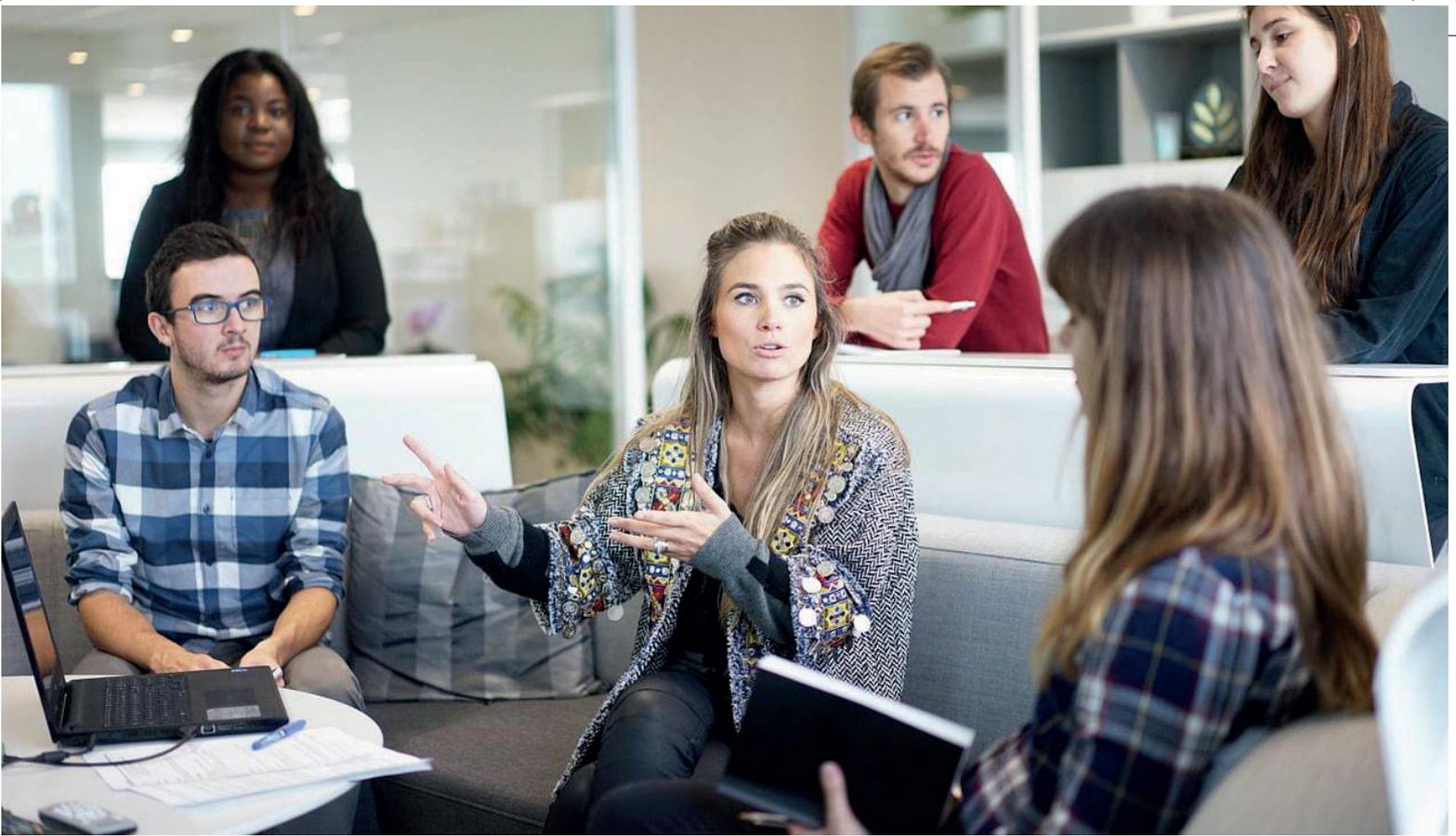
them better. The only diploma that I hang in my office is the communications diploma I received from Dale Carnegie in 1952." And he continued: "without good communication skills you will not be able to convince people to follow you even if you see the mountain and they do not." ⁽¹⁾

Communicating well is an art, and the good news is that it can be learned. What does this capacity consist of? What does it mean to be a good communicator and why is it so important? According to Rafael Beltrán, business psychologist and founder of Coaching Psychology, "when working on the ability to communicate, we are working on different but integrated capabilities: leadership, resistance, motivation, training, synergy, performance". And working on this reaches everyone. As he says, communication is a personal challenge, since the fear of communicating emotions and thoughts to another person is common to all of us and is something that we must overcome. "We all want to express

ourselves and be heard, that is the main motivation in the short term to generate communication. In the long term, on the other hand, the source of sustainable motivation is the expectation of personal improvement". For the psychologist, when we communicate we hope to build something more than impact, we want to be effective and empathetic. "Our communication is influenced by empathy and synergy, which is why it is important to develop good and solid communication skills to perform well."

Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, argues that authentic communication makes us grow and scale professionally, and to communicate authentically must be based on the idea that there is no truth, everything is subjective. She recommends that instead of declaring their opinions as facts, leaders should share their beliefs, and the facts that support them, and encourage the team to do the same, as a tool to encourage a better exchange of information. That way, it

(1) <http://patrickoshag.tumblr.com/post/110175028714/buffett-wisdom-you-may-not-have-heard-before>



enables others to communicate in an authentic way too.

Taking Responsibility

According to Sandberg, authentic communicators take responsibility for their actions; and that empowerment is an essential component in all stages of a career, whether you are an executive in a company or an entrepreneur raising funds for your project. Taking responsibility implies using the active voice: "I did not finish the project" versus "the project was not finished"; "I arrived late because I did not leave on time and there was a lot of traffic", instead of "I arrived late because there was a lot of traffic". In other words, whoever takes responsibility become a player and not a victim. ⁽²⁾

In his book "Performance Psychology", Beltrán links that empowerment with leadership. Good leaders face the truth and play a special role in communication. "Their grace and elegance define their power. They do not hide, they talk to everyone and

"Your ability to communicate with others will represent 85 percent of the success in your business and in your life."

Brian Tracy

validate the rationality of the truth," he explains. Good leaders speak with determination and conviction, they do not give explanations or leave doubts about the message; they communicate not only with words but with the conviction that supports them." Bearing the cost of the truth itself and communicating it is liberating, and builds a healthy personality in touch with reality."

As Beltrán points out, leading is a communication initiative. It can be towards a collaborator, a superior, a peer or a client. A leader is a person with the courage to communicate everything, someone who shows the benefits of a change and the failures of the old paradigms, while providing a new and integrated model.

Building the Bond

Communicating also has to do with providing a space for dialogue: "the best communication is not the one that always refers to certainty; doubt, the error and the possibility of making mistakes are also constructive ". For Beltrán, it is essential to generate a system where the fundamental expectation is dialogue, ideas and visions, agreements and consensus. With dialogue you lose (time, energy, control, illusion that the other thinks the same) and you win. "Communicating is creating a space where everyone can express themselves, where the flow of truth from opinions, suggestions, criticism and points of view is received with respect, courage and genuine appreciation," he says. "Human dialogue tolerates contradiction

(2) <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/video/the-importance-of-authentic-communication/>



because the other feels understood and not judged; brings us the new from others who express their ideas”

In order to develop leadership and communication skills, the ideal plan is to coordinate daily or weekly team meetings without a defined agenda. Then the leader can see how all the variables become constants. “The goal is not to learn how to talk, but how to listen, to make others talk or to model the group’s dialogue”. In this sense, asking is crucial. According to Beltrán, “humans need to communicate, express and manifest themselves, talk about themselves, and the questions allow them to do that. When someone is listened to, he develops confidence and satisfies the need of belonging. “When you ask, you give the other the space to share his opinion and include his point of view. If we only affirm, dialogue is unilateral and there is no room for opinions.

Matt Abrahams, lecturer in organizational behaviour and professor at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University, talks about communication in terms of “strategic” communication: that which points to a very specific goal for interaction. The goal of the conversation or interaction

allows preparation and communication to be narrowly focused towards those ends and to be more effective in the long term. (3) However, this is not enough; As Abrahams explains, the executives are the ones who speak face to face with their audiences or

“The art of communication is the language of leadership.”

James Humes

teams, who show genuine interest and vulnerability, who earn the right to lead. In Beltrán’s words, communication is effective when it generates synergy, and the conversational language is fundamental for this purpose. “The bond is materialized in how natural a conversation is - the psychologist describes - and in the harmony of its silences. Authentic listening captures through the mode of silence, because it considers important what the other has to say”. In order to capture the other’s need, and how valuable it is for us to join in, we must be willing to keep silent, listen and ask questions. Not only words communicate, silence also does it, the gaze, the tone, the proximity or the distance, etc. Good communication also uses these fac-

tors, and above all, it uses the silence that is necessary for listening.

As Churchill said: “Courage is what it takes to get up and talk, but it is also what is required to sit down and listen; I have often had to eat my words and have discovered that they were a balanced diet.”

According to Beltrán, the link is not important in communication but the link “is” communication, it carries and brings information, because both verbally and non-verbally we convey what we experience. In that way, communication must be clear and honest (and even any clarification is valid to ensure that the message is well received). Guesses and assumptions are the basis of the lack of dialogue, and they portray the expectation of a symbiotic link.

Sometimes difficulties in communication and understanding are seen as differences, and this could be caused by the inability to speak. Dialogue allows us to understand, respect and even enrich ourselves from the point of view of the other. Conversation should exhaust the topic but not the speakers. If an idea does not generate dialogue, then it has something false and unproductive in it. “The charisma is dialogical,” Beltrán explains, “it leaves the other loaded with dialogue, it involves him, gives him something, makes him feel part of something, he feels heard; It is an opening act.” ▽

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(3) <https://thesalesblog.com/2016/05/06/matt-abrahams-strategic-communication-presentations-sales-episode-56/>