



# Communication with the Customer

We've heard it time and time again, "communication is key". And there is so much truth to that phrase, no matter what industry you're in. If you want to establish a relationship with a customer, potential client, fellow employee, boss, friend, or family member, you have to be able to communicate effectively. Partnership is an activity. If you're not communicating, you're not partnering.

Project manager Jim Nelson shares with us that even though his teams work across multiple towns and states, he makes sure to get everyone together on a call at least once a week. He also has bi-weekly calls with two immediate groups – an operations team and a technology team. "Once a month I reach out to the vice presidents of companies we're working with or other members of the executive team. I do this just to make sure they are getting good feedback from their employees and customers and that they are happy."

***"If you're not communicating you're not partnering."***



Many times, there are barriers that need to be broken down in order to bridge the gap to successful communication. A good place to start is with transparency. There are certain levels of communication that are proprietary, but you must be transparent about the things that aren't. Just as much as you need to be open about the successes of the project, you also need to be open with the challenges you may be facing. By including others in your plans to overcome challenges, you can allow the relationship to grow.

***"Respond, don't react."***

If you have a decent relationship initiated, you are able to build a proactive partnership. You and the partner are both working towards the mutual success of a project and it is crucial to have challenges resolved ahead of time. This is done by creating an emergency response plan. In the case that a challenge does arise, we are able to respond with a clarification and follow a plan, instead of reacting out of shock.

When we think of communication, we typically think of speech or some type of conversational dialogue, but many overlook the importance of listening. Listening is just as important, if not more so than speaking.

# ***“We have two ears and one mouth.”***

Our project manager, Jim, makes a good point – “We have two ears and one mouth. Could that mean we should be listening twice as much as we are speaking?” Sometimes people talk just because they like to speak, while others talk because they have something important to say. It is an important skill to be able to distinguish the difference between the two. Regardless, it is valuable to sit back, listen, and learn when it comes to communication. This can greatly enhance the relationship and lead to a better form of understanding and communication.



Overall, it is important to understand the significance of communicating with those you manage and work for. Without proper communication, relationships cannot be formed, therefore hindering long-term success. There is a difference between understanding what someone actually means and what they are simply saying. One must establish a relationship, break down the barriers, respond instead of reacting, and be sure to listen twice as much as they speak in order to communicate successfully.



**Establish Relationships**



**Break Barriers**



**Respond, Don't React**



**Listen Twice as Much**