

Preface

While writing this book, I had occasion to recall many of the people I've dealt with during my career. Those who have made the most positive impression on me, and who've had the most positive influence on others as well, all share in common one quality. They're excellent communicators.

At times, I considered my interactions with others. Whether working with customers or team members, reporting to a manager or serving as one, I've enjoyed better results when I applied the skills presented in this book. It's been a reminder of the old saying, "practice what you preach."

I've also reflected on how much communications have changed. I've seen the introduction of cell phones, pagers, voice mail, e-mail, fax, video conferencing, and Internet chat rooms. Communicating has never been faster or easier. With all of these high-tech devices, we can now communicate with just about anyone, anywhere, at any time. But are we communicating any better?

Plenty of evidence suggests that often we're not. Many work groups are riddled with conflict, frequently a consequence of poor communication. Misunderstandings occur and misinformation spreads. At work and at home, relationships become strained because of negative communications. And we experience that so-called "failure to communicate." Solutions to these unnecessary problems lie in improving our ability to interact with one another constructively.

Before computerized transmissions, before electronic walkie-talkies, youngsters devised a low-tech device: two tin cans tied together by a string. As rudimentary as it is, this tin-can toy

illustrates the objective of communication: to create a durable connection and keep it intact.

In this book, you'll discover how to do that. You'll learn the essentials of effective communication, refinements for specific situations, and how to build better relationships through proven interpersonal skills. Put it all together and you can be (if you aren't already) an excellent communicator yourself.

Special Features

The idea behind the books in the Briefcase Series is to give you practical information written in a friendly person-to-person style. The chapters are short, deal with tactical issues, and include lots of examples. They also feature numerous boxes designed to give you different types of specific information. Here's a description of the boxes you'll find in this book.



These boxes do just what they say: give you tips and tactics for being smart in your communications as a manager.



These boxes provide warnings for where things could go wrong when you're communicating in various situations.



Here you'll find how-to hints to make your communications more effective.



Every subject has its special jargon and terms. These boxes provide definitions of these concepts.



Want to know how others have done it? Look for these boxes.



Here you'll find specific procedures you can follow for special on-the-job communications situations.



How can you make sure you won't make a mistake when communicating? You can't, but these boxes will give you practical advice on how to minimize the possibility.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to John Woods of CWL Publishing Enterprises for his work in bringing this project to completion and to Bob Magnan at CWL for his editing work. To my husband, Jess, for his endless encouragement and patience. And to my colleagues who model what it means to be an effective communicator—you know who you are.

About the Author

Lani Arredondo is a trainer and conference speaker specializing in communication and management skills.

An honors graduate of the University of California, she enjoyed an award-winning career with IBM, served on the faculty of National University's School of Business and Management, and was a top-rated trainer with a leading international seminar company.

She is the author of two other books from McGraw-Hill: *How to Present Like a Pro* and *The McGraw-Hill 36-Hour Course in Business Presentations*.