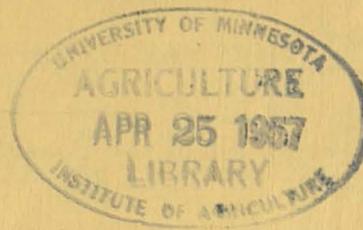


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Number 4



## Check up on Your Communications Skill

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



AGRICULTURAL

EXTENSION

SERVICE

2

Whether you are speaking to a group or are visiting with a farmer, homemaker, businessman or other visitor to your office, there are certain points you need to always remember. Test yourself carefully, honestly, on the two following sections. Be your own judge, but if you have too many checks against you, you'd better do some thinking about your communications and your personal relationships.

Do You---

- Make sure everybody understands questions brought up or discussed?
- Listen and judge carefully so you don't jump to hasty conclusions without hearing the story?
- Allow others to express themselves?
- Double check ideas to see if they are clear to the other person?
- Start where people are in knowledge or at values they accept and not at the point you're at?
- Analyze your situation carefully before communicating?
- Never assume technical knowledge on the part of the listener. The late Raymond Clapper once said, "Never underestimate a person's intelligence or overestimate his knowledge."
- Make sure not to set up blocks to communications by inferring ignorance or making the person feel that he naturally would know this if he were intelligent.
- Give enough time to the person involved to get out his questions or problems.
- Keep persons in tune with each other if you are involved in meetings.
- Provide right setting for a conference or visit so that a visitor feels at home.
- Stick to the point and not jump back and forth from one thing to another leaving your listener bewildered as to what you're talking about.
- Consider your audience and what they want and need and who they are.

## COMMUNICATION FAILURES---

Here are some of the reasons communications fail. Do you allow these communication blocks to develop in your relationships?

- Fail to say things clearly?
- Talk while others are not listening or are tuning in late?
- Get ahead of other's understanding?
- Refuse to adjust to a closed mind?
- Perform an unbelievable role?
- Always feel you're satisfactorily understood?
- Fail to see other's viewpoint and develop your presentation accordingly?
- Disregard beliefs, customs, prejudices, habits of the people with whom you work?
- Forget that time, energy are needed to absorb the material you present?
- Forget that prejudice often makes fiction, fact in a person's mind and consider this in your communications approach?
- Fail to realize that 2-way communication is imperfect and needs to be constantly checked?
- Fail to recognize that communications must be continuous?
- Lack the desire and enthusiasm to put across a message?
- Fail to organize your material systematically?
- Fail to use key people in telling your story?
- Fail to give the complete story, but not in too much detail?
- Let your own prejudices enter in your communications?