

## **Dictionary Obstructs Successful Business Practice**

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Chances are you learned as a child that to communicate means *to convey information or to transfer knowledge*. A dictionary will confirm this definition. Unfortunately, in this case, your dictionary falls short of a successful business practice.

A dictionary definition of communication leads you to focus on information—designing your message so receivers understand your precise meaning. This is good practice if you mean to relay a factual message. For example, facts are important in conveying the precise steps required to process a medical claim.

Most business communication, however, is not merely about facts; it's also about connection. Effective business communication can be defined as *making a logical and personal connection* so the receiver will support your idea, proposal, or recommendation. I heard Jim Cederna, Former CEO of Calgon Carbon Corporation, put it succinctly: “Communication is a contact sport.”

Good communicators certainly get their facts straight. They also spend energy on uncovering the priorities of their receivers. These communicators want to know what matters to their readers and audience members, so they can make a connection between their own proposals and the receivers' goals. Good communicators make contact through good questions and good listening skills.

By all means, convey information, but reach beyond information—to connect and to persuade. When it comes to communication, stretch beyond your dictionary. In this case, it's limiting your success.

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