

This Is Unknowingly Sabotaging Your Career; Here's How To Fix It

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Careers

I cover personal transformation and its impact on career growth.



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As a professional writer, I believe in the power of words to help us communicate and connect better. But far too often, I see others making choices that unknowingly sabotage their efforts, negatively impacting their careers.

Effective communication means you connect with your audience and that they receive your intended message, whether spoken (in person, over a Zoom call, or in a video), or written (in a piece of content you share on social media, on your website, or in a message or email).

Words matter, so it makes sense to pay attention to which you use and how you use them. Here are some ways to harness the power of words and improve your communication:

Stop meandering and get to the point

Have you ever starting reading something that went to go on and on, where you struggled to figure out the author's intent? Or maybe you've started watching an eight-minute video only to discover that five minutes in you're still not sure what the poster wanted to say?

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Mark Twain famously said, "If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter" —a reference to how much harder brevity is than length.

Meandering signals that you're unorganized and unsure. Worse, you'll lose your audience's attention—and the opportunity to communicate. When you want to deliver a message, be intentional about it, eliminate extraneous material, and get to the point.

Focus on one takeaway

Another common communication misstep is trying to cover too much at once. A good rule of thumb is that each piece of content should revolve around one central theme. This forces you to get specific about and home in on your message. And that clarity promotes better understanding, making it easier for your audience to understand your perspective,

Switch from negative to positive

As my grandmother used to say, "You'll attract more flies with honey than vinegar." When you use positive language, you're perceived as more likable, supportive, and caring. In contrast, using negative language paints you as critical and confrontational, even when that's not your intent. Positive language lets someone know what you *can* do instead of what you *can't* do.

According to studies, positive statements are more quickly received, and they are also well-received by the audience. In addition, research shows that using positive language is a highly efficient tool for being happier and more productive.

Move from passive to active voice

Imagine if Nike changed its tagline to *It was done*. Not very inspiring, is it? Passive voice is just that: passive. With it, the subject is acted upon by the verb. Something happened to it; there's no forward momentum.

Using the active voice conveys a strong, clear tone, such as Nike's famous tagline, *Just do it*. There is a call to action. Action-oriented language propels us to do something rather than remain idle. Where possible, minimize passive language and use using active voice.

Incorporate evocative language

A friend and I have a running joke that whenever someone asks how we are, we say, "I'm on fire!" The idea behind our unusual reply is that our word choice sets the tone and elicits an emotional response, two things critical for effective communication.

Incorporating evocative language into your repertoire opens you up to a more descriptive, interesting lexicon. Never again will you have to use "nice," "good," or "fine"—the four-letter milquetoasts of the word world. You'll stand out, capture your audience's attention, and ensure that your message will be more memorable.

Craft your story

The finest and most memorable communicators understand the power of story to convey a message. Think about it: would you rather read a list of facts or lose yourself in a narrative tale? Research from Paul Zak confirms this: Stories that are personal and emotionally compelling engage more of the brain, and thus are better remembered than simply stating a set of facts.

Even more fascinating, Princeton neuroscientist Uri Hasson found that the brains of storytellers and story listeners can synchronize. As Kinda Hall, author of *Stories That Stick*, says: "Stories don't just make us like each other; they make us *like* each other. They make us similar." Sharing our stories help others know, like, and trust us.

If you're looking for a way to communicate and connect better, craft a story. Because once you have your story, it changes everything, including how others perceive, pay, and promote you.



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I'm a social media ghostwriter who helps leaders craft their stories to communicate and connect better. As a former branding consultant, my role is to make it easier for my clients to share their unique talents and insights on a consistent basis, magnifying both their reach and impact. Throughout my career, I've attracted people eager to tell their tales of transformation. I've been a professional storyteller who helped my clients share their stories in a clear and engaging manner, and thus better connect with their intended audiences. Or, as my tagline long said, "People tell me things; I write their stories." I'm also a frequent speaker, and co-author with Bruce Kasanoff of "I Am: Escape Distractions, Unlock Your Imagination & Unleash Your Potential."