

The Power of Unconscious Communication

Dan Mariani and
Natalie Sarlo-McGarvey

Consider all the communication you are aware of surrounding you on a typical day—sights, sounds and tastes, as well as input from your other senses. Now multiply that by 1,000. Still, that's just scratching the surface of the amount of communication received by your unconscious mind.

Have you ever been driving along, thinking about some situation, issue or upcoming event and, when you stop at a red light, you are unable to remember the last few minutes of the drive? Your unconscious mind was looking after you by telling you to put your foot on the brake when the car in front slowed or by keeping you in your lane of traffic.

The human brain is amazing. Did you know it receives over two million bits of information per second? The brain then employs filters in order to handle this vast amount of stimuli. These filters distort some information, deletes some and generalizes other bits of information. If you were to talk to three people who witnessed an event, you would get three different stories of what had happened. While each of these people may be telling the truth as he/she

perceives it, each of their brains filtered the information differently.

You're conscious of approximately seven chunks of information

Of all the information you receive at the unconscious level, your conscious mind is able to retain about seven chunks of it, plus or minus two. That is, you are able to actively think about seven pieces of information at one time. That's not to say you do not have other information available to you; it simply remains at the unconscious level. You continually move chunks of information back and forth between your conscious and unconscious minds.

For example, if you were to think about the pressure on your big toe inside your right shoe, it would suddenly become part of your conscious awareness. You would know if it were cramped, sweaty or relaxed. That feeling was always there. You simply replaced one piece of conscious information with this one from your unconscious mind.

Imagine how much communication must be happening outside of

Imagine how it would feel to be able to motivate health-care professionals to accept what you are offering.

your conscious awareness every second. Research suggests 95% of communication is at the unconscious level. Now, consider how much more impactful your communication could be if you were to use the fact that most communication happens here. You can easily learn how to communicate with someone's unconscious mind. As you continue to learn this, you will have more influence with others and can encourage them to behave or respond in the way you want them to.

Try is one of the least empowering words in our language

Sometimes, strengthening communication can be as easy as using the right words. For example, one of the least useful, most overused words in our everyday language is "try". If I were to place a pencil on my open hand and ask you to *try* and pick it up, you would either pick it up or not. Try does not apply. How many times have you said to someone, "Let's try to get together?" There really is no strong commitment to this statement and chances are you will not get together with that person.

Try presumes failure. Your unconscious mind interprets any statement associated with the word try as, "This is just dialogue; there is no action that will take place." That is not to say that you should never use the word try. Use it when you do not want the activity to take place, where there is no commitment. Just to demonstrate how insidiously this word has crept into our everyday language, count the number of times a co-worker uses the word try in your next meeting. When you buy into the misuse of the word, start to eliminate it from your language when it really should not be there. Your communication will be stronger at the unconscious level.

Solutions In Mind has taken neuroscience and behavioural science tech-

niques and has applied them to everyday business. We teach our clients how they can influence behaviour in themselves and in others at both the conscious and unconscious levels.

Each individual possesses motivational traits that trigger and maintain their interest at the unconscious level. These may be recognized by certain language patterns unique to individuals. When these traits are recognized, you can adapt your style to match others, thus establishing rapport and influencing behaviour more quickly and consistently. When you speak using the language pattern that matches other people's, it is easier for them to receive your message as it was intended. The more effective you are at identifying and matching language patterns, the more effective you will be at influencing behaviour at the unconscious level.

Awareness of someone's motivations strengthens your communication & more effectively influences behaviour

Let's consider an easy-to-recognize motivational trait you can begin matching today.

There are a number of motivational traits and each has its own corresponding language pattern. In our last article (May 2004), we discussed "toward" and "away from" motivational styles. Two other contrasting motivational traits are "options" versus "procedures" or "process". In the work environment, 40% of the population is options-oriented, 40% is process-oriented and the remaining 20% are a combination of both. You can determine your own motivational style by answering the following question: "Why did you choose your current work situation?" Think about your answer before you read on. There is no right or wrong answer.

Let's review these two motivational traits, beginning with the process style.

Process-oriented people will unconsciously delete the "why" in the question and replace it with "how". They will re-interpret the question and ask themselves, "How did I choose my current job?"

If you answered the question by telling a story or describing an event from start to finish, you are probably a process-oriented person in the work environment.

In general, marketing people and health-care professionals tend to be process-oriented. Process people tend to believe there is a right and wrong way of doing things. In learning, they want to know the "how" more than the "why" of something.

In contrast, options-oriented people look at alternatives and are motivated by choice. They like to break the rules once in a while. Options people do not feel compelled to finish what they start. When they are required to follow a procedure, they prefer to change it and make adjustments as they go along. They like to design and develop, create new ideas. These people do not see a right or a wrong way, just another way. Advertising people tend to be options-oriented.

So, how does knowing this help me?

In the retail business, Ikea® is an excellent example of a process store. There is an established flow to the way you are required to move through the store. You have to pick up your merchandise in a set way and pay in a set method. Process people are delighted with the standardized format. Options people do not like shopping there.

Winners is an example of an options-oriented retail store. It has coats in many different locations, new merchandise coming in each week, and the merchandise is moved regularly. A process person may find it dizzying to shop at Winners.

In day-to-day work situations, how many times have you been aware of

breakdowns in communication between people in cross-functional areas or departments, or between your company and your client? We naturally communicate using our own preferred language patterns. Without having an awareness of the differences or of how to adjust language to match that of others, we increase the potential for miscommunication. We need to consider the language pattern of the person with whom we are communicating.

To motivate your clients, speak using their language pattern

When communicating with process people, it may be beneficial to establish some steps for them to follow. Identify the next steps, who is responsible, and when they should have it done.

To obtain the response that you want when communicating with options people, it is best to provide them with direction and boundaries while allowing them choice within that range.

The bottom line is, regardless of whether you are a process or options person, you can adjust your language pattern to increase your rapport with your clients or customers and enhance your ability to influence their behaviour. **CPM**

For more information about Solutions In Mind, check out our Web site at www.solutionsinmind.com, or contact Natalie Sarlo-McGarvey at (905) 884-2282.

To receive a free Neuroscope analysis of your language patterns, e-mail natalie@solutionsinmind.com.