





# Section the Second

## *Intermediate Failure – Workplace and team-based failure*

We've looked at what you can do yourself to forge forward in the failure stakes. Much of what you've learned already will affect your conduct in the workplace but now we'll look at directly influencing teams and business relationships.

## It's good to talk

You might have noticed that communication with staff/clients/pets or whoever your company is on speaking terms with is becoming more and more noticeable. There are intranets, extranets and adverts everywhere – in fact anything individuals and companies can do to get their message across.

The thing is a lot of the time it still doesn't work very well, which is excellent for our purposes because communication is vital to success. Research by a consultancy called CHA found that 42% of employees think their employer is a poor communicator, while 60% doubt their organisation knows where it is going.

The great irony to all this is that a lack of communication means

employers – as well as the colleagues around you – probably think that their communication skills are top notch and that they are as transparent as...well, something very transparent indeed.

***“To succeed means that you may have to step out of line and march to the sound of your own drummer”***

Keith DeGreen –  
actor

Methods are put in place to transfer vast quantities of data but little is done by individuals to check whether or not they are getting their message across.

Here’s our brief guide to good communication so you can make sure to avoid it:

- 1 – Work out what you want to say, why you want to say it and who is the lucky recipient of your chatter.
- 2 – Work out how you are going to relay your wisdom and what format would best suit your audience. For example, they might suffer from hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia, which, a tad surprisingly, means a fear of long words.
- 3 – Check what method of relay suits the situation best. For the utmost chance of failing we recommend emailing everything – especially bad news. We find that email is especially well received if the person sits on the desk next to you. This is a surprisingly successful technique for the student of failure. A recent survey by recruitment firm Office Angels found being emailed by the person close enough to actually whisper the message was the number one office peeve.

The top five were:

- 1 Emailing as just described.
- 2 Listening to voicemail on speakerphone
- 3 Swearing at your computer
- 4 Playing obnoxious radio music
- 5 People who don’t share tea-making duties

Being able to communicate successfully is not that difficult. All it takes is a little time and effort (of which the good student of failure obviously has neither). If you take the time to know what you are talking about there’s not an awful lot that can go wrong. At the other end of the scale, a lack of communication leaves people unprepared and out of the loop. Veritable music to our ears.

And it reflects in people's general demeanour and willingness to communicate further. Look around and ask yourself what the people around you need and want. Can you tell? If you can't then they aren't communicating properly and neither are you. Well done indeed.

Now up the ante and try getting up in front of a large group of people and trying to get your message across. Scared? Well so you should be. A poll taken recently found 42% of people in the UK feared public speaking more than losing their job, flying and even death.

We suppose at least you can't be called by Death and told of your impending demise in the same way that fateful telephone calls (or emails!) inform you that at 9.30am, Monday morning you are giving a presentation. Perhaps if Death had such an e-communication tool he might encourage a little more respect from people.

***“I honestly think it is better to be a failure at something you love than to be a success at something you hate”***

George Burns –  
comedian

## **SUCCESS WARNING!**

**Invest time in communicating, understanding and planning. Remember humans were designed to communicate face to face. Use technology appropriately when it enhances or aids communication not as the only form.**



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