

Week 3 – Leader's Choice
10-15 minutes
2 handouts
1 audio file
Optional: PowerPoint

Purpose

To identify any bad habits we've developed and to improve language habits that better express our professionalism.

Key Talking Points

- Our customers have confidence in us when we come across as polished professionals in the way we dress, speak, and present ourselves.
- Our communication habits—in person, on a call, or in an email, text, chat, or IM—sometimes get in the way of our polish.
- We can all develop poor communication habits over time. The good news is that, once we are aware, we can make corrections.
- We can work on our words, phrases, and pronunciations to make us look and sound a little more polished to our customers.



Put a Little Polish on It

I am a professional: The work I do each day plays an important role in the lives of our patients and in the experience of my customers. I bring the best of who I am to work every day.

Say: Today, we are going to talk about our **I am a professional** guiding principle and take a look at how we express our professionalism through language.

Do: Hand out the Put a Little Polish on It worksheet or show the (optional) PowerPoint slide.

Ask: Given a choice, which would you prefer: a bruised apple or a polished apple?

Say: The apple with the polish sends the message, "I'm good for you. Pick me."

Say: Professionalism is a lot like that. As the customer, you don't hesitate to interact with a polished professional; you have confidence because of how they dress, speak, and present themselves—in person, on a call, and in writing.

Say: Yet, sometimes our communication habits get in the way of our polish. We may even feel uncomfortable because we aren't perfect, or because English is not our native language. Remember that no one speaks perfectly. We all make slips of the tongue and more importantly, develop poor communication habits over time.

Note: Identify one or two of your poor communication habits to share here.

Say: I know that I have the habit of saying _____ and _____. I am aware of these habits, and I am working on them. Once we are aware of our habits, we can change them.

Say: When we communicate with a customer we know well, our words and style are generally more casual. That's fine because we have a good working relationship and we have already established our credibility with that person. It's different when we are interacting with an internal or external customer we don't know well.

Ask: Why is it important that we come across as polished professionals?

Anticipated Responses: We want them to think well of us; we want to be perceived as competent; we want them to have confidence in us.

Say: Let's listen to a few statements made by our coworkers. Let's assume that each coworker is speaking with an internal or external customer they don't know, or don't know well. As you listen, identify words, phrases, and pronunciations that make our coworker sound a little less polished. Some of these are subtle, so listen carefully.

Do: Hand out the "Put a Little Polish on It" worksheet and play the audio.

Say: We don't hear the whole call, but let's assume that, overall, our coworker created a positive experience for our customer and provided good service.

Say: And yet, what difference could it make if our coworker polished their speech?

Anticipated response: The customer would have more confidence in them.

Say: It is important to be yourself, not stiff or robotic. At the same time, it's a balance; we each need to be mindful of how we are being perceived as professionals.

Say: Here is a communication skills tip sheet. It includes four sections: Mental Preparation, Verbal Communication, Non-Verbal Communication, and Written Communication. Select three to five tips you want to focus on to enhance how you communicate.

Do: Hand out "Put a Little Polish on It: Communication Tip Sheet."

Do: Thank your team for exploring how they can polish their professionalism.

Everyday
Excellence

I am a professional

Put a Little Polish on It

June 2016



I am a professional

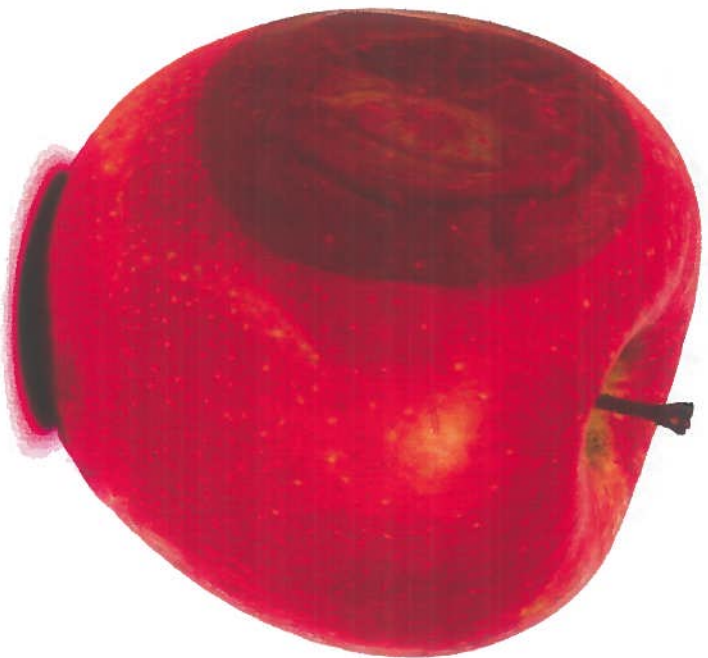
The work I do each day plays an important role in the lives of our patients and in the experience of my customers. I bring the best of who I am to work every day.



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I am a professional

Put a Little Polish on It



I am a professional

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Put a Little Polish on It

Coworker 1

Okay, okay, got it, Mr. Fuentes, no problem. Uh . . . hang on, just give me a second here. I've gotta check the number on that.

Coworker 2

I understand that funds are tight right now. So it's really yur call on how you wanna proceed. But let me first axe you this question . . .

Coworker 3

Seriously? That is so awesome! I mean I'm just sayin' that it's great to know you'll be able to stay with Dr. Heidigger after all you've been through.

Coworker 4

Juanita? Sorry, my bad. I think I put you on mute. I dunno. Well, whatever, can you hear me now? Juanita? Are you there? Can you hear me?

Coworker 5

Ya know, like no problem, really! It's my job to like, ya know, find a way to get things done, ya know? So'a lemme get you that information.

I am a professional

Put a Little Polish on It

Which words, phrases, or pronunciations did you identify that make our coworker sound a little less polished?

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-
-

I am a professional

Put a Little Polish on It

Which of these apples do you prefer?



As you listen to the audio, identify words, phrases, and pronunciations you hear that make our coworker sound a little less polished. Some of these are subtle, so listen carefully.

Take into consideration the relationship our coworker might have with the person and how the listener will perceive the words, phrases, and pronunciations they hear.

I am a professional

Put a Little Polish on It: Communication Tip Sheet

Everything you say and do sends a message and influences how others perceive you. Your communication can affect the relationship you have with a person. We all have communication strengths and opportunities for improvement. Select three to five tips you want to focus on.

Mental Preparation

- Communicate with your customer in mind: consider their preferred method of communication (in person, phone, email, text) and the nature of your message.
- Manage your mindset: remind yourself that bringing your best means being helpful (not hurtful), showing respect, and being transparent.
- Minimize distractions to demonstrate respect and stay focused.



Verbal Communication

- Listen with a genuine desire to understand. Ask questions and paraphrase to check your understanding.
- Speak to be understood, not to impress, put down, or be right.
- Pronounce words correctly. When unsure of the pronunciation, ask.
- Be mindful of overusing filler words, such as “um,” “uh,” or “like.” Practice pausing when you might otherwise fill the space with a filler word.
- Manage the tendency to interrupt, which can be a challenge on the phone and on conference calls. Listen for an opening and be polite by saying, “Excuse me; I’d like to add on to what you just said,” or “Mandy, I’m glad you mentioned that, because...”



Non-Verbal Communication

- Your appearance, grooming, and dress affect how your customer perceives you.
- Your posture, body language, gestures, and movement communicate an unspoken message.
- Maintain eye contact, and be aware of your facial expressions, words, tone of voice, and pace.
- Hunched shoulders, crossed arms, and clasped hands usually convey that you are not open to having a conversation with the other person.
- Words of collaboration and understanding can be canceled by negative body language.



Written Communication

- Written communication has permanence, so consider the words you use as well as the message you send through your spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Consider how CAPITAL LETTERS, bold fonts, unconventional fonts, italics, underlines, exclamation points!!!, and emojis 😊 😡 might be interpreted by your customer.

SANDY, CAN YOU CALL ME WHEN YOU HAVE A MINUTE? I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE PRESENTATION 🍌 WE HAVE TO GO TO TOMORROW... THANKS,

MARK 😊