

A Team of Two:

How to Improve Communication With Your Boss

A 90-Minute Audio Conference
for Administrative Assistants,
Secretaries, and Office Support Staff

Featuring **Catrina Simbe**



Overview of Today's Discussion

- The Importance of Good Communication
- Boost Your Communication Skills
- 10 Tips for Communicating With Your Boss
- Special Situations
- Q & A

Importance of Good Communication

“Effective communication ...
eliminates assumptions and mind-
reading ... and heads off workplace
roadblocks.”

*Karen Fritscher-Porter, editor and publisher
of the e-zine The Effective Admin*

Audio Conference Poll

How would you rate your communication with your supervisor?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Poor

Strong Communication is Important to Your Career Advancement

- More visibility
- Greater influence in decision-making
- Promotion opportunities
- More respect, mentorship opportunities among peers
 - Case Study: Debbie Gross
Senior Executive Administrator, Cisco
Administrative Excellence Award finalist

Good Lines of Communication With Your Boss Can Enhance Your ...

- Job satisfaction
- Confidence level
- Negotiation and persuasion skills
- Opportunities to keep learning
- Marketability

Good Lines of Communication With Your Boss Mean You'll Worry Less About ...

- Office politics
 - OfficeTeam survey: Executives spend 19 percent of their time each week dealing with internal politics
- Getting fair credit for your work
- Your stress level

Communicating: The Key to Successful Relationships

- Communication between supervisors and their assistants is good or excellent, according to 84% of administrative professionals and 94% of managers
 - Audio Conference poll results
- Contributions of support staff are valued, according to 90% of support personnel and 96% of supervisors
- Managers know assistants on personal level: 43% of support staff; 50% of managers strongly agree

Questions to Consider:

- Who is your boss?
- How often does change happen?
- What obstacles do you encounter most with your boss?

Boost Your Communication Skills

Audio Conference Poll

How are tasks delegated to administrative staff in your organization?

1. In person
2. Phone/voicemail
3. E-mail
4. Written note/memo

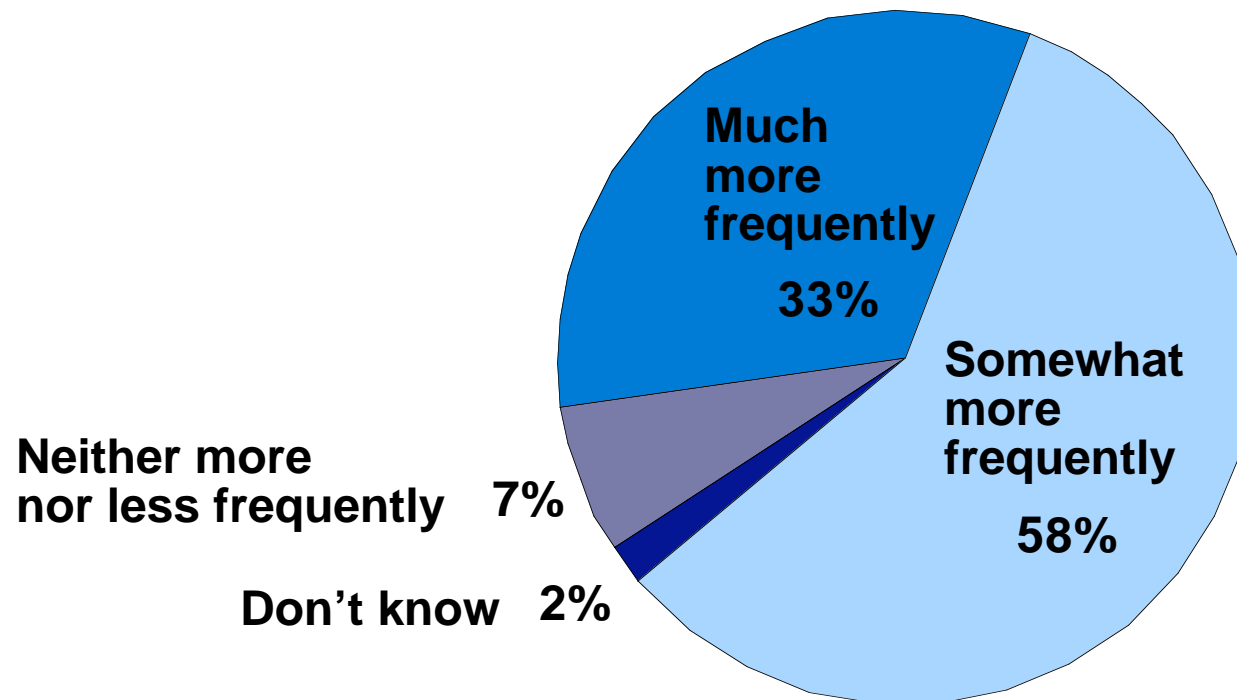
Understand Your Corporate Environment

- Know goals and objectives of company, department and manager
- Make observations about communication and work styles
- Track preferences

Develop Your Negotiation Skills

- Ask for what you want
- Be clear with your objective
- Put yourself in your manager's shoes
- Look for mutual gain
- Put emotions aside
- Keep your options open
 - Case Study: Nancy Brown
Administrative Team Leader, Manulife Financial
Administrative Excellence Award recipient

Employees Will Work on Project-Based Teams More Frequently



Source: OfficeTeam survey of 150 Fortune 1000 executives

Improve Collaboration

- Focus on group objectives, rather than personal ambitions
- Assist your co-workers when they're in need; they'll return the favor

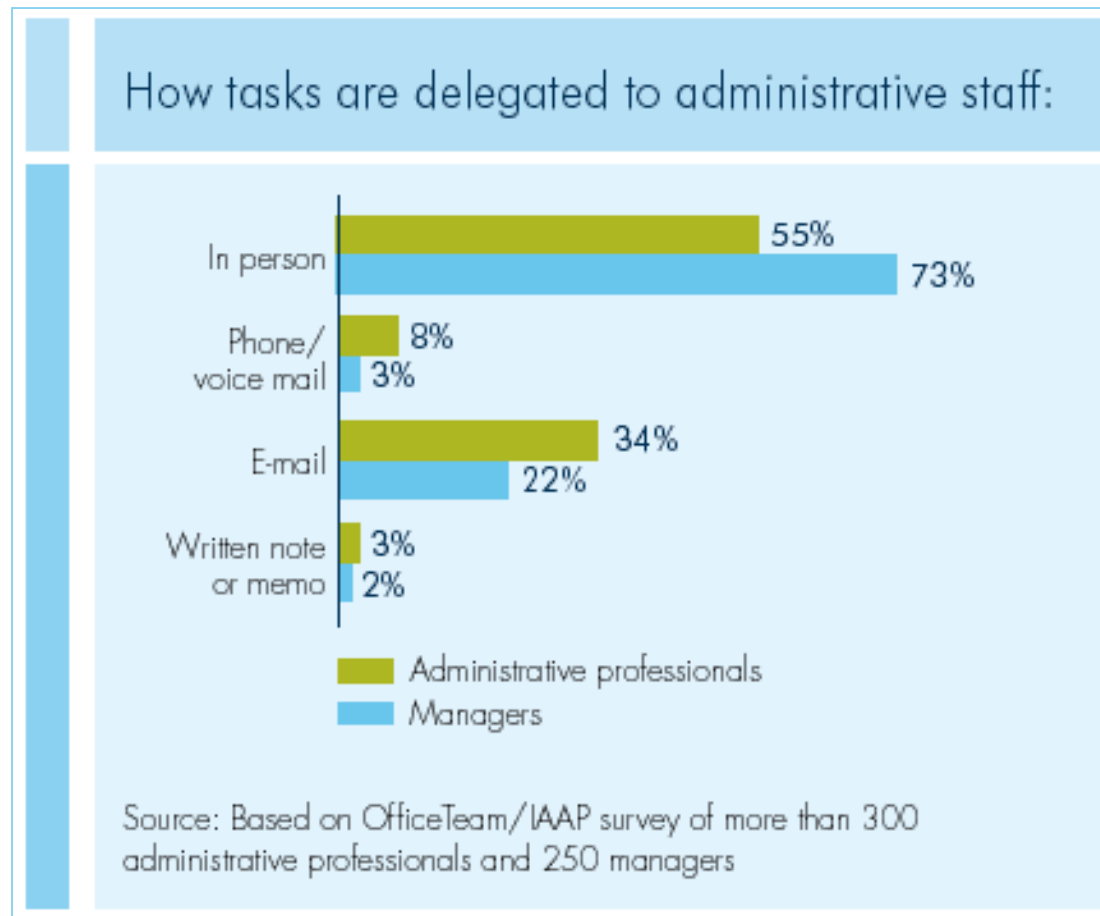
Additional Communication Skills

- Practice active listening
 - Ask questions
 - Take notes
 - Paraphrase
- Aim for clarity and conciseness
- Be aware of personal biases and other perspectives

Factors Influencing Workplace Communication

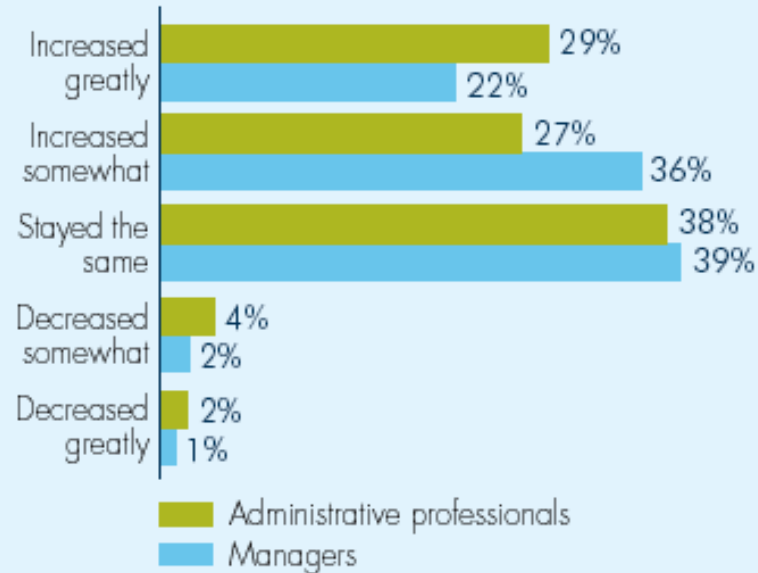
- Increased telecommuting
- Work goes global
- New technologies
 - Audio Conference poll results

Communication Methods Between Managers and Administrative Professionals



E-mail Use Has Increased

How e-mail communication between administrative professionals and managers has changed over the past two years:



Source: Based on OfficeTeam/IAAP survey of more than 300 administrative professionals and 250 managers

10 Tips for Communicating With Your Boss

Tip #1: Agree on Job Responsibilities and a Definition of Success

- This step affects all others
- Establish expectations; determine objectives

Tip #2: Ask For a Meeting to Discuss Questions Such As:

- Where does your job fit into the scheme of things, based on your company's strategic goals?
- Have job responsibilities shifted?
- How will your job performance be measured?
- What are the processes that shape work flow and efficiency?
- Are you encouraged to introduce innovations in procedures or are you expected to do everything strictly by the book?

Tip #3: Always Be Aware of Your Timing

- Internet speed makes this challenging
- Check: How quickly do you get to the point?
- Prioritize topic lists
- Create a rapport with your manager
 - OfficeTeam survey: 83 percent of executives said it's appropriate to ask your boss to lunch

Tip #4: Provide Just the Right Amount of Information

- Is it a 411 or 911 situation?
- Selective updates
- Frequency/type of updates
- When to “bring into the loop”
- Know your boss’s preferences

Tip #5: Determine Your Communication Mix

- When to call for a personal meeting
- When to rely on voice- and e-mail
- When to shift your mix for mobile executives

Tip #6: Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

- What do you need from your boss? It will affect your communication
- Every problem needs a solution

Tip #7: Be a Good Listener

- Your ability to communicate depends on your listening skills:
 - Focus on what boss is saying
 - Ask questions
 - Enhance your skills

Tip #8: Observe others

- Learn by listening, watching
 - How do others work with your boss?
 - How do they relay difficult news?
 - How do they get buy in for projects?
- Adapt to situations

Tip #9: Consider Your Boss's Perspective

- What's the big picture?
 - Focus on results, not process
 - Identify changing priorities
 - What else is on his or her "plate" right now?
 - Understand the business

Tip #10: Adapt to Your Boss's Personality

- How does your boss respond to stress?
- What can you change?
- How can you approach stressful situations?

Special Situations

Audio Conference Poll

Managers at my company do an excellent job of recognizing the contributions of administrative professionals

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Undecided
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Asking Your Boss For a Raise

- Do your homework
- Ask for a meeting
- Outline value points, avoid personal needs
- Have a backup plan
- Ask reasons why

Scheduling a Performance Review

- Ask your boss
 - Determine company review policies
 - Schedule a meeting where appropriate
- Be proactive
- Don't rely on coworkers for information

Handling Miscommunication on Deadlines

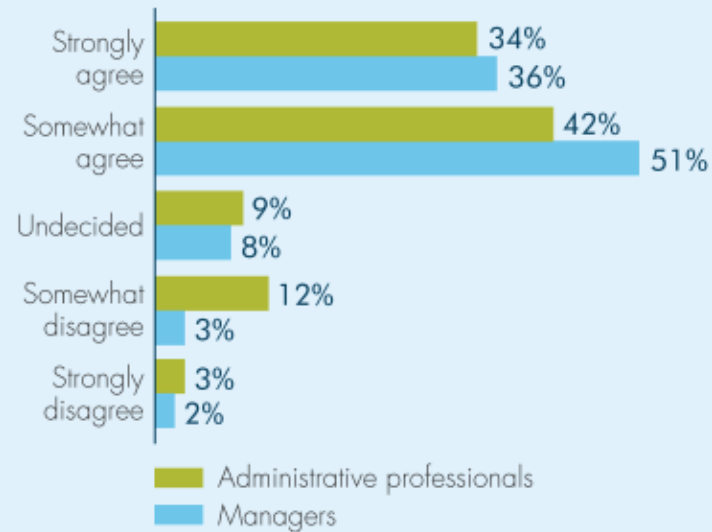
- Acknowledge the situation – don't place blame
- Apologize if/when necessary
- Don't discuss the situation with co-workers

Getting Credit For Your Accomplishments

- Put the situation in context
- Don't assume the worst
- Be proactive
- Cc or Bcc the boss as needed
- Highlight results, not just activity
- Provide:
 - Opportunities for regular communication
 - Status reports, even if not required
- **Audio Conference poll results**

Managers Recognize Contributions of Administrative Professionals

“Managers do an excellent job of recognizing administrative professionals’ accomplishments.”



Source: Based on OfficeTeam/IAAP survey of more than 300 administrative professionals and 250 managers

Working with Multiple Bosses

- Get to know each supervisor's personality and management style
- Ask managers to rank their priorities
- Maintain a list of projects and deadlines
- Keep your sense of humor!

When *You're* the Boss

- Apply the “Golden Rule”
- Maintain open communication
- Take active steps to gauge morale

Communication is an Ongoing Process

- It's always a good time to enhance communication
- Don't wait until there's a problem to work on your skills

“No other relationship in business is as central to the success of a company as the relationship of a corporate leader and his or her administrative assistant.”

Carol Evans, CEO, Working Mother Media

Notes:

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