Effective Communication in Matican Group

Effective communication in a team is essential because it ensures clarity, prevents misunderstandings, and streamlines workflows. When team members communicate clearly, everyone knows what's expected, deadlines are met, and tasks are prioritized correctly. It also fosters better collaboration, helping to build trust and efficiency. Effective communication helps align actions with goals, enables smoother problem-solving, and enhances overall team productivity.

Communication, the art of the "Ask" and the "Reply"

Communication is an ongoing loop of **Asks** (requests for information or action) and **Replies** (responses or actions taken). This continuous exchange helps ensure clarity, alignment, and smooth workflows within a team or any group, as each "Ask" prompts a "Reply" to close the loop and maintain effective interaction.

Make Your Ask Count: Be Clear, Know Why

Before making an Ask, always know why you're asking and what you're asking for.

1. **Be Clear**: Say exactly what you need. For example, don't say, "I need help with the project." Instead, say, "Can you complete the report by 5 PM?"
2. **Explain Why**: Give context. Instead of just asking, say, "I need this by 5 PM to share with the client."
3. **Next Steps**: Clarify what happens after the reply. Example: "Once you finish, I'll send it to the client."
4. **Priority & Deadlines**: Mention any deadlines or urgency. Example: "This is urgent because the meeting is tomorrow."
5. **Authority**: Only ask for things within your role. Ensure you're responsible for the request.

Understanding these points leads to clearer communication and faster results.

Communication Channels: Prioritization and Risk

Different communication channels come with varying levels of reliability, impacting how well tasks are managed and how risks (like forgotten tasks) are mitigated. Here's the ranking by priority and risk, including which to use for **emergency** or **urgent** situations:

1. **Task Management Panel** (safest, low risk): Ideal for tracking all requests.
   Use: Regular tasks, high-priority follow-ups.
2. **Email**: Formal but can be missed. Use: Important but not time-critical tasks.
3. **Text Messages** (quick, moderate risk): Good for fast exchanges but can get buried. Use: Urgent requests needing immediate attention.
4. **Voice/Video Calls** (informal, high risk): Often forgotten without documentation. Use: Emergencies needing instant responses.

For **urgent or emergency situations**, prioritize **text messages** or **calls** for instant replies but always follow up with written documentation (like email or panel) to avoid risk of forgetting or miscommunication.

Example: Making an Effective "Ask"

Ineffective Conversation:

- John: Hi Linda, can you set up a new subdomain for myproject.matican.work?
- Linda: Sure, but what technology and settings should I use?
- John: WordPress.
- Linda: When do you need it?
- John: ASAP.
- (The conversation lacks clarity and timing.)

Effective Conversation:

- John: Hi Linda, I need a WordPress installation on myproject.matican.work by today at 10:00 AM. Please email admin credentials to john.d@maticangroup.com once it's done.
- Linda: Hi John, done!
- John: Thanks, Linda!

This example shows how clear, detailed requests lead to faster and more efficient communication.

The Clear Ask Formula: A Simple Template for Requests

Don't expect others to know what you need without clear communication. If the response isn't what you expected, it's probably because your Ask wasn't specific enough.

Use this simple structure:

1. **Why**: "I need this because [reason]."
2. **What**: "I need you to [specific action]."
3. **Response Frame**: "Can you please [expected outcome] by [time or format]?"

This ensures everyone is aligned and avoids confusion.

Steps to Address a Concern or Negative Feedback

These steps should be used to address concerns affecting team performance. They ensure clear, constructive communication, making problem-solving easier and reducing conflict.

1. **Identify the Issue**: Be specific about the problem you're addressing.
2. **Explain the Impact on You**: Describe how the issue affects you personally.
3. **Show Team Impact**: Highlight how the problem impacts the team's performance or morale.
4. **Link to Goals**: Explain how the issue hinders achieving team or project goals.
5. **Suggest a Solution**: Offer a constructive way to resolve the problem.

This approach ensures clarity and a focus on solutions while addressing concerns or negative feedback.

Ineffective Example:

- **Manager**: "You're not collaborating enough with the team."
- **Employee**: "I didn't know that was an issue."

Effective Example:

- **Manager**: "I've noticed you haven't been contributing to team discussions, which affects the team's ability to make decisions efficiently. This is slowing down project progress and preventing us from reaching our goals on time. Could we work on a plan to ensure you're more engaged in the next meetings?"
- **Employee**: "Thanks for pointing that out. Let's set up a plan for more active participation."

This example follows each step clearly and constructively.

Summary and Best Practices for Effective Communication

Making an Ask:

- **Clarify Why**: Always explain why you're making the Ask and why it's necessary. This gives the other person context and helps them understand the importance.
- **Be Specific**: Clearly state what you need and what will happen next once the Ask is fulfilled. This reduces confusion.
- **Timing Matters**: Choose an appropriate time to make the Ask. Avoid interrupting or creating unnecessary pressure.
- **Privacy and Medium**: If the Ask requires discretion, consider sending a text or email instead of discussing it in person.
- **Deadlines and Priority**: State clear deadlines and priorities to ensure your Ask is addressed in time. Unclear timing may lead to delays.
- **Authority**: Make sure you're in a position to make the Ask and that you understand your role in the process.
- **Goal Impact**: Show how the Ask and the expected reply will contribute to the team's overall goals.

Receiving an Ask:

- **Listen Fully**: Before responding, make sure to listen to the entire Ask. This prevents misunderstandings.
- **Confirm Understanding**: Ask questions or repeat key points to make sure you've understood correctly.
- **Timing and Priority**: Be sure you understand any timing or priority information in the Ask.
- **Reply Format**: Ask how the requester prefers to receive the reply—whether via email, meeting, or another method.

Replying to an Ask:

- **Reference the Ask**: When replying, directly reference the specific Ask so it's clear what you're addressing.
- **Start with Key Details**: Lead with the most important parts of your reply to ensure the other person gets the needed information quickly.

Receiving a Reply:

- **Connect it to the Ask**: Ensure you understand which Ask the reply is addressing.
- **Listen Attentively**: Pay close attention to the reply to make sure nothing is missed.
- **Acknowledge the Reply**: Thank the person for their reply and ensure it fits the requested format.

Body Language & Manners:

- **Maintain Eye Contact**: Whether you're making or receiving an Ask or reply, maintaining eye contact shows respect and attentiveness.

- **Use the Same Platform**: If possible, be in the same physical or virtual setting as the other person to ensure smoother communication.
- **Appropriate Platform**: Use the right platform, such as the task management panel or a formal meeting, to avoid confusion.
- **Prefer Written Communication**: For clarity, especially for complex requests, written communication (like email) is often better.
- **Be Concise**: Keep your Ask or reply brief, clear, and to the point to avoid misunderstandings and save time.