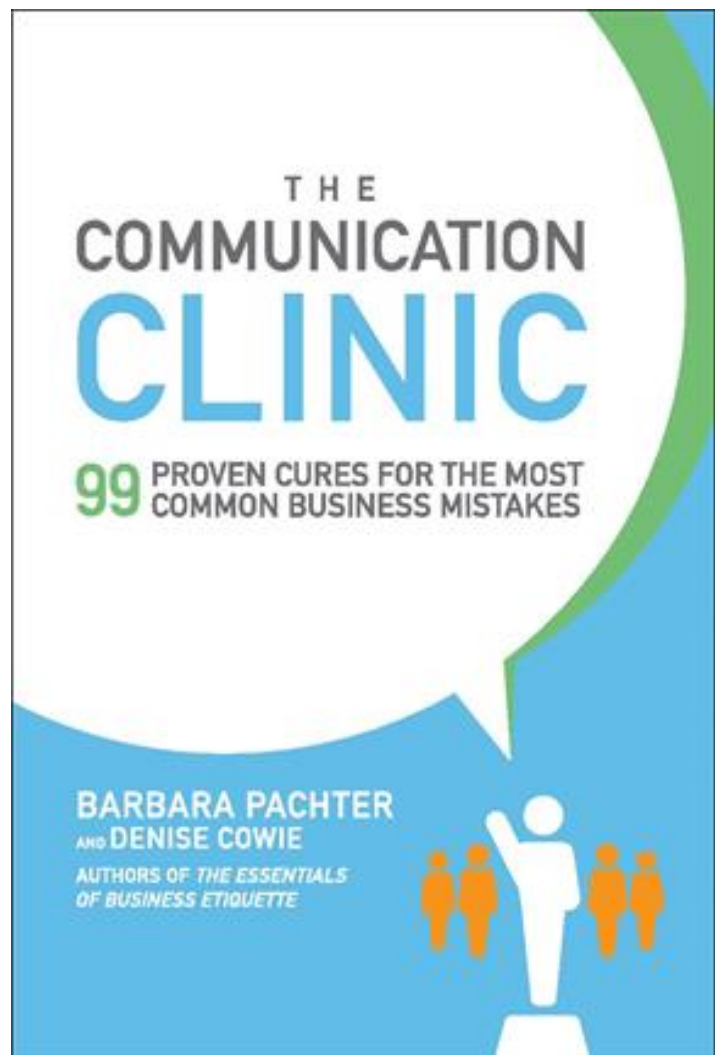


Discussion Guide

The Communication Clinic:

*99 Proven Cures for the Most Common Business Mistakes
with Barbara Pachter
and Denise Cowie*



The Communication Clinic: Discussion Guide

1. Pachter and Cowie believe that how you communicate with others – whether in person, in writing, or online – has a tremendous impact on your career. Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. When you consider your career, what do you think has been the greatest communication barrier to your success?
3. What are the most common email mistakes that you notice in your workplace? What assumptions do you make about people who send you emails with errors? Do you think it matters to your customers, colleagues, or bosses if your emails contain errors?
4. Do you inadvertently appear abrasive in your writing? Have you ever said, “But I didn’t mean it that way.” The book discusses ways to eliminate a harsh tone. What are six suggestions?
5. Pachter and Cowie discuss the importance of paying attention to the components of an email. Is your email address professional? Do you use an effective subject line? Is your signature block complete, including a phone number? Do you make sure to spell the recipient’s name correctly in the salutation?
6. Think about the last time you gave a presentation. Were you nervous? What happened? What suggestions on pages 61-65 would be helpful in enabling you to overcome your stage fright?
7. The Speech Organizer™ is on page 67 of the book. Would using it make putting together a presentation easier for you? Why or why not?
8. The book recommends using stories to emphasize your points during a presentation. Do you use stories? Have you started building your story file? If you are having difficulty finding stories, do the Exercise on page 77.
9. Using slides can be an important component of a presentation. What do you notice about slides that effectively support a presentation, and what stands out about slides that don’t work? Are you following the suggestions on pages 102-103?
10. Part III of the book covers assertive communication. Have you taken the self-assessment on page 115-116? Discuss your answers in small groups, if possible, including the consequences to you as a result of a “no” answer.

11. Try the following exercise: Pay serious attention to your verbal and nonverbal communication for one day. What did you notice regarding your posture, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, your voice, and your word choice? (Listen to your voice-mail messages, if you can.) What did you notice about the verbal and nonverbal communication of other people?
12. Many people are reluctant to speak up at meetings. Do you speak up? If not, why not? People don't know what you are thinking unless you tell them. You want to make sure your voice is heard. Check your actions against the list of tips on pages 128-129.
13. Think about the awkward, difficult situations you encounter. What will be your *What's My Line* response, the next time you experience one of those situations? If you are uncomfortable about speaking up, having a prepared line will make it easier to do so.
14. The authors discuss in Chapter 63 having "fire in your belly" as you build your career. What does that mean to you and why is it important?
15. Are you comfortable networking? Check out pages 176-180 for tips on how to build your network both online and off.
16. An entire section of Part IV focuses on how to conduct a job search. What are some key points for professionals to keep in mind when looking for a new position? Before your next interview, make sure you review *Questions You May Be Asked* and *Questions for You to Ask at the End of the Interview* in Chapter 74.
17. Do you have The Power of Presence? What actions can you take to help you engage with others and stand out in a crowd? Are you sure that you are shaking hands correctly, making introductions effectively, engaging in small talk, standing tall, and dressing appropriately? If not, review Section V.
18. Throughout the book, Pachter and Cowie describe how your use of social media can affect your career. Do you post information about your work on your Facebook page? Should you? Do you have an up-to-date LinkedIn profile? What three suggestions would you offer for using social media in the workplace?
19. Pachter and Cowie emphasize that you should not place your phone on the table when meeting with others. Do you agree that the presence of a phone hinders conversation? Where do you place your phone when meeting with someone?
20. While reading this book, did you have any "Aha!" moments? What is one thing you will do differently as a result? Why?

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