

# THE ART AND SCIENCE OF **COMMUNICATION** AND WHY THE DETAILS MATTER

## Day 2: Communication 101. Starting with the basics: Applying the 7C's

As reflected in the title, Day 2 really starts with the “basics”. The “7 C’s of Communication” was first mentioned in a book called *Effective Public Relations* that was published in 1952. Because of its simplicity and ease of use, teaching the 7 C’s is a staple in communication training. In this communication challenge you will learn the 7 C’s and put the concept to use. At the end of this challenge, you will be left with a souvenir. **This challenge consists of 1 article and 1 task.**

### Today’s Mentors:



**Scott Cutlip** is considered a pioneer in the field of public relations. He co-authored the book *Effective Public Relations*, which introduced the concept of the 7C’s. In 1972, Cutlip was recognized with the first Outstanding Educator Award presented by the Public Relations Society of America. Cutlip served as dean of the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia from 1976 to 1983.



**Allen Center** is a founding member of the Public Relations Society of America. Center served as the public relations director at Motorola and later became vice president of public relations for Leo Burnett advertising agency in Chicago. He co-authored the book *Effective Public Relations*. After retiring from the corporate world, Center became a part-time professor at San Diego State University, near his home in Southern California.

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### Introduction to the 7 C's (based on the book *Effective Public Relations*)

By Scott Cutlip and Allen Center

# Article 1



Effective communication is a skill you can develop (e.g. receive training and follow up with practice...practice...and more practice). The seven C's provides a recipe you can follow to become a more effective communicator. Write them down, learn them, and apply them in all modes of your communication as often as you can.

First, be **CLEAR**. Ask yourself, "What's the purpose of my message?" If you're not sure, the person you're communicating to won't be either. Emphasize the key points you're trying to convey. Do this by minimizing the number of ideas in each sentence and the number of topics throughout the entire message. In other words, stick to one primary subject. When communication is unclear, the recipient could "read between the lines" and misinterpret your message and/or your intentions.

Be **CONCISE**. Keep your message brief, avoid repetition, and delete unnecessary adjectives and filler words like "kind of", "I feel", and "basically."

Make sure your message is **CONCRETE**. This means strengthening your message with important facts. This will help establish confidence in your reader that the information you are sharing is valid and relevant. Look for ways to reinforce the purpose of your message without being too wordy.

Next, be **CORRECT**. Double-check for mistakes. When your communication is error-free, it will look more professional. The errors in a message speak to its importance. If your message has errors, it signals to the reader that your message is not a high priority or of importance because you didn't invest the time to proof-read and correct your mistakes.

Your communication should be **COHERENT**. In other words, it should be logical to the recipient. You've "connected all the dots" and you've made it easy for the recipient to follow your train of thought.

Next, make sure your communication is **COMPLETE**. Provide your audience with all the information needed to make a decision or take action. For example, if you're setting up a meeting, include the location, time, and purpose. Ask attendees to respond to you by a certain time and date.

Last, be **COURTEOUS**. This means having a friendly tone and avoiding hidden insults or passive-aggressive statements. Always keep your audience's viewpoint in mind. Show that you empathize and understand the recipient.

Beyond the 7 Cs, it's important to remember that once we hit send, our communication becomes "of record". Not only is it nearly impossible to "delete" an email from existence, it (and other forms of communication) may be subject to a public-records request.

**Day 2: Communication 101. Starting with the basics: Applying the 7C's**

Practicing the 7 C's

**Task 1**

1. Print out the 7 C's checklist below.
2. Place the checklist near your computer.
3. Next time you send an email, review the email for the 7 C's.
4. Mentally place a check-mark in each box before you hit "send".

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**CLEAR** - Minimize the number of ideas in each sentence and the number of topics throughout the entire message. Is it possible for the reader to misinterpret your message and/or your intentions?

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**CONCISE** - Keep your message brief, avoid repetition, and delete unnecessary adjectives and filler words like "kind of", "I feel", and "basically."

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**CONCRETE** - This means strengthening your message with important facts. Look for ways to reinforce the purpose of your message without being too wordy or subjective.

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**CORRECT** - Double-check for mistakes.

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**COHERENT** - The communication should be logical to the recipient. You've "connected all the dots" and you've made it easy for the recipient to follow your train of thought.

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**COMPLETE** - Provide all the information needed to make a decision or take action.

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**COURTEOUS** - This means having a friendly tone and avoiding hidden insults or passive-aggressive statements.

**The 7 C's – Steps for better Communication**