

Alice in CubicleLand Assignment:

Read the posted case "Alice in CubicleLand." Then draft out your communication strategy, using the following worksheet. Be prepared to role-play your part with this strategy as well as discuss the strategies of your classmates.

Luck, Susan 9/7/2013 3:18 PM

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What are the issues?

- Alice is distracted from her job by her co-workers, which is resulting in a decrease in productivity and satisfaction.
- Alice is receiving complaints from her clients, which could lead to less business contracts. The credibility and reputation of the company is also at stake.
- Alice's co-workers are complaining because she is reserving the conference room 3 days a week
- Alice has a 90-minute commute to work and from work.
- Alice has an old car. Alice needs a new car to get her safely back and forth to work.
- Alice wants to work 1 day a week from home. Alice's request has already been denied despite another worker being permitted to work from home, which are two standards.

What's your interest? Why do you want what you want?

- *What Interest/proposal?*
 - Working from home one day a week will improve productivity, increase satisfaction and enhance work-life balance.
- *Why the interest?*
 - Alice takes her job seriously.
 - Alice wants to improve her productivity.
 - Alice takes pride and ownership in her job.
 - Alice is not satisfied with her work-life balance.
 - Under the current situation, which is leading to Alice's proposal:
 - Alice is not satisfied with her job because her productivity is suffering from the distractions.
 - Alice commutes to work every day (90-minutes each way), which is affecting her work-Life balance.
 - Alice drives an old car. The 90-minute commute is causing wear and tear on her old car.
 - Gas costs are rising, which makes the 90-minute commute more dissatisfying.
 - Alice's co-workers are dis-satisfied, which can lead to poor morale, decrease productivity, and increase in turnover within the organization.
 - Alice's clients are dis-satisfied. Clients are commenting that they are unsure about the sincerity and professionalism of the company.

BATNA what is your walk away point?

Your BATNA "is the only standard which can protect you both from accepting terms that are too unfavorable and from rejecting terms it would be in your interest to accept." [2] In the simplest terms, if the proposed agreement is better than your BATNA, then you should accept it. If the agreement is not better than your BATNA, then you should reopen negotiations. If you cannot improve the agreement, then you should at least consider withdrawing from the negotiations and pursuing your alternative (though the relational costs of doing that must be considered as well). *(Do you have any other alternatives? If so, what are they?):*

Possible Alternatives:

- Request to work four, 10-hour days instead of 5, 8-hour days.
- Request to work non-traditional hours, including some weekends and holidays.
- Request to relocate to an affiliated company 1 day a week that would not require her and her family to move—relocate to an affiliated company closer to where Alice lives
- Request a private office to conduct business.
- Request the work environment be assessed to create private offices.
- Request a work study or time study to be completed to determine how the workload can be reallocated among Alice and her co-workers

Audience analysis

(Who are my constituents? In what social context are they? (Do a field analysis; who is on your team, who can affect the play, who can participate, who can make the final decision? What's going on in the broader environment in which the negotiation is taking place? (time limits? Rules? History of relationship with other party? Outside influences? Common practices?))

Primary Audience- Alice's boss

Secondary audience- Alice's co-workers

Tertiary audience- Alice's clients

- *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* should be incorporated into the audience analysis. Physiological needs must be met first to progress to self-actualization.
- A *demographic review* of the audience must be completed, which includes elements like age, gender, occupation, income, and education of those individuals in the audience.
- A *psychographic review* of the audience must be completed, which includes personality, attitudes, and lifestyle of those individuals in the audience.
- *The Toulmin Model of Logic* is a tool to help the speaker find common ground with the audience based on the reason, goal, and purpose of the argument and also the beliefs, values, or principles.
- The *WIFM factor* must be considered by addressing how the primary, secondary, and tertiary audiences will benefit from Alice's proposal.

Tone

Primary audience (Alice's boss)-*Sell approach*-Persuasion is key, but Alice's boss has the ultimate decision-making. Use a *deductive logic argument* by beginning the conversation with general statements and closing the conversation with specifics.

Secondary audience (Alice's co-workers)-*Consult approach*- Alice should try and build consensus among her co-workers. Use an *inductive logic argument* by beginning the conversation with specifics and closing the conversation with general statements.

Alice should use the *Given, Since and Therefore* format to structure her argument.

Given (major premise for proposal)-Alice will lay the foundation of her proposal. Alice's major premise is to work one day a week from home.

Since (minor premise for proposal)-Alice will need to explain to her boss and co-workers the benefits they will experience through accepting and implementing her proposal.

Therefore (conclusion of the proposal)-Alice should be prepared to explain what action or steps her audience (boss and co-workers) would need to take next.

- Do not be argumentative or defensive. Be even tempered.
- Make direct eye contact.
- Avoid clichés and slang.
- Avoid sexist language.
- Don't dwell on the negative.
- Don't interrupt, practice active listening, and ask questions for clarification.
- Don't let your emotions get in the way of your message and goal.
- Be confident and positive.
- Don't be judgmental. Don't deny the rights of others.
- Be open and flexible.
- Be assertive, not aggressive or passive.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Avoid what Meryl Runion identifies as "poison phrases".

Point of view & Persuasion topics

Point of View:

- Alice must ask the 5 *W's*, "*What* do I need to do to achieve my goal and how will it affect others?" *Who* needs to be there? *What information* is important? *When* will the discussion take place? *Where* should the discussion take place? *Why* is this discussion important? *How* will we make a decision?
- Use the *AIDA Plan* (attention, interest, desire, action).
 - Grab the *attention* of the listener by telling a story, using a video clip, data and research
 - Create *interest* by sharing details
 - Share with the audience your goal-what you *desire* to happen

- Tell your audience how they can help you achieve your goal---what *action* to take next
- Use *Kenneth Burke's Pentad* on how to analyze and put my point of view into action.
 - 1.) **Agent/Source- Question:** Alice must ask herself, "Am I the right person to deliver the message or make the request?" *Answer:* Alice wants to working from home one day a week to improve her productivity, increase her satisfaction and enhance her work-life balance.
 - 2.) **Act/Strategy & Tactics- Question:** "What do I need to do to achieve my goal and how will it affect others?" *Answer:* Alice needs to design and deliver a clear message to her boss and consider the impact it will have on the organization as a whole, including her co-workers and clients. Alice's proposal can't only be focused on her needs and wants.
 - 3.) **Scene/Setting/Context- Question:** Alice must ask herself, "When and where should this proposal or request take place?" *Answer:* Alice should schedule the meeting whenever and wherever it is convenient for her boss.
 - 4.) **Agency/Mostly Messages- Question:** Alice must ask herself, "Do I have the tools and resources to achieve this goal or implement this proposal?" Alice must identify the consequences of achieving her goal. Is this a win-win for everyone? *Answer:* The results of implementing her goal will benefit everyone on the team, including the organization as a whole. (see *created value* section below).
 - 5.) **Goal- Question:** Alice must ask herself, "Can I persuade my audience that my proposal will benefit and be valued by everyone?" *Answer:* Alice's boss, co-workers, and clients will individually benefit from implementing her proposal. The company will experience positive rewards as well (see *created value* section below).

Persuasion Topics

- Productivity
- Cost of production
- Employee turnover and retention
- Company's reputation and credibility
- Client satisfaction
- Staff satisfaction and morale
- Conference room availability
- Provide research and data to support my argument

Change Strategies

- Alice should tie her proposal to the strategic corporate initiatives and avoid making it all about her needs and wants.
- Alice should plan for and create short-term wins.
- Alice should maintain an optimistic environment.

- Alice should consider the following 8 barriers of change
 - **Habit-** Alice must convince her co-workers that they will continue to do the same work, without any changes to their daily routine. [this one is crucial](#)
 - **Time constraints-** Alice must convince her co-workers that they will not have to give up anything if the proposal is approved. [this one is crucial](#)
 - **Conflicting messages-** Alice's co-workers may be interested in working 1 day from home as well, so Alice should be prepared to counter this argument.
 - **Lack of consequence-** Alice must convince her boss and co-workers if they do not approve her proposal there are consequences they will experience individually and corporately.
 - **Lack of resources or support-** Alice must convince her boss that her co-workers will have the resources they need to do their jobs and meet customer expectations.
 - **Entrenched leadership-** Alice must be a positive example and have a good working relationship with her co-workers and boss to achieve their buy-in and approval of her proposal.
 - **Lack of follow-up-** Alice must have a set of clear standards and reinforce them to ensure her implemented proposal is a success.
 - **Lack of risk assessment-** Alice must consider why her boss and co-workers could oppose her proposal. Alice must understand their resistance point.

Resistance point for you and rebuttal

- Alice's family situation will not allow her to move. This is Alice's anticipated resistance point.
- Alice's rebuttal may go something like this: "My family situation will not allow me to move. Would you consider an alternative? Would it be permissible to work 1 day a week in another affiliated company office?"
- Consider moving through the other alternatives listed in the BATNA section.

Resistance point for them and rebuttal

- Alice has already made the request to work 1 day a week from home. Alice's boss feels being in the office 5 days a week is professional. This is Alice's boss anticipated resistance point.
- The rebuttal may go something like this: "Would you consider another alternative? Would it be permissible to work non-traditional hours, including some weekends and holidays?"

Referent Power and Legitimate Power: *(What supporting facts do I have? (What information do I have to support my view? How can I validate that information? Have these issues been negotiated before by others? Can I consult those others for information as to what arguments they used? How can I present the facts to be most convincing? Do I have visual aids that will help?)*

- Alice has a co-worker that has been given permission to work from home. Alice should consult her co-worker, seeking advice and guidance on how to develop a strategy of

persuasion to achieve her main goal and get her proposal approved.

- Alice must make sure she has vetted research and evidence to support her point of view leading to her proposal.

Created value How is this valuable to Alice? How is this valuable to Alice's boss, co-workers and clients?

Created Value for Alice

- Improved productivity
- Improved satisfaction
- Improved work-life balance
- Improved working relationships with co-workers

Created Value for Alice's Boss

- Improved client satisfaction and increase business contracts and agreements, by maintaining and improving the credibility, reputation and professionalism of the company.
- Improved staff satisfaction and morale, which leads to an increase in retention and a decrease in turnover.
- Improved staff productivity, which improves the cost of production.

Created Value for Alice's Co-workers

- Improved satisfaction and morale
- Increased conference room availability

Created Value for Alice's Clients

- Delivery of service will be timelier.
- Delivery of service will be more professional and sincere.

Protocol assessment & Meeting Plans

- **Where's the best place for the negotiation to take place?**
 - Alice should email or call her boss to arrange a one-on-one, scheduled appointment to discuss her proposal.
- **When is the best time for it to take place?**
 - Alice should be flexible and agree to meet her boss his/her convenience.

Script for beginning the conversation

Mrs. Wright thanks for taking the time to meet with me today. First, let me begin by saying how much I really enjoy my job. I consider my employment with this organization a true privilege. I want you assure you that I take my responsibilities as an employee very seriously and strive to deliver excellence service to our clients every day. The success, reputation, and credibility of our company are important to me. My working relationship with my co-workers is equally important to me. [good](#)

Staff productivity, morale, and satisfaction have been on the decline in our work environment. Moreover, client satisfaction has been on the decline. I am not as satisfied with my work-life balance either. Staff and client satisfaction are important to running a successful business. Poor morale and dis-satisfied employees could negatively affect employee retention and lead to an increase in turnover. Poor productivity results in higher cost of production, which could affect the company's fiscal responsibilities.

I have been observing the day-to-day operations of our department to determine the contributing factors that have led to the decrease in productivity, morale, and satisfaction among our staff. First, I looked at our work environment. Our work environment consists of a large room with six cubicles. Working in this kind of environment makes it nearly impossible to avoid distractions when trying to conduct business over the phone. I have received complaints from our clients regarding the distractions and loud noises overheard during business discussions. Loud noises and distractions overheard by our clients is embarrassing and affect our company's image. My clients have the most detailed and difficult requirements when compared to all of the company's customers. I am the only employee who has a set of clients who require almost daily telephone contact. To avoid distractions, I have started reserving the conference room three days a week so I can make these important phone calls. It's important to reduce to distractions so I can

meet our client's expectations. If we fail to meet our client's expectations, our company will lose business and credibility within the community. When I reserve the conference room three times a week, I notice my working relationship with my co-workers experiences tension and stress because there are times when the conference room is not available for them to use.

Today I want to offer a possible solution to these concerns. I believe everyone involved can benefit and find value in the solution I have to offer. I would like to have your permission to work from home one day a week. I understand that a co-worker of mine is already working from home one day a week. She has been successful in meeting the company's expectation while finding herself being more productive than ever before. Additionally, her job satisfaction and work-life balance have improved.

I believe working from home one day a week will improve my productivity, increase my satisfaction and enhance my work-life balance. If I am given permission to work one day a week from home, I will be able to make all of my business calls without distractions and interruptions made by my co-workers. The service that I am able to provide to our clients will be timelier and presented more professionally. Our company will be able to maintain its credibility and excellent reputation within the community. The availability of the conference room will also increase. My co-workers satisfaction will improve, and the overall morale of the department will be better. Our company will retain its employees and not experience a rise in turnover. My commute time back and forth from work will also decrease. Decreasing my commute time to and from work will reduce the wear and tear of my car. I can save money to buy a new car if I can reduce my commute time back and forth from work. I believe this is a win-win for everyone involved.

Thanks for your considering my proposal.

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