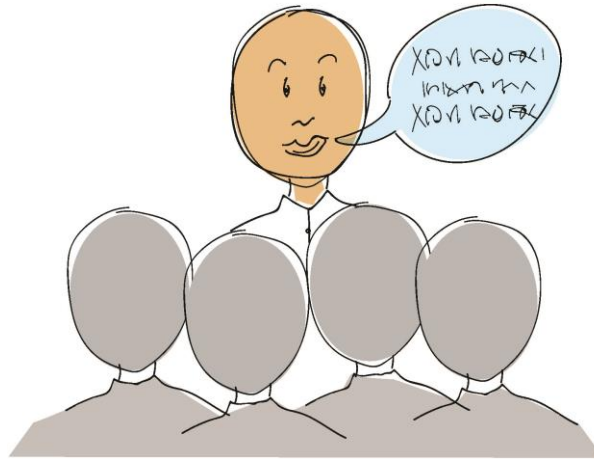


Delivering Bad News Assertively



Most of us find giving bad news difficult!

It's not something that is easy or comes naturally to any of us.

I don't know about you but as I grew up, I was told not to upset others or cause conflict and when I deliver bad news, I know I'm going to upset the other person and if things go badly conflict could occur.

So, I don't like delivering bad news.

Having said that I have had to - whether it was:

- my children that they couldn't go on their long-awaited trip,
- my colleague that I couldn't help them when they need me most,
- my boss that I was leaving for another role or
- my team when I had to tell them we were all on notice of redundancy and then later tell some of them there wasn't a role for them anymore.

We all have to deliver difficult or bad news and it never seems to get easier.

This document contains the thoughts of many people I have worked with when running assertiveness training workshops and we have discussed what we want when receiving bad news.

The 10 tips contained here are the result of those discussions - most of us know that our manager, colleague or child doesn't want to give us bad news but there are ways we would rather hear it!

If you have any other tips that you would add - please email me and let me know!

Ten tips for giving bad news assertively.

1. Take the initiative

Don't wait for the other person to find out from someone else or to hear it on the grape vine. You will always be on the back foot if someone asks you if what they have heard is true. And if you aren't prepared you may well say something you regret.

2. Be Empathetic

Before you start the conversation try to think things through from the other person's point of view. Be willing to change the way that you think they will react as you go through the conversation.



3. Listen

To do this you need to be able to listen and hear the other person's response. Make sure that you hear what they are saying and that you don't assume you know how they feel.

4. Don't waffle!

Be specific, tell them what has happened or changed - specifically! There is nothing more annoying than being on the receiving line of a long speech that must contain some important information but you can't work out what it is!

Beating around the bush is really frustrating and for the record it doesn't cushion the blow.

5. Be succinct

Give the reasons for what has happened or changed briefly. Don't go into detail.

If it is really bad news then the other person will find it hard to take detail in and if it's something that they can do something about they probably won't want the detail - just the salient points.

6. Tell them what action is being taken

Explain what action you have taken or plan to take - if these actions directly affect the person you are speaking to then it is even more important that you keep to the next tip which is

7. Keep it factual

Don't be tempted to embellish or enhance the truth or make excuses based on hearsay. Often the other person will know there and then that you are being economic with the truth or over egging a point. If they find out one part of what you say isn't entirely truthful then they will assume that nothing you have said is true.

8. Take responsibility

Nobody likes to think they are talking to the monkey and not the organ grinder, so don't blame others or "the company".

If it is your job to tell someone that they haven't got a promotion for example don't say things like "if it had been up to me" or "I wouldn't do ...X... but unfortunately the decision has been made". All you do is undermine your own authority going forward and at best you either look like you are making excuses or that you aren't very important!

9. Don't keep apologising

Something else that loses you credibility is if you keep apologising. One sincere I'm sorry is far more effective than a constant stream of sorrys.

The dictionary defines an explanation as a statement of fact that explains something while an excuse is justifying a fault or an error. If you over apologise your explanation very quickly sounds like an excuse.

And finally ...

10. Don't make promises that you can't keep

If for example you know that there will be no pay rises don't pretend that there could be.

If you know you can't work late then don't say you'll try.

To recap ...

... make sure that:

- you don't delay,
- you don't waffle,
- you are honest and
- you listen!

If you would like to work on your assertiveness skills a great first step is to understand your behaviour choices and communication style, so take the communication quiz on our website.

[\(https://partnerswithyou.co.uk/prism-brain-mapping/quiz/\)](https://partnerswithyou.co.uk/prism-brain-mapping/quiz/)



If you would like a more comprehensive understanding of your communication style, a specific issue, or to discuss how we can help you and your team to communicate more effectively, arrange a no obligation call with me now.

[\(https://my.timetrade.com/book/XDZ52\)](https://my.timetrade.com/book/XDZ52)

Best wishes,

Sally