

'This book is down-to-earth, gritty and oozes experience. I've been speaking for over twenty years... trust me, I've learnt from this book. Paul McGee is clearly a skilled helper.'

— Kriss Akabusi MBE

How To Speak So People *Really* Listen

**The straight-talking guide to
communicating with influence and impact**

Paul McGee

Author of the International bestsellers
Self-Confidence and *S.U.M.O.*



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communicating with influence
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Foreword by Andy Bounds, communication expert

You communicate all the time.

So you might as well be brilliant at it.

But it sure is hard to do well, isn't it? After all, people have different priorities and personalities to you. They might not like what you like. So, for you to be a good communicator, it's important to adapt your mindset and messages so they resonate.

Paul's book will help you do this. He'll challenge your thinking about how you communicate. He'll then explore loads of strategies to improve how you do it.

In fact, you're only a few hours away from communicating better than you ever thought possible ...

What part of your body will this book impact?

I have a thought for you ...

Imagine that, every time someone communicated with you, it turned part of your body bright green – the body part they'd had the biggest impact on.

So, if someone taught you something new, you'd be *cleverer* than before. So you'd have a bright *green head*.

Or if someone told you an emotional story that made you *feel* differently, it'd be a *green heart* communication.

I find most business books are one of these two – green heads or hearts. You know the sort of thing – you read them, learn stuff, enjoy them ...

But this isn't enough.

After all, what's the point of us becoming cleverer/happier if we don't *do* anything differently as a result?

No – instead, the best books give you *green hands*. They cause us to *do* things differently.

Which brings me to this book ...

Why this book will help you communicate better

Paul has used all his experience – and that's a *lot* – to give you *green hands*. To improve how you communicate. You won't just learn stuff. You'll read one of his tips, then be able to *use it immediately*.

The whole thing's written so you can adopt his techniques easily. Even better, each chapter ends with Paul challenging you to focus on the one key action you'll take after reading it – what he calls 'My One Thing'. And with twenty chapters, by my maths, you're about to have twenty new things. How many business books can you say that about?

My advice – as you read it, have three things with you:

1. A pen to write your actions down
2. Some paper to write them on
3. A drink. You'll lose yourself in this book. So have a drink handy. That way, you won't need to break off from reading!

I've read countless books on communication. I've written a few myself. But this one stands out as something that will make you communicate better.

Its sole purpose is to give you *green hands*.

And it will.

Andy Bounds
Communication expert, author and
award-winning consultant
www.andyboundsonline.com

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Introduction: Why this stuff really matters

“

***We can all talk. The
challenge? Getting
people to listen.***

”

Imagine the scene. You're desperate to win a new job. You've completed a lengthy application process. You were thrilled to have an initial telephone interview. That went well. You progressed to the next stage. Your excitement increased. You prepared extensively for your face-to-face interview.

And then the letter came.

You've made it to the final stage of the process. A second interview at head office which will also include you giving a ten-minute presentation.

You plan for this final interview as if your life depended on it. In some ways, you feel it does. Your years of study and sacrifice look like they will finally pay off.

You're tantalizingly close.

You've never had any training or coaching on giving a presentation before, but you've sat through countless presentations.

You know the score.

Polite and formal opening.

A slide showing a list of bullet points outlining your objectives.

Then an overview of your background.

A section that includes an overview of the company and what you've learnt about them.

The next section is on the role and what specific skills you can bring to it, followed by a summary and conclusion.

Oh and one more thing. Your final slide.

'Thank you. Any questions?'

You like making slides. And if the interviewer missed anything, you've written down all the details on them, which they can always refer back to.

You're ready. This is it. The chance of a lifetime.

Fast forward two weeks.

The job went to someone. But it wasn't you.

The recruitment agency informs you that you were the strongest candidate on paper. You'd made it down to the last three. Your background and experience were just what they were looking for.

You're gutted.

So what went wrong?

In a nutshell: your presentation.

You bombed. The content on your slides overwhelmed them.

There wasn't enough engagement with your interviewers.

The panel felt they didn't get to know the real you. Just a corporate clone that failed to connect with them.

They sensed within 90 seconds of your start that you weren't the right person. The rest of your presentation did nothing to challenge their initial impression.

You were smart in appearance. Professional, if a little wooden. Polite. Knowledgeable about the company and what the role required. But no thanks. They see dozens of people who are like that.

You didn't stand out from the crowd. You were, I'm afraid, forgettable.

You needed to stand out.

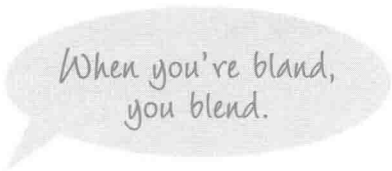
You needed to grab their attention immediately.

You needed to deliver with energy and authenticity.

You didn't.

Bye-bye dream job. Maybe it just wasn't meant to be.

The deal is:



*When you're bland,
you blend.*

Trust me, the above scenario happens every single day around the globe. The context may be different. So too might the process. But the outcome remains the same. The person with the strengths and experience lost out due to their ineffective communication skills.

The question is: how can you make sure that person isn't you?

Now I recognize you might not have an important presentation to make for a job interview. Maybe you're a charity worker hoping to influence people to support your cause. Perhaps you're a manager seeking ways to engage and motivate your staff, or a teacher or trainer wanting to make a difference to people, whatever their age. Alternatively, you might want to convince your boss to take a new direction in relation to a particular project. Or maybe you've been asked to deliver a presentation to your peers at a conference, or your passion for politics means you want to persuade others that your perspective is the best way to make a difference to society.

Whatever the scenario or situation, here's the sad reality:

You may have the expertise and experience.

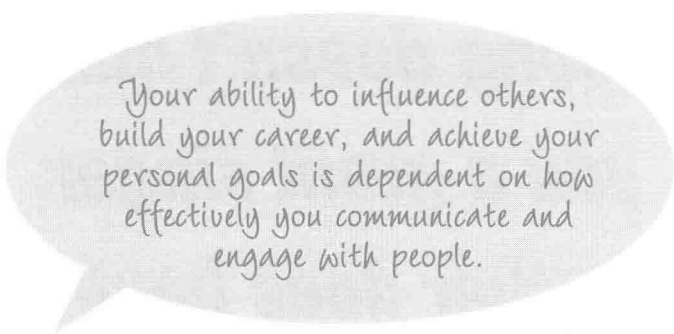
The passion and professionalism.

The competence and the contacts.

But you could lack one crucial thing.

The ability to communicate your message in a compelling way that causes your audience to sit up, take notice and listen.

Here's the deal:



Your ability to influence others, build your career, and achieve your personal goals is dependent on how effectively you communicate and engage with people.

Recently a colleague of mine was asked to sit on a panel that was responsible for awarding a £90,000 research grant spread over three years. All applicants were asked to present their case for why they should be awarded the grant. Ultimately, the £90,000 was given not to the best applicant on paper, but to the person who made the most persuasive presentation. Think about that for a moment.

Ninety thousand pounds.

That's a lot of money to lose out on because you weren't effective at communicating your message.

Trust me, this stuff really does matter. And it matters to you and your future success.

So make sure you never forget the following:

“

***Knowing the words to
a song doesn't make
you a great singer.
Neither does having
expertise in a subject
make you a great
speaker.***

”

And here's both a harsh and sad fact. Some people have values and views many would find offensive. But they get heard. They get noticed. Not simply because of what they believe, but because of how well they communicate their message. Criminals and politicians can manipulate minds because they've developed the skills of knowing how to persuade others. Yes, other factors and skills do come into play, but if they're unable to communicate effectively their influence is weakened. Their voice is less likely to be heard.

So how does this specifically affect you?

Well, potentially you miss out on promotion, or the new job, or fail to secure some new business, and you do so not because the other person is better or more knowledgeable than you.

You lose out because they've mastered the ability to communicate more effectively and persuasively than you. They've learnt to sell themselves or their services in a better way than you have.

That's the reality folks.

That's why I believe developing your skill as a communicator is crucial. Master this skill and it will help get you noticed, get along better with others and get ahead in life. Fact.

You see, the harsh reality is that life isn't fair. We don't all start on a level playing field. But there is some good news. Where we finish can be influenced by a range of factors. And one of those factors is simply this:

Here's the deal:

“

***Good people
with a great
message are
not guaranteed
a captive
audience.***

”

Your ability to communicate effectively with others.

Thousands of people know this. That's why so many politicians and leaders from all sectors want to develop their skills in this area, and are prepared to invest a considerable amount of time and effort to do so. I guess you've decided to do the same.

Getting the best from this book

You've been prompted, for whatever reason, to read this book. Great. But make sure this is not a passive perusal through the following pages.

I want you to involve yourself as we explore a whole host of ideas and insights. How? Well, think of specific situations where you want to raise your game as a communicator. Perhaps it's with a customer, a colleague or even one of your kids. It could be speaking to a large audience, leading a meeting or simply a conversation with one other person. Whatever the context, whatever the size of the audience, look for ideas and insights that will take your communication to a new level, and in doing so increase your influence and impact.

Oh, and here's something to be aware of. The issue is not whether you've come across some of these ideas before. Neither is it a case of labelling what you read as 'just common sense'. The question is: 'so what are you doing with it?' If you're reading this book simply to acquire more knowledge, fine. I wish you well. People who accumulate lots of knowledge might do well in pub quizzes. They can sound impressive among their friends. But I hope you