The Fifth Key to Business Communication success is transparency of communicating in a trustworthy and reliable manner. Trust, among those communicating, generates from transparency (Palanski, Kahai, and Yammarino, 2011), and provides shared information that is considered relevant and reliant on the content of the sender of the communication. When reliable information sharing is withheld by that singular knowledge, abuse of power can occur and competition can dominate between those communicating. Take, for example, those who market a product or service but do not fully disclose features that the consumer considers of importance in making the buying decision. Non-disclosure of a salient aspect of a product or service is non-transparency and can lead to future issues among and between the original members of the communication and to long-term distrust.

The need for transparency in business communication is venerated by some and deterred by others in business communication. Legal matters that require limited transparency as a strategy to win or lose an argument or lawsuit might be employed. Some business communicators address all communication on a competitive basis and weigh the merit of the communication only on the personal or corporate benefit derived from the correspondence. Nevertheless, business communication that maintains transparency and, therefore trust among its participants, instill confidence to the recipient of the communication that they and their organization are ethical and maintain integrity with those they have dealings or transactions.

If you gain control of your communication transparency you can gain control of the climate of your business environment and are on the way toward being a more capable business communicator. Designing for business communication transparency has merit as a skill and a key to your business communication success. Transparency in business communication is a conscious effort to design one’s business communication with the intent of sharing knowledge reliably and consistently. Transparency is the bridge to build trust and mutual sharing of information. Properly designed business communication generates trust and supports mutual reliance. The lack of transparency can cause distrust and elevate business communications toward competition, anger, and questioning of ethical behavior or integrity of a communicator and their company. Utilizing business communication transparency takes time to build and is a commodity that provides a competitive advantage for those who fail to recognize its merit or applications.

Works Cited

Ahearne, M., Jelinek, R. & Jones, E.. “Examining the effect of salesperson service behavior in a competitive context” Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 35 (4)4, 2007. pp. 603-621.

Palanski, M.E., Kahai, S.S. and Yammarino, F.J.. “Team virtues and performance: an examination of transparency, behavioral integrity, and trust,” Journal of Business Ethics, 99 (2), 2011. pp. 201-220.