

QUICK TIPS FOR MANAGERS

Book 1:

Personal Skills

How to
communicate well
and be effective
at work

Mike Clayton



Get off to a flying start as a new manager, with the help of this time-saving ebook.

Each chapter can be read in five minutes or less (ideal for reading in your coffee break or on the train) yet the tips you'll pick up can benefit you throughout your whole career.

The short chapters have been designed so that you can read them in any order, dipping into your chosen topic as the need arises. Each topic comes with a practical exercise to help you put your newly-gained know-how into action.

You no longer need to search through numerous lengthy management books trying to unearth the gems that might help you in your everyday work – Mike Clayton has done that hard work for you, distilling some of the most useful business models and presenting you with the essence: clear, succinct summaries of the techniques that will serve you best.

QUICK TIPS FOR MANAGERS will be helpful to experienced managers too – a concise refresher at your fingertips!

Coming next in the *QUICK TIPS FOR MANAGERS* series:

Book 2: Managing People

How to manage, motivate and lead, in good times and in bad

Book 3: Organisational Management

How to master the different aspects of organisational life

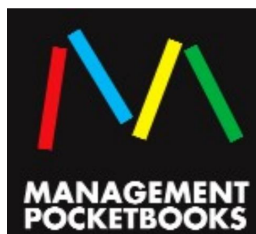
Quick Tips for Managers

Book 1: Personal Skills

How to communicate well and be effective
at work

By Mike Clayton

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Mike Clayton



Mike Clayton has spent his whole working life trying to master the personal skills in this book, first as a practitioner, building a career leading project teams, managing his time and personal productivity, communicating with his teams, clients and stakeholders, and developing his personal impact and influence.

Later, as a trainer and speaker, Mike has run courses covering all of the material in this book, leaving thousands of managers able to assert themselves confidently, use their time efficiently, communicate effectively and understand the human dynamics of their work environment.

As an author, Mike continues to write extensively about these subjects, with eleven books in print, including two books in the Management Pocketbooks series: *Management Models* and *Handling Resistance*. His other books include *How to Speak so People Listen*, *The YES/NO Book*, *Brilliant Influence*, *Brilliant*

Stress Management and *Brilliant Time Management*; all available in eBook format.

Mike also speaks and runs seminars for clients in the commercial, public and not-for-profit sectors. *Brilliant Time Management* and *How to Manage a Great Project* are among his most popular seminars. You can find out more about Mike's books and seminars at www.mikeclayton.co.uk.

AN INTRODUCTION TO NLP SKILLS

One of the commonest acronyms and buzz-phrases a manager will encounter is *NLP*, or *Neuro Linguistic Programming*. What is it?

First off, ignore the name: we'll come back to that later. Focus on what it does. NLP is a toolkit of resources that help us with improving our performance and general communication-related tasks like:

- being better understood
- influencing others
- making decisions
- understanding other people
- reading between the lines
- improving aspects of performance
- setting goals
- uncovering issues
- resolving problems and issues
- negotiation

The toolkit was developed using the fundamental philosophy behind NLP, that:

‘Excellence can be modelled and reproduced’

Put simply, if you do something well, then if I do it exactly the way you do it, I will do it as well as you. Clearly, this approach has applications in all areas of business, public service, management, sport... the list goes on.

A lot of the tools were therefore originally developed by observing excellent communicators and therapists, documenting what they did, testing and codifying the lessons, and distilling their techniques down into a set of rules. These form the body of NLP. They include things like:

The Meta Model

A set of language constructions that we can recognise in other people's speech, which give clues to the faults in their thinking (modelled from family therapist, Virginia Satir).

The Logical Levels Model

This model (described in the [next chapter: Using Logical Levels to Counter Resistance](#)) sets out different levels at which we perceive aspects of ourselves and the world. It is useful in diagnosing problems and stimulating change.

Change Processes

NLP has its roots in therapy. So a lot of the tools are helpful in personal change and personal decision making.

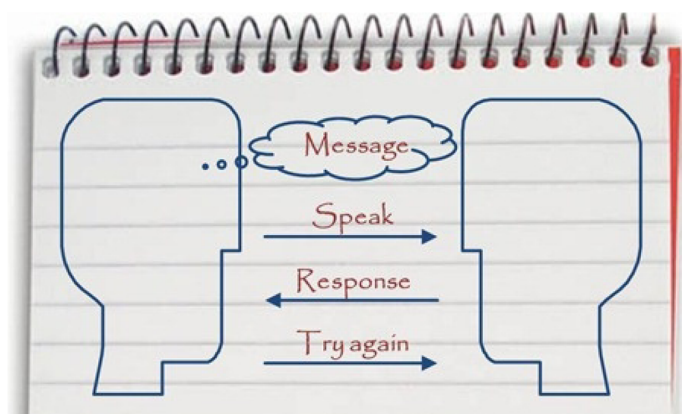
The Modelling Process

How to elicit the way excellence arises. Use it to observe a great sales person, for example, to distil what they do and codify it into a sales process other team members can apply.

The meaning of your communication is the response you get

At its core, NLP offers a very simple model of communication. If you want to take responsibility for your own communication with others, NLP offers a four step process.

1. Decide on your **outcome**: what do you want the other person to do or think?
2. **Communicate**: put out your ideas as effectively as you can.
3. **Notice** how they respond: do they get it? What are they doing in response?
4. Be **flexible**: if you didn't get the response you wanted, try a different approach.



Why 'Neuro Linguistic Programming'?

I suspect the name is as much an attempt to shroud the new (in the 1970s) methodology in a mystique and in academic language, as anything else. 'Neuro', because it works with our best understanding of how the brain works. 'Linguistic' because

language is the medium through which it operates and ‘Programming’, because it seeks to create new, more useful habits.

Exercise: The Meta Model

The meta model is a powerful tool for spotting faulty thinking in yourself, and in others. We hear the clues in the way people speak. So start listening for each of these four common meta model patterns.

1. Faulty cause and effect

We use the word ‘because’ to show we know the reason why. But often, we are making assumptions that we cannot justify. We don’t have the evidence: we just spot a pattern and jump to a conclusion.

For example:

‘She gave the work to Mark, because she doesn’t trust me’

‘Really? Could she have given the work to Mark for another reason? How do you know she doesn’t trust you?’

2. Presumed meaning – also known as ‘complex equivalence’

This is similar to faulty cause and effect, but here, we think we know the meaning behind an event or action. Yet often it means something different – or nothing at all. Events take on a significance when we ascribe a meaning to them, but sometimes they are in truth random or completely meaningless.

For example:

‘I didn’t get a pay rise. That means my boss doesn’t value me anymore and my career here has reached its peak.’

‘Really? Maybe no one got a pay rise. Maybe your boss fought hard to get you one. Maybe your pay is at the highest level and your boss knows that you will get a promotion in a couple of month’s time, but cannot tell you until it is formalized. Maybe your boss values you, but your performance was not quite good enough; if you can improve this year, you can still move upwards.’

3. **Possibilities and necessities**

We often hear people using words like ‘*I can’t do this*’, or ‘*I must do that*’. But where do these rules come from. Usually, we are imposing a set of constraints on ourselves and we will open up whole new possibilities when we ask instead: ‘*How could I do this? What would I need to change to make this possible?*’ or, perhaps, ‘*Why must I do that? What would really be the consequences of doing something different? What opportunities could a different choice open up?*’ These presumed rules wrap us in mental cages, sometimes known as ‘**psychic prisons**’.

4. **Missing comparisons – also known as ‘comparative deletions’**

The fourth common meta model violation is when we say things like: ‘*You need to do better, I need to get fitter, he ought to work faster...*’ Setting aside the obvious failure in the statements to give a good reason for these sorts of assertions, we cannot evaluate them without first knowing: ‘*Better than what... and how much better? Fitter than what... and how much fitter? Faster than what... and how much faster*’ When we speak, we often delete the missing comparator and the missing increment, and we usually do so as a short cut to avoid truly careful analysis and rigorous thinking.