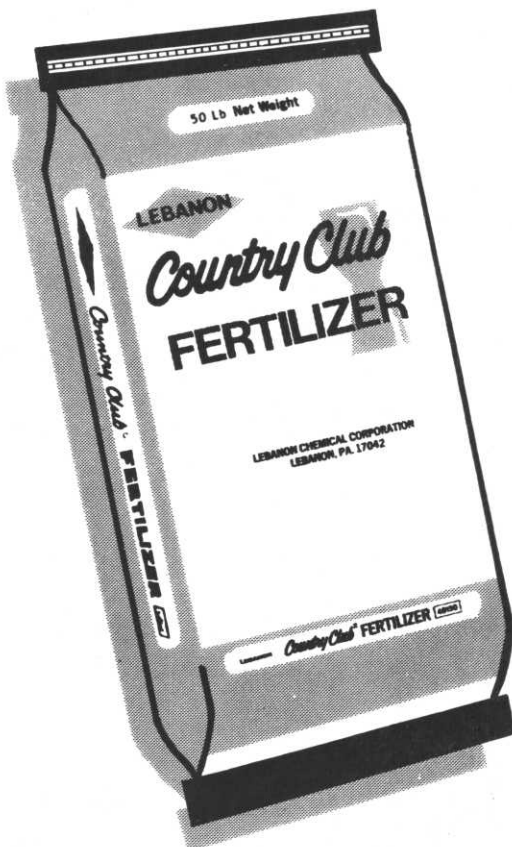


HOW TO COMMUNICATE

What's the key to good communication? It's nothing more, or less, than saying what you mean and then letting the other guy have an opportunity to do the same. Honesty and directness, while sometimes ruffling a few feathers, have the virtue of leading to real contact between people and that's the way to tackle a problem head-on.

Think about these points the next time you have to communicate with a co-worker. When you're talking: *Don't speak in the abstract. Instead of saying, "I wish a little more work was getting done around here", try, "I don't think you're getting enough work done". *Avoid talking about what ought to be. Don't say, "We really should have finished that maintenance by now". Instead, "I am concerned that we are behind on our maintenance schedule" is more honest and a lot easier for someone else to understand. *Don't say something that contradicts the way you really feel. Keeping a smile on your face when you're mad only makes it harder for you to communicate and for others to understand you. *Don't use words like "you", "we" or "one" when you mean I. "I think", "I need", "I want" is a lot more likely to get your message across. The other side of the coin is giving the person you're communicating with his chance to tell you what he really means. Here are a few ways to help him communicate with you: *Stop talking! It seems obvious but you can't find out what he has to say if you don't listen and you can't do that when you're talking. *Empathize with him. Try to put yourself in his place. Imagine what he must feel like and what his perspective on the situation must be. *If you don't understand, ask questions. If you want more information or an example, ask! It shows the person that you've been listening and that you're interested in what he has to say. But don't ask embarrassing questions or ones designed to make him look bad. *Look at the other person and concentrate on what he is saying. Focus your mind on what he is trying to say to you. Look at him. His face, eyes and hands are clues to what his message really is. *Don't rush him. Give him time to say what he wants to say. Don't interrupt. Communication doesn't need to be a problem. Honesty, directness and a real desire to listen are the most important parts.



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