

MODULE 5

THE 6-STEP COLLABORATIVE COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

Communication isn't just about talking—it's about connecting. The 6-Step COLLABORATIVE Communication Framework gives us a process for navigating tough conversations, building stakeholder trust, and influencing without authority. This framework works whether you're talking to your boss, a cross-functional partner, or someone you're in conflict with." Key message: Great communicators aren't born—they follow a process. This framework IS that process.

THE 6 STEPS

1. **LAUNCH PAD:** Prepare yourself mentally and emotionally before the conversation → Get clear on your goal, check your assumptions, manage your emotions
2. **RECOGNIZE YOUR AUDIENCE:** Understand who you're talking to—their priorities, pressures, perspectives → What do they care about? What's their context? What motivates them?
3. **TAKE NOTICE:** Observe what's happening in the moment—body language, energy, reactions → Are they engaged? Defensive? Distracted? Adjust in real time.
4. **UNDERSTAND & ACKNOWLEDGE:** Listen deeply and validate what you're hearing before you respond → "What I'm hearing is..." "That makes sense because..."
5. **DISCOVER COMMON GROUND:** Find shared goals, values, or concerns that connect you → "We both want..." "What we agree on is..."
6. **SYNERGIZE:** Co-create solutions together instead of pushing your agenda → "What if we..." "How might we..." "What would work for both of us?"

WHY THE SEQUENCE MATTERS

You can't skip steps. If you jump straight to Step 6 (Synergize) without doing Steps 4–5 (Understand and Find Common Ground), people will resist.

The framework builds trust step by step. Each step creates the foundation for the next.

WHEN TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

- Navigating tough conversations
- Building stakeholder trust
- Influencing without authority
- When you need buy-in or support
- In conflict or resistance situations

KEY TAKEAWAY: *Communication isn't just about talking—it's about connecting. This framework IS that process.*

LAUNCH PAD + RECOGNIZE YOUR AUDIENCE

Communication Framework Steps 1-2

STEP 1: LAUNCH PAD (Prepare Yourself)

Before an important conversation, ask yourself:

- WHAT'S MY GOAL? What do I actually want to accomplish? (Be specific)
- WHAT ASSUMPTIONS AM I MAKING? Am I climbing the Ladder of Inference? What do I think I "know" that I might not?
- WHAT'S MY EMOTIONAL STATE? Am I calm and centered? Or am I frustrated, defensive, or anxious?
- WHAT BIASES MIGHT BE SHOWING UP? Am I making judgments about this person or situation?

STEP 2: RECOGNIZE YOUR AUDIENCE (Understand Them)

Before the conversation, research and reflect:

- WHO ARE THEY? Role, background, expertise, communication style
- WHAT DO THEY CARE ABOUT? Goals, priorities, current pressures
- WHAT'S THEIR PERSPECTIVE? Context, past experiences with this topic, potential concerns
- WHAT MOTIVATES THEM? Recognition? Efficiency? Innovation? Relationships? Problem-solving?
- HOW DO THEY PREFER TO COMMUNICATE? Data-driven? Story-driven? Direct? Collaborative? Visual? Detailed?

WHY THIS MATTERS

When you SKIP Steps 1-2:	When you DO Steps 1-2 well:
You bring unchecked emotions/biases	You show up grounded and clear
You frame around what YOU care about	You speak their language
You miss opportunities to connect	You build trust faster
You create resistance	You increase your influence

KEY TAKEAWAY: *Great communication starts before you even open your mouth. Most communication breakdowns happen because we skip preparation.*