



Bridging the Gap: Communication Guide for Previously Inaccessible Directors

Do you find yourself unintentionally coming across as distant or unapproachable to your team? Leading with an open and accessible style fosters a more collaborative and productive work environment. This guide will equip you, the "previously inaccessible director," with practical steps to bridge the communication gap and connect with your team in new ways.

1. From Monologue to Dialogue: Shifting Gears in Team Meetings:

- **Move from "information dumps" to interactive sessions.** Instead of lengthy presentations, consider shorter updates followed by Q&A sessions or breakout discussions where team members can share ideas and insights.
- **Actively solicit feedback.** Don't be afraid to ask direct questions like: "What are your biggest concerns about this project?" or "Do you have any suggestions for improvement?"
- **Practice active listening.** Dedicate time during meetings to hear from your team. Use verbal and non-verbal cues to show engagement, like nodding, summarizing what you've heard, and avoiding distractions.

Practical Exercise: During your next team meeting, allocate a specific portion of time for open discussion and feedback. Use open-ended questions and avoid interrupting team members who are sharing their thoughts.

Example: "We've just finished discussing the launch strategy for the new product line. Now, I'd like to hear your thoughts and suggestions. What aspects of the plan are most concerning, or what ideas do you have to improve its effectiveness?"

Journaling Prompt: Reflect on your past communication style in team meetings. How comfortable do you feel soliciting feedback, and how engaged are your team members during these sessions? Identify areas where you can improve the dynamic.

2. Encouraging Open Communication & Collaboration:

- **Lead by example.** Actively share your own ideas and thought processes, but also acknowledge that you don't have all the answers.
- **Foster a safe space for sharing.** Encourage team members to respectfully disagree, propose alternative solutions, and participate in problem-solving.
- **Develop clear communication channels.** Utilize multiple communication platforms like email, internal platforms, or instant messaging tools to ensure accessibility and information flow.



Example: When a team member proposes an approach that differs from yours, acknowledge their suggestion and ask them to elaborate. This shows your openness to diverse viewpoints and fosters a collaborative environment.

Journaling Prompt: Think about a time when a team member offered a dissenting opinion or suggestion in the past. How did you react? Consider how you can actively encourage this type of open communication moving forward.

3. Building Stronger Relationships Through One-on-Ones:

- **Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with team members.** This allows you to get to know them better on a personal and professional level, and provide a platform for open dialogue.
- **Shift your focus.** These meetings are not just performance reviews. Focus on career development, addressing concerns, and understanding individual goals.
- **Actively listen and provide constructive feedback.** Express your appreciation for their contributions and offer development suggestions in a supportive and encouraging way.

Practical Exercise: Schedule a sequence of one-on-one meetings with your team members within the next few weeks. Develop an agenda beforehand that incorporates getting to know them on a personal level and addressing their professional needs.

Example: During a one-on-one meeting, ask your team member: "What are your biggest challenges in your current role, and how can I best support you?"

Journaling Prompt: Reflect on your experience with one-on-one meetings in the past. How could you adjust your approach to create a more open and productive environment for yourself and your team members?

By incorporating these communication strategies and engaging in the provided exercises, you can transform yourself from an "inaccessible director" into a leader who fosters open communication, values diverse perspectives, and encourages a collaborative and thriving work environment.

Need Support? Reach out to us at charlene@habitatforleadership.com

Ready to explore if coaching is right for you? Schedule [here](#)