

Andy Bounds

Make all your communications great, not “not rubbish”



In 1959, psychologist Frederick Herzberg proposed there are two sets of factors that influence our levels of job satisfaction - hygiene factors and motivators.

A ‘hygiene factor’ causes job dissatisfaction. But – when removed – it only stops us being dissatisfied; it doesn’t make us satisfied.

For example, you might feel dissatisfied if it’s too cold in your office. But, when they get the temperature right, it stops your dissatisfaction; but doesn’t motivate you (do you know anyone who’s buzzing with excitement, itching to go the extra mile, just because they feel the right temperature?).

It’s a good term for it; poor *hygiene* makes you ill. But excellent hygiene doesn’t make you super-fit. It just stops the illness.

Motivators – on the other hand, motivate (surprisingly). So, things like the prospect of promotion, praise, recognition and achievement *do* make us go the extra mile.

So, a quick summary: hygiene factors take you from dissatisfied to neutral; motivators from neutral to satisfied.

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And the relevance to communication?

Well, let’s be honest, a lot of it isn’t very good. This leads to dissatisfaction. And people tend to do two things about this. Either:

1. Nothing – “We’ve held our weekly Update Meetings for years. And they’re *terrible*. Everyone hates them. And they always will because they’ll never change”; or
2. Remove the hygienes only – “How can we make our Update Meetings *less boring*?”

The first of these two achieves... well, nothing.

And the second only removes the negatives, or hygiene factors. So the best outcome is neutral. So, the communication still isn’t great. It just isn’t as rubbish anymore.

Other examples:

- Making a presentation? People often say “I’m nervous. I hope I don’t mess it up”. So that means your best outcome is that you didn’t mess it up
- Writing a report? If you think “How can I pull this together quickly – I haven’t got time to make it good”. Well, the best outcome is something that’s quick but not good

- Making a sale, but thinking “How will I avoid the dreaded price objection?” This means you focus too much on price, and too little on the value you’re delivering

Now I don’t know about you, but I don’t want the heights of my ambition to be that one day, if I’m lucky, I might just become a bit less rubbish.

So, to improve your comms, ask yourself different questions:

1. How can we make this meeting brilliant?
2. How can I make this presentation career-changing? What do I need to say, and how must I deliver it, so that I wow every single person in the room?
3. How can I ensure this report delivers great outcomes for both the reader and me? So they get the right information, so they can make the right decisions. And so I get the praise/endorsement I’m after?
4. How can I focus all the conversation on the value I’ll deliver to the customer?

These are easy questions to ask. They’re often easy to answer too.

And, all of a sudden, your comms have more chance of being great, not just “not rubbish”.

Action point

You know your next communication today? The one you're about to make? Will it be rubbish, not rubbish or great? What can you do to ensure it's the latter?

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About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain's Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world's largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him '... more about effective communicating than a lady who'd taught two American Presidents'.

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His core belief is “it's not what you say that counts. It's what people do differently after you've said it”.

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