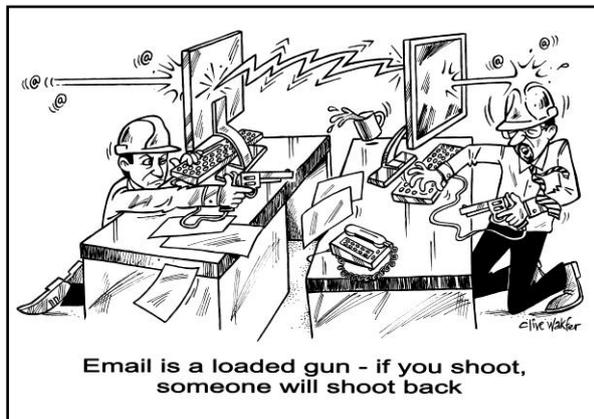




## THE ARCHITECTS OF TOMORROW

In business everything starts with a conversation and so the quality of that conversation determines everything. Organisations with a low spoken to written word ratio will suffer, as executives will hide behind screens for most of the day firing out emails. As we all know Email can be a loaded gun and if you shoot, people are likely to shoot back.

Viktor Frankl delivered arguably the single most powerful slice of philosophy to humankind when he taught the world to recognise and manage the gap between stimulus and response - so powerful that Steven Covey turned it into his first habit in his best selling '7 Habits' book.



There are many barriers to effective communication; sometimes it's hard to pass the 'ACID' test which places 4 obstacles in between the communicator and a great conversation:

- Apathy** - easier to defer or avoid
- Convenience** - choosing email or text
- Interference** - pride, fear, anger, hurt, embarrassment, depression, intimidation, stress
- Distraction** - workload, pressure, online communities, television, radio, newspapers etc

ACID burns through the fabric of essential communication and prevents us from having vital conversations. When there is conflict, leadership in communication is simply making the first move, knowing that future events can be designed or influenced just by having the right conversation.

Many thanks to ace cartoonist, Clive Wakfer:  
[www.clivewakfer-cartoonist-illustrator.co.uk](http://www.clivewakfer-cartoonist-illustrator.co.uk)

## WE NEED TO TALK

Companies are littered with people who are unhappy with the way they are being managed. Maybe their manager is too 'prescriptive' which can suggest a lack of trust, or sometimes too 'pre-occupied' which can cause a lack of attention.

Reports sometimes carry around a clear picture in their head of what they believe a 'good manager' is and these fierce expectations may not match the reality. This causes frustration and even anger, fuelled by their resistance to clearly stating their feelings in an honest encounter. They skirt around the issues which means some managers are never fully aware of the impact of their own behaviour.

This is a 2-way problem: the manager doesn't foster an open relationship and the report shies away from forcing the issue. So what type of communicator and listener are you?

- Amiable Diplomat** – holes in the back seat of their trousers through much non-committal fence-sitting
- Articulate Advisor** – enthusiastic mentor who gives advice in great detail and with flamboyant precision
- Bad Cop** – aggressive use of authority; Good Cop sometimes accompanies but can end up imitating
- Information Taxi** – ships data from one individual to another without adding value; emails start with 'FYI' or 'JSYK'; sometimes useful, sometimes avoidance / hovering above stressful activity
- Railroader** – the very height of work passion; just have to push this idea through and there is simply no room upstairs for any other opinion
- Sharp Reactor** – on a life mission, determined to turn surface over-reaction into an art form

## COACHING TOOLS – The Listening Model

- The Juggler** – juggles what is being said with other internal distractions which prevent full attention
- The Hurrier** – drives the conversation at a high speed as has to get back to work / another appointment
- The Rehearser** – prepares what is going to say next at the expense of what is currently being said
- The Pretender** – to all intents and purposes is listening as does all the right things; but isn't fully in the moment
- The Fixer** – starts to prepare advice usually before the issue has been fully aired / investigated