



## Communicating to Inspire

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Do you ever struggle with communication? Have you ever talked to someone in plain, simple English, but in return you see a “deer in the headlights” look tells you they don’t get it? And then you wonder how they could in the world they could not get it?

Your job as leaders of MnUSA is to help members and non-members alike “get it.” Protecting trails is a big message to communicate. You can do that effectively when you’re grounded in shared values and use three simple techniques: words, tone of voice and body language that inspire and motivate.

Here are three steps for MnUSA leaders to inspire members and non-members alike:

First, know and be grounded in common values: respect, honesty, quality, teamwork and trust.

Sounds simple, right? It is. But it’s critical. You and other snowmobilers share a love of the sport. Therefore, as leaders, it’s critical that you respect other people and their opinions. Be honest with people, but never brutal. Commit to quality, but don’t demand only YOUR way to get there. Desire teamwork and reward it because together, everyone does accomplish more than “I” can by myself. And live with the integrity that creates trust. Build trust by doing what you say you’ll do, but building other people and thanking them for what they do.

Second, see each other not just as members, but as customers. Develop a “member service” culture where people feel valued and appreciated for belonging and volunteering. Don’t expect them to belong for YOUR reasons. Focus on their reasons, just as you would focus on a business customer.

Third, communicate to emphasize their important roles as members, and be open to what that means. Younger members have computer skills that can help MnUSA stay in touch with members and non-members. Find ways to let them use their skills, move up early as leaders, and then let them lead.

Positive encouragement, recognition and hearing “thank you” go a long ways in creating positive communication. Remember that only 7% of the emotional meaning in a conversation comes from the words you speak, 35% from your tone of voice, and 58% from your body

language. Focus on positive body language: uncrossed arms, a smile, nodding your head all help people feel welcome when they meet you.

Be open—truly open—to new people, new ideas. Be strengthened by your values. If we truly respect and trust, value teamwork, we'll be more open to others' ideas. Change cannot be stopped, but it's much easier to accept and benefit from if we view the world as being much bigger than us.

When you create something you want to last, quality is critical. And quality brings a pride that involves us a members, and when I help build, I value more.

My mom taught me a simple lesson on quality way before Lee Iacoca talked about it. She always said, "If you're going to bother to do something, do it well." She also taught me to share. When I was ready to "cut" the one brownie left in the pan so I could "share" it with my sister, mom told me to go ahead and cut it. But, she added, my sister would get first choice of pieces.

What choice of "pieces" are you willing to give to younger members today? Leadership pieces? Important roles, decisions? Or do you expect them to just join and do things "your way." Which way would you cut the brownie?

Look and listen to your leadership communication style today. The Nike slogan is a great marketing tool, but a poor leadership model.

Communicate the joy leaders like you had in creating the great trails Minnesota enjoys today. Share your commitment to quality with inspiring words and a smile. The only way trails will survive for my grandson and yours is if younger members step up and take leadership roles. Help younger members to appreciate the quality trails experience available in Minnesota by talking with them, being open to them, focusing on them, and serving them. They are, after, your future.

## **About Dee Dee Raap:**

Dee Dee Raap is a service expert, national speaker and consultant who loves to help people make their journey great. Dee Dee believes we all serve, and how we serve, lead and live is guided by the authentic, timeless values inspired by our moms and other key people. Putting those values to practice every day not only makes service great, but helps organizations grow and retain employees, a result Dee Dee's clients and audiences know well.

For information on authentic inspiration to make service, leadership and life great, go to [www.DeDeeRaap.com](http://www.DeDeeRaap.com).

