

# IEDC Faculty: Learning from the best



*A School with a View*

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Prof. Dorothy Grandia, Rotterdam School of Management, the Netherlands and INSEAD, France

## “IT IS EASIER TO CONTROL DELIVERY THAN PERCEPTION”

**It is not unusual that people who deliver leadership development communication programs have been theatrical professionals at one point in their career. One of such professionals is also Prof. Dorothy Grandia, who will lead a new IEDC seminar titled “Communicating with Influence” in June. Obviously, her career did not start at Faculty or in company, but in an opera. Dorothy has a Master in Vocal Performance from the Mannes College/New School University in New York City, where she studied voice, diction, and characterization with stars of the Metropolitan Opera.**

Now she combines her unique experience, on the operatic stage, in the political arena, and in leadership and communication programs to help leaders evolve their communication range and increase their leadership influence. She is a faculty member at Rotterdam School of Management, where she delivers Leadership Communication programs for the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations and Personal and Career Development programming for pre- and post-experience students and professionals. She is also Assistant Director of the RSM Career Development Centre. On behalf of Steve Knight Business Communications, Dorothy coaches participants of the INSEAD Art of Communication course for Executive and fulltime MBAs on projecting clarity, engagement, and influence. She delivers research-based and highly interactive



Communication and Negotiation Programs at organizations such as Europol, the European Central Bank, ING, and Pfizer, as well as Open Programs at Rotterdam School of Management Executive Education. On behalf of Crown International Mobility, she coaches Unilever expatriates on integration both into life in the Netherlands as well as into the multinational decision-making environment at Unilever. She also coaches leaders to deliver powerful keynote speeches at conferences and TedX events. In her own TedX talk “Authenticity is a Dangerous Word”, Dorothy explores how feeling the need to be ‘authentic’ can be a disadvantage for women in leadership. Very inspiring and worth watching!

Even though the span of her professional activities is wide, they all focus on the common goal: Dorothy helps bring the best performance out of people. Join her two-day workshop at IEDC and allow her to help you create more influence in your company. Save the dates: June 8 -9.

**By: Tonja Blatnik, Head of Corporate Communications, IEDC**

**As an operatic young dramatic soprano, you performed in lead roles in the Netherlands, France, and the US. What are the key “music lessons” that are useful in a business world?**

When you are on stage, you are inhabiting a ‘role’. You are not only singing words and notes - you are interacting with others, following the conductor, and expressing your interpretation of the role and story all at the same time.

So your focus is in part on noticing and responding to what’s going on around you (your fellow actors might act differently than usual, the conductor may push things forward, even the set may be on fire!). But your focus is also in part on how you are delivering your role – your communication – and the impact this is having on your environment.

Communication is always a two-way street between sender and receiver. Receivers – your listeners – are listening not just to your words, but also to you – the messenger. On stage, effectively communicating a role involves not just the words and notes (the message), but also the tone of your voice, your posture, how your body moves (the messenger). The same goes for all verbal communication. Learning how to both notice how you deliver communication and how to gauge and respond to your environment isn’t just useful on stage – it’s a great skill to develop in order to increase your influence in business. That is why it’s quite common for people who deliver leadership development communication programs to have been theatrical professionals at one point in their career.

**What are going to be the main**

**takeaways for the participants of your seminar “Communicating with Influence”, which will take place at IEDC in June?**

The tools we will use – pyramid-structured, top-down leadership communication tools – will help participants change their communication style at work from informative to persuasive.

In a practical sense, each participant will experience creating a ‘statement of influence’ from start-to-finish. This statement will reflect the change they want to make in their organization and why that change matters, much like a suggestion for change they might bring up in a meeting or conversation at work. By structuring this statement in a clear and powerful way, framing the statement to appeal to the value and benefit for the listeners, and delivering the statement in a powerful but engaging manner, participants will practice in the workshop the changes in communication they will make afterward.

Each participant will also understand their natural preference for negotiation, even informal negotiation for resources and support at work, and practice different styles of negotiation in role-play that they can employ at work to achieve better results.

**Everyone wants to be as effective as possible when it comes to communication, but what is the right combination of our own authentic-self and the golden rules?**

There is no one perfect combination – the best way to frame this question is to think first

about how we naturally learn to adapt our communication style to context and purpose. For example, in most cultures, you do not speak the same way at a formal holiday dinner with your grandparents as you do when you are out for a night on the town with your buddies. That change in how you speak does not make you inauthentic; it just makes you socially adaptable.

In my experience, most clients stumble on the idea of authenticity when it comes to adapting how they say what they say in order to achieve a goal. For some people, that adaptation feels ‘manipulative’. If your behavior isn’t in line with what you say you value and what you say you’ll do, eventually people will experience you as ‘inauthentic’.

But most of the time, when people are adapting their communication style in order to become more effective or influential, their discomfort stems from ‘cognitive (in)competence’, or the psychological unease that comes from disrupting how they normally think and talk. Eventually, if practiced enough, those new patterns of communication become second nature and the feeling of inauthenticity disappears.

**What do good negotiators have in common?**

Good negotiators have a lot in common – but the top two mental frameworks which good negotiators use are

- knowing and adapting negotiation strategy when it’s the right time to talk about content (concrete issues) and when it’s the right time to investigate motivations (underlying issues driving the negotiation) and

- knowing and adapting their negotiation style to the counterparty and the context, not simply using the style which is most comfortable for them.

**If it is true, that the most effective negotiators are capable of making the other party believe they got the best deal they could under the circumstances, does it also mean that best negotiators are as well great manipulators? Is the win-win situation always possible?**

Here is that word ‘manipulation’ again. It has a negative connotation. I would toss the question back to the reader – what is the difference between manipulation and influence? If the other party does not just believe that they are better off, but they are actually benefitting from the deal (as are you), does that absolve you of the ‘guilt’ of being a skilled negotiator (or practiced influencer, or manipulator, etc.)?

In the end, if you get people to agree to a deal thinking it is great for them but they find out later on that it is not, your reputation will be damaged. In the US we call this a “bait-and-switch”. Bait-and-switch is never a good negotiation option for anyone who cares about their reputation. The upshot is that if you use “framing” – describing advantages of a deal from the counterparty’s perspective – that framing better turn out to be accurate.

Here is an example: Let’s say you and I want to watch a movie on TV together tonight. There are many options to choose from. I like disaster movies, you like love stories. It turns out that the movie Titanic is on tonight. I have seen it before and want to see it again; you have never seen (or heard) of

it. Now, if I try to convince you to watch the movie Titanic tonight by convincing you it is a great love story – does that make me manipulative? To many people, the Titanic is a great love story. I do not really like love stories, but does that matter? Now consider this angle - if I know for a fact that you like love stories and you also HATE disaster movies and I still convince you to watch the Titanic, what’s the difference from the first scenario?

To your second question – a win-win negotiation is not always possible or even desirable. Win-win negotiations are generally time-consuming, and sometimes it is better for everyone in the long run just to compromise or to accommodate at that moment in the relationship or on that smaller issue in a larger negotiation. Win-win negotiation as a concept is en vogue because it is a good approach for preserving relationships. If you are always winning and your partner is always losing, eventually, they will not be your partner any more. But if you have a ‘transactional’ negotiation with someone you’ll never see again and who has no connection to your social network, a win-win approach may take a lot of effort for no practical gain.

**What is the most difficult part for leaders when they share their visions, trying to convince others of their ideas, but still preserving relationship?**

The biggest challenge for leaders lies in the incalculable number of variables that influence the future. In a way, the future is a scary place to many people simply because we can never be sure of what is going to happen. Leadership is about showing direction and gaining followers to create positive results together in the future. You can coerce people into action – but that requires extrinsic power. In a sense,

extrinsic power is easy power. More difficult? Inspiring people to belief and action – to have faith in your lead - by appealing to their sense of reason, their sense of what is right, and/or their desires and fears. Of course, the reality is usually somewhere in between these two simple frameworks.

Unfortunately, what we are seeing in international politics lately confirms that the easiest way to inspire people is by appealing to their fear and anger. You can get people to follow you that way, but fear-based behavior has a downside.

When you focus on avoiding a negative outcome, you lose the opportunity to focus on what you and your team or company can gain in the future.

Finding the balance between having a positive vision and allaying people’s concerns about the future or anger about the now is indeed tough. Therefore, from that perspective, let me use an old allegory – there are many roads to Rome. If Rome is the beautiful vision of the positive future you want everyone to get to, you can describe Rome and engage everyone to want to get there, but you also have to do some work to determine where each of your listeners are now and what their transportation options are.

**How much of our communication impact is defined by the non-formal part of the presentation, such as body language, vocal intonation? Can we control it?**

Famous research dating from the 60s suggested that people interpret verbal communication by ‘listening’ to body language (55%), tone of voice (38%), and words (7%). This bit of research is widely

misunderstood. What the research was really suggesting was that if there is a misalignment (mixed message) between words and/or tone and body language, in some contexts, listeners were more inclined to believe what the body language or tone of voice was “saying” rather than the words they were hearing. Imagine your partner screaming “I LOVE YOU!!!!” at you and you’ll know what I mean.

In the years since that research was unveiled, neuroscientists have conducted heaps of research which seems to be clarifying that it’s likely that the part of our brains that kept the human race alive back when our very survival depended more on communication and cooperation with the tribe – hunting together, fighting for resources against other tribes together and before the dawn of language – that part of our brain is still informing the more modern, cognitively pronounced part of our brain of how to interpret a verbal message.

As to your follow up question, can we control that impact? We can try to control one or both of two aspects of communication in order to increase effectiveness:

1) how we perceive communication (as the ‘receiver’) and 2) how we deliver communication (as the ‘sender’). Science would suggest that it is easier to control (i.e., to change) delivery than perception.

**Please, give us five tips about how to construct messages that engage and convince?**

Before you start talking, think first:

- What do you want the listener to think, feel, believe, or do differently because you spoke, and how will that affect what you say?

- What is the right time, the right manner, the right place for this message to be heard and adopted?
- What is the listener’s perspective on this message and how will that affect how I frame the message?
- How will my own feelings – or lack of feelings – about the message affect how I am perceived? How will the listener’s feelings about the issue and about me affect how I am perceived?
- Do I know the answers to questions 2 – 4 well enough to start talking? Or do I need to do a little more ‘political landscape mapping’ to find out?



## MEET DOROTHY PERSONALLY

### I am inspired by ...

... encountering different cultures – I love to learn about the difference between personal influence on decision-making versus the influence of cultural norms on decision-making. Travel and teaching and interacting with people from a different language and culture is the best way for me to experience that.

### My favorite part of the day is ...

... twilight, because I love to watch the changing sky and the reflection on the water from my house on the Rotte River in Rotterdam.

### My friends would describe me as ...

... someone who likes to incorporate humor into everything she does.

**I believe in ...**

... the ultimate lean toward positive change in the world – positive change doesn't always come equally or evenly, but in the long term. I try to do what I can to contribute to this progress.

**My most precious lesson in my life was ...**

... losing my parents when I was relatively young. They were too young to die, and I was a young adult who felt like an orphan. It was a terrible time, but the years – decades now! – after their deaths taught me that I had already learned a lot from them, that I have a great bond with my siblings, and that I am a fighter. I carry that lesson with me every day.

**My dream is ...**

... to be remembered as someone who helped people bring the best out of themselves.