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# WE LOVE YOU MADLY

A CONCISE GUIDE TO GOOD COMMUNICATIONS

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# We Love You Madly – A Concise Guide to Good Communications

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## 1 Introduction



The Title for this Guide comes from one of the great communicators of all time Duke Ellington who closed his performance at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1956 with his trademark farewell *"You are very beautiful, very sweet and we do love you madly."*

This Guide is not a blow by blow account of communication in terms of means of communication or a state of the art guide to social media and the latest fad or fashion in communication, it is a Guide in which crucial functions of the communications process in your working life are highlighted and illustrated. The Guide is primarily aimed at the jazz musician and the volunteer jazz promoter.

Two of the great communicators in jazz were Humphrey Lyttelton and Duke Ellington. Other people in jazz who have excellent communication skills and are well worth seeing or listening to are: Nikki Illes who presents her music well and is also an inspirational teacher. Soweto Kinch has become a media personality with an interesting angle on the music, a personal presence and a great sense of humour too. On the current UK scene, players such as trumpeter/bandleader Matt Roberts (hilarious announcements), saxophonists Phil Meadows (focussed and ready to welcome an audience into what the music is about), Nubya Garcia has appeal and relates to her audiences and Wendy Kirkland gets her music across to the audience. These are just a few that are worth mentioning.

## 2 What is communication?

Communication is simply transferring information from one person, group or place to another. The Oxford English Dictionary's definition of "communication" is:

"The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.  
...The successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings".

The Oxford English Dictionary' definition is useful as it brings into play the proselytisation of ideas and the sharing of feelings. The whole crux of communication by whatever means is getting your ideas across and with empathy for the other person's feelings. This is sometimes a tall order but the golden rule is "always be nice to people on the way up as you meet them on the way down" and common courtesy is the one commodity we can give away by the bucket load and it does not cost us a penny

Many people think that the communication mix revolves around social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook or the latest development. However for the jazz musician or jazz promoter the message or information can be communicated in a number of ways:

Spoken communication – this includes face to face, you to an audience, radio, television and other media such as YouTube or TikTok

Non-Spoken communication – this covers how we dress, how we act and our general demeanour and behaviour, body language, gestures, the tone of our voice which can indicate our mood or emotional state, our gestures our hand signals can add positively or negatively to a spoken message

Written communication – including letters, postcards, email, social media, newspapers, magazines, books the internet and other media. Today every one can write and post (publish) their ideas and articles online.

I am sure some people will say I know all this and they do, but do they use it to their full advantage or like insects, which use surface tension, skate on the surface of it all.

### 3 Communications - some dos and don'ts

#### 3.1 Written communications

In the introduction I mentioned that the Guide was not a text book on communications but tips for developing essential core communication, skills, activity and functions. For detailed guides to various communication topics CD Baby publish a range of guides that are free to download and available here: <https://cdbaby.com/musician-guides.aspx>

- *Marketing Your Music 101* - Essential tips for getting your music out there
- *Remarketing for Musicians* - A better way to tell your story, build a loyal fanbase, and drive music sales online.
- *50 Music Promo Ideas You Can Do Right Now* - No budget? No time? No problem.
- *The Complete Music Promotion Checklist* - Do you have everything you need to share your music with the world?
- *Email Marketing For Musicians* - Six steps to growing and monetizing your email list
- *The 30-Minute YouTube Bootcamp for Musicians* - Turn your YouTube presence into a real promotional tool and revenue stream.
- *CD Baby's TikTok Guide for Musicians* - Building your audience with short-form video
- *Creating Effective Facebook Events* - Fourteen rules to get more people to your shows

There are also further Guides on the Online Music Business Resource at:

<https://www.chrishodgkins.co.uk/business-education/>

The first essential function is responding to people's communications. There seem to be two types of people, those who respond and for some reason those people who think it is smart not to bother – and this is not just in jazz it seems to be across society at large. Clearly you use your judgment and do not respond to SPAM or group emails but if you want to be professional, on the case and build a reputation for competence then respond with alacrity.

Here are two copper bottomed reasons why it is good to respond and the golden rule:

- It is courteous – it is incredibly frustrating, irritating, time wasting and counterproductive when people do not respond and it is bad manners. They may be busy but then so is the person who is emailing them. As mentioned earlier common courtesy is the one commodity we can give away by the bucket load and it does not cost a penny, it is free and it generates good will. A well constructed out of office reply or if you cannot reply fully then a quick holding email of acknowledgement helps and is a measure of politeness.
- You will be seen as reliable - when you respond quickly to those who contact you, you are generating an impression that you mean business, are responsive, prompt, reliable and even trustworthy and appreciate speed in your correspondence
- And remember the golden rule “Always be nice to people on the way up as you meet them on the way down” and also Michelle Obama's now-famous catchphrase “When they go low, we go high.”

A working example of what generates good will and a good reputation can be experienced if you are planning a tour. I organised a tour in 2018 for May 2019. Planning a year ahead I personally emailed 162 promoters and I then personally reminded 90 promoters. Out of 162 promoters I received 80 responses. Half of the promoters did not respond even with an out of office reply – some of these promoters who did not respond were receiving public funding. But let's be positive and dwell on the ones who did reply. The replies were helpful and you knew where you stood, some promoters kindly suggested other promoters in their area who might be more suitable and a lot of the promoters had helpful out of office replies that informed you about how they book and run their operations and if they were going to book you they would let you know – a case of don't hold your breath but you know where you stood and you could move on. Jazz at the Lescar is a prima facie example of good

communications even with an out of office reply. They were awarded Jazz Promoter of the Year in the 2018 Parliamentary Jazz Awards, Jazz at The Lescar is a non-profit jazz night run by a group of committed volunteers, operating every Wednesday night at The Lescar Hotel, in Sheffield. Please see Appendix 1

### **3.2 On the bandstand – spoken and non-spoken communication**

In communicating to your audience your manners, mien and demeanour on stage are crucial.

*“That is not to say you have to emulate some ghastly chat show host with stitched on smile, servile blandishments and a fawning manner or on the other hand display all the warmth and vitality of an undertaker’s mute. However, it does help to be smartly turned out and look reasonably cheerful; even if your partner has run off with the local vicar and your credit cards. Finally, when you make an announcement, pick the microphone up. How many times have we all seen the band leader crouched over the microphone still attached to the stand, looking like Houdini in the final throes of escaping from a straitjacket?”* (See Marketing Your Band at: [Online Music Business Resource](#))

It is worth remembering the tone of your voice can give a clue to your emotional state and your gestures and the movement of hands can add or detract from the message you want to convey. To help you develop a stage presence you could video yourself on your mobile phone and show it to friends to see get some feedback and ways in which you can improve your presentational style.

### **4 Social media and staying ahead of the curve – the Product Life Cycle**

Any musician or jazz promoter who wants to be on top of communications and ahead of the game or the “curve” it helps to understand the notion of the product life cycle.

The product life cycle describes how a product, like a human being, is born, moves to infancy childhood, middle and then old age. Each stage of a products life attracts different kinds of buyers. The introduction stage which is where a new product has been developed and launched attracts the buyer known as an “innovator” who comprises 2.5% of the market hot on the heels of the “Innovator” is the “Early Adopter” who makes up 13.5% of the market. These two groups of people are opinion formers they are people ahead of the game.

For example Tik Tok was launched in September 2016, and in the three years since its launch, it has grown at a phenomenal rate. TikTok has 800 million active users worldwide (Datareportal, 2020). TikTok is ninth in terms of social network sites, ahead of LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat. TikTok has connected with the young people of the world. 41 percent of TikTok users are aged between 16 and 24 (Globalwebindex, 2019) So the smart musician would have been on to Tik Tok from the start and been an “Innovator” or at least an “Early Adopter.” Whereas the author is still scratching his head and will be lucky to make the decline stage as a laggard probably more as a left behind.

Set out below are the four stages of the product life cycle and profile of the buyer for each stage. At risk of over egging the pudding it will come as no surprise to know that where you want to be is on the ground floor, ahead of the game and ahead of the curve. To stay in front to you need to be an “innovator” in the “introduction” stage of the launch of new social media. If you are an “innovator” then you will be initially communicating with people who are also “innovators”. You can see their profile below but they are people who like new ideas.

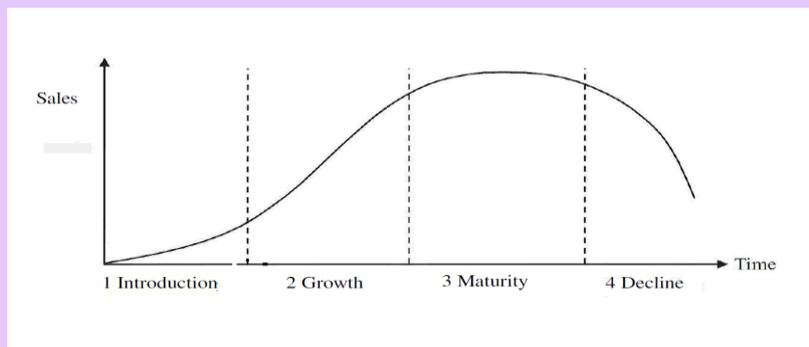


Figure 1: Product Life Cycle © Chris Hodgkins

The introduction stage of the Product Life Cycle is when new social media is introduced into the market place. The growth stage follows as interest is created and the new media is accepted, followed by the mature stage. Decline follows and is the final stage unless the social media is repositioned and the product life cycle is restarted. Hand in hand with the product life cycle is Professor Everett Rogers' theory of *Diffusions of Innovation* that explains how and at what rate new ideas and technology are advanced and the buyers or the market at each stage

- The Introduction stage attracts the Innovators who make up the 2.5% of the market who will adopt a new idea. Innovators are closely followed by Early Adopters who are best described as opinion formers in their respective communities and take to new ideas or new social media early and they comprise 13.5% of people who adopt a new idea.
- The Growth stage is characterized by buyers who are the Early Majority. They adopt new social media before the average person and make up 34% of the market.
- Maturity has buyers known as the Late Majority who have reservations and only adopt new social media after a majority of people have tried it. They account for 34% of buyers.
- The Decline stage is identified with Laggards who are bound by tradition and finally purchase when the social media has taken on a degree of tradition. Laggards account for 16% of buyers.

Whilst these notions might seem recondite they have important implications for jazz and its constant search for renewal. (Philip Kotler, *Marketing Management*, Prentice Hall International 1988 pp.349-351 and pp.440-441)

## 5 Finally

I am grateful to Paul Pace and Jez Matthews for their help and advice.

### Appendix 1 - Jazz at the Lescar out of office reply

Hello!

Thanks for contacting Jazz at The Lescar.

#### Audience Enquiries

I will get back to you as soon as possible, although as I run the night in my spare time, I tend to do this from Sunday to Tuesday, so if you contact me between Wednesday (gig night) and Saturday inclusive, you may not hear back from me for a couple of days.

#### Musician Enquiries

If you are a musician enquiring about a gig at The Lescar, please note that if your enquiry is a new one, we have now filled all dates in 2020 and have a shortlist of enough bands to take us well into 2021. Any new requests for gigs will be put onto our list for consideration for 2020 in the event of any cancellations or dates that we are unable to fill; or else put on on our list for the **remaining dates in**

**2021.** We will continue to review all applications in case any gaps in our schedule emerge before then. Due to the volume of gig requests I cannot promise to reply to everyone who gets in touch, but ***I do read all emails, and will get back to you if we are interested in giving you a gig.*** Unfortunately we are not sufficiently resourced to reply to all emails, setup new bookings, and also keep on top of the weekly running of the club.

If you are seeking an update for a gig request that you have made previously to us, but have not heard back, we regret also that there isn't time for us to update everyone who has requested a gig, for the reasons given above. We hope that you understand this.

More details

You can find more details about us (including our current programme) at our website [www.jazzatthelescar.com](http://www.jazzatthelescar.com), or on our Facebook page.

Awarded Jazz Promoter of the Year in the 2018 Parliamentary Jazz Awards, Jazz at The Lescar is a non-profit jazz night run by a group of committed volunteers, operating every Wednesday night at The Lescar Hotel, in Sheffield (<http://www.thelescarhuntersbar.co.uk>).

Doors 8.15pm, music 8.45pm.

Thank you!

Finally, thank you to all the musicians, audience, and many others who continue to support us in many ways running Jazz at The Lescar weekly throughout the year. We believe passionately in giving a platform to the music that we are promoting, and we really couldn't do it without you!

Best wishes,

Jez Matthews & The Jazz at The Lescar team (Hannah, Rich, Helen, Alan, Steve, Francesca, Will, Alex, Ben)

Jazz Promoter of the Year 2018 Parliamentary Jazz Awards

[www.jazzatthelescar.com](http://www.jazzatthelescar.com)

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