

Association Executives of North Carolina

Success *Live*

BY ASSOCIATION

The below educational content of this edition of *Success by Association Live* is sponsored by Visit Greenville NC.



[Click to Listen
to the Article](#)

NETWORKING DOWNTOWN STYLE

Beyond our modern meeting spaces and networking-friendly hotels, you'll discover a restaurant scene bursting with creativity, legendary Eastern NC whole hog BBQ and emerging art galleries. Host your corporate event, trade show or reunion here and meet the real-deal Greenville. NC's Emerald City is filled with countless hidden gems.

Rachel Whitten, CMP
VP of Sales & Services at Visit Greenville, NC
252-329-4244 | Rachel@VisitGreenvilleNC.com
VisitGreenvilleNC.com/Meetings

@visitgreenvillenc @visitgreenvillenc
 @visitgreenvillenc @visitgreenville

Leading From the Top: Professional Communication Strategies

Andora Gandy Hinton

Click [here](#) to listen to the article instead!

May 7, 2025

Leading From the Top: Professional Communication Strategies

Andora Gandy Hinton, Founder & CEO, **Willow Growth North Partners**

When we get down to the fundamentals, communication is exchanging information. Whether it's ideas, plans, goals, or concerns, we should be able to work with others toward a shared, actionable understanding. As a leader, how you give and receive information is integral to your success. So how do you lead from the top and model communication that gets results?

Here's what we suggest to lay a strong foundation.

1. Be Specific About What You Need.

At the core of our communication, whether we're talking or listening, are unmet needs. You don't have to lay everything on the table in every interaction, but it can be transformative to speak specifically about your needs, and to frame conversations in those terms, instead of where others are falling short. For example:

- Instead of: "I need you to be more attentive during meetings."
 - Try: "It helps me to know our discussion is landing if we all have our devices on silent during meetings. Can you do that going forward?"
- Instead of: "Why aren't you taking notes? It's frustrating having to repeat myself after covering everything in the meeting."
 - Try: "I need team leaders to share their next steps with me after we lay out plans during staff meetings. Can you share your action steps every Monday afternoon on our Slack channel?"

2. Listen for the Needs of Others

Just as you should be asking for what you need from your teammates, it's important to cultivate the mutual trust that makes it safe for them to tell you what they need. This may not feel natural at first, and that's okay! We're not socialized to listen, we're taught to talk. We have to be deliberate, and change the way we think about conversations with our teams.

"Culturally, the way Americans engage in conversation is an exchange of verbal volleys akin to a tennis match. If it slows, someone rushes in to fill the silence. If a thought or a comparable experience pops into someone's head, they feel compelled to share it. . . It takes practice to break these reflexive habits. Instead of a tennis match, try thinking of your next conversation as an interview. You are a detective trying to get to the bottom of the mystery that sits in front of you."

Depending on the tone of the conversation, or the context, it may not always be possible or practical to address their needs in real-time. But make sure you follow-up as soon as possible so important issues aren't falling through the cracks.

3. If You're Unsure, Ask

Sometimes it feels like no matter how much we try listening actively, we don't know what our teammates and staff need. If you're feeling frustrated or confused, there's a simple solution. Ask what people need. This might look like taking a direct approach by asking, "What do you need from me?" or "How can I support you?" Or your questions may be more situational, like:

- "How can I help future discussions flow better?"
- "What's missing from [insert meeting, process, or workflow here]?"
- "What can the team do to help minimize distractions or unnecessary tasks so you can focus on this more labor-intensive task?"

4. Follow Through on What You Learn

Whatever you learn from your listening sessions, be sure to follow through with any actionable steps or suggestions you've determined are a priority. This means allocating time, resources, and evaluation to any plans. And it likely means incorporating professional development into team dynamics. Of course, not every plan can be implemented simultaneously, but keeping folks in the loop will help people trust the process.

5. Communicate with Goals in Mind

When it comes to how you communicate with teams, staff, and clients, it's important to go deeper and look forward. "Be a better communicator" is a noble idea. But it's not a goal. Working on communication with goals in mind shifts the focus so you can go deeper, cultivate emotional intelligence, and take meaningful action.

For instance:

- What can I do to make meetings more productive?
- What tasks can we automate to free up more time for professional growth and development?
- Who am I not hearing from, and how can I change that?

Goal-centered questions like these go beyond feel-good communication theory and take you into the realm of practices that can pave the way for lasting change.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Andora Gandy Hinton founded Willow North Growth Partners with a goal to help professionals transform both their professional and personal lives in a way that would make a monumental difference in their holistic work.

Willow North Growth Partners is committed to giving organizations and their teams the tools, resources, and support they need to meet, and exceed, their personal and professional development goals. With over 22 years of experience in sales, sales management, training, coaching, and leadership development, Willow North Growth Partners has helped to develop thousands of leaders nationally and internationally.

Need personalized guidance to refine your communication skills?

Schedule a call to discover tailored strategies to build and enhance communication with leaders and their teams. We offer expert guidance, training, and support to help you improve communication, resolve conflicts effectively, and retain top talent.

Together, we'll support your people and organization to create a resilient, high-commitment work environment that drives success and growth.

If you would like to have one of your articles featured in **Success by Association Live** or have interest in sponsoring please contact Madi today at madi@aencnet.org.



AENC | 514 Daniels Street Box #352 | Raleigh, NC 27605 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

