



Stephens Rivet and Machine is proud to build on our strong tradition of customer service with this innovative newsletter. Along with technical updates and information, we've reached outside the box to bring you useful advice on the 'soft skills' that are key to making any business successful: communication, leadership, customer and staff relations, and more. In each issue, our in-house communication expert, best-selling author Dr. Jennifer MacLennan, will offer insight and tips on improving your professional interactions and relationships. We're pleased to welcome her aboard in Communication and Corporate Relations.



R_x **Communication Doctor** Communication on the Job: How Important Is It?

Twenty-five years ago, writing in *Machine Design*, engineer James McAlister identified a key reason for career failure among technical workers: faulty communication. McAlister pointed to poor workplace relationships, failed teamwork, and general ineptness in conveying meaning clearly.

Not much has changed since then. Studies still show the adverse effects of poor communication, not only on job effectiveness, but also on interpersonal satisfaction, personal happiness, social relationships, and even health.

About the author:

Dr. Jennifer MacLennan brings twenty-five years of experience as a communication trainer and consultant to business, industry, and government. Her many books, including *Effective Communication for the Technical Professions*, are widely used in Canadian colleges and training programs, and she has successfully coached hundreds of professionals in improving their communication for greater success. Since 1998, Dr. Jen has held the prestigious D.K. Seaman Chair in Technical and Professional Communication for the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, where she is also founding Director of the Graham Centre for the Study of Communication. She joined Stephens Rivet and Machine in 2008.

It's not just individuals who suffer the consequences of communication failure. Ineffective communication is also a high-cost item to employers. As much as 75 per cent of the average person's day is spent communicating in some way (in sales or managerial jobs, the figure rises to 90 per cent), and failures can be staggeringly expensive. Costs include high staff turnover, lost sales, and a reputation for lousy customer service that can be very difficult to repair. The impact is felt where it hurts most: on the bottom line.

Most of us know that poor communication hurts business, but the big question is how to fix it. How can we find the time in a busy week to fine-tune our own skills or to nurture them in employees?

These Communication Doctor columns are our response to this pressing need. Over the next several issues, we will address a host of common communication challenges, offering timely case studies and useful tips to improve interactions with staff, customers, suppliers, and the public.

Continue reading for some helpful hints from Dr. Jen that will improve your communication right now.

Dr. Jen welcomes your questions and topic suggestions for future articles in Riveting Ideas. You can reach her at Dr-Jen@Stephensrivet.com



Semi-tubular rivet length selection



Improve Your Communication Right Now: Tips from Dr. Jen

Many factors can influence the final choice of length for a given semi-tubular rivet application but a rule of thumb is to simply add a clinch allowance to the total thickness of the materials being riveted together. Minimum clinch allowances are given in the table shown below. A riveted assembly should always be tested before a final decision is made to ensure that the requirements of the application are met in all respects.

Rivet Diameter		Min. Clinch Allowance
1/16	.062	.032
3/32	.093	.045
1/8	.125	.062
9/64	.141	.093
5/32	.156	.093
3/16	.187	.110
7/32	.218	.156
1/4	.250	.156
9/32	.281	.172
5/16	.312	.187
3/8	.375	.218

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www.stephensrivet.com



• Focus on relationships

At first glance, it might seem that the main purpose of communication, especially in the workplace, is to gather and exchange facts. Not so. The real purpose of communication is to build and maintain effective relationships. In fact, the kind of relationship you build has a more powerful and lasting impact than the content of your message. You can improve your communication dramatically if you approach it as an interaction between people rather than simply an exchange of information.

• Give everyone a chance to be heard

Too many industries treat their clients, and their staff, impersonally, as if people are just so many machine parts. You can increase your communication effectiveness by being the exception who listens to others with genuine interest and concern. Even if their expectations can't always be completely accommodated, most people will appreciate when a sincere effort has been made to consider their perspective, and will respond with good will in return.

• Cultivate civility

Incivility and disrespect seem to be everywhere in our contemporary world. We can help to make the world a more pleasant place, and our own communication more effective, if we make the effort to treat others with an appropriate level of respect and fairness—in some cases, even, a level of respect greater than what we hope to receive in return.

Stephens Rivet & Machine Inc.

"Your Rivet Specialist"

6730 Invader Crescent, Mississauga, Ontario L5T 2B6
Tel: 905-795-8412 | Fax: 905-795-8465
US & Canada Toll Free 1-800-858-9183
email: info@stephensrivet.com

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