

# A Proven Method for Building Skills

A white paper based on years of research by AlexanderHancock Associates

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Every year, thousands of managers and other professionals attend training programs on how to communicate more effectively, yet nothing really seems to change. The role play methodology has been widely used in this type of training in the fifty years since its origin in psychological counseling. However, many training programs utilizing role play have demonstrated limited effectiveness in producing lasting changed behavior. Over the past 30 years in working with thousands of managers in hundreds of organizations, we've learned a *powerful secret*:

People change their communication behavior only when they experience a significant *aha! moment* – *when they can actually see themselves as others see them* -- and then, building on that insight, experience intensive practice and feedback.

This conclusion from our years of research and experience is supported by recent MRI brain studies in the field of neuroscience indicating how adults actually learn to change habitual behavior. But how do managers and other professionals gain this significant insight into themselves? Many years ago the Scottish poet Robert Burns said, [and we translate the Gaelic] "I wish God would give us the power to see ourselves as others see us." Now, more than 200 years later, technology has given us that ability.

## *P2P Videolabs<sup>tm</sup>*

AlexanderHancock's trademarked process  
for rapid development of business communication skills

Through *videotaped labs* - skill practice through role playing the critical conversations with a trained facilitator, watching the tape with a facilitator/coach and a group of peers, and receiving intensive coaching and feedback.

*The video doesn't lie...*Our experience shows consistently and repeatedly that videotaped practice of these critical conversations is the most effective way of changing communication behaviors since it allows learners to see firsthand what needs to be done differently. This practice is coupled with concrete, specific tools, techniques, and coaching to ensure lasting success.

## Research

**Our practical research** with over 1000 managers in a major financial corporation shows that managers who experienced the P2P video lab approach *improved significantly* on all 20 measures of communication behavior, and the improvement was *sustained over time*.

Managers were assessed by their employees just before attending the workshop and again **12 months after the training**.

**Academic research:** As part of her **Master's degree studies** at Wake Forest University, Emmie Alexander conducted a controlled study of 45 middle managers in a public utility who were assigned to one of four groups using 4 different skill building methods. Using pre and post measures, the study design measured two levels of four variables. **Results showed significant improvement (p<.05) only when using videotaped practices, versus using the other 3 methods.**

### **How P2P Videolabs™ Work**

In a 2 ½ day video lab workshop, each participant receives a minimum of **3 hours of individual coaching**, and participates in **7 hours of peer coaching**. AlexanderHancock training programs using **P2P Videolabs™** provide managers:

- A model for successful conversations (either video or live demonstrations)
- A toolkit of skills
- A track to run on
- Specific language to use
- Intensive videotaped practice and application
- Personalized feedback and coaching

Managers are immersed in real-life situations, practicing the conversations with a skilled facilitator taking the role of the employee while the practice is videotaped. In a small group, managers view the videotapes to see for themselves how they handled the conversation, and receive intensive coaching from the facilitator and honest feedback from colleagues. The P2P Lab's high-impact practice format requires one facilitator for every 5 managers. Each participant receives a guidebook with tips and examples for each conversation, and a laminated job aid to use as an on-the-job guide.

### **Training that produces enduring results: critical success factors**

Our own extensive research, plus the research of countless other experts, indicates that **much greater and more permanent change** occurs when several factors are present:

- The practice situations are **real life** situations the participant is currently challenged by, not "case study" creations.
- The participant does not "play a role" but is himself/herself.
- The other "role" is played by a trained, expert facilitator.
- The interaction is **videotaped** so that the participants can truly see themselves as others see them – objectively, without filters or bias.
- Participants focus not only on what they say, but how they say it.
- The feedback is specific, direct, pointed, honest.
- The participant has **multiple** opportunities to practice "getting it right."
- The new skill set is reinforced in multiple ways by the organization.

Contact us at [inquiries@alexanderhancock.com](mailto:inquiries@alexanderhancock.com) to learn how you can achieve these breakthrough, enduring results in your organization.