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Impactful Communication: David Goldberg of Edge Studio On 5 Essential Techniques for Becoming an Effective Communicator

An Interview With Athalia Monae



Athalia Monae

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Begin every sentence with a “Positive First Word Response” For example, if a colleague asks if you’d like to grab a drink after work, DON’T SAY: “No, I have to work tonight.” INSTEAD SAY IT BETTER: “Yeah I’d love to... and how about tomorrow because I have to

work tonight?” In the first example, your colleague will feel let down. In the second, they’ll feel great!

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In *an age dominated by digital communication, the power of articulate and effective verbal communication cannot be understated. Whether it's delivering a keynote address, leading a team meeting, or engaging in a one-on-one conversation, impactful speaking can open doors, inspire change, and create lasting impressions. But what truly sets apart an effective communicator? What techniques and nuances elevate a speech from mundane to memorable? As part of this series, we had the pleasure of interviewing David Goldberg.*

David Goldberg is a speaking & presence coach with an industry-leading approach that's now used by over 10,000 CEOs, politicians, authors, and entrepreneurs, to come across better — whether on stage, on camera, on mic, online, & in person.

He's also CEO of Edge Studio, an international voiceover recording & training company based in Times Square, New York City, that's recorded over 13,000 projects for brands including AT&T, Google, & Microsoft.

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Thank you so much for joining us in this interview series. Before we dive into our discussion about communication, our readers would love to “get to know you” a bit better. Can you share with us the backstory about what brought you to your specific career path?

Yeah it was kind of a funny path that got me to where I am today. I'm a musician, piano and drums, and during college I got into recording and mixing music. And I quickly rose the ranks and within a few years was working with major, national bands. And while I absolutely loved the work, and excelled at it, I didn't do drugs like a lot of the rock musicians who I worked with did. Well anyway one night I was driving home from a studio, and I felt super ill from second-hand smoke and felt like I was going to crack up my car. (When you work in small, confined rooms virtually around the clock, the stuff in the air absolutely affects you.) And well? That was it... I realized I'd better leave the scene before I killed myself. So I moved to *voice* recording. First I began directing voice actors, then celebrities, then executives, and pretty quickly moved on up to politicians and CEOs. And when dealing with people who need to use their voice in the absolute best way possible, who have tight schedules, and who have no speaking training, I have to use techniques that can very quickly get them to do whatever is necessary. And so over the years I've built an arsenal of super-specific wording and speaking adjustments that can pretty much get anyone to sound anyway within seconds; from masking nerves when on stage, to softening quirky speaking habits, to better pacing so their audience can digest what they're saying. It's super helpful to be able to pull these out as I need them.

Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you started your career?

Wow you know it's really hard to pick one:) I mean a lot of weird stuff goes on behind the scenes. But what's super interesting is a unique way I run my

studios that celebrities really like, and it brings them back time and time again: We never...and I mean *never* ask for photos with them, we never ask for signatures, we do none of the fanfare stuff. It started sort of out of respect for the celebrities. And then celebrities started requesting my studios because we didn't do the fanfare thing. So today, usually our production director tells us who's going to be in the studios and as excited as my team is, we chill out about it.

You are a successful business leader. Which three character traits do you think were most instrumental to your success? Can you please share a story or example for each?

Well this is a hard question because many character traits are super instrumental in being successful, so picking 3 is sort of a challenge. But here goes: (1) For me, being able to think extremely quickly has been extremely helpful. What commonly happens is a client will request something that is tough to make happen: either because it needs to be turned around super quickly, or it's a low budget production and will be challenging for us to complete, or they require a lot of particulars, And I have very little time to get back to the client. So it's in these situations when I often need to make pretty much snap decisions. (2) Another trait is feeling confident enough in my skills to be able to work alongside many of the biggest names in the industry without ever feeling the need to show off. In other words, I don't feel like I need to prove myself. And instead I know that once I begin voice-directing them, they'll realize that I'm able to do my thing well. (3) The third trait is definitely having the ability to best balance working *in* the business and *on* the business. For example when I work *in* the business, it's super exciting and I absolutely love the work and I bring in income! However I'm not growing my business at that moment. Conversely when I work *on* the business, I'm thrilled to be working with spreadsheets and marketing people (I find that stuff very fun), except I'm not with clients, and so I'm not bringing in income at that moment. So I have to know and project where it's best to utilize my efforts.

Ok, thank you for that. Let's now jump to the primary focus of our interview. Let's begin with a basic definition so that we are all on the same page. How would you define an "Effective Communicator?" What are the characteristics of an effective communicator?

Oh this is simple: the combination of the words you use, the way you say them, your body language, and your in-person or online presence has your message land well and without misunderstanding.

How can one tailor their communication style to different audiences or situations?

Oh, let me add one more thing to your question: In addition to tailoring your communication style to different audiences and situations, you should also tailor it to different settings. Here I'll explain that: (1) For your audience, you should always tailor your words, the way you say them, and your body language given their age, their culture, their command of your language, your command of their language, their preferences, their energy, their style, their emotions, and your intent. (2) And about the situation, you've got to tailor your voice and prosody and body language to what's being communicated. For example are you firing someone or hiring someone? Is it a birthday or a funeral? And so on. And (3) The setting is key, because you

have to tailor how you come across given if you're on stage, on camera, on mic, in person, in a boardroom, at a loud networking event, in a quiet library...

Can you provide an example of a time when you had to adapt your communication style to reach a particular audience successfully?

Okay I could give you 1000 examples here. But one? Well one thing that happens a lot is that we have to record someone who's nervous at the microphone, and they need lots of hand-holding time, however the client wants the project recorded lightning fast. So we need just the right vocal-tone and speaking-coaching to keep the narrator at peace, happy, and calm, while moving them through everything quickly. And the right communication gets us through those intense sessions.

How do you handle difficult or sensitive conversations while maintaining open and effective communication?

Easy, two things: You have to start with a technique that we developed called "positive first word response" in which every conversation begins with a positive word to engage the listener and keep them engaged! And secondly, it's about always looking into the future, sensing how your words will land in *their* head, and adjusting your words until they'll land as intended.

In your experience, how does storytelling play a role in impactful speaking? Why do you think stories are effective in communication?

This one's straightforward: stories are real. They're how we talk! So to sound real when you talk, make sure you tell stories. Remember this when you're scripting your next powerpoint deck, your next customer presentation, even when you're giving your next elevator pitch!

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What are your "5 Essential Techniques for Becoming an Effective Communicator"?

1. Begin every sentence with a "Positive First Word Response" (David Goldberg, *6 Seconds to Say It Better*, © 2025). For example, if a colleague asks if you'd like to grab a drink after work, DON'T SAY: "No, I have to work tonight." INSTEAD SAY IT BETTER: "Yeah I'd love to... and how about tomorrow because I have to work tonight?" In the first example, your colleague will feel let down. In the second, they'll feel great!

2. Leave long breaks between phrases. Amazingly when you speak like this, it's better for you because you run out of air less often, you have time to organize your words and thoughts and therefore tell a much clearer story, you avoid getting tongue tied and speaking in circles, so all in all you sound way more clear. And also longer breaks between sentences gives your listeners time to absorb everything you say. So it's a total of win-win!

3. Use casual words, colloquialisms, and contractions because that all sounds 'real', and conversation is supposed to sound real. It's amazing, when you do this, you connect a lot better with your listeners, and they stay way more engaged too! Just know when you should turn these styles off, for example when you need to come across as formal, or when you speak with people who don't speak your language well.

4. Okay when you talk, make sure you give the key point first, and then give the details after. This way your listeners can always follow along with what you're saying, and you don't confuse and lose people because they have no idea what you were talking about. (Unfortunately we're programmed to give details first, and then the key point ... so this takes a bit of practice to nail.)

5. And most importantly, stop and think before you speak ... for 6 seconds! This is how long how long neuroscientists say it takes your brain to sense things from your listeners mindset. So before hitting send on a text or email, calling someone to tell them something important about work, or saying something to someone, think if the words you were about to say, and the way you were about to say them, would land as you intend them to land in your listener's head. When you do take 6 seconds to do this, you'll find that you typically need to adjust your words. So if you want to be ultra clear, and if you want to avoid misunderstandings, and if you want your words to land well, then take 6 seconds to say it better.

How do you integrate non-verbal cues into your communication? Can you provide an example of its importance?

Most of us are *not* concerned with personal traits that our listeners *are* concerned with, like body language, in person presence, and online presence. And when we blow off these traits, we come across showing a lack of attention to detail. Like a low budget TV ad. Once you can command these traits, you can convey your point way more easily and positively!

How has digital communication changed the way you convey your messages? Are there any specific challenges or advantages you've encountered?

Business professionals have more and more opportunities today to tell their story via some type of digital communication; like media interviews, press releases, company podcasts, elevator pitches, when zooming with recruiters, and when hybridizing at networking events. So you've absolutely got to be well rehearsed and ready to jump into any one of these settings at any time. In fact one of the most valuable services we provide is coaching people to be ready for all of these situations, for example to have a number of elevator pitches well-crafted and well-rehearsed and ready to go at the drop of a hat.

By the way, one of the most utilized services we offer now is called "Zoom Setup Checkups". Here we make sure people comes through their online channels looking and sounding fabulous..., that is, coming across as they're at the top of their game. To make sure what we provide is backed by proof, we researched a crazy number of studies on camera angles, lighting setups, sound quality, microphone types,. And it's really interesting what we learned along the way, things like how someone's light can communicate different emotions, how their sound quality can communicate their attention to detail, even how someone's background in a zoom square can communicate their level of organization. When we spend even just 15 or 20 minutes with

someone providing them with an online assessment and adjustments, they communicate a much more professional image and enhance their professional image. It's like the equivalent of someone having a headshot that looks terrible versus one that looks great. The difference is amazingly meaningful and absolutely increases colleague and customer buy in.

Public speaking is a common fear. What techniques or strategies do you recommend to manage and overcome stage fright?

I don't believe telling someone "you've got this!" and "you've got no need to feel nervous" is useful. Contrary I think it makes it harder for most people. So instead I direct people on how to *mask* their nerves. By lowering their pitch, slowing down the entry word of each sentence, leaving more space between sentences so they don't get tongue tied. And many more techniques like this. Techniques can vary greatly from person to person depending on their audience, setting, and situation. Even the type of microphone they'll be using can have a huge difference on how I direct them. Seriously I could write a whole article on the trade-offs of different types of microphones for different situations, and I'll tell you that the right microphone can make a huge positive impact on how someone comes across.

What additional resources do you recommend for individuals looking to improve communication skills?

Easy, call me 😊

You are a person of great influence. If you could start a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)

Teach public speaking to grade-school kids. And we are looking into this!

How can our readers further follow you online?

My business: edgestudio.com/

My bio: edgestudio.com/about-david-goldberg

My email: David@EdgeStudio.com

Thank you for the time you spent sharing these fantastic insights. We wish you only continued success in your great work!

Hey thank you, good questions!

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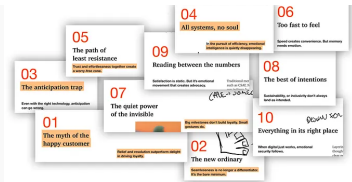
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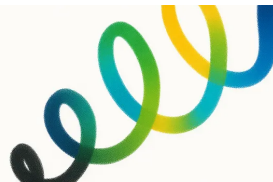


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