



The 4MAT Communication Model

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Delivering Messages with Clarity

One of the most useful and effective models for making communication clear is a model entitled “4MAT.”

It was developed as an instructional design tool and has expanded into other areas of communication as a “best practice”.

What is 4MAT?

4MAT is a methodology that allows communicators to create presentations that are engaging to a variety of communications styles, intelligences and personalities.

Advances in neuroscience describe how our brains function in two separate hemispheres.

Our brains sometimes work together, sometimes separately. Each leading and following, sometimes in conflict, depending upon the task, situation or context.

What does 4MAT do?

4MAT attempts to combine the best of the right and left brain thinking to create understanding.

The 4MAT also makes us aware not only of the strengths of right or left brain processing, but also of the kind of tasks we ask of them.

4MAT was created by Dr. Bernice McCarthy as a methodology that helps simplify complex communication in a way that engages people.

The Basics of 4MAT

Individuals are unique; they have preferences for receiving and processing information (left or right brain). People have discovered what works well for them and they lead with these information preferences.

Even with left and right brain processing, individuals process into specific areas:

- Some prefer to explore the meaning of things – purpose and causation (They question **WHY**)
 - Some look for the concepts – components and information (They question **WHAT**)
 - Some look for the operations – utilization and application (They question **HOW**)
 - Some prefer to review – variations and possibilities (They question **WHAT IF**)
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Keys to 4MAT Effectiveness

The key to the effectiveness of the 4MAT is to remember that it is a cycle. You start with the why and then cycle through the what, how and what if.

If you jump around the 4MAT, you may unintentionally “shut down” a individual. Research has shown that individuals who process meanings (Whys) will not process anything else until the meaning is established. They won't pat attention to what or how until their “why” is addressed.

People who need the “what” and “how” information will process the “why” first, but they must eventually have their “what” or their “how” explained.

4MAT Order

Although this model appears simplistic, people respond very positively and with better understanding when they recieve communication using the simple order of:

1. Why?

3. How?

2. What?

4. What if?

4MAT COMMUNICATION GRID

<p>1. Why?</p> <p>The reason/purpose I am communicating this is:</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>3. How?</p> <p>The way this works/How you can use this is:</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>2. What?</p> <p>The Things I want you to know about this are:</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>4. What if?</p> <p>The effect of this might be/This might cause:</p> <hr/> <hr/>

Horizontal arrows below the grid indicate a flow from left to right between columns. Vertical arrows on the left and right sides indicate a flow from top to bottom between rows.

