

Delivering Messages with Clarity

A useful and effective model for communicating clearly is a model titled “The 4MAT.”

Although developed as an instructional design tool, this tool has expanded into other areas of communication as a versatile and easy to learn process.

What is 4MAT?

4MAT is a methodology that allows people to create presentations, emails and other types of communications that engage a variety of audiences.

The 4MAT model identified four communications preferences:

Purpose

Information

Application

Possibilities

Through research and feedback, the creator of the 4MAT has organized these preferences in a sequence that, when used, creates communications that are more widely understood.

What does 4MAT do?

Created by Dr. Bernice McCarthy (<http://www.aboutlearning.com/>) the 4MAT methodology helps simplify communication in a way that engages people.

4MAT methodology uses right/left brain research to create efficient transfer of information and better understanding.

The 4MAT also makes us aware not only of the strengths of right or left brain processing, but how to take advantage of this knowledge.

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**.

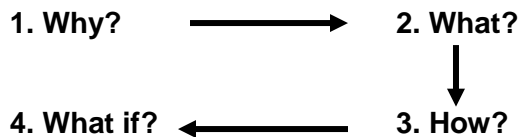
You start with the why and then cycle through the what, how and what if.

For example, if you jump around the 4MAT, you may unintentionally “shut down” an individual. Research has shown that individuals who process meanings (whys) will not process anything else until the meaning is established. They won’t pay attention to what or how until their “why” is addressed.

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

4MAT Order

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



4MAT COMMUNICATION GRID

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

