

Brad Landis & Brian Whipple

# Better Your Communication Between Technical & Non-Technical People



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## Disclaimer

A FEW THINGS FIRST

**This presentation is for information only.**

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**Brad  
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Software Developer, Tandem



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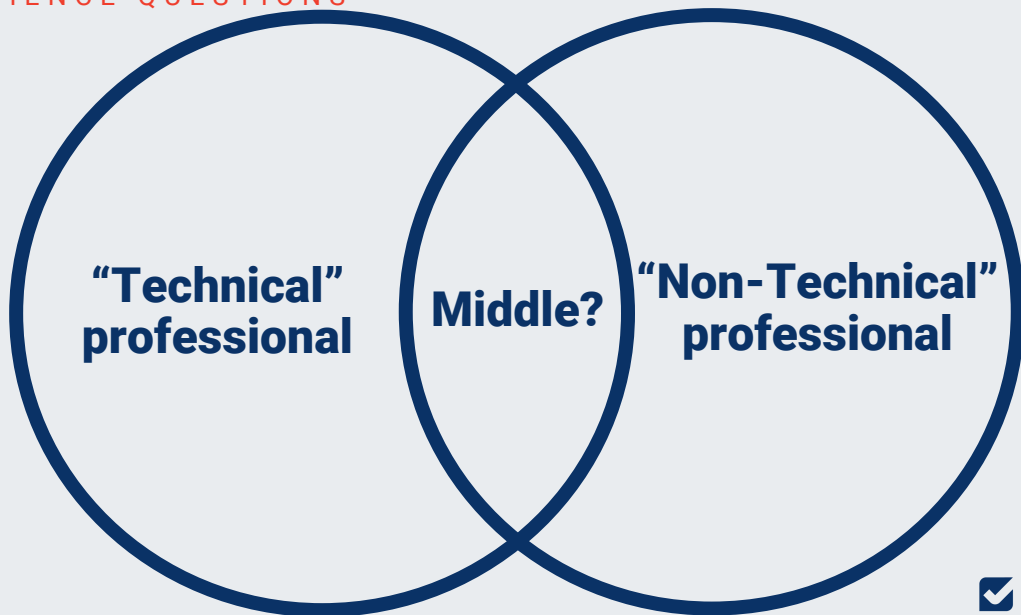
# Brian Whipple

Marketing Manager, CoNetrix / Tandem



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## AUDIENCE QUESTIONS



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# Agenda

## HERE'S THE PLAN

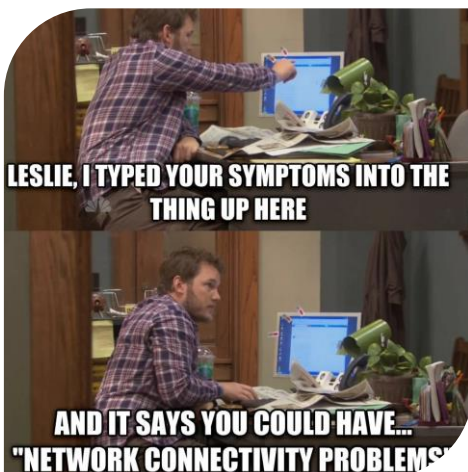
- Breakdown some negative stereotypes
- Insights into the Technical mind
- Insights into the Non-Technical mind
- Hiccups we've experienced
- Ideas for better communication



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# Stereotypes About Non-Technical

## NETWORK CONNECTIVITY PROBLEMS



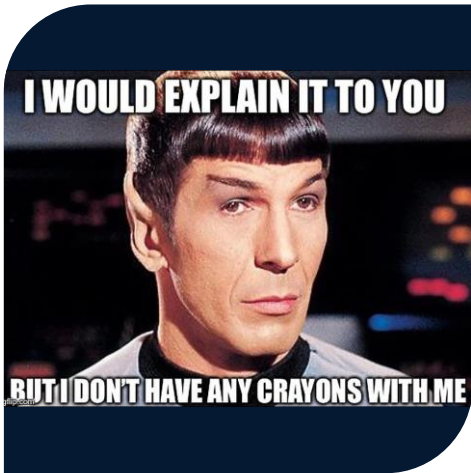
- Free-thinkers
- Talk too much, low productivity
- Pen & paper



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# Stereotypes About Technical

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER



- Poor communicators
- Anti-Social or socially awkward
- Know-it-alls



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## Insights into the Technical Mind

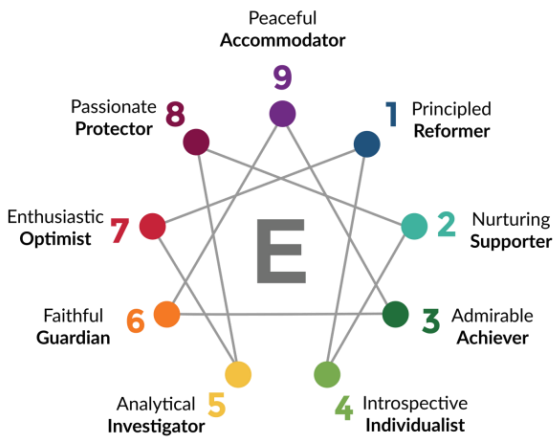
10



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# Personality Types

ENNEAGRAM FOR TECHNICAL



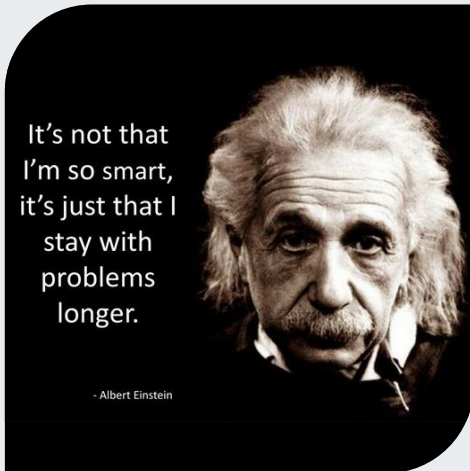
The Investigators



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# Problem Solving

TECHNICAL MIND



- Like problem solving for long periods of time.
- Not afraid to break things to learn.



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# Communication Style

TECHNICAL MIND



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# Communication Style

## TECHNICAL MIND



- Internal thinkers/introverted.
- Concise.
- Ideally, they are knowledgeable and prepared for a conversation.
- Messaging allows them to think and craft their response.



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# Insights into the Non-Technical Mind

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# Enneagram ≠ 5

NON-TECHNICAL

## 3

The Achievers

## 9

The Accommodators

## 2

The Supporters

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# Problem Solving

NON-TECHNICAL MIND



- Jumping from one thing to the next
- Problem solving on the go
- Coordinating with multiple people



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# Communication Style

NON-TECHNICAL MIND



- Communication is often ad hoc
- Planning is often harder due to nature of work
- Ideas often come midstream
- Verbal thinker
- Lean towards in-person meetings or calls



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# Hiccups We've Experienced

AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

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## Disruptive Tasks

WHAT TAKES PRIORITY?

“Could you help me with something? It shouldn't take too long.”

Disruptions occur, offsetting current priorities and plans



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# Disruptive Tasks

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

Non-technical people; you're  
not-so-special

1

2

Share your team's work and  
planning processes

Plan requests and projects with  
coworker's processes in-mind

3



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# Everything is an Emergency

I NEED HELP!

“Something has come up, and I need your  
help ASAP!”

Is your problem *really* an emergency?



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# Everything is an Emergency

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

Don't make everything "on-fire"

1

2

Create some space for disruptions

Communicate due dates

3



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# Poorly Planned Projects

SCOPE CREEP

"I'm sorry. This isn't quite right. Could we rework this/add this?"

Scope creep occurs because the project isn't clearly defined at the beginning



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# Poorly Planned Projects

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

1 Explain (or ask for) the “why”  
before the “how”

1

2

2 Be thorough in your initial  
planning and communication

3 Communicate and show  
progress often

3



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# Communication Disconnect

LOST IN TRANSLATION

“The [technical term] has to render on the  
[technical jargon] before finishing.”

Technical jargon causes confusion leading  
to miscommunication



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# Communication Disconnect

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

Show them the high level and avoid “getting in the weeds”

1

2

Learn some technical skills. Be prepared. Google things!

Avoid jargon. BUT, if it’s needed, take the time to explain it.

3



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# Chain of Command Issues

WHO DO I COMMUNICATE WITH?

“My boss asked me to put this project on hold. You need to reach out to them.”

Company structures adds a layer of complexity to projects



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# Chain of Command Issues

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

Start with the manager and respect their position

1

2

Establish guidelines for working across team structures

Keep management in the loop throughout projects

3



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# Complete Communication Breakdown

I CAN'T EVEN ...

“Per the email thread attached, I have already addressed this issue.”

Today's world of online communication leads to breakdowns.



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# Complete Communication Issues

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

Know when to move to an in-person discussion

1

2

Address any discontent directly

Verbalize your coworker's perspective before sharing your own

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## The ONE Takeaway

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

- Understand that you're not-so-special
- Share your team's processes
- Plan projects with a common mind
- Don't make everything "on-fire"
- Plan as best you can. Communicate due dates
- Create some space for disruptions
- Be thorough in your planning
- Explain the "why" before the "how"
- Communicate progress often
- Don't "get in the weeds"
- Learn some technical skills
- Ask for help unless it's needed
- Respect the manager's position
- Establish guidelines across teams
- Keep management in the loop
- Move to in-person communication
- Address discontent directly
- Verbalize your coworker's point

# EMPATHY



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# Tools for Better Communication

A LOOK UNDER THE HOOD

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## Memo Method

COMMUNICATION TOOL



- Describe what you want to accomplish
- Describe what was done in the past
- Describe your new approach or idea
- Describe how it will benefit the company



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The image shows a Trello board for 'Tandem.App' with a blue background. The board is organized into five columns representing different stages of project planning:


- Backlog/Ideas:** Contains cards for 'Article and Blog preview function to view in draft before publishing', 'Content: Industry - Healthcare', 'Content: Industry - Non Profits', 'Change copy on /demos page.', 'Authenticate users via SSO', 'Add state filter to "Find a Partner" page', 'Ads', and 'Content: Training'.
- Planning:** Contains cards for 'Feature: TEMPLATE', 'Add brochure link on Product pages', 'Update Industry Page Hero Images', 'Create ad feature that is similar to what we built for CoNetrix.com', and 'Add button to Careers page'.
- Bugs:** Contains cards for 'Bug: TEMPLATE' and 'Run-on sentence on the SMM panel on the Bank and Credit Union industry pages'.
- Ready for Estimation:** Contains a card for 'Feature: Change "Request a Quote" option on website'.
- Ready for Development:** Contains a '+ Add a card' button.

On the right side of the board, there is a vertical text 'TRELLO' and a large vertical title 'Project Planning'. At the bottom right, there is a logo for 'KEYS CONFERENCE'.

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The image features a large white square with rounded corners and a red border. Inside the square is a large, bold, dark blue question mark. The background of the slide is a light gray color with a pattern of white keyboard keys. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for 'KEYS CONFERENCE'.

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**KEYS**  
CONFERENCE

DON'T FORGET!

**Fill out the  
survey to get  
your sticker!**

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**KEYS**  
CONFERENCE

THANKS FOR JOINING!

**Better Your Communication  
Between Technical & Non-  
Technical People**

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# Upcoming Sessions

20 MINUTE BREAK

Refreshments with Exhibitors

KEYNOTE

Recent Releases and Future Growth + Tandem  
User Group Discussion

Brady Cook, Cory Faust, Lindsey McReynolds, and Alyssa Pugh

ENTERTAINMENT

PINSTACK & Dinner

