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Who Do You Need?

PART 3: COMMUNICATOR

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The last two weeks I've talked about how Clientek looks for professionals who are curious and courageous. Today, my focus is on the importance of finding a good communicator and how we interact with other people. This not only means being clear and concise, but also interacting in a way that inspires others to come away feeling good about a conversation.

What we expect from our teams is that people come away from conversations, even difficult ones, knowing that we are committed to their (and the project's) success. We want our customers to recognize that we are here to help and work through their project in the best way possible.

The challenge for our employees is that they must do this with three different levels of personas throughout a project. They communicate with project stakeholders, analysts/architects, and developers/testers. Each of these roles speak using different language and have greatly varying needs.

Most conversations start with project stakeholders. We need people who can help our stakeholders define their vision for the future and use it to drive success. This is the language of vision, strategy, and objectives. These discussions demand a solid understanding of an organization's business and market. They also tend to be more vague and open to interpretation - requiring further clarification.

With this information, our team then needs to meet with analysts and architects to discuss business process and solutions. This includes language of process flows, architectural diagrams, and strategic directions. These discussions tend to be more precise, while still conceptual and riddled with exceptions and edge-cases to interpret.

Lastly, we need employees that can communicate the vision, business process, and intended solution to our developers and testers. The language here encompasses user stories, acceptance criteria, detailed designs, and test cases. These discussions are highly precise and detailed, and in many

cases, even include team members who speak different languages all together.

This is the transition point in which our team goes from listening and understanding to providing direction and oversight. The ability to communicate in both manners is much more difficult than it first may seem and requires someone with patience and the ability to work on both aspects at the same time.

Leaders need these skills much more than they need to know the latest changes in Azure or AWS. Without them, our teams cannot effectively communicate, understand what success means, or provide details on how we intend to deliver it. Communication is the key to forming lasting relationships that survive long after the most current technologies die out!

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