

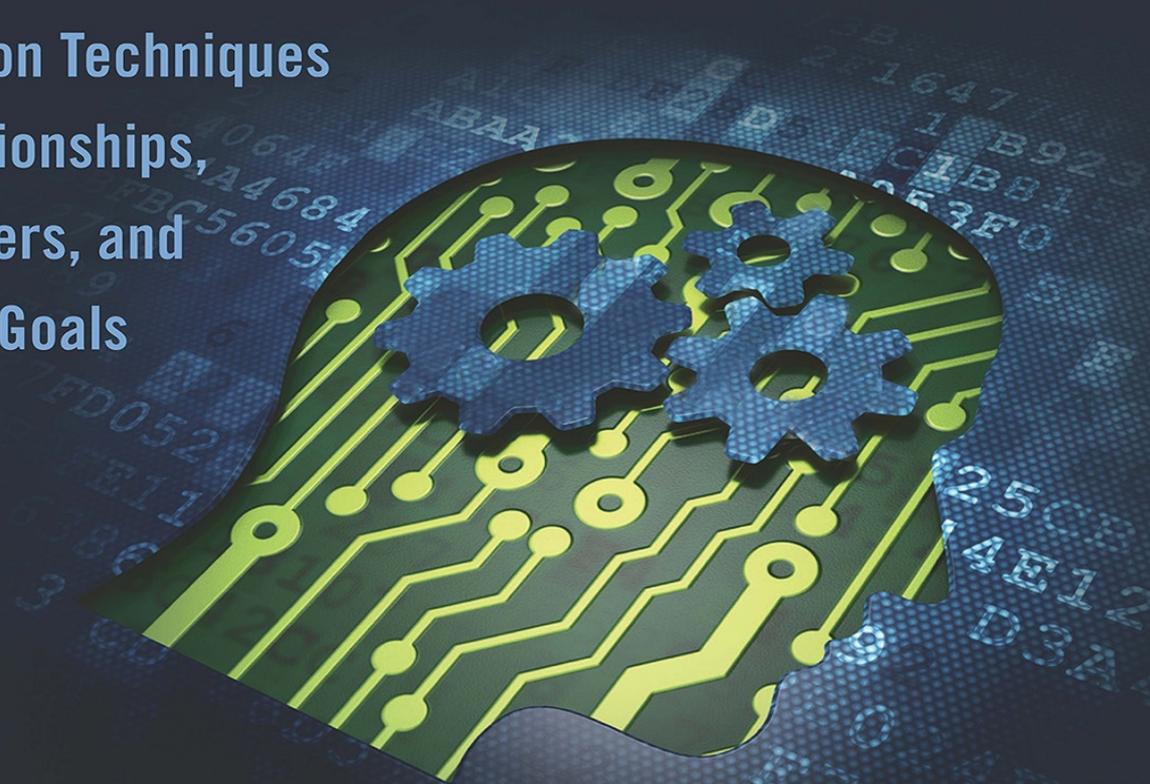
“Illuminating and hugely useful.”

—Mensa Magazine

NLP

THE ESSENTIAL HANDBOOK FOR BUSINESS

**Communication Techniques
to Build Relationships,
Influence Others, and
Achieve Your Goals**



JEREMY LAZARUS

NLP: THE ESSENTIAL HANDBOOK FOR BUSINESS

Communication Techniques to
Build Relationships, Influence Others,
and Achieve Your Goals

By Jeremy Lazarus



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Foreword

This is an extremely useful book to introduce those working in organizations to the world of applications from Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP). NLP helps us understand how successful people do what they do.

We all need to take our whole person—our mind, body, and spirit—to work and (in the words of Robert Dilts, one of the co-developers of NLP) “to contribute to the creation of a world to which people want to belong.” No longer can we be passengers, just turning up, without effecting change in ourselves and our colleagues.

The end of lifelong careers, the turbulent changes caused by downsizing and market economies, the budget cuts in the public sector, the environmental differences caused by remote and home working, technology, and upheaval in domestic relations have all added vast amounts of complexity to the way we juggle our daily lives. The speed of work is not conducive to reflection or creating the energy to take action.

This pragmatic handbook enables us to quickly and easily understand tools and techniques for causing simple changes within ourselves and others, and is full of examples of applications from the organizational world. We can read about both “organizational skills” and “life skills,” blending and aligning the two to work holistically with ourselves as a “whole” person.

In the words of Gregory Bateson, “everything is a metaphor for everything else” and we find that NLP is in fact a metaphor for the firmly established and researched psychological practices that Richard Bandler and John Grinder collected together so that we can use them to become successful in all that we do.

Jeremy has simplified the initial work and makes it truly accessible for all.

—Dr. Sally Vanson
Behavioral change consultant, executive coach, and Certified Master Trainer of NLP
Bradford-on-Avon, UK

Introduction

Welcome to *NLP: The Essential Handbook for Business*. Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is essentially a series of techniques, tools, and attitudes which help people to improve their results in all areas of life, including business and the workplace. This book has been written to help you to improve your results in your business or career, and to achieve the kind of improvements that tens (and probably hundreds) of thousands of people have experienced throughout the world, either directly from NLP training or from NLP-based coaching.

NLP was originally developed in the mid-1970s by John Grinder, an associate professor of linguistics at UCLA, and Richard Bandler, one of his star pupils. They began to inquire into how excellent communicators differed from other people. These initial projects to find “the difference that makes the difference” led to further inquiry and projects into the mindset of successful people and organizations, and to the development of some of the widely used NLP techniques which we will cover in this book.

Since its early days, NLP has become widely used in many areas of work. NLP is increasingly becoming accepted as a valid work-based tool, and since the early part of the millennium, there have been Master’s degrees from UK universities which have NLP as a significant component. Since 2008, there have been academic conferences in the UK where research papers have been presented regarding the effectiveness of NLP.

If you have been on management development, communication, leadership, or sales training courses, you will probably have already had some previous experience of NLP, whether or not NLP was expressly mentioned on the course, because many of these types of courses will incorporate NLP. This book is suitable both for people who have not knowingly been exposed to NLP and for those who have some experience and want to broaden and deepen their knowledge.

The book will include only the necessary theory to help you to be able to use NLP, and will refer to a few links with existing business and management theories; the bulk of the book will be a practical, hands-on guide to skills that you will be able to use for the rest of your career.

You may have already read my other book, *Successful NLP*, which covers the use of NLP in most areas of life. *NLP: The Essential Handbook for Business* looks specifically at how you can use NLP in numerous workplace situations.

Please note that although this book has the word “business” in the title, the contents are equally applicable in not-for-profit sectors. For example, even though public-sector organizations (such as hospitals, local government) may not have a formal “sales” function, they have revenues, targets, budgets, and expenditure like any business, and

their staff need to influence and persuade. So if you work in a not-for-profit organization, whenever you see the term “business” in this book, please consider that it means “work” or “the workplace,” and is equally relevant to you. The terms “business,” “work,” “the workplace,” and “organizations” will be used interchangeably throughout the book.

How *NLP: The Essential Handbook for Business* is structured

There are six parts of the book, each with its own brief introduction.

Part I provides an essential background and foundation to the material covered in the rest of the book.

Part II covers communication, including the subtle meaning of words, and how to use words to put your message across even more effectively. It also looks at non-verbal communication, which is often even more important than verbal communication.

Part III looks at how to change the way you think and feel (and hence your results), the “nuts and bolts” of NLP. For each topic, you will learn why it is useful, the relevant information about the topic, and how to use it in a variety of work-related areas and activities. I will answer some of the questions that many of my training course delegates typically have about each topic.

Part IV covers gaining even greater insight into, and how to understand, motivate, and influence, people at work.

Part V covers how to use NLP to replicate excellence.

Part VI takes 16 activities in the workplace (for example, recruitment, sales, and decision-making) and summarizes which of the NLP topics covered earlier in the book would be useful to you in those situations. You can use it as a quick reference guide when you are preparing for, or involved in, one of these 16 activities.

In addition, there are appendices listing answers to two specific exercises on language in [Chapter 7](#), information about NLP training courses available should you wish to learn NLP in a supervised environment, a list of resources for further learning, and a glossary.

Practical tips when reading this book

Most chapters have exercises, tips, and brief stories showing how the techniques have been, and could be, used in work situations. It is recommended that you do all of the exercises in order to solidify your understanding of the relevant technique and how you can use it in practice. Most of the exercises have an estimated duration for your guidance.

Each NLP technique included in the book is explained step by step, in sufficient detail so that you can use the techniques effectively in your work. You will probably find it useful to reread some of the processes or refer to them while doing the exercises. Most people learning NLP find that the more they read through and then practice a particular NLP process, the more effectively they are able to use it.

Many of the topics discussed are relevant for individuals and organizations. As you read the book, it is worth remembering that organizations are simply collections of individuals.

Please note that I have changed the names and sometimes genders of the people referred to in the examples in order to preserve client confidentiality.

A quick word on ethics and best practice

NLP coaching techniques are potentially powerful business tools, and are only to be used in a way that is beneficial to all people involved. Although many of the techniques in NLP are used by qualified NLP professionals (Practitioners, Master Practitioners, and Trainers) to assist others to improve their results, *NLP: The Essential Handbook for Business* is written primarily for people to use for themselves and colleagues, as opposed to when coaching others, unless they have other coaching experience or credentials.

Although NLP techniques are increasingly being used by medical professionals, therapists, and counselors, they are not a substitute for professional medical advice, therapy, or counseling if that is what someone needs. If in doubt, I recommend you initially contact your human resources department or medical practitioner or the Association of NLP (www.anlp.org).

Part I

The Foundations

Part I provides the foundation and building blocks for the techniques and practices covered in the rest of the book.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of what NLP is, how it originated, and the types of business situations where NLP can help.

Chapter 2 discusses what happens inside every person's head during every single moment at work, looks at why we are all different from each other, and provides some initial ideas about how to communicate even more effectively.

Chapter 3 moves on to the "mindset for success," the key attitudes and beliefs that successful business people have.

Chapter 4 looks at how to set goals in such a way that makes them really achievable.

1

What Is NLP and How Can It Help You?

Overcoming the challenges you face at work

There are numerous challenges in the workplace, both at an organizational level and at an individual level. This chapter seeks initially to identify the main challenges, and then explain what NLP is and how it can help you to overcome them.

Challenges in the workplace

Businesses and other organizations, and the individuals working in them, are facing greater and more complex challenges than before, as the world's economies become more complex and global, and consumers become more discerning and demanding. At an organizational level, some of the key challenges include:

- How to retain your competitive edge.
- How to recruit, retain, and motivate excellent staff.
- How to balance the needs of all the relevant stakeholders.
- How to create leaders of the future.
- How to make sufficient profit/return on investment.
- How to be flexible enough to respond to, and manage, changes in the economy or your business.
- How to manage diversity.

At a more individual level, the challenges include:

- How to achieve the objectives set by the organization in your job description or at your periodic appraisal (assuming you have them).
- How to create a suitable work-life balance.
- How to manage time and priorities.
- How to manage your own career progression.
- How to keep your skills up to date or even ahead of the field.
- How to feel fulfilled at work and find work that aligns with your values.

This book is dedicated to helping both individuals and organizations (i.e. a

collection of individuals) overcome the challenges they face. The challenges outlined above often reflect the following 16 activities that influence results at work.

Internal communications (with staff and colleagues):

1. Management of staff.
2. Team building.
3. Leadership.
4. Human resources, recruitment, and interviewing.
5. Training.
6. Coaching.

External communications (with customers, clients, and suppliers):

7. Sales, business development, and account management.
8. Marketing and advertising.
9. Liaison with clients, customers, patients, and other service users.
10. Procurement.
11. Negotiation.
12. Presentations.
13. Resolving conflicts and misunderstandings.

Work processes:

14. Consultancy, including change management.
15. Improved decision-making.
16. Creative problem solving.

Throughout the book you will learn how to use NLP to help you address each of these topics at both an individual and organizational level.

Exercise 1.1

(Approx. 5-15 minutes)

In light of the topics mentioned above, reflect on why you are reading this book, and what you want to achieve from it, both for you individually and, if you have management responsibilities at work, for your organization. For example, you might want to become even better at making sales, managing your staff, or preventing misunderstandings. Please do this exercise thoroughly; making a list of what you want to gain from reading this book will help you focus your attention. For reasons that will become clear later in the book, the more you know what you want and why you want it, the more you will benefit from this book.

What is NLP?

There are various ways of explaining NLP, and many NLP professionals alter the way they explain it depending on the audience. One often-used definition is “how to use the language of your mind (**N**euro**L**inguistic) to change the **P**rogrammers (or **P**atterns) of behavior.” Examples of patterns of behavior at work are:

- Feeling nervous (or confident) before meetings or presentations.
- Becoming angry (or showing understanding) with staff for not delivering on time.
- Procrastinating (or being decisive) about making decisions.

Another definition of NLP is “a series of skills, techniques and approaches to help you to achieve your desired outcomes and goals.”

Two main reasons why there are various definitions are because there are different ways in which NLP can be used, for example, coaching, sales, management, sport, counselling, health, and education; and because it is still a relatively new profession.

The benefits of NLP

NLP provides a series of techniques, attitudes, and tools to achieve three main benefits in the workplace:

- Improving communication.
- Changing thinking, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs.
- Replicating excellence.

Let’s take each of the benefits outlined above in turn.

Improving communication

You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across, your ideas won’t get you anywhere.

—Lee Iacocca, former president at Ford Motor Company and Chrysler

At work, you probably communicate with other people most of the day. You also communicate with yourself; for example, if you are nervous before a meeting, you are in some way communicating to yourself that it may not go well (people rarely get nervous at the prospect of a situation going according to plan). NLP provides a series of ways to communicate more effectively with others (such as staff, customers, suppliers, colleagues) and yourself (by changing the way you perceive the situation if you are nervous, in order to become more relaxed). The communication aspects of NLP are specifically covered in [Chapters 2, 6, 7, and 15](#), and, to some degree, communication is covered in every chapter.

Changing thinking, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs

Most people experience moments of negativity at work (for example, if their promotion application has been turned down or if they have lost an important contract). Sometimes people behave in ways that are not particularly useful, such as procrastinating, showing frustration inappropriately, or not considering other points of view when it would be beneficial to do so. NLP provides a series of “techniques” to assist you to become more positive and adopt useful behaviors instead of unhelpful ones. [Chapters 9 to 13](#) cover some of these techniques, and [Chapter 3](#) covers the empowering attitudes and beliefs usually found in successful people.

Replicating excellence

Whether you would like to replicate excellence at departmental or organizational level (sometimes referred to as benchmarking), replicate excellence in a particular task such as negotiating or managing, or replicate your own excellence in a different situation (for example, if you are excellent at presenting to five people and feel overwhelmed at presenting to 50, what are you doing in the smaller presentation that you could replicate in the larger one?), NLP has a methodology to assist in replicating excellence, which is known in NLP as “modelling.” [Chapter 16](#) will cover the key elements of modelling for organizations.

Caveats

Very occasionally I hear someone say that NLP is “manipulative.” This is not the case, because whether something is “manipulative” depends on the intention of the user, not on the thing or tool itself. For example, in the vast majority of situations, a computer will be used in a positive and useful way, and very occasionally it can be used for criminal purposes; that is not a criticism of the computer! Like a computer, NLP is a very powerful tool. Based on many years’ experience (my own and that of my NLP associates) of using NLP in business, I believe that the best results come from using NLP only to create solutions that work for all stakeholders in the organization.

Finally, as mentioned in the Introduction, NLP is *not* a substitute for therapy or counseling if that is what someone requires.

2

Communication at Work

What really happens when people talk?

I'm a great believer that any tool that enhances communication has profound effects in terms of how people can learn from each other, and how they can achieve the kind of freedoms that they're interested in.

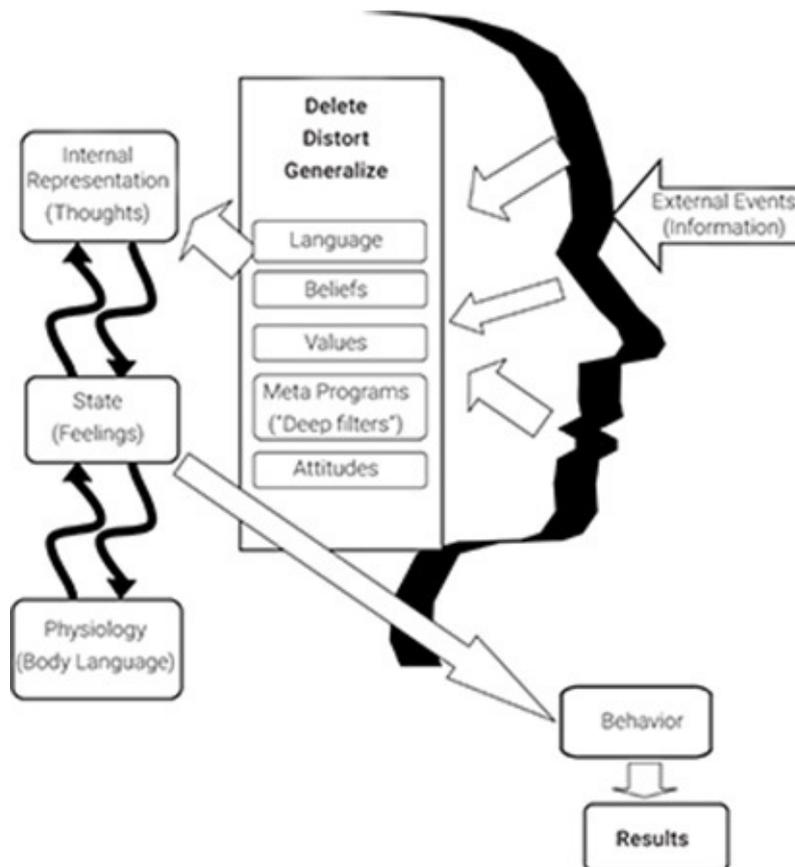
—Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft

In [Chapter 1](#), we mentioned that improving communication is one of the key benefits of NLP. In this chapter, we will take a closer look at communication in the workplace, start discussing why your messages may not always have the desired effect, and look at how you can use NLP to remedy this. Once you have grasped the simple yet profound elements about communication explained in the next section, your ability to understand and influence others at work will increase, and you will be able to use it as a structure for understanding and using the remainder of this book to your advantage.

Overview of communication at work

Diagram 2.1 shows what happens inside the head of every customer, supplier, and colleague, from the most junior to the most senior. Known as “The NLP Communication Model,” it explains in overview why there are misunderstandings, and why you could say the same thing to different customers or staff members but receive very different responses. The Communication Model also provides a framework to understand, communicate with, and influence people that we will return to several times in the book. The following description will mention the NLP terminology, with relevant explanations. It will also focus primarily on individual communication, because when communicating in an organization, you are communicating with a collection of individuals, although the organizational implications will be referred to briefly here and in far more depth in later chapters.

Diagram 2.1: NLP Communication Model



Starting from the top-right-hand side, you receive information from your surroundings, which you perceive through your five senses. This information is then automatically, and almost instantly, filtered (the three key filters are covered in the following section), and leads to an “internal representation” (i.e. a thought or mental image) of what you think you have perceived, usually a combination of pictures, sounds, feelings, internal dialogue, plus possibly taste and smell. Your state (i.e. how you feel) will depend on whether this thought is agreeable to you or not, and this in turn will impact on your physiology—for example, how you are standing, moving, and talking.

These thoughts, feelings, and physiological responses will lead to your behaviors and actions, which ultimately determine the results you achieve. For example, if your boss tells you that you are chairing the meeting in five minutes’ time because she has to go to an urgent appointment, and you are having positive thoughts about it, feeling good, and looking and sounding confident, you are more likely to perform better than if you are dreading it, feeling anxious, and stumbling over your words with a faltering voice. Some of the reasons why you might think positively or negatively about the situation will be covered in the section headed “What influences how we filter?” on [page 30](#).

The three main filters

The three main filters are:

- Deletion.