

Talking to Budget Holders

*(so that they – hopefully 😊 –
listen & understand...)*

Sam Garrett

Financial Controller HPFT

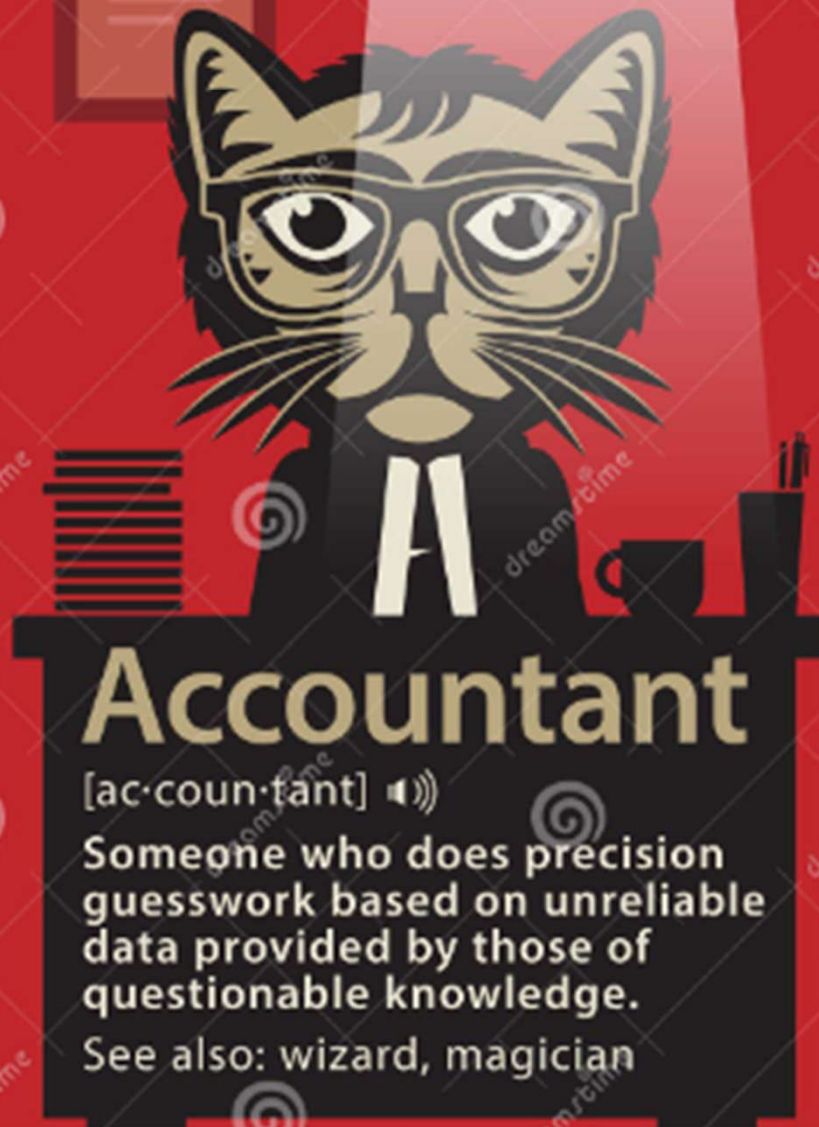
(FACE; Value Maker; I&D Ambassador)



Topics we'll cover

1. First Impressions & building rapport
2. How do we engage – communication methods
3. Breaking down complex info to key messages
4. Making finance info relatable for ops staff

ROYALTY-FREE VECTOR



What do we want to achieve? We'll always be doing precision guess work, but we want to get more reliable data from our budget holders by improving their knowledge

1a. First Impressions

You're meeting a new Head of Nursing for the first time:

- a) Hi Finance Person I've really high acuity at the moment I need you to sort it so I can have 75% of people on obs plus have you seen my NEWS scores we need more training

What do you think? Type in the chat – is this good or bad?

- a) Hi I'm Aisha I'm in charge. I don't have a lot of time for finance I'm too busy. Tell me what I need to fo & I'll get on

How about this? Type in the chat

- a) Hi my name's Aisha good to meet you Sam. Looking forward to working with you. I'd like to show you round the ward as I think it'd help you to understand what our acuity is like currently and can we also talk NEWS figures – I can explain what that means if you don't know. **Better?**

1b. First Impressions

Now turn the tables – I'm meeting a new budget holder:

- a) Hi I'm the sbu finance person I look after the whole sbu so I'm really busy and have to go now but email me.....
- b) Hi I'm your Finance Business Partner there are a lot of issues that we need to get sorted. Do you know what your ytd pay spend is against budget and what you're expecting your FoT to be? How about non pay – any more reqs to go out? And have you got suggested CIPS for 24/25 yet?
- c) Hi I'm Sam I work in finance and my role is to support you to monitor your spend and budgets. As you're new as a first step I'll show you how to read your budget statement.

1c. A Non-NHS Example

I am new working at Sainsburys

Oh hi you're new, I'm the Section Manager for H&B, can you go grab the NDIs from the buffer room and we'll get them dressed in. **What does any of this mean I think?**

H&B = Health and Beauty Department (aka toiletries etc!)

NDIs = Not Dressed In Items (aka new products)

Buffer room = The area between the shop floor and the warehouse/staff areas. Known because in years gone by Buffer machines were kept there. Even when I worked there 30 years ago they didn't use them any more

Dressing in = Finding a space for new products on the shelves so they can be sold

1d. Building Rapport – What I do

- Introduce myself, say what I do, mention experience
- Talk about their service, I'm curious & show interest: this service must be really rewarding / what types of patient do you treat here / what a great environment you have
- Ask questions including those I think I know the answer to or which I think might be silly or basic
- Try to show that accountants are human too (we are!)
- Get involved in non-finance things – networks etc
- Often have to find a line between showing I am “on their side” & still influencing behaviour e.g. “I know it's hard to make savings at the moment, but we do have to, can I suggest some things others have done”

2a. Communication Methods

How do you communicate with budget holders?

e.g. do you write them a letter?

Type into the chat



2b. Communication Methods

Emails

See them in person

Phone calls

See them at meetings

Teams calls

Teams messages

Formal letters

“Water cooler” chat
if based nearby

An outlier – football!



2c. Pros & Cons

Method	Pros	Cons
“Water cooler” chat	Rapport; can see reaction	Element of chance
“Just pop and see them”	Rapport; can gauge understanding / reaction	Might not be possible – org. culture / multi-site
Phone / teams calls	Immediate; quick	Too quick; no answer
Teams (or other) instant messages	Immediate; quick; can often tell if read	Can get lost in volume; open to misinterpretation
Email	Lots of info; time to plan wording; attachments	Too much info; email volume; risk wrong “tone”
Formal planned meetings	Time to plan; formal info reporting; allocated timeslot	Too formal?; squeezed time slots; multi-taskers
Formal letters	Lots of info; time to plan	Overly formal....

2d. Preferences

- We all have preferences
- Think about what yours is AND ask your budget holders what they want
- Then try to bridge any gap

When we've asked ours at HPFT they generally prefer calls and (shortish) meetings

I often suggest "phone so and so" and when I check back get the response "I emailed & got no reply".....I did mean phone!

3a. Breaking down Complexity

Complexity is in the eye (or brain) of the beholder....

Finance Person: *“it’s really simple”* versus Budget Holder: *“it’s really complicated!”* *“I don’t know what to do”* and in their heads *“I’m scared”* (yes really)

We think it’s objectively simple – but are we typical of the population, as accountants?

Put into numbered steps / screenshot / quote everywhere & repeat, repeat, repeat

3b. Breaking down Complexity

We frequently have invoices that don't get paid on time because the invoice doesn't quote the PO, or the PO isn't receipted, or even the invoice is sat in someone's inbox

We had manuals galore, why didn't people just read them? Why didn't they read our long emails berating them for not reading the manuals? And why did they make the same mistakes over and over again?

So we broke the process down into seven steps and called them 7 Simple Steps (I made sure to have 7 – alliteration is your friend here!)

3c. Example

Seven Simple Steps to Payment

1. Liaise with supplier & agree price
2. Put “Requisition” (Req) onto e-Procurement
3. Budget holder approves Req on e-Procurement
4. Procurement raise Purchase Order (PO) & send to supplier
5. Supplier invoices ELFS directly to elfs.367hpar@cloud-trade.net quoting PO no
6. Once goods or service received, Requisitioner receipts on e-Procurement
7. Supplier paid on next payment run (once due)

3d. Other Tricks

Type into the chat tricks you've found that work?

Written info / emails / training / power points:

- Key information at the top, use colour capitals etc
- Small number of key messages (like 2 or 3)
- Each slide “If you remember just 1 thing make it this”
- Simple explanations “red numbers are bad black are good”

Speaking / giving reports / even conversations:

- “I've got 3 key points today which are 1.... 2.... 3....” Then go through one by one and sum up
- The old “Tell them what you're going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you've told them” still works
- Simplify, shorten, slow down, check understanding

4a. Making it Relateable

Do this as we go along using points 1-3; ALSO make it relateable, not just quoting numbers

e.g. on SFI limits I say: imagine you're buying a kettle or having your whole house painted. You might do a bit of kettle research, but you'd likely get quotes for the painting

OR if you were spending £100k a year on transport not £200k you could save £50k and employ another nurse....

OR a social care placement for 1 person at £1,000 per week costs as much in a year as a Social Worker who can look after more than 1

4b. Example – Pay Costs

Explain impact of 24/7 working on pay costs by a) showing a Health Roster shift calculation OR b) running through this


Each person works c. 45
“productive” weeks/year

They work 37.5 hours /
week which is **1,725**

hours per year

So to run a service 365
days / year for 24 hours /
day we need **8,760 hours**
/ year to cover

8,760 hrs divided by 1,725 hrs = just over 5

 So to cover 24/7 365 ***we need 5+ people!***

Summing Up

1. Be your best self and be kind, considerate, curious & interested
2. Pick the best method for them (not just you....)
3. Simplify, shorten, and then do it again
4. Find what your budget holders relate to

Finally

Please make a commitment to yourself by popping into the chat your action plan:

- Who will you meet with to practise this?
- When, and How?
- Thank you for your time today 😊

