

## THE LINGO GIRL

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Amber D. Nelson launched Lingo Consulting, Inc. to address the many umms and errs of the world. With a degree in Journalism from Boston University and more than 20 years of experience crafting messages with organizations and individuals across the nation, she knows how to talk, how to listen and how to communicate in a way that gets things done.

She is a RIVA-certified moderator with a strong business mind, a quick wit, easy going demeanor and sense of adventure and positivity. She regularly conducts workshops and seminars on effective communication, moderates focus groups and ethnographies and coaches clients in strategic workplace communication.



**Q:** Business person, team player or leader... which title best describes Amber D. Nelson?

**A:** I'd say "collaborator" is the title that I think fits best. As a collaborator, you know your strengths and your weaknesses, you assess each challenge to determine whether you should be the leader, a follower or a bystander and you bring the best assets you can to each individual situation.

**Q:** Is there a specific person or persons who helped pave your current walk?

**A:** Since I was a little girl I've looked to pioneers as role models. Growing up in Idaho, I had a fascination with Lewis and Clark and those who traveled the Oregon Trail. Over time, the pioneers that inspire me have changed. Today, I'd name Sir Richard Branson, Cristi Hegrans of The Global Press Institute and Barbara Corcoran as pioneers that exhibit a fearlessness, flexibility and dedication that inspire me to keep bringing my best every day. By example, they show me that defining and pursuing success on your own terms is far sweeter than measuring up to any arbitrary external yardstick.

**Q:** Regarding "Leverage Your Lingo Series," what made you write the series, especially "Effective Communications for Women in Business;" how long did it take you to write the book; why a short read; why does every business women need to read your book?

**A:** The "Leverage Your Lingo Series" was inspired by my work as a focus group moderator. Over the years, I learned how to set a stage that invites people to tell their stories. I saw the immense value my corporate clients found in hearing those stories. I also realized the great personal value so many of my respondents found in the deep soul fishing they did during interviews. Eventually, I came to realize that these techniques can be applied to interpersonal settings that improve communication for both individuals and organizations. I firmly believe that great communication makes everything easier and the "Leverage Your Lingo Series" endeavors to help particular groups learn to communicate their messages effectively, strategically and authentically so that they can move toward their goals.

"Effective Communications for Women in Business" was a result of watching women with great ideas and significant brainpower get in their own way with words that don't work and attitudes that ask for permission to use theirs smarts. There are so many brilliant, clever, funny women out there who hide their gifts out of a sense of propriety and uncertainty or cover those gifts up by trying to act like stereotypical men in power. When people, women and men, learn to communicate their ideas in a way others can actually hear, their effectiveness shoots through the roof.

This book was written in bits and pieces over many years. When I finally sat down to write it, I spent a short week or so on the first draft and many weeks editing and rearranging content so that I could have a short, readable volume that would be useful to busy women. We've had such a good response to the eBook we decided to issue the book in hardcopy, too. Now women can keep the book on hand and refer to it as needed. The hard copy will make it easier for women to check out the 'Ten Commandments' before going in to a big meeting or refer to the Leverage your LINGO examples to help them navigate difficult personalities at work.

Every business woman needs to read this book as an exercise in self-awareness. I'm willing to bet that every single working woman in this country can recognize herself in at least one of the Ten Commandments. Great communication is an art that is ever-changing and always evolving. We all need reminders to help keep us at our best and this book provides that reminder in an easy-to-read, compact, actionable way.

**Q:** How does your professional role, and LINGO play out within Amber's personal life?

**A:** In so many ways, my work IS my life. I am continually looking for blog, workshop and speaking material through my daily interactions with shopkeepers, customer service reps, clients, friends and family. I use the

LINGO method all the time, especially in building relationships with new clients. While I certainly take time “off the clock” for my personal life, I’m always learning about communication and the ways that people try to reach one another.

**Q:** How does Amber dream at night? Do you carry your dreams onto your business or life strategy?

**A:** I’m a big dreamer. I think dreams work very much like street signs. They are directional and provide possible pathways forward. In my life, dreams have served to get me to the next place and the process of dreaming has helped me understand when a particular path won’t deliver the outcome I desire. My dreams tend to cross all sorts of work/life boundaries. I dream about working with my favorite people or collaborating with those who inspire me and I also use dreaming to play out potential futures. What would it be like if I did collaborate with that person I admire so much? What would I really want from that partnership? How can I see it all unfolding? Of course the reality is rarely an exact duplicate of the dream and if you’re lucky, the reality is better.

**Q:** If Biography was contacting you regarding your life’s success...which strategy would you convey knowing your words would live a legacy?

**A:** My life’s success has come from taking the time to fully understand what I’m working toward. The first, most important component of great communication is knowing what you want. When you get clear on what is really important to you, the focus on that clarity can sometimes move mountains. Look at some of the most amazing heroes of our time. Mandela wanted freedom and didn’t get caught up in the pettiness that would have exhausted his energy before he reached his real goal. Malala works every day for the singular goal of increasing access to education. Look at Abraham Lincoln, his focus was keeping our country together and he used that clarity to guide his presidency. When you know what you’re working for, the work has purpose and that purpose provides clear direction.

**Q:** Do you cling onto a specific faith? If so, describe.

**A:** I definitely believe in something larger than ourselves. The poem *Desiderata* by Max Erhmann is a good description of my faith. He talks about keeping true to your own path, not comparing yourself to others, providing a wholesome kind of discipline for oneself, and having faith in love (“for it is perennial as the grass”) and “God, whatever you conceive him to be.”

**Q:** What would you address at a woman’s conference; can you provide three mini-lessons?

**A:** Lesson One: Use Your Words to Increase Your Worth

The way we talk about ourselves teaches others what we’re all about. Words equal power. Use your words to convey your brilliance, your strength and your wisdom. Speaking well of yourself and your accomplishments isn’t bragging, it’s providing information to those who might find your particular skillset and accomplishments valuable. Don’t cheat them out of knowing what you can bring to the table.

Lesson Two: Stop Apologizing

Pantene is on the “stop apologizing” bandwagon with their “Sorry, Not Sorry” campaign and writers for The Washington Post, Slate, and The Los Angeles Times concur, women are guilty of over-apologizing. Simply listening to yourself in conversation and being aware when others around you throw “sorry” into a conversation as a space-filler will help make you more aware of this habit. Absolutely apologize when you make a mistake but stop apologizing for a hot day, a broken elevator or someone else’s rude remarks.

Lesson Three: Stop Leaning, Start Standing Up Straight

Sheryl Sandberg started a movement with her book *Lean In*. It has been met with resistance from those who suggest women should “lean out” rather than get caught up in the corporate rat race. I say stop leaning and start standing up straight. Be clear about what you want, why it’s important to you and what you need to do to achieve it. Get real with yourself and you’ll be able to reach for success as you define it, as it fits your life and as it will bring you the satisfaction you’re seeking.

**Q:** Many businesswomen including artists, writers, are on the verge to identifying themselves as self-made Americans (doing all things solo due to lack of financial means)... how can you encourage them in today’s saturated and competitive markets?

**A:** I have a Sir Richard Branson quote above my desk that reads, “Do good, have fun, and the money will come.” I think the first part is to do work that fills a need in the marketplace. When you can see who your work connects with, you can create more, earn more and make more of a difference. Too many women I see feel they have to choose between doing good and doing well. It’s a myth. You can do good work, make the world a better place and get paid for it. It’s a matter of finding the right audience. I’d also like to remind women that abundance isn’t a finite commodity. There truly is plenty for all of us.

**Q:** Have you reached your life’s purpose? If so how, if not, what should we look forward to and when?

**A:** I’m not sure I’d say I’ve reached my life’s purpose but I can say with great certainty that I’m on my life’s path. What should you look forward to? Watch for a trail that is lit up by those who have found the words to convey their thoughts effectively, women pausing to genuinely accept kudos for a job well done and droves of people positioning their work as valuable. Honestly, I don’t think I will ever feel like I’ve reached my life’s purpose and I find the ongoing adventure both compelling and exciting.