

COMMUNICATION

Communication and communication strategy is not just part of the game - it is the game.

--Oscar Munoz

CEO of United Airlines

2017 Communicator of the Year (PR Week)

Why is communication such a big deal?

It's essential for effective:

- Organizational functioning
- Planning
- Leadership/management
- Coordination of effort/teamwork
- Human relationships
 - Building trust and cooperation
 - Resolving differences

--and lots of other stuff

So how is our communication?

Crocker--

- Interpersonal communication skills the most important.
- 80% of a typical manager's hours are spent in verbal communication.
- Most managers indicate poor communication is their biggest problem.

Haney--

- Virtually everyone--Communicating at least as well as and, in many cases, better than everyone else in the organization.
- Organization had communication problems, but it was "other people" who were responsible.

Harris Poll

Harris poll of 23,000 workers

- Only 37% said they have a clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve
- Only one in five was enthusiastic about their team's and their organization's goals
- Only one in five said they had a clear "line of sight" between their tasks and their team's and organization's goals
- Only 15% felt that their organization fully enables them to executive key goals
- Only 20% fully trusted the organization they work for

Stephen Covey

Stephen Covey said that if a football team had these results:

- Only 4 out of 11 players on the field would know which goal is theirs
- Only 2 of the 11 would care
- Only 2 of the 11 would know what position they play and know exactly what they were supposed to do
- All but 2 players would, in some way, be competing against their own team members rather than the opponent

We have work to do.

Strategies for Effective Communication

1. Appoint communication wizards
2. Have a plan—don't just wing it
3. Know what needs to be communicated—and what doesn't
4. Use communication to build trust, cooperation, and a sense of transparency
5. Become the masters of one-on-one
6. Don't let conflict blow the place apart
7. Monitor it and make changes when it needs to happen

Strategy 1: Appoint communication wizards

One person per focus of communication (i.e., audiences—doctors, community, employees, media, etc.)

- Diffusion of responsibility—it's just not gonna happen

Story: Supply techs

- Continuity
- Consistency
- Compliance with plan

Ensure no gaps or overlaps

Strategy 2: Have a plan (one per audience)—
don't just wing it

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.

--Alan Lakein, author

What is a communication plan?

A written statement (which requires serious thought) regarding:

- The goals and objectives for communication
- Methods to accomplish goals for communication
- Timetables, tools, and budgets—and unambiguous assignments
- Plan for evaluating effectiveness of communication

Why write a communication plan?

- Gives focus to day-to-day efforts to communicate
- Helps set communication priorities
- Provides a sense of order and control for communication
- Ensures CEO and others support

Story: CEO and PR disaster

- Protects against last-minute, seat-of-the pants demands
- Provides peace of mind—you have a plan and you're working your plan

When to develop the communication plan

- Shortly after strategic plan is created—they must tie together

Where does the information for the plan come from?

Mission statement

- Audit of communication methods and materials currently being used
- Customer surveys and focus groups
- Discussions with managers and employees
- Log of prior years' communication glitches
- Interview Board members
- Talk to doctors, patients, visitors

Find out:

- What employees, doctors, board members, community members, etc. are doing to communicate
- What communication employees tune in to
- What each communication activity is designed to accomplish
- How effective each activity is
- Who are the opinion leaders
- Key access points
 - Telephone, telegraph, and tell the Main ACC
 - Rumor control

Define communication objectives

Some examples:

- Excellent patient service

- Tune in to hassles

- Enhance doctor loyalty

Story: Hauling Mike to the Doctor's lounge

- Increased revenue per adjusted patient day

- Financial accountability at the Director level

Story: No financial info to anyone other than CEO and CFO

- Improved employee recruitment/retention

Story: Saint Francis—presented at conferences

- Influence on media, patients, and other audiences

- Get people in the area to use your hospital

Define goals

- Write clear, concise, measurable, and timely objectives
 - Include action plans with timetables and assignments
 - Include tools to be used
 - *Cascading communication—lots of issues*
 - *Live with Mike*
 - *Table top notes*
 - *Emails to all*
 - *Bulletin boards*

Story: Visiting elders

Story: Suppers at the hospital

Story: Conference rooms at Ida Grove, Horn Memorial

- Create a comprehensive approach to achieving each objective (details matter)

Define goals con't.

- Include plan for evaluation and reporting of progress
- Importance of feedback

Story: Enhancing patient education

- Tool for getting everyone involved in strategy
- Every key element of the strategic plan
 - Metrics
 - Graphs
 - Feedback to all

Strategy 3: Know what needs to be
communicated and what doesn't

Never miss an opportunity to shut up.

--Mark Twain

Communication overload

Study of 50,000 knowledge workers

- 40% of workers don't get a full 30 minutes of focused time in a workday
 - 17% don't get 15 minutes
 - Only 30% get an hour
- 36% check email every 3 minutes--or less
- Leads to multitasking—takes over 9 minutes to return to the original task
(Yes, take a moment to do the math.)

What to communicate?

Criteria:

- Does it have a clear tie to the strategic plan?
- Will it impact competitive advantage?
- Will it impact significant operations?
- Will it avert a problem in the future?

If all “No’s,” there better be some other clear and compelling reason to communicate.

Strategy 4: Use communication to build trust, cooperation, and a sense of transparency

*When trust is high,
communication is easy, instant, and effective.*

--Stephen R. Covey

Two causes of trust

1. Trustworthiness

- Ability – the knowledge & skills needed to do a specific job along with the interpersonal skills & general wisdom needed to do whatever is promised (even if the promise is implied.)
- Integrity – extent to which a person adheres to sound moral & ethical principles.

I'm not upset that you lied to me. I'm upset that from now on I can't believe you.

--Nietzsche

Benevolence

- Benevolence – extent to which a person wants to do good for another, without any profit motives (same as loyalty, caring, or supportiveness.)

Story: Employee put in charge of joy

Note: Those we trust are our friends.

We help our friends.

Trust

2. Trust propensity

- Initial stages of a relationship—surprisingly high levels of trust
- Betrayal—trust plunges to a level below the initial trust level—restoring trust is more difficult than building trust in the first place
- Trust can be damaged by unsubstantiated allegations—gossip

I've learned that it takes years to build up trust, and it only takes suspicion, not proof, to destroy it.

--Unknown

Benevolence has the greatest impact on growing trust.

Lack of integrity has the greatest impact on destruction of trust.

DON'T MISS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS

So, how are we doing with trust at work?

- Mercer—60% don't believe that bosses are honest
- Towers Watson—most desired trait in leaders is trust; 12% think the leaders are trustworthy

Check it out: [Edelman Trust Barometer](#)

Jeffrey Pfeffer of Stanford

The first question that leaders should ask about any proposed practice is whether it

is likely to build and maintain trusting relationships.

If the answer is no, the practice shouldn't be instituted – period

Strategy 5: Become the masters of one-on-one

Communication—the human connection—is the key to personal and career success.

--Paul J. Meyer

Founder,

*Leadership Management
International*

Communication

A communication is simply the transfer of information between one person to another.

- Not solely the accuracy of content that determines whether mutual understanding takes place.
- The relationship of the people— can enhance or inhibit mutual understanding.

*Story: Granddad and my friends
coming to visit*

*Let no one come to you without leaving better and happier.
--Mother Teresa*

Relationships

Relationship problems lead to:

- restricted communication flow
- inaccurate messages
- misunderstandings

What's needed?

Communication that helps obtain mutual understanding
without jeopardizing interpersonal relationships

Focus

1. Focus on the problem, not the person

- Person-focused communication emphasizes characteristics of the person, not the event—suggests the person is inadequate.
Common reactions are defensiveness or outright rejection
- Problem-focused communication emphasizes the problem and its solutions

Person Oriented

Because of you, there is a problem.

Problem-Oriented

What can we do to resolve this problem and make sure it doesn't happen again?

Describe

2. Describe the situation, don't evaluate it.

- Evaluate--judge and label
- Tendency to evaluate others is strongest when the issue is charged with emotion or when a person feels personally threatened.
- Evaluative communication is likely to become self-perpetuating.

Three steps

The three steps of descriptive communication:

- What happened—describe as factually as you can.
- Here are the consequences of what happened.
- Here is a better way (and don't hesitate to involve them in coming up with a better way.)

Evaluative

I can't believe you did that.
You were incredibly stupid.

Descriptive

This is what I saw happen.

When things like that happen,

I get concerned that you're going to get hurt.

Let's talk about a better way to do that in the future.

Supportive

3. Supportive, not unsupportive

Don't:

- Use put downs (“That was dumb.”)
- Suggest you are superior to them (“What’s wrong with you?”}
- Be rigid (“Once I’ve made up my mind, I don’t change it.”)

Discussion with rigid guy when I was 16 and a lot more reckless

Indifference

- Be indifferent

Story: Friend who talks incessantly

Do:

- Communicate as an equal

Story: Repair guy who worked at Cale's house

- Be flexible
 - Don't state opinions as facts.
 - Requiring it be done "my way" sets stage for hostility
- Be sure both have an opportunity to be heard

Unsupportive

You will do as you are told.
I don't care what you think.

Supportive con't.

I like your suggestion.

I have an idea how we can build on that
to make this work.

Let's talk about it.

Listening

4. Requires listening, not one-way message delivery.

- We are usually about 25% effective in listening.
- Surveys show effective listening is rated as the most important managerial skill.
- 85% of people rate their listening skills as average or worse.
- Listening skills are worst when?

(More on listening in the next section)

Strategy 6: Don't let conflict blow the place apart

Conflict—a problem wrapped in distressing emotion

Criteria for quality of conflict

1. Problem is resolved effectively long-term (it's fixed forever)
2. **No** residual hard feelings—for anyone

Why “no hard feelings”?

- Frustration is accumulates and it is portable
- Gottman—most common reason married couples fight

What do you need to know to have high-quality conflict?

- Communication, especially listening
- Dynamics of conflict
- Tools

We'll focus on communication

Listening con't.

- Talk less (let them “run out of air”)
- Be interested in the message
- Resist distractions

Story: Minister in the burning church

- Don't let personal biases turn you off
- Try to understand the message and the implied message
 - Getting the facts often isn't enough
 - Understand emotions involved

Understanding

- Work hard to understand difficult ideas or material
 - Take notes
- Don't hesitate to ask questions
- Be nonjudgmental
 - Don't interrupt
 - Hear the entire message

Don't just sit there—listen--actively!

1. Giving advice
2. Changing the subject
3. Ask probing questions
 - Elaboration (“Can you tell me more about...”)
 - Clarification (“I’m not sure I understand. Could you explain?”)
 - Repetition (“Could you go over that again?”)
 - Reflective (“You say you’re unhappy with your schedule.”)
Identify emotions

Don't just sit there—listen--actively! con't.

4. Rewind the tape

After the other person has talked for a time, provide a brief summary what was said.

Shows you have heard and understood.

Strategy 7: Monitor it, make changes when it needs to happen

Kinds of metrics

- Activity metrics—extent to which plan is being implemented
- Reach metrics—assess size of the audience and the extent to which the desired audience is getting the message
- Engagement metrics—the effect communication is having on those who hear them (audience interaction is required).
- Impact metrics—measure the behaviors and attitudes that have changed, the actions the communication inspired others to take.

*Communication is a skill that you can learn.
It's like riding a bicycle or typing.
If you're willing to work at it, you can
rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life.*

--Brian Tracy

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