
Success-tions - Communication

The third in the line of our 'success-tions', communication may be one of the most difficult to master, yet makes the biggest difference in terms of motivating people to action. If you want things to stay the same, or get worse, all you have to do is keep information from your people.



Communication is so important that it ranks in the top seven of our prime laws for organizational success... “Given the same information, most people, with time, will come to very similar conclusions”. What does that mean? Your ability to engage people in meaningful communication will shorten the time frame required for them to embrace new or different ways of doing things. You simply cannot leverage the full potential of your organization without a consistent and conscious communication strategy at every level.

Studies have shown that the average organization *under-communicates* by a factor of ten during routine operations. Imagine what happens to that factor in times of change, or when people are fearful, or under pressure! Are you are your people experiencing any of these?

Back To Basics

“What we have here is failure to communicate.” With hundreds of lines spoken in a thousands of films, why did this one from *Cool Hand Luke* become a catch phrase for millions of people?

There are probably as many answers to that question as there are people... which illustrates a common misconception of communication. Many think that communication with others is about transferring a precise piece of information from one mind to another. Nothing could be further from the truth. Words, gestures and expressions, in and of themselves, have no meaning. Instead, people assign meaning to them.

Communication is the *exchange of ideas* between two people. Communication involves more than just *sending*. It also involves *receiving*. The basic reason for any type of communication is to



prompt some form of behavioral response or action. Yet, you may often discover that what you say or do does not always elicit the kind of response that you want when you want it.

Four basic techniques are used to communicate: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. When you consider that a good percentage of your day is spent in these activities, it stands to reason that you should seek to excel at each of them. Before ideas can be accepted, they must be known and understood clearly by the individual.

Thoughts and ideas are the most valuable contribution that a person makes to their organization. Expressing creativity is a natural desire that offers a great deal of self-fulfillment. The more you realize the value of a new idea, the more enthusiastic you become about it. But, unless you are able to stimulate the same kind of excitement in others, that idea will quickly gather dust in the dust bin of their minds.

Principles Of Effective Communication

If you want to be truly successful in leading your organization, you'll need great empathy and sensitivity to the needs and wants of the people you lead. By knowing their needs, you can chart a course designed to give them what they want, AND at the same time achieving your overall goals.

You can achieve your goals by going around people, through people, or gaining the cooperation of people, but not through forcing people. In reality, you can't force people to much of anything. Ever since each of us were two years old we haven't liked being told what to do. It's not difficult to see then, that the easiest way to accomplish your objectives is with the enthusiastic support of those around you. That kind of support comes when people trust you and believe in you and your sincerity. If you really seek to understand, you'll be amazed at how positively people respond.

You communicate every day with different types of people in different types of situations. To understand how to get your message across, examine these fundamental principles of successful communication:

1. The human mind functions in a very orderly fashion. It can only concentrate on one thought at a time. If you attempt to communicate a number of ideas in quick succession, or in an illogical sequence, the listener's mind will have great difficulty following along and understanding you. Before you present any idea, write out a plan highlighting the objective of your communication, including the main points. Make sure that the important facts are in a logical sequence. You may even want to share your thoughts with a non-involved third



party in order to see if they clearly understand what is to be presented. Don't assume... we all know that that does!

2. The human mind transposes words into pictures. Because words mean different things to different people, the responses that they produce may evoke may not be the same for everyone. For example, ask a room full of people to describe the details of picture in their minds when they hear the word 'kitchen', and each individual will describe something completely different... some will describe their mother's or grandmother's kitchen, while others detail their own or their dream kitchen. The point is that each will have a completely unique picture in their mind. Kind of makes you wonder how we ever communicate effectively, doesn't it? Their level of education, their socio-economic background, where they grew up, and many other factors, determine what pictures crystallize in a person's mind for any given idea or concept.
Emotion is the birthplace of action. As you begin to understand the needs of others, you will begin to use words that elicit an emotional response in harmony with those needs.
3. "Too many words" clutter up communications. When we fail to condense and simplify our communication, we leave the door wide open to time-consuming misunderstanding and undesired responses. This is especially dangerous if we need an immediate reaction to our communication. Take care that your objective in communicating is to develop a mutual understanding, not to impress or make yourself look smart at someone else's expense.

Take the time to become more conscious of your communication style and strategies. Remember that different people respond differently to different styles. Use these helpful hints regularly in your communication efforts. They will be most effective when they come from a sincere desire to understand and appreciate others. If people feel you are trying to manipulate them, you will lose their respect and their trust.

Your people want you to believe in them, just as you want them to believe in you. The most beloved, most respected, and most successful leaders are those who have the capacity to empathize with the feelings of others, and who openly show it.

Are you reading to take your communication to the next level?

