Effective Workplace Communication: Promoting Success Through a Culture of Trust and Belief

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“When an organization perpetuates good communication, it demonstrates an investment in the workforce, enhances self motivation, and allows employees to feel a part of the company’s success. When the vision, goals and expectations are known to the workforce, the message is clear: they are part of something bigger, their hard work pays off, and they are valued and respected. In short, they count.”

--Debbie Kukla,
Vice President - OI Global Partners
Today’s Agenda

What is Workplace Communication?

Benefits of Effective Workplace Communication

Effective Management-Employee Communication (Best Practice)

Building Effective Communication Skills

Effective Communication as an HR Competency
**Definition:** The ability to effectively exchange and create a free flow of information with and among various stakeholders at all levels of the organization to produce impactful outcomes.

In addition to written and verbal communication, active listening and non-verbal communication, such as body language, can play a large role in effective workplace communication.
Some Organizational Benefits:

--Improved productivity
--Increased morale
--Higher employee job satisfaction
--Reduced turnover rates
--Greater trust in management
--Stronger teamwork
--Increased business understanding
--Higher employee engagement
--Stronger corporate culture
**Benefits of Effective Workplace Communication**

**Towers Watson Change & Communications ROI Study:**

Global study found that companies that are highly effective at communication are almost **twice** as likely to be high-performing than companies that are not highly effective at communication.
The goal: Create a Culture of Belief

Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton teamed up with Towers Watson in a 300,000-person study, and found managers of the highest-performing workplaces create a “culture of belief”.

In these distinctive workplaces, people believe in their leaders and in the company’s vision, values, and goals.

Employees are not only engaged but also enabled and energized, which leads to astonishing results—average annual revenues three times higher than for organizations lacking such a positive culture.
"Developing excellent communication skills is absolutely **essential to effective leadership.** The leader must be able to share knowledge and ideas to transmit a sense of urgency and enthusiasm to others. **If a leader can't get a message across clearly and motivate others to act on it, then having a message doesn't even matter.**"

---Gilbert Amelio
Former President and CEO
National Semiconductor Corporation
Perspective Video

UK for U2!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqO3sfRZDAE
Communication between employees and senior management ranked as the 8\textsuperscript{th} highest contributor to job satisfaction, with 55\% of employees surveyed saying that it was “very important” to them.

60\% of employees surveyed were \textbf{satisfied} with employee-senior management communication at their organization.
Effective Management-Employee Communication

Best Practices:

1) Develop a communication strategy
2) Build trust through transparency
3) Reiterate organizational goals/mission
4) Define clearly what is expected
5) Recognize good work
6) Highlight organizational successes/history
7) Establish feedback mechanisms
8) Use a variety of communication channels
1) Develop a Strategy:

Your internal communications team should work with top management to define a strategy to communicate effectively with your employees.

It should support your larger business strategy and seek to build a culture of trust and belief, accountability, engagement, high morale, and job satisfaction.
2) **Build Trust through transparency:**

Management-employee communication should be transparent and straightforward about the challenges of the business and the organization’s financials.

Such candor fosters trust and understanding among employees.
SHRM Job Satisfaction Survey:

Trust between employees and senior management ranked as the SECOND highest contributor to job satisfaction, with 64% of employees surveyed saying that it was “very important” to them.

62% of employees surveyed were satisfied with employee-senior management trust at their organization.
Lack of Public Trust in Leaders

**Edelman Trust Barometer:**

Only 15% of Americans trust business leaders to tell the truth.

Globally, **only 28%** of the 30,000+ Edelman respondents believe that businesses follow ethical practices.
3) **Reiterate Organizational Goals:**

To be effective, employees must clearly understand and work towards fulfilling the organization’s goals, using strategies that are also well understood and followed.

Management must frequently and creatively reiterate these goals and strategies to keep them at the top of employees’ minds.
4) **Be Clear on what is expected:**

Management should deliver messages that are in a logical order and that use a **simple formula** to address potential questions.

- What is the goal?
- Where is the impact?
- Who is responsible?
- How will it get done?
- When is it due?
- Why is it important?
5) **Recognize good work:**

A key goal of management communication is to inspire employees to be the best that they can be.

Commending good work and highlighting top performers and teams in creative ways makes employees feel valued and motivated to perform at higher levels.
6) **Highlight organizational successes/history:**

Another powerful communication tool to motivate employees is highlighting recent and past organizational successes.

Also, reminding employees of the organization’s history and traditions, especially on anniversary dates, builds pride and a sense of being part of an important family.
7) **Establish formal and informal feedback mechanisms:**

Studies have shown that employees want the ability to share their ideas and concerns with management at all levels.

Establishing feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and town halls, and encouraging and valuing employee feedback can bring big dividends to any organization.
8) **Leverage a variety of communication channels:**

The company Intranet, CEO e-mail updates, monthly all-employee meetings, training programs, award ceremonies, departmental retreats, and survey participation are among the many communications channels that management can use creatively to communicate with employees.

**SHRM** is a good example of new Intranet technology.
Key Skills:

1) Know the outcome
2) Build a reputation
3) Avoid flaunting power/intellect
4) Be confident
5) Show awareness of others
6) Consider timing
7) Master the art of listening
8) Build professional networks
9) Learn from mentors

Source: “How to be a Better Communicator in the Workplace”
1) **Know your desired outcome:**

Before you begin planning what you will say in a meeting or another situation, know what you want the outcome to be.

What actions do you want the others to take? How will you move them?
2) **Build a strong reputation gradually**

To gain respect as a trusted authority or dedicated employee, you will need to build your reputation over time.

Other people’s perceptions of you don’t form based on a single encounter.

If you work hard to exceed expectations and deliver with integrity, you are on the path to establishing respect and trust.
3) **Avoid flaunting power/intellect:**

Leave your ego at the door when speaking to other employees. Establish an even playing field, and place yourself at the same level with your listeners.

Avoid a condescending tone of voice and terminology your audience will not immediately understand.
4) Be confident:

Appearing confident is a key to effective communication. Use strong action verbs and avoid filler words like “um” or “ah”

Look people in the eye and sit or stand straight when called on to speak
5) Understand your audience:

When you deeply understand how your audience thinks and feels, you can craft a message that resonates with them.

Try to “walk a mile in their shoes” to understand what’s important to the people you are communicating with.
6) Consider Timing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEglH8RL3wg
7) Master the art of listening:

Adept communicators are experts at listening and reading between the lines.

Rather than interjecting your commentary when someone else is speaking, wait and ask open-ended follow-up questions to show your respect for the person and their information.
8) **Build face-to-face and online professional networks:**

Actively network with business colleagues and leverage social media, such as LinkedIn, to interact with others in your field.

This interaction will help you build confidence and practice the steps for improving your communications skills.
9) **Learn from Mentors:**

Enlist help from managers or leaders you respect, who can provide constructive feedback and coaching.

Consider joining Toastmasters International to build your public speaking skills in “learn-by-doing” meetings.
Most large and medium organizations have an internal communication team and an HR team that work in tandem to communicate with employees.

To be effective, the HR and internal communication teams must collaborate closely, mutually reinforcing each other.
Communication as a Competency

SHRM HR COMPETENCY MODEL

- Communication
- Relationship Management
- Consultation
- Ethical Practice
- Leadership & Navigation
- HR Expertise (HR Knowledge)
- Global & Cultural Effectiveness
- Critical Evaluation
- Business Acumen

www.shrm.org/hrcompetencies/documents
Definition: Ability to Effectively exchange information with stakeholders

Effective communication is one of the building blocks of personal and career success

When HR information is communicated well, employees better understand the purpose and value of policies and practices
Behaviors at Highest Level of Proficiency

- Provides clear, concise information to others in verbal, written, electronic, and other communication formats for public and organizational consumption
- **Listens actively and empathetically to the views of others**
- Delivers critical information to all stakeholders
- Seeks further information to clarify ambiguity
- Provides constructive feedback effectively
- Ensures effective communication throughout the organization
- Provides thoughtful feedback in appropriate situations
- Provides proactive communications
- **Demonstrates an understanding of the audience’s perspective**
- Treats constructive feedback as a developmental opportunity
- Welcomes the opportunity to discuss competing points of view
- Helps others consider new perspectives
- **Helps managers communicate not just on HR issues**
- Utilizes communication technology and social media
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THANK YOU!
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