

Managing/Leading With Good Communication

by Joe Tabers, CSP

One of the biggest problems we continue to encounter in many of the organizations we visit and often work with is poor internal communication. With more companies doing the same amount of work (or more) with fewer people and less time, communication often gets cut short or doesn't take place at all.

The problem often begins by not scheduling time or not making time to meet with others who are affected by our work, our work flow, our assignments, etc. The problem then often gets worse when that same information, (or lack of information), affects other departments. How? Assumptions are made, misunderstandings or mistakes occur, and negative perceptions get formed. The "no news is good news" philosophy **rarely** works and usually backfires.

You Can Help!

So what can you do to help improve internal communications in your department or organization? **Practice these five rules and watch for the positive results:**

- * **Rule #1 Take responsibility!** Remind yourself that it's nearly impossible to over communicate. Freely share as much information as you can and make it a point to clarify in writing, by phone, fax, face-to-face, or in meetings whenever possible.
- * **Rule #2 Let people know your intentions and reasons for doing things.** Share *your* desired results/vision for a task or decision, then ask for *their* help.
- * **Rule #3 Ask them what they need from you,** such as information resources, support, etc. Then listen, restate to confirm their needs as needed, and thank them for their input.
- * **Rule #4 Set regular meeting dates (make the time).** In nearly twenty years of consulting, the most effective organizations or departments I've witnessed have been those that meet regularly - monthly, weekly, etc. - to plan, update, share, or solve problems as a team.
- * **Rule #5 Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up.** Yes, as much as we hate to admit we are imperfect human beings. We get busy, we get side-tracked, we get interrupted. Follow-up helps all of us with accountability as well as simply keeping the lines of communication open.

Why Wait For Things to Get Better?

I believe all of us respect, appreciate and even admire good relationships. Good relationships however don't just happen by luck, they require both communication and effort. If you are in a leadership position in your organization, or even if you are simply a respected

employee/coworker, you are in a great position to help prevent communication problems. **By practicing these five rules** for more effective internal communication, you can help avoid misunderstandings, and turn negative perceptions, irritations and attitudes around one person or department at a time. Good Luck!

*Joe Tabers, CSP is a certified speaking professional, senior consultant and one of our most requested communication skill-building specialists. Since 1984 he has been helping organizations interested in improving trust, teamwork and communications in the workplace. **If you believe your company or one of your departments within it would benefit from more effective communication; please contact our manager of customized training Kathy Kull @ 1 800 805-8780 for a free, no obligation consultation.***