

NUGGETS OF KNOWLEDGE

Communication Is An Outcome, Not An Activity

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You've all read the survey results.

"Employees place communication problems at the top of their frustration list."

"Effective communications between management and employees is lacking in the majority of organizations."

There is an interesting paradox in most organizations because it is typical for the managers to feel they are quite effective communicators. In fact, one study showed that 80% of managers think they are better communicators than they really are.

In many corporate assessments that have been done, this has been proven time and again. The good news is that, once the situation is acknowledged, communication and understanding from both parties tends to improve.

So much has been written about how to communicate better, usually about improving the process of communicating. Do this, don't do that. It all becomes a bit tiring, doesn't it? We need to do a major shift in our thinking. We must concentrate on the outcomes, not on the process itself. Let's look at some key outcomes of communicating.

• Building trust

You may not often think of this as a desired outcome, but you should. In order for people to truly follow a leader, they must trust that leader. Without trust in the person, whatever is being communicated may not be fully understood, accepted and supported. Trust is at the core of effective communications.

Lack of trust creates a barrier or disconnect that is difficult, and time consuming, to overcome. No matter how important or impressive a title someone holds, no matter how big their bank account, or how much authority they have, what is really important is that others trust him or her and what is being said.

• Sharing Knowledge

Bob Noyce, one of the founders of Intel, the high tech giant that runs most of our

"Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness without action."

-Benjamin
Disraeli

"Never confuse activity with results."

-Lou Gerstner,
CEO of IBM

" Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after."

- Anne Morrow
Lindbergh

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Computers, once said, *“Knowledge is power and knowledge shared is power multiplied.”* That is one of the guiding principles that caused Intel to be so successful.

Have you ever worked on a jigsaw puzzle and got to the last piece and found it missing? How did you feel? Now, what if someone had that last piece in his or her pocket and they gave it to you?

The feeling you get is similar to someone who shares his or her knowledge with you to finish a project, make a decision or solve a problem. You feel pretty good about them, they’ve shared and you’ve succeeded.

On a broader scale, if you share with an individual or team of people where and how they fit into the bigger mission, you’re creating value and gaining their trust. Sharing knowledge is the basis for understanding – the foundation of co-workers’ cooperation and support.

• Providing Feedback

One thing that seems to stay the same in business is the need to change. Change is continual, change is renewal, and change is progress. It also creates the need to constantly have an effective feedback mechanism so managers and employees can stay on target.

According to author David Cottrell, *“Everyone has four basic feedback needs. A good feedback system encourages connected communications between managers and co-workers by addressing those needs.”*

Employees need to know **what is required of them**, especially during times of change. Employees need to **know how they are doing**. It’s not enough to just tell them at the annual or semiannual performance reviews. Make it a point to be sincere, be timely, and give feedback to others.

Employees also need to **know their manager cares about them and about how they are doing**. Be available when they need you. Get them involved in decision-making by asking their opinion. An email *“thank you”* is not nearly as effective as the face-to-face, look `em in the eye, and say *“thank you”* technique.

In summary, if you change your way of communicating to focus more on the outcome rather than the process, as discussed above, you will have taken a significant step towards better communications.

Try it this next week, I think you will be pleased with the results.

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Why You Should Re-Consider the Importance of Teams

Many will agree that people are the most important asset of an organization. More importantly, however, is how well those people work together to accomplish the common goal. Whether a company has thousands of people working in various locations worldwide or just a handful working in one small office, teamwork is vital to success. So, how can you ensure that your teams are performing at their fullest potential? How do people contribute to the team differently? Have you built effective teams?

To begin answering these questions, you must learn how to really understand each member of the team to identify their work style and how it compares to others in the group. You also need to look at the inherent strengths that each person brings to the table. Not their expertise or their background, but those things they seem to be good at just because that is who they are.

Once you understand the team members, you can not only build a team with the most effective combination of strengths, but you can also learn how to leverage each individual's strengths for a dynamic team that works at its highest potential. Only then will teams reach goals that have been unattained by individuals, work at levels of productivity no single person can achieve or impact the bottom line more effectively as a group. In fact, maybe we should revisit the assets of an organization. Perhaps TEAMS are more important than people on their own?

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