

## Leading People Within Organizations

Communicating for Performance

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## Look familiar?



"The greatest problem with communication is the illusion it has been accomplished."  
*George Bernard Shaw*

## Learning Objectives

- Identify a common vocabulary for leadership communication
- Explore benefits of effective communication
- Suggest tips and strategies for inspiring commitment and delivering effective feedback

## Vocabulary

- **Leader**
- **Effective communication**
- **Performance**

## Leader

A leader is someone with followers who get the right things done.

Formal/Informal

## Effective Communication

The lifeblood of a healthy organization



Messages sent are received, understood and acted on appropriately.

## Effective communication

- Builds relationships
- Supports increased performance
- Fosters employee engagement

## Effective communicators

- Are credible and trustworthy
- Keep at it
- Build relationships
- Get their message across

## Performance

An organization's\*  
actual output or results  
as measured against  
goals and objectives.

\* or individual's

## PP - IL = Actual Performance

PP = Performance Potential  
IL = Interaction Loss

## Communication opportunities

- Inspiring commitment to big ideas/ big tasks
- Providing feedback/coaching

## Inspiring commitment to big ideas/big tasks

- Assume nothing
- Break through "organizational noise"



## Risky Assumptions

- "How I communicate doesn't matter, we just need to get word out"
- "Everyone will 'get it'"
- "It's best to wait until we have more/all the information"

## Break through "organizational noise"

- Attention is hard to get and hold
- Build emotional and rational connection
  - Leadership = generating commitment/ownership
  - Commitment = emotional connection
  - Leadership = generating emotional connection

**Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it.**

*Bartlett's Book of Quotations, 1907*

## Where do leaders use stories?

- The World Bank
- Costco
- Medtronic
- NASA
- Shell Oil
- Conoco-Philips
- Your organization

## Who I am, why I'm here stories...

- Build credibility, trust and connection
- Are simple, brief and honest
- Show humanity and character
  - **Resource:** The Story Factor: inspiration, influence and persuasion through the art of storytelling by Annette Simmons

### To get started... Who I am

Think about pivotal events in your life

- Where were you?
- What happened?
- Who else was there?
- How did you feel?
- What did you learn?
- How does it impact you now?

### To get started... Why I'm here

Think about your greatest "prouds"

- Where were you?
- What happened?
- Why did it matter to you/others?
- How did you feel?
- How does it relate to today and tomorrow?

### Inspiring the future stories...

- Leave tension between the current reality and a desired future
- Generate an "aha!" rather than lay out a plan
- Encourage others to build on the story
  - **Resource:** The Springboard: how storytelling ignites action in knowledge-era organizations by Stephen Denning

### To get started... Inspiring the future

- Write a story from the future
  - Describe the benefits worth working toward
- "Imagine a future where..."

### Working Vacation Effective Feedback Jumbo Shrimp

### Effective feedback/coaching

- Is a conversation
- Suspends communication conventions
- Avoids abstract language
  - "Great team player"
  - "Effective leader"
  - "Improve your performance"

## To get started... Being clear

- Student: "Well written paper" or "Good interpretation of labs"
- Employee: "Be more attentive to detail"
- Colleague: "Your idea has merit"

## Effective feedback guidelines:

- Consensus on goals
- Description and appreciation
- Concrete and specific
- Constructive motives
- Provide negative feedback if relevant
- Own observations, feelings and judgments
- Time appropriately
  - **Resource:** Process Consultation Revisited: building the helping relationship by Edgar H. Schein

## SORRTS

- Specific
- Observed
- Relevant/Respectful
- Timely
- Supportive

## 21st Century performance competences

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving  
Teamwork/Collaboration  
Leadership  
Oral Communications  
Written Communications

## To communicate for performance

- Reduce "IL"
- Personalize
- Ask for feedback
- Build skills
- Keep at it



## Thank you



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## Additional Resources

- **The Heart of Change: Real Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations**  
by John P. Kotter and Dan S. Cohen - Key message: change initiatives fail because they rely on "data gathering, analysis, report writing, and presentations" instead of grabbing "feelings that motivate useful action."
- **Successful story processes: From global to local** - May 5, 2007, Washington, DC. One-day conference where presenters share tools, tips and techniques to use story and conversation to accomplish organizational goals. <http://www.goldenfleececon.org>

## Resources con't

- **Communication Competence and Business Success**  
by David Clutterbuck - Two-year study compares communication in successful and less successful organizations; explores link between communication competence and business success. <http://iabcstore.com/IABCRFRpts/ccbussuccess.htm>