

THE ART OF CONNECTION

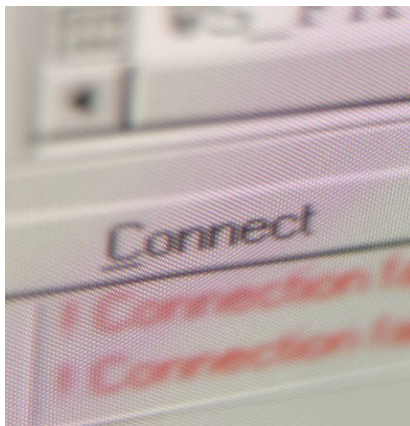
Keep It
Smart
and Simple

(the real meaning of COMMUNICATION!)

How well do **your** people communicate?

How well do they **actually connect**?

What's your **communication model**?



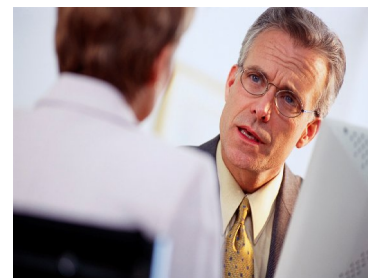
- Chinese whispers?
- 3 wise monkeys?
- Least said, soonest mended?
- What they don't know won't hurt 'em?
- They only need to know on a need to know basis?
- We heard it on the grapevine?

COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- it is the lifeblood of organisations
- it is vital to successful management

We need to communicate to:

- establish control (introduce procedures policies, rules, systems)
- motivate (tell staff how they are doing, what needs to be improved)
- allow for emotional expression (people have views and feelings that they want to express)
- give information (to explain decisions and changes)



When was the last time you examined the quality of communication in your organisation? Isn't it time to check out how well your people are connected?

We have some strong views on good communication. Here are our thoughts. Communication works through networks. These can be:

- formal channels (typically vertical)
- informal channels (the dreaded grapevine!)

There can be many barriers to good communication. For example:

Neglect – failing to communicate at all

Filtering – twisting the message in some way

Selective perception – people seeing and hearing things based on their own needs

Emotions – how we feel at the time when we receive a message

Language – the choice and emphasis of words



So how do you know if you have poor communication? Some of the symptoms are:

- job roles and responsibilities are unclear
- no-one understands who is accountable for what
- there is duplication of effort (several people do the same thing at the same time but with different outcomes)
- there is neglect of some things (Everybody thought Somebody else was doing it and in the end Nobody did it)
- people at the bottom of the organisation do not know what is changing or why
- people at the top of the organisation do not know what is happening at the front line or how change is being received
- people are often not aware of decisions being made, or are not helped to understand how or why decisions are made



Who is responsible for communication in your organisation?

We believe that managers are primarily responsible because they are the “connectors” between the top and bottom of the organisation. They are the decision-makers and part of their role is to communicate with staff for whom they are responsible

Management’s job is to communicate management’s message.

Employees expect to be told what their job is and who is their boss.

They want to know how their work contributes to the team and the organisation.

They have to know what is expected of them, what their targets are, how they are doing.

They are entitled to know what decisions are being made, what changes are afoot, how it will affect them.

Things that affect people's jobs are a must for communication:

- changes in the products or services that are provided
- changes in client and customer needs
- changes in working methods
- changes in systems and procedures
- new workload management tools



Managers who don't communicate effectively are neglecting a vital part of their role, fuelling a divide between management and staff and creating obstacles to the acceptance of change.

They are also costing the organisation money as dissatisfied, neglected employees under perform or leave!

Some key points to note:



With easy access to e-mail, telephone, fax, paper and meetings, managers have no excuse whatsoever not to communicate. Time, or lack of it, is no defence.

Constant change and turbulence in the business environment means more communication is needed, not less!

The success of a manager depends primarily on their ability to communicate with the staff they are responsible for.

Some managers prefer to keep things fuzzy because they then do not have to handle objections, deal with questions or field negative feedback.

It's easy to confuse a lack of communication with a hidden agenda to keep it ambiguous because it serves a purpose (ie to avoid confrontation, bypass decisions people publicly support but privately disagree with).

Not everything can be communicated, not everything should be communicated. The secret to success is prioritisation and discernment. Prioritisation is about understanding the things that significantly affect a person's ability or willingness to give their best in their work. Discernment is judgement about what people should be told and what they say they need to know.

What method of communication should you choose?

It is very important for the right method to be used in relation to what your message is about. Your communication process should include different methods and everyone in the organisation should understand the process and the range of methods.

It is also important for people to have a chance to ask questions and express views. Upward communication is every bit as important as downward communication.

Whatever method you choose, it is vital to regularly check that communication is working. The good news is that grapevines will wither when staff know that there is a good method to find things out



What can you do to improve communication in your organisation?

Give it the recognition it deserves:

- identify it as a formal part of your operating procedures
- appoint someone to take responsibility for it
- make it a mandatory topic on the senior management agenda
- tell your people what you are doing and why you are doing it

Make managers responsible and accountable for it:

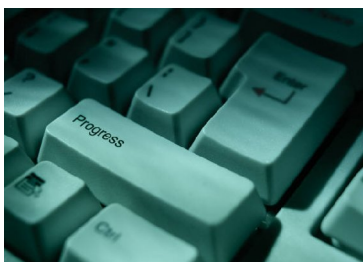
- confirm to managers that communication is their responsibility
- set minimum standards for managers to work towards
- assess their performance on the quality of their communications

Get feedback from employees:

- ask staff what they can contribute to the communication process
- ask staff what they would like to know and how
- discourage moaning and griping about what does not work
- invite staff to make suggestions
- make staff feel involved and part of the communication process

Develop an internal communications strategy:

- create a model and a network for communicating
- define information that can be shared
- explore opportunities and incentives for more upward communication
- identify better ways of using technology to communicate
- set minimum standards for the quality of communication
- identify ways of checking if it is working



There is no doubt about the importance of excellent communication. If you can't communicate well amongst yourselves how can you create the right impression with your clients or customers?

Improving communication in your organisation can achieve many other things. You can send messages out quickly and accurately, enable staff to feel involved and part of the organisation, break down barriers and change your culture.

It's so **smart** and really very **simple**.

Contact us to discuss your communication problems and explore how we can help you.



If you're not sure how to tackle your communication issues and you don't know where to start, we will work with you as your consultants, helping you to find the right solutions.



Find out about our executive coaching programmes, one to one development with your managers, helping them to set clear goals for improving their communication skills.



Ask about our range of powerful, individual assessment tools.



Discover how our dedicated workshops can help to develop communication skills with your managers

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