

- grapevine?
- ...In the lunchroom?
- ...do they talk business?
- ...are the stories about successes or failures?
- ...how do people view the company's future?
- ...their own future?

■ Check the In-Basket

- ...What kind of written materials are people getting?
- ...what do the press clippings look like?
- ...do the written materials "talk business" or bowling scores?
- ...Does the newsletter come out on time?
- ...Are there videotapes piled in back of the mail room?

■ Feedback channels

- ...What's in the suggestion box?
- ...What is the sales force reporting?
- ...what's getting back up the ladder?

Getting Feedback

We can't measure communication effectiveness unless we get feedback via...

- personal interviews
- face-to-face meetings with small groups
- mail or phone surveys
- removing a channel (like a newsletter) and measure complaints
- "employee-on-the-street" interviews
- employee councils
- manager appraisals conducted by employees
- formal attitude/communication surveys
- rumor hot lines

Tools for Communicating

The secret of communicating is to mix your tools. Here are some of the newer ones:

- ▲ Voice Messages – Good for management, but can be overused.
- ▲ Electronic bulletin boards, e-mail – good but can

get cluttered

- ▲ Audio cassettes – good for sales force
- ▲ Videotext – Accessible to all, but can be distracting;
- ▲ Management Newsletters – Very effective; good line to managers

About this pocket guide

Want more information on employee communications?

Get the Crisp 50-minute book, *Communicating with Employees* by Frank M. Corrado. This hands-on, interactive book is 87 pages and sells for \$9.95 plus \$3.00 postage and handling. Call 1-800-875-0570 to order. Fax your order by calling 312-641-0915.

About Communications for Management, Inc. Int'l

Communications for Management, Inc. International, specializes in strategic communications consulting, custom training design and delivery.

For a free catalog of CM training materials call 1-800-875-0570.

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A Manager's Guide to

COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES

A C4M POCKET GUIDE

by Frank M. Corrado



Whose Job is It to Communicate?

It's not the HR department's job, it's not "everybody's" job, it's not even the communication department's job... it's primarily the responsibility of top management to:

- [1] continuously communicate the mission/vision/values of the organization;
- [2] make sure that primary communicators — supervisors and managers — get the word out to their employees and then feedback employees' ideas, reactions and comments up the top.

The job of *communicators* today is to support managers by providing management information — through handouts, slides, e-mail, newsletters, etc. — to help *managers* do the communicating.

You're "Marketing" Your Employees

The true frontier in business remains the effective deployment of human resources, an even more challenging task than managing capital, developing technology or bringing products to market.

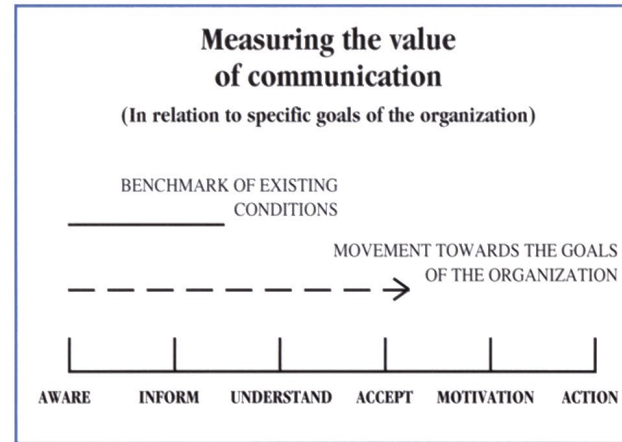
As organizations have gone into quality programs and reengineering and restructuring and downsizings, the need to keep the workforce productive and committed has taken on crucial importance. Organizations need to go beyond communicating with employees today. They need to begin "marketing" to them as they would any customer group. It's a major sales effort to get employees to "buy into" the organization.

Why communicate? To Create Value, Change Behavior.

Communication is not the company "blurb" that runs birthdays and bowling scores. The purpose of communication in the '90s is not to get people to feel good about the company they work for, but rather to change their behavior in a way that will create value and attain organizational objectives and achieve goals. This is very similar to marketing — determining the level of audience commitment or

resistance and then taking steps to move that audience towards taking action.

This means we need to research where our audience is on the "commitment scale."



Once we know the level of employee commitment to business goals, then we can devise communications programs to move them along towards taking action. This approach increases the importance of evaluation in the communication process. And when we finish communicating, we see how well it worked and then go back and communicate again to move them towards "taking action." It's a cybernetic system.

The '90s Communications Environment

Today's employees are different from yesterday's.

<u>Yesterday</u>	<u>Today</u>
Homogenous	Diverse, multicultural
Authoritarian	Cooperative
Stable	Dynamic
Security, loyalty	Loyalty to self, profession

What works? It's harder than ever to motivate employees who have little loyalty. Recognition works. So does constant, credible information delivered orally by the first-level manager. And today's manager has to remember that today's audience is younger and used to communicating

differently:

<u>Older workforce</u>	<u>New workforce</u>
Readers	Viewers
Slow on computers	Keyboarders
Formal communication	Informal
Ideas	Images as ideas
Focused attention	Short attention spans
WHAT was said	WHO said it

What works? It may be that a combination of more traditional and newer high-tech tools such as e-mail and bulletin boards will be our choice. Our only question for media should be: **what works?**

Eight Messages Your Employees Want to Hear

Here are the eight key messages managers must deliver continuously to their employees:

- "This is the mission of our company (unit) and here's how you fit in..."
- "What you do here is important..."
- "Let me tell you how you're doing..."
- "Let me help you do your job better..."
- "We will help you with your personal problems..."
- "Here's how our unit did this quarter..."
- "We've made a mistake. Here's how we're going to fix it..."
- "What are your ideas?"

How To Evaluate Communications

The best way to evaluate communication is to...

- **Get up and take a walk.**
...Are people sitting in their offices or interacting?
...What's on the bulletin board?
...Are there any motivators on the walls?
- **Listen in**
...What are people talking about on the