

COMMUNICATING FOR RESULTS:

Better Leadership Through More Effective Communication





So You Call Yourself a Leader?

Do your employees and peers see you as someone who:

- Guides and directs?
- Motivates and inspires?
- Influences and persuades?
- Effectively manages/controls situations?
- Improves performance and gets results?

And most importantly:

- Communicates well?

How Well Do you Communicate?

1. Break out into pairs.
2. Designate one person to relay instructions to the other without using the keyword on the sheet.
3. Be prepared to share your results with the class.



Great Leaders Are Great Communicators

Through the spoken and written word, great leaders:

- Enable, foster and create the understanding and trust necessary to encourage others to follow them.
- By communicating effectively, leaders improve their ability to get things done with and through people.





Critical Elements of Leadership Communication

Effective leaders are able to:

1. **Understand the strategy/vision** and make it relatable and actionable.
2. **Engage employees and stakeholders** to obtain buy-in and move forward with implementation.
3. **Ensure alignment has taken place** by addressing concerns, misunderstandings or other barriers to implementation.

Communicating the Strategy



Communicating the Strategy (Con't)

- Many strategies fail because leaders overlook the importance of creating a **line of sight** for employees—a way for staff to see and understand where they fit in to the overall picture/vision.
- To create a line of sight, you must **use language that inspires an emotional response** so that employees relate to the plan/message on an emotional level.





Communicating the Strategy (Con't)

- Strategies also need to have feet, or a framework for taking action and measuring progress. To do this, leaders need to set S.M.A.R.T. goals:
 - S** – Specific, or significant
 - M** – Measurable, or meaningful
 - A** – Attainable, or action-oriented
 - R** – Relevant, or rewarding
 - T** – Time-bound, or trackable

- Goals should be realistic, well-defined and focused, with numeric targets, if possible.

- Be sure to share them with your employees!



Communicating the Strategy (Con't)

Take the next 5 minutes to write down 1-3 professional goals using the S.M.A.R.T. goal method.

S = Specific – Who, what, when, which, why?

M = Measurable – When will I know I've achieved my goal?

A = Attainable – Am I able to achieve what I want?

R = Realistic – Am I *willing* and *able* to work at this?

T = Timely – By what date can I accomplish this goal?

- **Alignment**, or agreement on a common message delivered from the top to the bottom of an organization, is integral to implementation.
- It involves **buy-in and support**—two things that are obtained over time and evolve from trusting relationships between employees and leaders.
- Alignment occurs when **leaders take the time to ensure employees at every level truly understand the vision/strategy and are invested in supporting the implementation.**



Creating Alignment (Con't)

Leaders can create alignment by:

- **Showing enthusiasm!** Passion is infectious and inspires others.
- **Painting a picture of success.** This picture must include measurable goals, as this is the roadmap others will follow
- **Building a convincing case.** Create a line of sight and always answer the question, “What’s in it for me?”
- **Being a storyteller.** Make the vision real, relatable and memorable.



Creating Alignment (Con't)

- **Inviting others to participate** and share ownership of the plan to determine a joint course of action.
- **Reinforcing optimism** to innovate, learn, and overcome obstacles. Remember, there's no such thing as a mistake, just an opportunity to develop.
- **Encouraging growth and developing potential** in each employee so they are able to achieve their best.



Sustaining Alignment

- Conduct **periodic check-ins** with staff to celebrate incremental successes, resolve issues, and perform course-corrections to remain on target to achieve goals.
- Check-ins can be daily, weekly or monthly, as well as formal or informal.



Communicating the Strategy (Con't)

Remember:

- Without a **clear understanding** of what is to be done and why, employees will often passively-aggressively refuse to buy into the vision.
- The age-old question, “What’s in it for me?” **must** be answered.



Engaging Employees as Partners





Engaging Employees as Partners

- Positive, productive relationships between leaders and subordinates are integral to an organization's success.
- Employees must feel that they can trust and rely on you for:
 - **Inspiration and motivation** when obstacles arise;
 - **Timely and accurate information** so they can do their jobs;
 - **Honest responses** to curb gossip and calm fears;
 - **Guidance** when the path is unclear; and
 - **Assistance in understanding** where they fit in to the big picture (how what they do matters).

Engaging Employees as Partners (Con't)

- The best leaders are **able to work with and through people** to get things accomplished.
- You should connect with employees' emotions and discover what motivates them via **constant, two-way dialogues**.
- These discussions show employees **their thoughts, feelings and ideas are valued** by you and other leaders, and that they play an important role in the organization.



Avoid at All Costs

Don't:

- Promote a “My way or the highway” mentality.
- Don't dismiss employee concerns or ignore feedback
- Don't assume everyone is on the same page.
- Drown others in buzzwords; keep the message simple and relatable.
- Limit communication methods or hide behind e-mails and memos.







Glorimar Maldonado

Talent Management officer

Office of Human Resources Management
Overseas Private Investment Corporation

Tel: 202-336-8531

E-mail: Glorimar.Maldonado@opic.gov

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation of the federal government.