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.
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

**Cartoon Text:**

**Panel 1:**

How are you doing on your unspoken objectives?

**Panel 2:**

I'm referring to the goals I have in my mind that I've never mentioned.

**Panel 3:**

How are those going?

**Panel 4:**

I'm totally nailing them.
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 into 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.
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!
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.
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.
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

before I make my decision, I'd like to ask for your opinions.

it's supposed to make you feel "engaged."

and you actually plan to listen to us?

I'm hoping it will look that way on the outside.
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).
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.
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