

# TIPS FOR GOOD EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

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Poor communication is perhaps the most common problem among businesses large and small. Most employees, regardless of their position in the organization, will cite communication as an area in their workplace that needs improvement.

Here are a few pointers to help you get your message across to workers:

## **Make employee communication a principal management objective.**

The most common communication problem in organizations is simply a failure to communicate at all. Many employees tend to believe that they are deliberately being "kept in the dark" when they aren't told about something in the workplace that affects them. When in fact, however, the cause of the failure to communicate is usually an oversight on the part of management. The first step in achieving good employee communication, then, is committing the organization to making an **effort** to communicate with employees. Effective communication is a proactive, not reactive, process.

The quickest and most convenient ways to get the word out are often by memo or e-mail messages. Resist the temptation to rely solely on these communication methods, however. Words actually spoken to employees are critically important; sincerity and a genuine concern to employees are best communicated verbally. Many times, written and electronic communication serve as effective tools to reinforce what was previously communicated verbally.

## **Communicate honestly.**

Be straightforward and don't be too entrenched in delivering the "party line", which represents management's sometimes overly rosy view of a situation. The honesty of your communication determines the character of the company and its ethics in the minds of employees.

## **Communicate quickly.**

Don't let the grapevine speak for you. Keeping employees informed on matters that affect their jobs and the company will boost motivation and job performance.

**Talk in' workers' terms.**

Management jargon or technical words are often considered pompous or alienating to employees. Get to the point early (by the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence is a good rule of thumb), then fill in the details.

**Be prepared to share bad news.**

Bad news is never pleasant, but it's worse when it's badly delivered. You will gain the respect of employees if you have the guts to deliver bad news in an honest manner. Remember, it's better if bad news comes from management – not the grapevine.

**Invite questions.**

Two way communication is important. Wise managers realize that they won't have all the answers to employee questions. "I don't know at this point" is an acceptable response to an employee question, as is "Let me check into that and get back to you." The key here, of course, is follow through. If you say you'll get back to the employee with more information, do it!

**Consider special circumstances.**

In situations where litigation may result, every word uttered or issued by management should be monitored with care. To limit the chance of misunderstandings, it is wise to read from a prepared statement approved by legal counsel.