



Confident Communications

Top Tips Newsletter

My mission is to help people unlock their true potential through confident verbal communications — Bob Ferguson

Why Develop A Communications Strategy?

There are many good reasons for having a communication strategy in your organisation, and not just the legal ones. Good communication in an organisation can bring large benefits, or it can have large consequences.

Remember the Boeing story!

The five steps to implementing a communications strategy

Even if you are not as large as Boeing now is the time to develop a communications strategy whilst you are growing, because that is the time when you have control over all aspects of your business, so you can make sure its implemented properly.

There are five key steps to implementing a communications strategy:

1. Understanding communication needs
2. Developing an internal communication strategy
3. Engaging people with visions and values
4. Supporting implementation
5. Creating a knowledge-sharing culture

Engaging with the staff

To me the major action is engaging with your staff, and the word engaging is important. People often think of communication strategies as sending messages out, but to me engaging is as much about listening to your staff as it is talking to them. One of the criticisms of the "cascade" system used in large companies is that there is little feedback from the answers the staff ask. This makes them feel management are not listening.

It is ideal if we can listen and talk very close together and that is best achieved by talking to people.

However, do not think of using PowerPoint for your presentation. You want to make good eye contact with your audience because that is where a lot of the emotion and feelings flow from.

Remember : When PowerPoint is on its delivering an impersonal, factual message. When PowerPoint is off, you are delivering a personal, emotional message. Maintain good eye-contact to retain credibility and rapport.

Use frequent, informal communication

Use frequent, informal communication to achieve the best results. It makes your staff comfortable with the communication and generally gives you the best quality information about what is happening in your business.

Give good feedback

An extra benefit is it allows you to deliver high quality feedback. Not any form of criticism but feedback on what people have done well and what measures they can take to improve. However remember the Vodaphone survey. Over 60% of the people that think they use positive feedback find it is not received by their staff. This is the problem George Bernard Shaw saw when he said "The problem with communication is the illusion it has been accomplished."

In summary good communication in your organisation can bring benefits but it takes hard work and commitment to achieve, so what is in it for you.

What is in it for you

From the Watson Wyatt survey of 2005/6, companies that communicate well:

- Attract the right calibre of staff
- Retain their staff better
- Work more efficiently in a whole series of ways
- They paid 57% more to their shareholders over a 4 year period
- They had a 20% premium value for their businesses.

We are in the age of computers and high speed communication but that does not negate the need to have a properly thought out and implemented communications strategy, because as American Journalist Edward R. Murrow said

"The newest computer can merely compound, at speed, the oldest problem in the relations between human beings, and in the end the communicator will be confronted with the old problem, of what to say and how to say it."

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