Chapter 7

I.N.F.L.U.E.N.C.E.

Engage in Transparent Communication:
Sharing the Authentic Spirit of Navigation

Whatever your corporate mission, paint a clear and compelling picture that others can understand and embrace. State your mission in terms that appeal to your team's best instincts. Persuade and empower as if you are leading and mentoring volunteers. -Tony Dungy, The Mentor Leader

The **number one** engagement driver for employees is knowing that senior management cares about them. Transparent communication increases both productivity and profit

The New "Communication Culture"

On a scale of 1 – 10 how transparent is your organization?

What do you think are the advantages of a two-way transparent communication portal for your organization?

Times are scary; if you are not communicating with them, your employees will become insecure, they will worry about their jobs, their performance will drop, and they will begin to look for jobs where they can feel confident about their future.

The Many Advantages of a Communication Portal

- Plays to your employees social network 'addiction'
- Create a sense of community which is what most employees want
- Allows for a consistent message top down
- Employees respond to both good and bad transparency
- Keeps employees across different locations connected to each other
- Helps everyone to get a better understanding of fellow departments
- More cost efficient than meeting physically to get work done
- Employees feel connected every single day rather than just once in a while

The good news is that when employees understand the company, its history, its direction, and what makes it stand apart from the crowd, they perform better, become loyal to the company, and are able to easily distinguish themselves and their products or services from their competitors. The bottom line is: If you want to get everyone on board, tell them where you're going. They need to know how to plan, pack and prepare for the journey.

Other things you can do with a communication portal

1. Communicate your organizations values and mission statement

2. Recognize achievements

3. Encourage certain behaviors

4. Build stronger teams by allowing members to have their own space online

5. Conduct focus or transformation groups

6. Conduct surveys

7. Use the portal to disseminate training and development

8. Management and executive teams can use it to interact and communicate with one another

FORWARD ACTIONS

Establishing Your Own Communication Portal

1. Assess your current means of communication.

Is it effective?

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Does it provide timely information?

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Are all departments aware of each other's goals, and are the overall goals of your organization discussed frequently?

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What is missing?

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2. **Ask your teams to design an effective system for transparent communication.**

What do they want to hear about?

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What are the most important topics?

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How can the system give voice to employees?

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How will the executive team share information?

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3. **Decide on a platform that is secure and easy for all personnel to use.**

    Look into both in-house and web-based platforms.

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4. **Determine what discussion rooms or areas you would like to have on your portal and what type of information would be best offered in each.**

    ☐   Will there be a human resources area for benefits?

    ☐   A CEO newsletter?

    ☐   An operations or safety portal?

    What about "In the News," "What we are doing in the community," or a "Shout Out" area for recognizing achievements?

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5. **Once you have the basic structure set up, consider using an assessment service to provide polls to quickly collect data from your employees.**

6. **Give a face to your communications through videos, which are fast, effective, and preferred by all types of learners.**

7. **Decide on the frequency of updates from executives.**

☐ Old blog posts quickly become stale. Then, once a number is determined, keep your promise, posting as often as you have decided.

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8. **Develop an implementation rollout plan.**

One plan that has been used successfully is to begin with the executive team allowing key pages to be populated, followed by managers, and, finally, all employees.

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9. **Consider allowing employees to have their own pages where they can post information, allowing them to get to know one another better.**

What else can be added that will build a family-like atmosphere, even if your locations are continents apart?

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10. Develop a "how to" guide to educate users on how to post, your posting protocol, on how the site will be monitored, and on what types of posts go where.

11. Launch the site by scheduling site enrollment days.

    ☐ Local managers can inspire enrollments by making access something valuable and desired.

12. Start to connect, engage, and weave unity throughout your organization, truly sharing the spirit of navigation toward your goals with authenticity and transparency.