



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Managing Change Communications

Organizational Change cannot occur without effective and consistent communications. The goal of communications is to provide clarity and understanding, thereby establishing a context for change and the ability to effectively manage expectations. The communications should help employees understand:

- Why the change is happening now?
- What is the risk of not changing?
- What does the change mean to me?
- How and where do I go to pick up new skills?
- What are the consequences if I don't go along with the change?

Why is it important?

Many of today's projects represent significant changes in the workplace by introducing new business processes, tools and technology that affects how work is performed. These projects can also affect status, working relationships, reporting structures and much more. Without good information, people generally make up "facts" and create assumptions. A lack of information can breed uncertainty, which often leads to anxiety. Such anxiety will soon interfere with employee productivity. Effective project communications and information sharing gives people a sense of ownership in the project and people generally work harder when they feel they have a stake in success. It also ensures that employees will rely primarily on the project, project manager and company, as opposed to the grapevine or rumor mill, for accurate, up-to-date information

To enhance project credibility, all communications should be honest, open, relevant and timely. Communications can also stimulate new ways of thinking in preparation for change.

How communications fail

- No clear identification of key stakeholders and/or audiences
- Failure to listen to stakeholders' attitudes, concerns, information needs and/or suggestions
- Lack of faith in people's ability to handle "bad news"
- Lack of candor
- Focus on the "what" at the expense of the "why"
- Failure to analyze which communication processes and/or channels works and don't work
- Over-reliance on established media
- No high-level, strategic accountability for communication