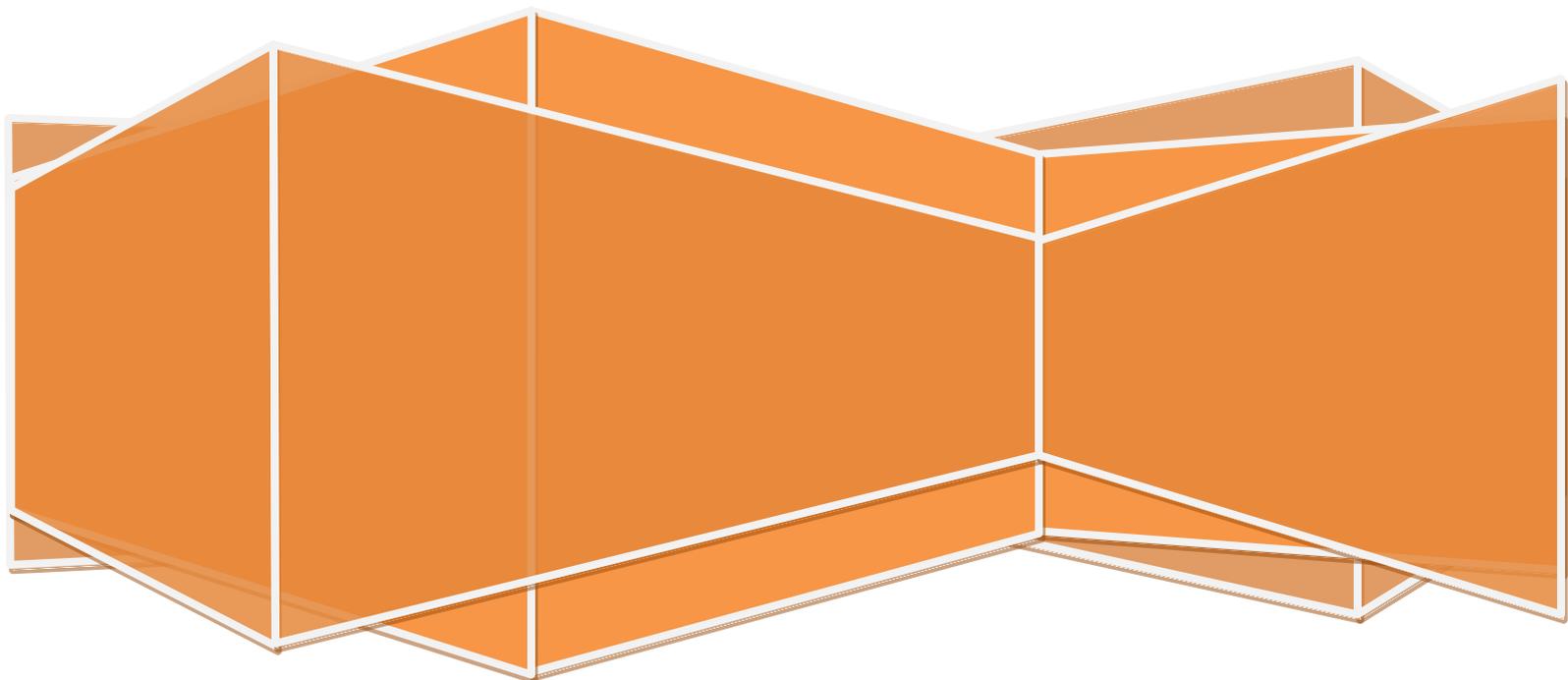


# Successful Communications Start from Within

Essay

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*Information does not mean communication.*

Monday. Morning coffee. News online. News on TV. News on radio on the way to work. Emails. Phone calls. Meetings. And it all comes down to communicating information.

We live in the Information Age. Consequently, we are faced with an enormous amount of data that lays a mouse click away. Media is a compulsive tool, computer also. It beckons to us as soon we enter the office. One of the first daily activities is to turn our computer on, of course if we have ever turned it off the night before.

Nowadays the 7 wh-questions play a key part in effective communication. This means that we should target information; make it useful which equals successful. In my opinion successful communications mean to employ extracted information in order to gain results. Due to modern world, everyday work is identical to communication.

Help needed indeed. With overwhelming informational flow everyone needs some support in figuring which is true, important, priority or even fun, when is the time and place to mention news learned in a little while. The Thing that helps us to reduce information to essentials is internal communications.

When I try to explain how worth internal communication is, I usually talk about HR, but not in its common understanding as “human resources”. I find the term “human relations” much more appropriate. I guess it is something in between: HR (“human resources”) and PR (“public relations”). As Paul Hawken used to say “Good management is the art of making problems so interesting and their solutions so constructive that everyone wants to get to work and deal with them.”

Yet, all the top communication producers know that their value to their companies and organizations is their ability to communicate with other living human beings either face-to-face, over the phone or the Internet – to establish rapport.

Tuesday. Morning coffee. News, news, news... and all we hear is financial downturn, on and on, and on... This theme does lock up people’s motivation and desire to bring value.

With this background it is not only about help needed to deal effectively with information, it is about discussing of problems and solutions, talking frankly, directly about future, not only avoiding bad news, because they are reality, the scaring reality. A communicator (this term I use in general, it may be Internal Communication Manager/ Officer/ Specialist, HR, PR, etc.) must have people believe them, trust them and understand them. It is truly impossible to heat an oven with snowballs. Rapport cannot be created through keystrokes; it is possible with personal interaction.

What is more, in crisis times emotions are a native human reaction to stress and lack of concrete information. We should not forger one of the key rules that are crucial in a crisis – tell it all, tell it fast and tell the truth. In fact this is the only chance to minimize a situation or even make the best of it. When dealing with THE crisis it is extremely helpful to step out of the communicator’s role in the company and put in the situation of who and how is involved in the crisis or otherwise said to try to view the crisis from the eye of the different employees. Ignoring the situation with all its emotional side will only make things worse.



Wednesday. Ok, skip the morning coffee and deal with news – bad, good, mostly bad.

Comprehension is equal to fake coin without emotional attachment to the content. Major "movements" in the organization usually first appear when employees feel it safe to venture their feelings or opinions to peers. We can communicate change or deal with emotions with regular meetings, making "the boss" talk, because first of all, people accept easily live meetings not just newsletters, emails or videos, a personal contact is a key step to securing the rapport. Secondly, when the management talks, employees see their awareness and feel free to ask questions, thus share feelings and fears.

Monday. Tuesday. Wednesday. Thursday. News out, but also news in. We should let the future shine for our company, our fellow colleagues, and ourselves. This denotes: to have good news within the organization, we should create them. Successful (meaning "effective") communications (meaning "managing information") start from within. Every single person, call them employees in general, is a powerful source of news, which make them a potential influential communication leader. At the present time there are social networks, blogs, we are constantly discussing Internet image – personal, corporate, organizational, department, etc. If we could not start the communication process internally in order to manage it properly – to provide the accurate information to lead debates, to release feelings, to let us learn from others; someone will do all these instead of us.

The communication process is far too different from the way the river goes, as it has two ways, the comparison is due to the use of the term "communication flow". Successful communications are about active listening and offering answers or even honestly stating "I do not know, but I care...".

Friday. Coffee and news. News and coffee. The end of the working week, however it is not the end of the communication.

"The best way to predict the future is to create it", someone said. I do agree. It all comes down not only to information itself as a respected tool, but also about the right information, told by the right person in the right time and the right manner, explaining reasons and solutions. Successful communication may start from within; it is all due to our specific set of skills to make it happen.

