

# Employee Communication Sources

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Where do employees currently receive communication about their job, work, and company? From what sources would they prefer to receive this information? What is the relationship between these actual and preferred communication sources? The answers to these important employee communication questions may provide management and supervision with some significant insights into how to more effectively communicate with employees.

## BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Employees need communication from two sources:

1. Job related information from immediate supervision
2. Total business information from top management

If the grapevine is the basic information source, then there is too much distance between the firm's decision makers and employees. Under these circumstances, too much communication distortion occurs. The result is that employees believe that the company discourages openness. This increases the gap between organizational and personal goals, thereby reducing employee commitment and productivity.

Ineffective communication is the most important factor causing less than optimum employee-management relations and contributes greatly to low employee productivity. Therefore what is your strategy and your firm's strategy for improving the communication process?

## COMMUNICATION TIME BY COMMUNICATION TYPE

Written	10
Reading	15
Spoken	35
Listening	40

Total 100%

How much time have you spent in the last six months thinking conscientiously about ways to improve your communication effectiveness?

## WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is a transfer or exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, rumors, and/or expression of feeling between two or more persons so that a mutual understanding results. It is a fact that the message must be received and understood or there has been no communication. The basic elements of communication include:

1. The sender - the originator
2. The message - information to be transferred
3. The channel of transmission - spoken, written, action
4. The receiver - person receiving the message
5. Understanding - message comprehension by the receiver.

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### EVERY EMPLOYEE WANTS TO KNOW?

• Do nearly all employees want to know what is expected of them? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

• Do nearly all employees now know what is expected of them? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

• Each employee wants to know -

1. What is my job?
2. What is a job well done?

• You may think that your employees know quite well what is expected of them and how they stand with you. Yet, research shows that many employees do not know or have only a vague idea of what is expected. Research also indicates that employees have only a vague idea of when a job is performed well.

• When assigning work activities and tasks, have you made clear:

1. The results you want?
2. Why it needs to be done and what it will accomplish?
3. When it should be completed?
4. The possible difficulties that might be encountered?

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5. Tips for doing it and where to start?

6. Where to get help and what to do when through?

• Employees want to see the overall pattern and how their tasks fit total firm operations, objectives, accomplishments, etc.

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### THREE GREATEST COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

1. People are not all alike. They have different backgrounds, experiences, education, etc. that impact the communication process. To understand communication, one must therefore understand individual differences.
2. Failing to recognize the problems with one's current communication skills. Many business managers identify communication as the number one business problem, yet in most instances the manager is thinking about the other person who can not communicate effectively rather than himself/herself.
3. Taking communication for granted because of its commonness. The commonness and intimacy of communication may cause us to forget that it is the basis for all human progress and accomplishment. Effective communicators do not permit the commonness of communication to degrade it but rather let it emphasize its importance.

### SOME BASIC COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

1. Understanding can only occur when there is common knowledge.
2. There must be common sharing of the meaning of words before understanding can occur.
3. The more subjective the message, the more difficult it is to achieve understanding.
4. There is always feedback from any message that is received.
5. A good message is not only understood, it also achieves the desired response.
6. When the purpose of the message is emotionally important, it can usually be achieved most successfully by personal contact.
7. Communication becomes more effective as more of the senses are involved.
8. To insure most successful understanding, keep it simple, keep it short.
9. When there is not understanding, there is quite apt to be misunderstanding.
10. All messages need to be sent with the knowledge that the receiver will interpret it as he/she sees it, that is, as a unique human being. ■