

Cliff Wagoner Receives GCSAA Recognition

Former CGSANC past president and current retired member Cliff Wagoner was recognized at the recently concluded GCSAA Conference in Las Vegas. Fifteen GCSAA members, including Cliff, celebrated their 25th Anniversary of Certification and were honored at the Certification Luncheon. Cliff was among the inaugural group of 47 superintendents who achieved certification in 1972.

Communicating Better At Work

By: Frank Grazian and Don Bagin

Employees often show concern about the quality and quantity of communication at work.

Some claim that management gives only lip service to open communication, but does little to really communicate with them.

Others contend their organizations believe that posting notices on bulletin boards and sending out memos provide adequate communication.

Still others say they receive vague instructions that are difficult to follow. Ineffective communication often results in poor cooperation and coordination, lower productivity, and undercurrents of tension, gossip and rumors, and increased turnover and absenteeism.

Experience shows there are many ways managers can improve internal communication. Here are some things they should do:

- **Understand** that communication is a two-way street. It involves giving information and getting feedback from employees. It isn't finished when information is given.
- **Put more** emphasis on fact-to-face communication with employees. Don't rely mainly on bulletin boards, memos and other written communication.
- **Ask themselves**, each time they give an instruction, if the message is clear. Most

vagueness is caused by failing to be specific.

Example: Don't just tell an employee to "show more interest" in his or her work. If an employee spends too much time chatting with others, be specific about it.

- **View information** as "service to" employees and not "power over" them.
- **Listen** to employees; show respect for them when they speak. They'll feel part of the team and

will tend to be more dedicated and productive. *One way:* Ask questions to show interest and clarify points.

- **Don't just** talk open-door policy. Practice it by walking around and talking to employees.

Don't fail to create a
climate of trust

Allow people to disagree and to come up with new ideas.

- **Conduct one-on-one** meetings. Ask each employee to tell the manager how the manager can help the employee to do a better job. Then share those things employees can do to help the manager do a better job.
- **Prepare publications** frequently. Emphasize current issues that employees care about; don't substitute quarterly "prettier" publications for substantive, up-to-date ones.
- **Concentrate** on building credibility with employees. Managers who lack credibility and fail to create a climate of trust and openness aren't believed — no matter how hard they try to communicate. ↗

Did You Know?

GCSAA and others successfully lobbied to restore National Turfgrass Evaluation Funding (NTEP) that had been cut from President Clinton's fiscal year 1997 budget. Efforts resulted in \$55,000 being allocated to the program, a ten percent increase over the previous budget.

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