

Seven Ways You Can Up Your Communication Game and Build a Great Culture

Years ago, I discovered that good communication is necessary for effective leadership. A leader always sets the expectations and defines the level of communication by example.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Eph. 4:29, NIV).

The motivation to communicate well is clear: There is a direct relationship between open communication and increased performance in any organization.

Today we'll explore another attribute in ERC's (Employers Resource Council) list of characteristics of “Great Workplaces that Excel at the Attraction, Retention, and Motivation of Top Performers” based on 15 years of surveys and interviews (“HR Insights Blog” ERC (Employers Resource Council), 5-Sep-2013 (12-Aug-2014)).

Every leader can develop a great workplace by incorporating effective communication into their culture.

Open Communication

ERC noted the following about great workplaces:

“Leaders frequently share information about the organization's performance, its financials, the vision and direction of the organization, and other critical information and updates at great workplaces. In addition, leaders regularly interact with and communicate with employees one-on-one, in small groups, and as an entire staff. Additionally, great workplaces help

everyone understand the mission and purpose of the organization, and how their work connects to the big picture.”

My Take:

Early on, I realized that a breakdown in communication often led to a breakdown in our business. I learned that open and intentional communication enhanced mutual understanding within our organization. I used a variety of methods and events to sustain an environment of open communication:

- Since 1989, we started every company-wide meeting by reminding our people of our mission and beliefs. In the 1990s, we began these meetings by reviewing our beliefs (later called values), our purpose, our vision and our super-objectives.
- Beginning in 1992, we shut down the company for one-half of a day, once or twice in the fall, just to learn and discuss the particular emphasis/focus for the next year.
- We had three “State of the Company” meetings—one going into our peak season, one coming out and one after the first of the year. We would talk about where we had been, where we are now and where we are going.
- Going into our peak season, we did our “trolley history tour.” We rented a city trolleybus so I could show our new employees the physical locations used in the past and talk about the history of our company. This helped these new folks understand the roots of where we came from.
- Prior to having our Friday Standup meetings, I would use payroll envelope stuffers to consistently communicate about what was going on in the company and to remind our people about the emphasis/focus for the year.
- We had a Pay-for-Performance incentive/bonus for all employees. Each month, we would update our financial progress toward the incentive/bonus threshold at our Friday Standup

meetings.

– Finally, there was no substitute to management by walking around. I would go around and just ask questions and listen to our people. It was amazing what I would learn. And best of all, our people knew I cared about what they were doing and I cared about them as a person.

As leaders, we have a great opportunity to shape our culture by the way we communicate with our team.

What about you? How do you communicate with your team? What challenges do you face when it comes to regular, open communication?

To learn more, click on the link for the entire article. {eoa}

Bobby Albert started his leadership journey as the young president of his family's five-person business. That small business became a 150+ person organization that he eventually sold to a publicly traded company. He spent decades learning how (and how not) to lead and motivate his people. Bobby coaches and guides Christian business leaders, encouraging them to engage their minds and hearts to improve their effectiveness. Bobby uses biblically-based principles and practices to tackle the every-day challenges faced by today's leader.

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