

Communication

Much of the communication in today's organizations entails an exchange, wherein all parties involved must act as both giver and recipient of information. This exchange ensures that the information is received and the recipient has an opportunity to express agreement, disagreement, confusion, understanding, need for clarification or any other response. Ineffective communication results when a breakdown in this exchange occurs, and this breakdown can be exacerbated when we overuse electronic means of delivery. As we all have experienced at one point or another, devices crash, we lose connection, emails go unread in overfilled inboxes, spam filters block messages, or most importantly the message fails to register our human nuances delivering unintended communication.

Communication starts and stops all effective collaborations. Some of the causes of ineffective communication are a mixture of both organizational and human factors. Time pressures, work stress, a multilayered corporate structure, language incompatibilities, and information overload are cited as some of the organization related causes. The human factors are mental, behavioral and emotional.

One of the most important ways leaders can practice effective communication is to continuously express their intent or vision for the direction of their team, department or organization. A leader's Intent, clearly and effectively communicated, allows all team members to understand not only what is expected of them in their individual performance, but how their individual performance impacts the overall goals and daily mission of the entire organization. Team members need to be able to share vital information without fear of experiencing intimidation, retaliation, or rude, demeaning, and condescending behavior. They also need to be able to ask questions without being made to feel inferior and uneducated.

Successful leadership of the future will require a complete culture shift to a new leadership mindset of socialness and connectivity that shares a common language throughout the organization. It will be a culture shift to a 'learning environment' workplace with a deep need for all employees to see the value in being self-directed and taking a leadership role in their own learning through daily work experience in a safe, respectful, and participant-centered environment for learning. Remember, a learning mind is a healthy mind.

In the developed world, our organizations are now composed primarily of knowledge workers— people who are highly educated and experts in their individual fields, and who need each other's mind and skill in order to achieve organizational goals. These people are too smart to accept top down dictatorship and to believe that a few at the top know what it will take for success. There has never been a time in history for employee engagement to reach exponential levels of motivation as there is today. With the right leadership, the knowledge work force will be able to reach successes never dreamed of.

So what will the 'right' leadership look like? Unfortunately, there is no 'one size fits all' answer, but on the other hand, leadership qualities can be found and developed in everyone, at every level of the organization. For success in today's fast-paced ever-changing global environment, leadership will be about managing their individual flow of energy and information in a quick and efficient manner. Information at the front lines will need to be relayed in real time to the top in order for barriers to be removed, opportunities to be grasped, and strategies to be adjusted to accommodate the environment in real time.

At the big-picture level, leaders and managers must learn to be effective conduits of information, both tangible and non-tangible alike, in an environment of safety and respect. Successful organizations will be a continuous looping and re-looping of information, feedback and adjustment. Organizations will have to flatten right out so that information is being transmitted quickly and efficiently. Managers will be the eyes and ears between where the work is being done and where the strategy is evolving. Power lines for informed decision-making will have to be free of bureaucratic static and barriers, and it will be up to managers to become experts at mitigating the bureaucracy that often weighs down efficiency.

For efficient information transfer and sharing there will need to be high levels of cooperation, coordination and collaboration among leaders of all ranks to ensure information is communicated clearly, succinctly, and consistently through all channels. This level of communication will require highly effective relationships and a special connectivity among organizational leaders. It will require the type of connectivity that only comes with an understanding of emotional human energy that leads to connectedness – how it works; how it evolves; and the behaviors needed to get there. For that we need to look to the neurosciences and the plethora of evidence that is coming forth using advanced neuro-imaging technology within the realm of cognitive behavior (among others). And then we have to develop the necessary cognitive and behavioral skills in our leaders. These skills are paramount to leading with high levels of connectivity, and these skills must be continuously accounted for and supported through the overarching organizational culture.

This is what the skill of Positive Presence is about – it comes with an awareness of holding our human energy field in harmony with those around us. It is relatively easy to learn and just as easily measured through workplace behavior. In his 2010 book *“The Heart-Mind Matrix,”* Joseph Chilton Pearce refers to studies showing that when your energy is positive you are experiencing positive thoughts and feelings such as kindness, happiness, optimism and love....and on the flip side when thoughts and/or feelings are negative (like, anger, frustration, jealousy, and cynicism) ... your energy is also negative. Pearce also explains the linkage between positive energy (positive thoughts and feelings) and the increased ability to ‘connect’ and ‘mesh’ with others of like energy.... an increased ability to work together, if you will.

Science has proven that the motivation and passion that is associated with employee engagement, the focus and clarity that is associated with optimum productivity, and the emotional intelligence that is associated with influential leadership – only occur within positive human energy. The tangible indicator of human energy is behavior. That being said, the number one key performance indicator (KPI) for future leaders will be individual leader behavior, the kind of behavior that displays only within positive human energy, the kind of behavior measurable only on feedback from followers and peers.