

WORKSHOP – INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

HTCE

April 25, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Communications audit examines what and how you communicate with your stakeholders. For an internal audit, it's what and how you communicate with your employees, management, contract workers, unions, Board of Directors – each with different interests and agendas

WHY:

- Determine if your communications efforts are effective ...could be communicating but not connecting
- Engage stakeholders in process, therefore gives ownership
- Provide a benchmark to measure and evaluate communications programs on a regular basis
- Good communications makes for good relations which often makes for successful companies

WHEN:

- Before you design your next annual strategic communications plan
- Before you launch any new initiative e.g. newsletter, intranet
- Before a pending risk issue situation
- And...if you've never done one – RIGHT AWAY.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Collaboration with HR
- Management buy-in
- Two-way employee dialogue and involvement
- Time
- Objective viewpoint (from outside communications dept or company)

STEPS:

- Research – surveys, focus groups, F2F interviews, feedback mechanisms, open forums
- Review – communications tools, employee programs, employee incentives, management access, opportunities for two-way dialogue
- Comparison – to other companies, Best Practices
- Analysis – SWOT, situation analysis
- Report – no fudging or soft-pedaling, share with employees; include recommendations but not required to propose definitive changes

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS:

- Materials-- what kind, too many, too few, how often(newsletters, bulletin board, town halls)
- Feedback mechanisms – opportunities for open dialogue, feedback mechanisms, F2F with management, anonymous channels
- Intranet

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WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Awareness factor – do your internal audiences know that you communicate in many different ways? If not, your tools have little impact
- Messaging – are you including key messages which reflect your organization's goals and values? Do your employees recognize these messages
- Culture - Do your methods reflect your culture? Hi Tech – leading edge, online; hospitals-mixed approaches, education oriented
- Tone – is it friendly but not patriarchal?
- Guiding principles – are communications methods based on guiding principles of employee relations – respect, honest feedback, recognition, a voice, encouragement
- Priority – Do you tell employees before you tell the world?

EVALUATION:

- SWOT or Situation Analysis
- Scorecard – rate your program and each method and principle on a scale

REPORT:

- Tell it all and tell it true – don't appease management
- Share it with employees
- Include recommendations but definitive proposal not necessary unless required by client
- Use it as your 'game' book until you do the next one.

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