

ROUND TABLE PRESENTATION, HTCE, 25 APRIL 2005

Involving senior management/management in internal communications

FACILITATED DISCUSSION: Why communicate?

- E.g. To build and enhance relationships that enable people to work together effectively to perform activities in the pursuit of goals.)

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

- How do we get people to 'communicate' ?
 - We cannot not communicate; it is the essence of how we get work done. Only successful or unsuccessful attempts.
- What happens without intentional communication, well handled?
 - Grapevine, conflict, etc.
- Alternatively, benefits of well handled communication?
 - Collective purpose, improved morale and productivity, teamwork; less absenteeism/presenteeism

CONGRUENCY – When are communication tactics an appropriate response? When NOT!

- Not in response to discrepancy between an organization's perceived actions and stakeholders' expectations of them.
- Otherwise, the effort risks degenerating in to "spin.
- Most effective when discrepancy lies between the real actions stakeholders' perceptions of them; i.e. they don't know what you're really doing. Then, information is appropriate to correct inaccuracy.

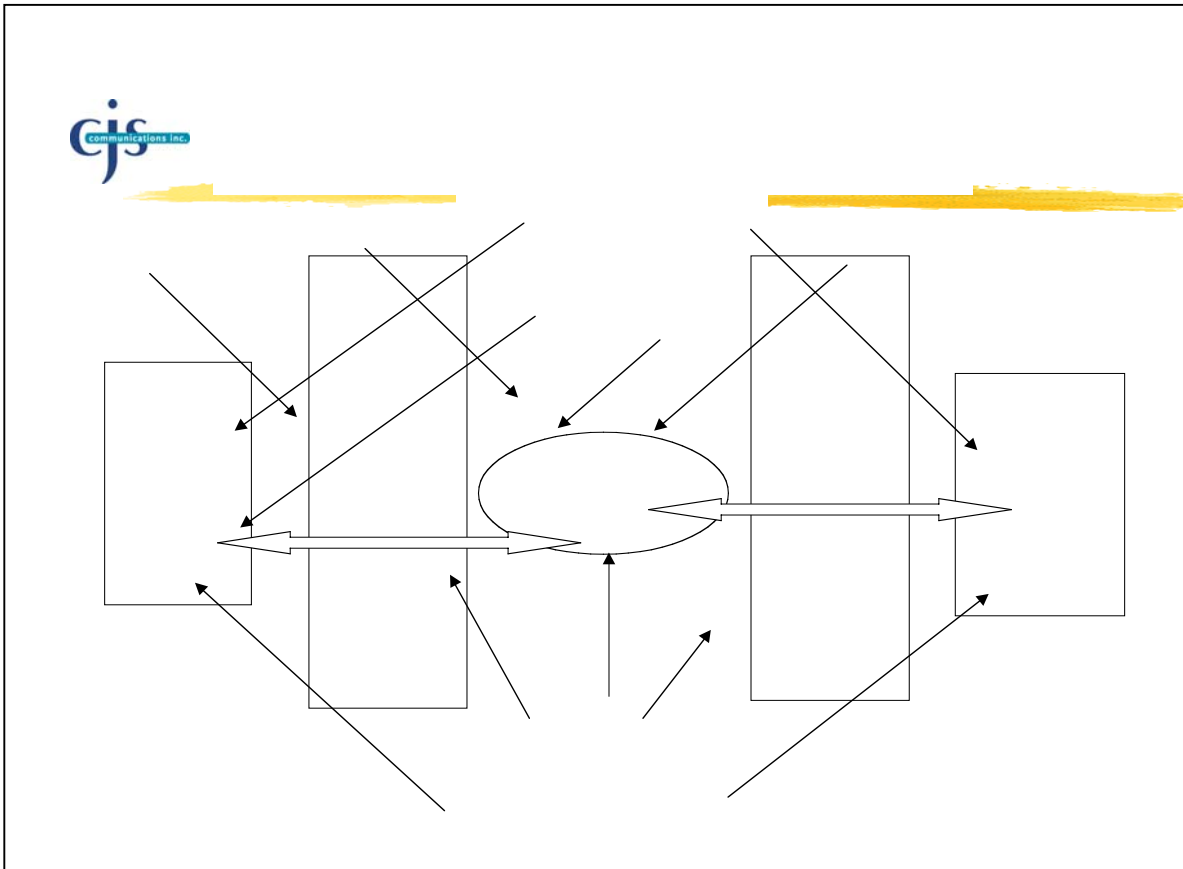
FACILITATED DISCUSSION: What do people need? (response and respect; a genuine opportunity to be heard)

- Fair Process: Engagement, Explanation, Expectation Clarity
- If people can "see" the decision-making process, deem it to be fair and trust in it, they will better accept management decisions, **even those that do not favour them.**

COMMUNICATION MODEL: two-way, symmetrical model of communication (Dr James Grunig*); not **feedback** per se.

- In cybernetic theory, feedback is communication that helps a source control a receiver's behaviour.
- Never does a furnace/air conditioner initiate the communication or get to tell the thermostat to change the temperature setting because it is wasting fuel, being socially irresponsible.
- Communication in this model is truly one-sided, or **asymmetric**.
- AND THAT'S ALL RIGHT! Just be sure to name it accurately; it is when management says 2-way communication, but is only accepting feedback that things get crazy.

* Grunig: * "Managing Public Relations", Rinehart and Winston, 1984



FACILITATED DISCUSSION: How do we persuade people to take recommended actions?

- The reaction to news/change varies; put efforts where greatest pay-off is possible
- can't persuade everyone; so don't try
- only need "tipping point" – critical mass – approx. 20%.
- reinforce "champions" who work on "neutrals"; with their help; defuse 'negatives'.
- Only walking the talk counters cynicism.

The Gallup Organization has 20 years of employee survey results. Key point: people join companies and leave bosses!

In a recent Gallup* workplace survey, based on three million respondents, their estimate of the costs of misalignment – vis-à-vis lost productivity:

- 29% US workforce actively engaged – 55% not engaged – 16% actively disengaged
- In other words, 2/3 just showing up !
- The 16% = \$350 Billion/year
- The 55% + 16% (71) = approx. \$1 **Trillion**/yr

* **NOTE:** Gallup uses "Business Impact Analysis" (a proprietary process) to correlate engagement scores with customer feedback and measures, such as turnover, absenteeism, shrinkage, and sales. <http://www.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=40>

Q12 in various Gallup clients shows that:

"The single most important variable in employee productivity and loyalty – not pay or perks or benefits or workplace environment: it's the **quality of the relationship between employees and direct supervisors.**"

Costs of "misalignment": example, Best Buy stores

- Stores ranked by employees in the top 25% -- exceeded profit goals by an average of 14% **vs.** stores ranked in the bottom 25% -- missed profit goals by some 30%.
- Stores in top 25% retained 1,000 more employees than did stores in the bottom 25% = an additional \$27 million in direct hiring and training costs (for bottom-ranked stores).
- Same company, system, pay scale yet different attitudes among employees.
- Leadership only logical explanation – shows how much "human side" matters.
- Gallup's process a way of looking at qualitative or "human" skills of managers and provides clear evidence that such skills directly influence profit and retention.
- As Q12 scores rise, companies lose fewer people, face fewer worker-compensation cases, suffer less shrinkage and earn higher profits.

Overall, employees who answered "strongly agree" to the 12 questions were:

- 50% more likely to work in business units with lower employee turnover,
- 38% more likely to work in more productive business units, and
- 56% more likely to work in business units with high customer loyalty.

"First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently", Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (of The Gallup Organization)

GALLUP Q12

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?