

Basic Topic: Communications

Problem Statement 1: Communications at all organizational levels are too infrequent.

Problem Statement 2: There is not enough personalized communications.

Problem Statement 1

Communications at all organizational levels are too infrequent.

Cause A: Logistics (scheduling, transportation, finding adequate space)

Cause B: A determination by management of what employees should and want to know.

Cause C: There is not enough Management by Walking Around (MBWA) through all levels.

Cause D: Management doesn't communicate priorities/goals/accomplishments on a regular basis.

Other Causes: 800 lb. Gorilla concept carried over from the original reorganization.

Overall employee attitude, (I am too busy to attend meetings. The meetings are irrelevant to my job.)

Fear of self-expression

What is the point - I haven't seen anything change.

Cause A:

Logistics

Solution 1: Management needs to remember there are two locations for AFM employees.

Solution 2: Meetings should be scheduled to provide opportunities for social interaction among the staff. For example: Instead of scheduling a staff meeting from 9:00 - 10:30, schedule it from 9:00 - 12:30. The meeting might still go from 9:00 to 10:30. But then let the staff know they have from 10:30 - 12:30 to meet with or have lunch with coworkers. This would encourage the staff to get to know each other better and potentially overcome some of the problems inherent with a geographical split.

Solution 3: Replace the sedans downtown with 7-passenger vans. By putting 'cars' downtown which can carry 7 instead of 5, it becomes easier to transport the downtown staff to Beltsville for Divisional meetings.

Solution 4: Increase the usage of video-conferencing. Since both locations are supposed to have video-conferencing capability, look to utilize this technology more to have Division/Branch meetings. This may not be as good as a face-to-face meeting but certainly is better than no meeting and somewhat takes care of the transportation issue and

the time involved in traveling to either location.

Solution 5: Ensure the TVs throughout AFM are cabled to receive the departmental broadcast.

Cause B:

A determination by management of what employees should and want to know.

Solution 1: Provide the minutes of management meetings to employees.

Solution 2: Increase the use of teleconferencing with remote work sites. While teleconferencing is not as good as face-to-face meetings or video conferencing, it is a method of communicating with the employees and overcoming the issues around logistics.

Solution 3: Don't assume the employees aren't interested in the information or don't want to know. TELL THEM. Just tell them.

Solution 4: When All-Hands meetings are held at the AFM level or Division level, have guest speakers/representatives from the other REE agencies/AFM division. These types of presentations could serve to educate the employees regarding the agencies we are servicing and the other Divisions within AFM..

Solution 5: Provide timely feedback. When employees complete projects or assignments, timely feedback on that project could work wonders and generating positive feelings on the part of the employee.

Cause C:

Not enough MBWA through all levels

Solution 1: All levels of management should make a determined effort to visit the troops. However, these visits should be sincere visits and not communicate to the employees....."Well, I have to visit, so here I am".

Solution 2: Branch Chiefs and Division Directors should make an extra effort to visit the troops and interact.

Cause D:

Management doesn't communicate priorities/goals/accomplishments on a regular basis.

Solution 1: The information contained in the "State of AFM" should be communicated to employees at a meeting which would include a discussion of goals. While sharing this information could be positive, steps should be taken to ensure the employees

don't find the presentation irrelevant because of the inclusion of 'dry' budget figures.

Solution 2: The Division Directors should periodically report to their staffs addressing divisional goals, priorities, and accomplishments.

Solution 3: Provide the employees information from the Quality of Work life conference and progress reports on the various issues.

Solution 4: The seven teams from the Quality of Work life conference should coordinate future activities with similar teams within AFM.

Problem Statement 2

There is not enough personalized communications.

This problem statement is not meant to convey a desire on our part to get ride of either email or voice mail. We think both have a place in our environment. Basically, they way we saw it: Several years ago there were two ways to communicate (personal visit and phone call). Today we tend to use two ways to communicate (email and voice mail). We would like to see an environment created where all four ways to communicate(personal visit, phone call, email, voice mail) are appropriately utilized.

Cause A: People hide behind the technology (fear of confrontation, an excuse for avoiding direct dealings, used as a shield).

Cause B: Easy way out (less time and energy required)

Other Causes: Lack of people skills
Location
Provides documentation
Too busy because of workload (cop out)
Less efficient business

Cause A:
People hide behind the technology

Solution 1: Wiz should address all the employees regarding the desire to use more personalized communications (personal visit, telephone) instead of (email, voice mail) when appropriate. This should **not be an email message or memo but a personal presentation by Wiz.**

Solution 2: The managers, supervisors, and team leaders should set the tone by example. Let you employees see you visit people and call instead

of email. Also, be careful when providing instructions to employees how frequently you indicate sent an email versus calling or visiting.

Solution 3: Coaching – If you see an employee whom you think is avoiding personalized communication, talk with him/her and attempt to encourage more personal communication.

Solution 4: In-house training – Develop an in-house training course to assist employees in better determining the appropriate form of communication to use.

*Cause B:
Easy way out*

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Solution 3: In-house training – Develop an in-house training course to assist employees in better determining the appropriate form of communication to use.