

The S E S C O management consultants

Report

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Your “Human” Resource Since 1945

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Communicate, Communicate, Communicate: The Key to Effective Employee Relations

Employee satisfaction surveys confirm that the primary key to success in every employment relationship is effective communications from leadership. A recent Gallop Employee Satisfaction Survey revealed that 86% of employees seek improved communications from their leadership. SESCO’s exclusive satisfaction survey ranks poor communication from leadership as the number one employee issue within the employer-employee relationship.

Although leaders rank themselves high in effective communications, employees rank them very low. This gap of perceived effective communications is always filled. If the leader is not communicating effectively, they must know that their employees, and many times, the community will always, 100% of the time, fill that void with rumors, negativity, false and damaging information, employee backbiting and other disruptive misinformation.

Effective employee relations are crucial for fostering a positive workplace environment and professional service provided to customers. Effective communication is the key in

developing this positive workplace environment. Clear, open and effective communication builds trust, enhances teamwork, prevents conflicts and leads to a high level of job satisfaction and productivity. In today’s employer-employee relationship, a leader cannot say, “Come to work for us, do a good job and we will take care of you.” Employees today fully expect leadership to openly communicate from day one (1). Expectations include:

- Detailed job expectations to include performance outcomes.
- Effective and ongoing training and coaching to ensure success.
- What can the employee expect from his or her employer in return for a job well done to include compensation, growth opportunities and benefits.
- Respect from their leader.
- Employees want to provide input into their day-to-day responsibilities – all humans appreciate when they are asked for their input and advice.
- Employees want to know and are willing to participate in addressing challenges the organizations face and also want to share in the successes of the organization.
- Employees want and need recognition from their leader when things go well. Every employee in every organization wears a badge



on his or her chest stating, “**Make me feel important, make me feel appreciated.**”

Effective leaders know and understand the need for effective communication. In fact, these leaders will develop a formal **Communications Plan** to manage internal as well as external communications with employees as well as customers and the community. These Communications Plans can be very detailed, but remember if you develop a Communications Plan, make sure that it is practical and can be implemented efficiently. Elements of an effective Communications Plan with employees may include:

- Regularly scheduled staff meetings. Monthly tends to be a very common timeframe. Within these monthly staff meetings, a leader may address key business indicators such as customer feedback, organizational goals/plans and updates, requesting staff feedback, question and answer times, etc. Conducting these meetings during

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lunch is effective. The important point is that the leader is open, as much as possible, about the organization's successes, goals, challenges and involves staff.

- Celebrate anniversaries, birthdays, staff and their family news and other "celebrations."
- Training and development sessions.
- Daily staff meetings, typically in the morning, to prepare for the day and service expectations.
- One-on-one staff check-ins, monthly or even quarterly. An open discussion of the employee's performance to include expression of appreciation as well as coaching and feedback. Note: Do not wait until the year-end performance review meeting.
- How and when leadership will communicate to include electronic (email), in person and formal letters.
- Conduct at least annually employee satisfaction surveys which are conducted in a confidential format utilizing an outside third party such as SESCO Management Consultants.
- Celebrate holidays to include staff and their families.

There is no one (1) "best" Communications Plan. The best Communications Plan is customized and implemented. Do not leave staff communications to go unplanned.

We must understand ourselves and those we work with:

Tony Robbins quoted, *"To effectively communicate, we must first realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."*

To summarize this quote, the most effective communicators understand his or her own communication style as well as those who they are communicating with. The most effective tool that we utilize to understand ourselves and others is the **DiSC Profile**. This personality profile is more than 94% valid. It is extremely easy to administer, and a thorough, comprehensive report is produced to include identifying the individual's personality strengths as well as providing a very detailed outline of how to improve one's communication skills. Once leadership and the team understand the **why** and **how** team members communicate, we then can understand individuals in a more personal and professional manner. The lights come on in that we now understand why a staff member communicates and/or does what he or she does. It is just their core personality. Once we understand these realities, we can then appreciate individuals' strengths and communicate and work towards those strengths. There are no right or wrong profiles as we all are created with our own unique style and personality. Once we understand ourselves and how we communicate and work with others and in response understand those that we work with, the workplace becomes so much more fun and harmonious. And although this article is directed toward the employer-employee relationship, when employees become trained in recognizing personality traits, they become extremely effective in serving and communicating with customers. The DiSC Profile has many benefits in terms of screening and hiring, communications, team building, conflict resolution, customer service and sales, and other relationship matters.

Some of the more common causes of communication issues include:

- Unclear messages
 - Messages that lack clarity
 - Inconsistent information, especially when there are multiple family members or leaders within an organization
- Generational differences
- Lack of feedback
 - Without constructive feedback, small misunderstandings escalate
 - Slow feedback can hinder progress and create frustration
- Not holding employees accountable – The kiss of death is allowing mediocre or poor behavior to go unaddressed or to be allowed to hang around (stay employed). When you draft key communications tools such as an employee handbook, job descriptions or other directives and expectations, be consistent in their application and hold employees accountable.
- Reliance on electronic communications/emails
 - In today's environment, we overly use emails. Emails are drafted quickly without thought of the potential "meaning" or "emotions" that come through.
 - Emails do not allow for an effective give and take.
- Leadership does not listen. An effective communicator listens 80% of the time and communicates 20% of the time.

Most employee relations conflicts can be prevented and addressed by the leader through:

- Articulating expectations in writing as well as verbally in an ongoing leadership fashion. The key tools include the employee handbook,

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the cornerstone of the employer-employee relationship, effective, detailed criteria-based job descriptions and finally, practical and clear operational policies and expectations.

- Providing ongoing communications and feedback to the team as well as individuals.
- Effectively rewarding a job well done to include both psychic communications which includes expressing appreciation and competitive compensation. Know that psychic compensation is the most important compensation an employer can provide.
- Timely/immediate coaching and counseling of mediocre or poor behavior. The employee either improves or is made happier somewhere else, re: another employer or profession. The leader is not responsible for their staff but to them. Regardless of the profession, no employer, large or small, can allow poor behavior to hang around. You cannot afford, from a profitability standpoint, this poor behavior nor can a positive employee relations culture withstand this type of behavior.

Internalize and Plan for the Basics of Effective Employee Relations

Throughout SESCO's 80-year history in working with leaders, always remember the following tenets:

- Employees want to do interesting, challenging work in which they can assume some responsibility.
- Employees want recognition for good work. Verbal and tangible recognition is often more important than pay. Recognition from management makes an employee feel important and appreciated.

These basic self-esteem needs, when constantly met by leadership, are the most powerful, intrinsic job motivators.

- Employees want to work with managers and supervisors who treat them with respect. They desire employee and employer communications that are a two-way street, free of verbal threats, verbal abuse and/or unrealistic demands.
- Employees want to work with leaders who listen and appreciate employee ideas on how a job can be done better, more productively or more safely.
- Employees want a chance to think for themselves rather than just carry out a rigid set of instructions from their "boss." Effective employers implement employee involvement/survey programs, suggestion systems and lunch and learn opportunities.
- Employees want to work where their leader is committed, dedicated and supportive of their needs daily. And to achieve this, those effective leaders are communicating daily with their staff to understand and meet their needs.
- Employees want to know what is going on. Today's employee wants to know how well the organization is doing and the problems and challenges that it may be facing so that they can participate and assist. They want to be a part of the team and the organization's success.
- Employees want to feel good about working for the organization. They want to have pride in the contribution to the organization's objectives and success. They want to feel proud about where they work. They want to work with ethical

and positive leaders that are well respected within the community.

In summary, leaders can draw on a wealth of behavioral science research to understand what makes employees tick. These experts agree that employee motivation depends most heavily on a positive work environment created by sympathetic management, effective employee communications and participation and where employees have some control over their performance. In short, quality work life is the key to employee motivation and at the center of this work life is effective leadership communications.

SESCO Client Feedback

"Hi Bill. Thank you, very strong article." ~ Edward J. Defort, Editor, NFDA Publications (The Director, Memorial Business Journal, The Director.edu) - National Funeral Directors Association - Brookfield, WI

(Feedback concerning background checks) *"Good morning Tonya. That was such a quick turnaround, thank you so much." ~ Pam Nuxoll, Project Manager Assistant - J.A. Street & Associates - Blountville, TN*

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2026 SESCO Webinar Series (Part 2)

- **June 30: Building Smarter Compensation Systems: Total Rewards Strategies for Retention & Growth**
- **July 14: Leading with Respect: Recognizing & Preventing Harassment and Discrimination**
- **July 28: How to Conduct Internal Investigations: Get it Right the First Time**
- **August 11: Performance Management for Leaders: Driving Accountability, Growth, & Results**
- **August 25: Conflict Resolution for Leaders & HR: Turning Workplace Tension into Productive Outcomes**

Tuition:

\$65.00 per person, per webinar

Tuition includes a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and live recording emailed to registered individuals.

Schedule:

Every Other Tuesday, beginning March 10, 2026 - November 3, 2026

1:00 pm-2:30 pm EST

To register for SESCO's 2026 Webinars, please visit our Webinar Store at www.sescomgt.com.

For more information or registration, contact tonya@sescomgt.com.

Note: The Zoom information will be sent to participants a week prior to each scheduled webinar, via email. A reminder email will be sent to participants the day prior to each scheduled webinar.