

## MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

### Practical Tips for Communicating with Employees

To build teamwork and communications among their departments, managers have to set an example. The old saying, "monkey see, monkey do" is quite true in these circumstances. So managers must work very hard at setting examples by always communicating their needs and wishes and making sure they do it clearly. This means providing constructive feedback, information, letting people know what you expect from them and being available to listen to employee concerns.

By sharing information and keeping people well informed-- either face to face, through company e-mails and memos, internal websites, stopping at their desks or facilitating meetings, management will actually foster a positive environment and encourage employees to do their best. There is nothing worse than the rumor mill which often spirals out of control and puts managers on the defensive instead of allowing them to control the information. We recently worked with a company that did everything right. Due to tough economic times, they had to slash benefits. They set up company wide meetings, question and answer sessions, internal newsletters, specific areas on their website, etc. Because they kept the lines of communications open and were very proactive, their departments worked as teams to help navigate through the difficult times.

Finally, put yourself in someone else's shoes to understand how you would feel if you were them. That way, you can personalize your communications. Speak simply in real language, not office speak or someone else's words. Talk in terms of solutions, not in terms of problems and let people know they are appreciated. Everyone needs a pat on the back and when you make someone feel good about themselves, they are more likely to want to do a good job for you.

Interestingly, when I look back at my own career, much of what I learned, I learned from being a television reporter. Management screamed at you and you were really only as good as your last story. I vowed that one day when I was in business; I would never become the people I once worked for.

It's a hard way to learn a lesson, but it's a lesson worth learning.

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