

## Recover the Costs of Poor Employee Communication

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Have you ever thought of the business losses associated with poor communication? Everyone can identify with how miscommunication in a personal relationship can quickly turn sour, but when businesses fail to communicate well, they don't have the opportunity to simply 'kiss and makeup'. Here are a few things about employees to consider:

- **Productivity lost** – when employees waste time feeding into the rumor mill, or when their morale is lowered because they don't feel empowered or appreciated.
- **Reputation damage** – when employees bad mouth the company as a symptom of bad morale, or when they simply misrepresent it because their responsibilities about company messaging are not clearly articulated.
- **Brand dilution** – when they fail to stay “on message” or on strategy because expectations are not made clear.

The fact is, the costs are incalculable; because employee morale and related losses in productivity, as examples, are imperceptible. However, the best way to recover such unseen costs is to prevent them and that takes effective communication. The following are eight common “best practices” that mark companies with superior employee communication.

- The chief executive is the communication champion and model.
- Words must match actions.
- There is a commitment to two-way communication. Every employee should feel that they are heard and that an opportunity for “dialogue” is always available.
- There is an emphasis on face-to-face communication. It is often the critical difference, especially in times of transition.
- Employee communication responsibilities are shared, not centralized.
- The degree to which communication about bad news is culturally valued and institutionally supported. Use candor for bad news, and the good news will be more believable.
- Knowing your customers, clients and audiences. Organizing communication around them as opposed to focusing on the vehicles used to reach them.
- Communication is viewed as a vital management function that is essential to the achievement of corporate goals. It can't be just a set of techniques. It can leverage high tech practices, but not ignore the need for high touch.

Those companies with a genuine commitment to consistently apply the above best practices of communications will reap the rewards that employees offer in kind, and will find that business objectives, as a result, can be more readily achieved.