



## Why Do Supply Chains need an Effective Communication Plan?

Effective communication is a vital component to successful supply chain management, yet an alarming amount of businesses have no official communication plan in place to guide their employees. On top of this, supply chain managers are rarely trained in communications and end up taking a very laissez faire attitude towards the entire process.

To understand why this is a problem, stop and consider the effects of bad communication. The number one result is decreased efficiency through wasted time, money and resources. Other effects include decreased worker morale, public relation problems and missed opportunities for innovation, among other things.

This can easily be brushed aside under the assumption that there is nothing wrong with your current communication methods, but the problem is that poor communication can often take months or years to develop into a clearly visible problem. Proactive managers can avoid this by adopting proven approaches that ensure information flows efficiently to all stakeholders.

### **How Do You Develop an Effective Communication Plan?**

If you want to ensure your organization avoids communication breakdowns, simply follow the advice given below. This won't replace a formal education on the topic, but these time-tested solutions can place you significantly ahead of those that do not follow these strategies.

#### **Organize a Communication Chain**

A chain of communication is as straightforward as it sounds, but it is important to establish the expected flow of information within a business. The chain can be as simple as the chain of command, but all members must understand what is expected of them when they receive a message — including what messages should be forwarded, who they should be forwarded to, and how they should be delivered.

The communication chain should allow for -- and encourage -- feedback. This means the chain should promote multi-directional communication, facilitating the flow of information up and down the chain of command. When workers feel that their voice is being heard, morale tends to improve significantly. This has the additional benefit of allowing managers to obtain insight into where their plans may expect too much or where additional value can be obtained by expanding on a project.

#### **Break Down Your Messages**

Before delivering a speech, sending an email, or even having a meeting with one of your workers, you need to dissect the message you intend to give to ensure that you are delivering it effectively. Ask yourself the following questions in order to make sure you have developed the most compelling message possible.

### **What Is the Goal?**

Communication attempts should have a clear goal. Ask yourself what you desire the outcome of the message to be. If you can't articulate this to yourself in a sentence or two, then the chances are pretty high that the people you are delivering the message to will be left confused and unsure of what is expected of them.

Generally speaking, messaging goals tend to fall into four different categories: requesting action, delivering information, requesting information, and congratulating teams or individuals. Many messages will have aspects of multiple categories, but it is important to make sure that your main goal is clear.

### **What is the Message?**

Determining the goal is only the beginning of crafting the message. The actual words used matter more than you might expect. A message delivered with the wrong words will fail to inspire action and oftentimes will go completely unnoticed.

Understanding the significance of this is as simple as considering two different messages that both are making the same request.

"You have to stay late tonight."

will have a much worse response than:

"I really appreciate the hard work you have been doing lately, we're almost done with this project and if we work a few extra hours this evening we can get this done."

### **Who Are the Recipients?**

Determine who needs to receive the message and make sure you have chosen the appropriate chain to get the message to them. This requires taking the time to consider who needs to be involved in order to achieve the goals you have identified at the beginning.

When considering the people you need to address, you also need to take into account how separate groups may respond differently to the same message. The extra time it takes to address each person or group individually may pay off exponentially when it comes to the overall reception of your message.

### **What is the Best Delivery Method?**

The delivery method is also important. Some messages are very effective via certain mediums while having little to no effect through others. Using email to inform people about an upcoming meeting is a great idea, but emailing someone to let them know that they are under-performing will not be solving any of your problems.

Delivery method also involves who will be delivering the message. It is important to have messages delivered by people who the recipients will be receptive to. Authority figures are often the obvious choice, but that doesn't mean they are always the right one. You can be creative here, but that doesn't mean you can avoid delivering bad news by having other people do it. That's an easy way to lose respect.

### **Measure and Adapt**

The final step to developing a successful communication system is to measure how successful you are at achieving the goals you identify. For some, you will actually be able to get numbers relating to your target, such as when you wish to get volunteers to sign up for a certain task. Other situations will not allow specific measurements to be taken, but that doesn't mean that you can't observe their effectiveness.

This step is important as it allows you to adapt your communication techniques based on what delivers the best

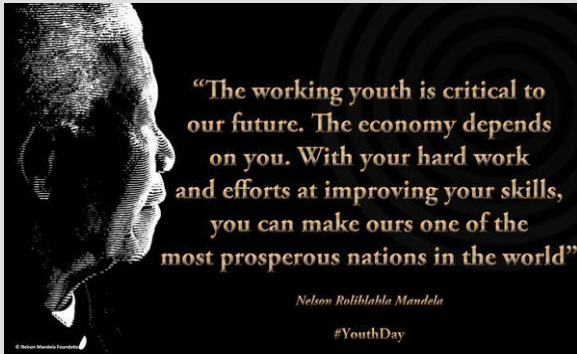
results. Pay attention to what works and what doesn't, and keep making small adjustments along the way.

You'll be surprised at how much more efficient your business can become through simple improvements to communication.

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### Youth Day "16th JUNE"



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Orange Recruiting (Pty) Ltd  
Company Registration Number: 2005/041787/07  
Tel: +27 11 807 8102 | +27 82 550 0959  
[www.orangerecruiting.co.za](http://www.orangerecruiting.co.za)  
P O Box 5322, Rivonia, 2128,  
357 Rivonia Boulevard, Rivonia