



FLOURISH GUIDE

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION



Healthy Communication

Communication is the exchange of information between individuals for a purpose. In organizations, communication is effective when leaders involve employees, seek for and act on their suggestions, explain reasons behind decisions, and create an environment of open dialogue. Organizations who practice **Healthy Communication** value diversity, and experience an environment of mutual accountability, innovation and unity.

FLOURISH MODEL

-  **F** = Fantastic Teams
-  **L** = Life-Giving Work
-  **O** = Outstanding Talent
-  **U** = Uplifting Growth
-  **R** = Rewarding Compensation
-  **I** = Inspirational Leadership
-  **S** = Sustainable Strategy
-  **H** = **Healthy Communication**





WHEN ORGANIZATIONS PRACTICE HEALTHY COMMUNICATION, THEY HAVE:

- ▲ Regular and timely communication from leadership.
- ▲ Leaders who share both good news and bad news.
- ▲ Information presented directly and clearly.
- ▲ Opportunities for employees to provide feedback and give input into decision making.
- ▲ Open and honest exchanges about ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
- ▲ Communication that is often face to face.
- ▲ High levels of trust.
- ▲ Consistently applied strategies for dealing with conflict.



WHEN ORGANIZATIONS LACK HEALTHY COMMUNICATION, THEY OFTEN:

- ▲ Fail to share important information with employees in a timely manner or are inconsistent in doing so.
- ▲ Provide too little or too much information.
- ▲ Fail to share difficult information with employees.
- ▲ Resist engaging employees in decision making.
- ▲ Do not provide opportunities for feedback from employees.
- ▲ Do not act on employee feedback
- ▲ Ignore conflict.



Survey Questions

The following questions from the Best Christian Workplaces Employee Engagement survey are used to assess **Healthy Communication**:



- 1 Diversity is clearly valued by people at our organization.
- 2 Leaders at our organization explain the reasons behind major decisions.
- 3 Our organization seeks suggestions of staff/employees.
- 4 Our organization acts on the suggestions of staff/employees.
- 5 In my area, we feel free to voice our opinions openly.
- 6 Our organization involves staff/employees in decisions that affect them.
- 7 Staff/Employees at our organization are encouraged to experiment and to be innovative.
- 8 At our organization we strive to help one another maintain life balance.
- 9 At our organization people are responsible and held accountable for doing what they say they will do.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS TO BUILD AND ENCOURAGE HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

- 1 **Have a plan for communication.** It is easy to overlook the need for communication when developing a program or initiative. Put yourself in your employees' shoes – what would you want and need to know to do your job effectively? Identify key stakeholders and clarify the information they will need, and plan how and when to provide the information to them. Who is impacted by the decisions that are made? Understand how information cascades through the organization and use that to your advantage to effectively disseminate information. Identify someone to ensure that the necessary communication is taking place.
- 2 **Communicate regularly.** Establish regular meetings to share information with employees. A quarterly or semi-annual meeting with everyone may be effective for organization-wide updates. Monthly updates may be appropriate. Departments may meet more frequently. Schedule one-on-ones with individuals on a regular basis. Daily stand up meetings may be appropriate for some teams. Whatever frequency you determine, be intentional and consistent. Have an agenda. Don't shy away from sharing challenges. Be sure to explain the reasons behind decisions, not just communicate the decision itself.
- 3 **Avoid overdependence on one form of communication.** Often it seems most expedient to utilize electronic communications. E-mail or instant messaging may be an efficient means of communication, but it isn't always effective. Some things should be shared in person. Determine the most effective method of communication based on the message that needs to be shared. Leverage technology to your advantage, but don't let it become a substitute for face-to-face interactions.



- 4 **Solicit feedback.** Provide opportunities for employees to give feedback. Don't assume that people are not interested or can't understand difficult issues. Take advantage of employees' perspectives and experiences on the front lines. Ask for their input. Create different methods for collecting feedback. Recognize that some people will not speak out in front of a group, so ask for feedback one-on-one, or provide an anonymous way for people to give their input.
- 5 **Use coaching techniques in your communication.** Healthy communication isn't just about what you say, but it also includes what you hear. Learn to ask good questions, and to listen well to the answers people give. This is especially true when receiving feedback. Listen to and receive it. Don't immediately evaluate it and respond.
- 6 **Become conflict competent.** When conflict arises, address it quickly. Focus on the problem or issue, not on the individuals or personalities. If conflict becomes too emotional, take time to pause to let things cool down. Ask questions; listen to answers. Seek solutions that are a win-win for everyone involved.
- 7 **Understand how others may communicate.** People give and receive communication in different ways. Some people are wordy when communicating. Some are "just the facts." Understand others' communication styles and preferences, and when appropriate, communicate to them in those ways.





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