

Communicating with Employees on Six Channels

A Value Systems Approach

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Premise 1: The ability of employees to respond appropriately to communications depends on whether the communication from management is on the “right” channel(s).

Premise 2: The purpose of communication is to change behavior. No change in behavior = no communication.

Premise 3: It is the responsibility of management to “transmit” on the employees’ various channels – not the employees to “retune” their “receivers”.

Premise 4: It is the responsibility of management to “receive” communication on the channel the employees use to “transmit”.

Premise 5: The Value Systems of management and employees are usually quite disparate.

What is a Value System?

Values are the personal “programming” underlying the “why” of how one responds to communication. Values are also the emotional response to the message. Change the way the message is communicated and you change the understanding and consequent behavior. Effective communication occurs when a person’s deep-seated beliefs, motives, language and needs, i.e., **values**, are compatible with the style and words used in the transmission of the message.

Why the Message Not Received?

According to CVR nationwide Attitude Surveys, just over half of employees report they are getting enough information from management. Even when managers are sincerely focusing energy and resources on better communications, why does it remain an issue? **Because the message is being sent on the wrong value system channels.**

Want to Communicate to Everyone?

Well, you are going to have to say it six different ways!

CVR has 25 years of research and experience in helping managers “Transmit” and “Translate” their messages to match the six different “Receivers” present in their organizations. Here is a summary of those six “Receivers.”

Clannish Values

The need to change is not easily understood by employees with a Clannish Value System. This value system learns from a narrow range of sources within a relatively small physical and mental comfort zone. Among these sources are team sports, clubs, gangs, school cliques, religious ceremonies and beliefs of the parents and blood relatives. Of particular importance is the “Chieftain” or leader of the family or anyone in a clear position of power. These belief systems are imbedded and implanted permanently into the thought processes and personal identity of the individual. Culturally, clannishness appears as ethnocentric identities, religion, race and ancestry. Thought processes that have been learned and practiced on a lifelong ritual basis cannot be easily altered. With 25% of the population having this as a key part of their value system, communication depends on the credibility and leadership skills of the “Chieftain” or “Supervisor.” Management must communicate to the “Chieftains” and let them translate and communicate with their respective “tribes.”

Cynical Values

The Cynical value system places an extremely high value on personal thoughts. This person operates in an endless loop of ideas, each reinforcing the other with little external input allowed. Largely, this circular thought process precludes influence by others, for contrary beliefs or ideas are met with cynicism and protective bluster. This value system has a desire to dominate others. The concept of positive attitudes has little meaning to the cynical value system. The 5% of the adult work force in this group do not change because of gentle communication, but rather on direct orders from a strong “boss.”

Conventional Values

The Conventional Value System is focused upon institutionalized sources of information, religious, government, military and corporate policies and procedures. Emanating from these institutionalized sources are the formalities of codified behavior in speech, thinking, attire, decorum and etiquette. The printed word is authoritative. What appears in print must be practiced uniformly at all levels of the organization. The desire to be perfect and wanting all others to be perfect is a prime motivator. Communication (if it is written and followed to the letter by all leaders) may be believed and accepted as the truth. A belief in change does not fit this value system. With 35% of the adult working population having a strong Conventional component in their thinking, perpetuation of past attitudes and behaviors will remain strong. Management must be willing and able to provide the depth of detail and precision in communications this value system requires.

Competitive Values

The competitive value system is a key component in 15% of the adult working population. Many managers have this value system and therefore tend to communicate in their own values model to employees. The values are competitive, cunning, calculating and motivated by cash. The focus is on highly visible role models within the corporation and society. The closer a role model is to the top of the “corporate pyramid” the higher the probability that the message will be received. Competitive individuals prefer to associate with individuals of a similar value system and set of beliefs. It is easy for managers to communicate successfully with others of the same value system. (This is why managers spend so much time talking to each other and consultants.) Communication is easy when everyone thinks alike, but this value system is not often found on the “shop floor.”

Compassionate Values

Those in the compassionate value system view all individuals as equals and is the only value system that is truly appreciative of the individual differences and ideas offered by various cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds. Socially concerned employees are suspicious of management’s perceived “manipulation.” Concern for fellow human beings and broad latitude for expression of diverse opinions and ideals is a way of thinking for the Compassionate. This 10% of the adult population accepts change only to the extent that managers can communicate how the change brings equality to the workplace. Change for economic benefit to the corporation only, will be resisted vigorously. If change does not obviously help the shop floor or office and clerical employees, change will be met with subversive actions.

Conscious Values

These individuals have a conditional view of the world. Absolutes are replaced with views of relativity. The thought process is no longer binary (is, is not) but rather replaced by a world of possibilities. Views on change are tempered by what is appropriate and effective. Change coming as a current fad from an “expert” or a manipulative “sales pitch” is not considered a validation that the process is right for the organization. Although employees with Conscious Values do have an appreciation for change, he or she will see little value in a major “program” with lots of fanfare — “just do it” is their motto. This 10% of the adult work force will evaluate communications and changes as to their effectiveness and appropriateness to the current situation.

So, How Does One Learn More?

Let CVR measure the Value Systems of your entire workforce using our exclusive Value Systems analysis instrument. You administer it to your employees and send the completed forms to CVR and we will process the data and prepare reports and interpretations.

We can also come to your site and present a seminar to educate all persons in management and supervision in the concept of value systems. At the same time we will give hands-on experience to your leaders in restructuring your written and spoken communications. We can also show how to use Value Systems in recruiting and hiring people.

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