How to Communicate Effectively at Work

Communication Guidelines for Workers:

Verbal -
. Tell them WHAT is to be done and how important it is to be done well.
. Compliment them often and do this in a group setting.
. Use the words “we” and “us” frequently.
. If a change is going to occur, tell them how important they are for the change to be effective, how their fine performance has made the change possible, and provide frequent reassurance that the change is good.
. Give logical explanations for any changes and be willing to answer questions about the change.
. Talk often about work “benefits.”

Non Verbal -
. Authority figure needs to be present in the work place.
. Smile, shake hands, hug, etc., whatever is culturally acceptable to let them know they are your friends.
. Put up charts and signs in the work place that show the quality of work or the amount of work that has been done. Put a lot of names on these charts or signs. (Do not single out one person.)
. Any changes that are made must be put in writing and posted.
. Authority figure must have some of the trappings (symbols) of office, but not so much that the person is too distant from the group.

Do Not –
. Give vague or “general” information, such as, “Do whatever needs to be done.”
. Make frequent changes in routine.
. Be distant or aloof from these workers or they will find a nother “leader” who they like and this could be just about anyone.
. Let good behavior and production go unnoticed.
. Use verbal, theoretical training.

Communication Guidelines for Leaders:

“Never insult an alligator until you’ve crossed the river.”

Cordell Hull
Verbal:
. Tell them WHY something is to be done. Let them figure out the WHAT - it is important that this individual be challenged.
. Let them know how they will benefit from working in the organization.
. Give public recognition when they do well. Unlike Workers, these people like being singled out.
. Be very clear as to what the rules are.
. Be very clear in defining objectives.
. Address problems directly - do not let problems slide.

Nonverbal:
. Eye contact.
. Show no fear.
. Give name recognition to this person (sign on door, mention in memos, etc.).
. Include in meetings and conferences.
. Never ignore this person - this will divert their attention from working with you to working against you.

Do Not –
. Ignore, slight or insult them. They may not be big on friendships, but will identify enemies.
. Give total “free reign” or they will take over. Allow them space to operate, but monitor and have them give reports.
. Promise them something and not come through if they meet their end of the bargain.
. Get into competition with them, set up situations where they complete against others.
. Put them in situations that are routine or place them in circumstances where there is nothing to do, they will get caught up in their own wants, and you may not be able to bring them back to the organizations goals.

Communication Guidelines for Helpers:

“What the world really needs is more love and less paperwork.”

Pearl Bailey

Verbal:
. Ask how they are doing or how they feel.
. Talk to them about people problems (motivation, benefits, etc.).
. Share a problem with this person.
. Talk to them about people in their lives (family, friends, etc.).
. Let them know that others need them.
Nonverbal:
- Smile and be sincere.
- Give them all of your attention.
- Provide opportunities for one-on-one communications.
- Put them in charge of projects that are group oriented or at least let them be involved in the planning.
- If an employee is having a problem, refer the employee to this person.

Do Not –
- Put them in situations where they have to discipline others, or be very directive with others.
- Place them in situations where they work by themselves for long periods of time.
- Use cynicism to get a point across they will interpret this cruelty.

Communication Guidelines for Researchers:

“It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult.”

Seneca

Verbal:
- Share information or problems with this person.
- Ask for opinions.
- Ask if there is another way of doing things.
- Don’t limit conversation to only the immediate needs.
- Talk about planning and details.

Nonverbal:
- Have an open-door policy with this person.
- Don’t panic or show a great deal of concern when they go off on a tangent.
- Allow freedom of movement and thought.
- Overlook oddities of behavior.

Do Not –
- Keep them in routine work situations for long periods of time.
- Isolate them from the information flow of the organization.