

THE
GROSSMAN
GROUP

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FIVE STEPS TO

THRIVE

[NOT JUST SURVIVE]



AN INTERNAL
COMMUNICATION
PRIMER FOR
LEADERS

THERE'S A "NEW NORMAL" INSIDE ORGANIZATIONS TODAY

Setting aside the usual array of workplace challenges...



**INCREASED
GLOBALIZATION**



**MARKETPLACE
COMPETITION**



**CHANGING
WORKFORCE
DEMOGRAPHICS**



**INCREASE
IN VIRTUAL
EMPLOYEES**



**WORK/FAMILY
BALANCE**



**TECHNOLOGICAL
AND DIGITAL
ADVANCES**



You now face a workforce that is more skeptical and, in some cases, more wounded than ever before.

ENGAGEMENT IS DOWN

ACCORDING TO THE 2017 GALLUP
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INDEX¹

32%

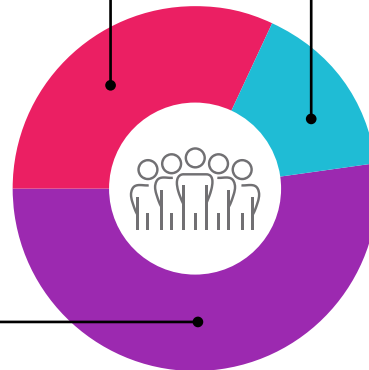
(just under one third) of all U.S. employees are engaged

16%

are actively disengaged

52%

(just more than half) are on the fence



ONLY 13% OF WORLDWIDE
EMPLOYEES ARE ENGAGED.

SO WHAT
DOES THIS
MEAN
FOR YOU?

A LOT...

SURE, THINKING ABOUT THE
BIG EFFECTS OF SOMETHING
AS *(SEEMINGLY)* SMALL AS
A DROP IN ENGAGEMENT
PROBABLY MAKES YOU WANT
TO PULL THE COVERS OVER
YOUR HEAD AND GO BACK
TO BED TILL IT'S ALL OVER.



But the truth is the challenges of the past offer opportunities for the future. With fresh assessment, clear goals, and a path to effective communication—along with empathy, courage, and compassion—you can set your company (or clients) on the path to not just survive, but thrive in the coming months and years.



HERE ARE FIVE STEPS

YOU CAN TAKE TO
PROPEL
YOUR COMPANY, AGENCY
OR TEAM INTO THE
NEXT DECADE



GET A MIRROR

YOU'RE AWARE EMPLOYEES LISTEN TO WHAT YOU SAY, BUT THEY ALSO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU DO.

The truth is that body language speaks, and often louder than words. And there's no better way to think about how others are seeing you than to visualize a mirror that is in front of you all the time. Reflect on what others are seeing and reading every time they interact with you, and develop the awareness not only to act the role of the leader you want to be, but to role model the actions and characteristics that you would like to see in others.

Great leaders know themselves and have an understanding of how others see them. As a leader, think about putting an actual mirror on your desk as a constant reminder to reflect on your role and on the influence you can have. You need to understand your leadership style and to know that communication and effective management begins and ends with you. The more you reflect on your role as a leader, the more that mirror will reflect the positive and influential image that those in the company see, too.

ROLE MODELING 101

- Do you want to send a message that you're open and available to your team? Walk the floors or halls of your company, keep your office door open, or join your team members for lunch or during a break.
- Want your team to know you're listening? Repeat or paraphrase what they tell you so they know you not only heard them but are processing/thinking about what they've said.
- Want your team to know you care about them? Ask them how they're doing or what's on their mind. And if they offer an idea on something that could be improved, take action on their idea.
- Want employees to follow certain procedures? Use the same procedures yourself, and explain why you're using them and how they help.



ENGAGED EMPLOYEES ARE CRITICAL TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

When Doug Conant came in, Campbell Soup was rated at the bottom of the heap in terms of employee engagement among Fortune 500 companies, sales were falling due to prior management's decisions to raise prices and the company had lost half its market value. Conant believed the key to a successful company was employee engagement. Under Conant's leadership, Campbell's stock outperformed the Standard & Poor's Index. He retired in 2011 after completing his 10-year plan.¹



PLAN

YOUR COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION IS PLANNED FROM THE BEGINNING WITH A CLEAR ASSESSMENT OF THE BUSINESS OUTCOME YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE.

If you're a natural communicator, you might be wondering why communicating with your department needs a formal, structured strategy. There are myriad reasons, but the most important one is that "just do it"... just doesn't work.

I can tell you from experience that leaders often feel their communication efforts are better spent on external initiatives—initiatives that have the potential to directly affect their bottom line and business growth. But when they begin to add up the collateral damage resulting from a high decline in engagement, they begin to realize the very direct importance of an internal communication strategy.

Like any communication plan, you have to think about outcome, audience, message, method, and evaluation. But don't feel like you have to have all of this information to communicate to the team or company.

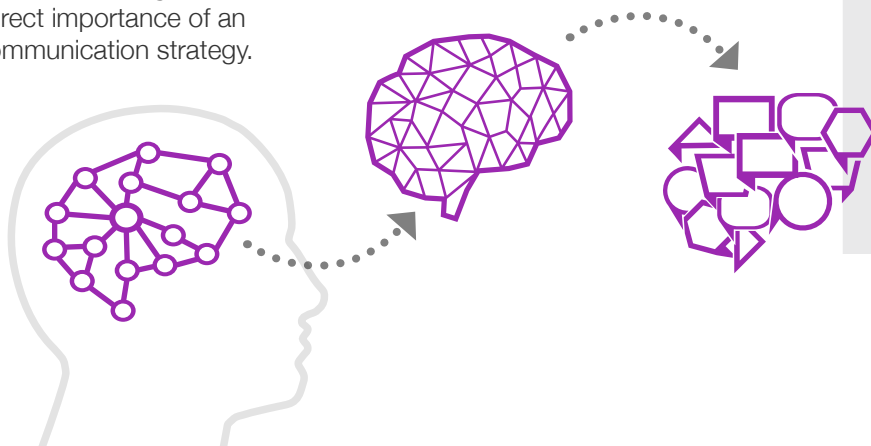
This approach is paralyzing and inefficient, and it's a sure-fire way to feed the rumor grapevine, potentially sabotaging your initiative before it even gets off the ground. Chances are you already have enough information that is valuable to employees.

HOW MUCH INFORMATION IS ENOUGH INFORMATION?



Naturally, it depends on the situation, but in the case, for example, that you've got a big elephant in the room—a reorganization, a high-level executive change, a merger or acquisition, a round of layoffs, or anything else that could be seen by employees as directly threatening their positions at your company—tell them what you know, what you don't know, when you're going to find out additional information, and stamp out myths or misperceptions. The key here is transparency, which means addressing the issue at hand before it spirals out of control.

A truly good plan creates a well-informed workforce, and a well-informed workforce can be one of the most powerful weapons in your company arsenal.



DIFFICULT MESSAGES MADE EASY.

It's never easy to communicate difficult information to employees, but with these six essential steps, you can prepare for the toughest conversations:



1. IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Are business results not where they should be? Do staffing changes need to be made? Are there undesired behaviors that need to change?



2. IDENTIFY YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME

Are you trying to put business news in context for your employees? Do you need your team to understand changes that are underway? Do you need desired behaviors to become the norm among your staff?



3. IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Do you need to inform your entire staff? Is it a small group of employees? Is it one employee? And should they all hear the message at the same time, or should some people hear it first?



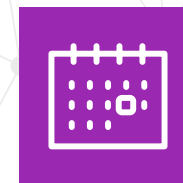
4. STRUCTURE YOUR KEY MESSAGES / CONVERSATION

- What do you want your audience(s) to think, feel and/or do?
- What will you say (in a calm, constructive way) so they understand the situation and your concerns?
 - Consider how to start the conversation.
 - Identify the questions you will ask (to seek input/check for understanding). For example, "Tell me how you feel about what I just said."
 - Have stories or examples to illustrate your main point.
 - Outline specific actions being taken and/or that your employees need to take.



5. CONSIDER HOW YOU WILL SAY YOUR MESSAGE

Select the right time and place to have a conversation with privacy and without distraction. Encourage dialogue so you can get real-time insights on how employees are receiving the information, what's on their minds, and if they understand what you are saying.



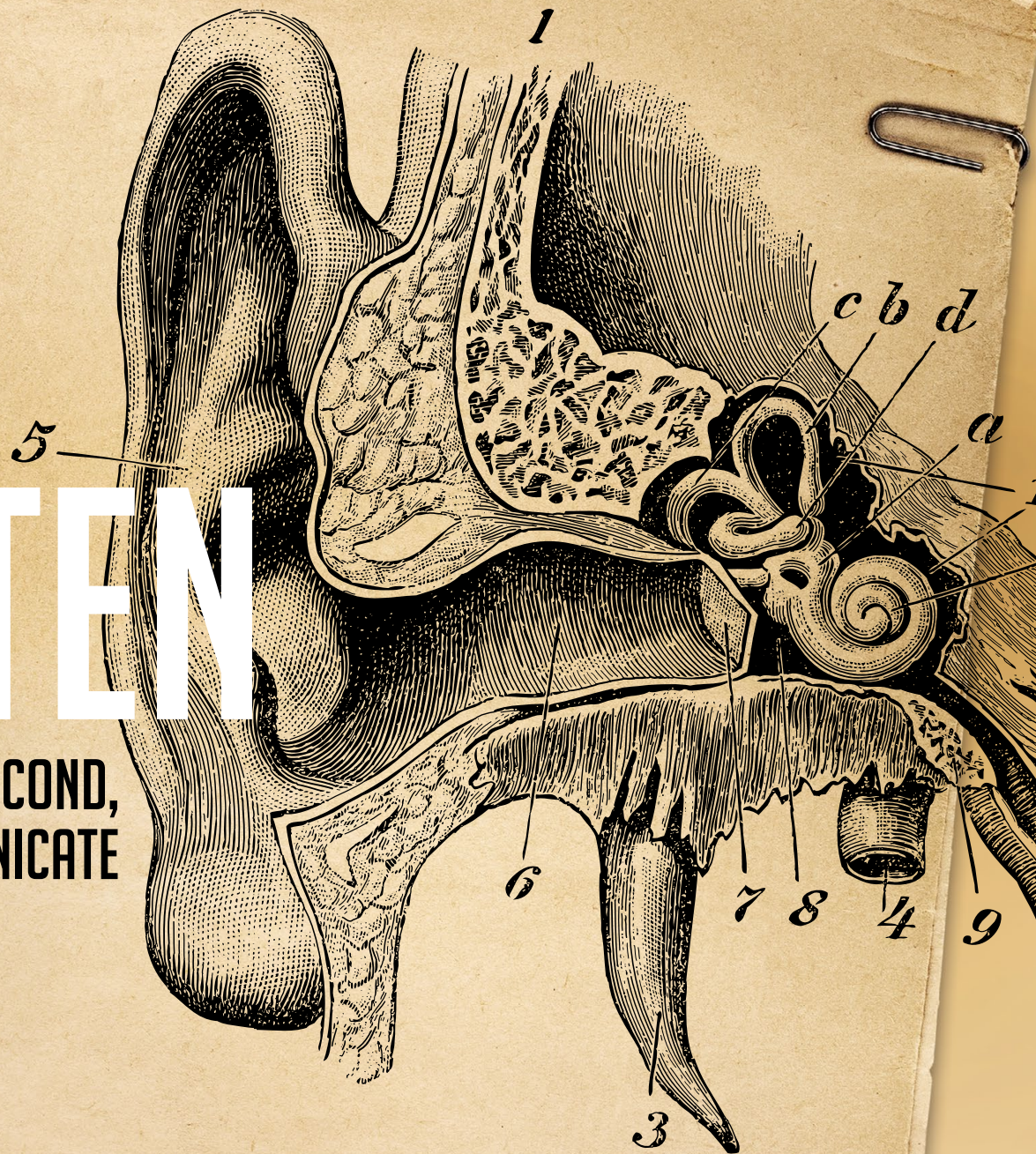
6. FOLLOW UP

Do your employees have questions? What's on their minds?

3

LISTEN

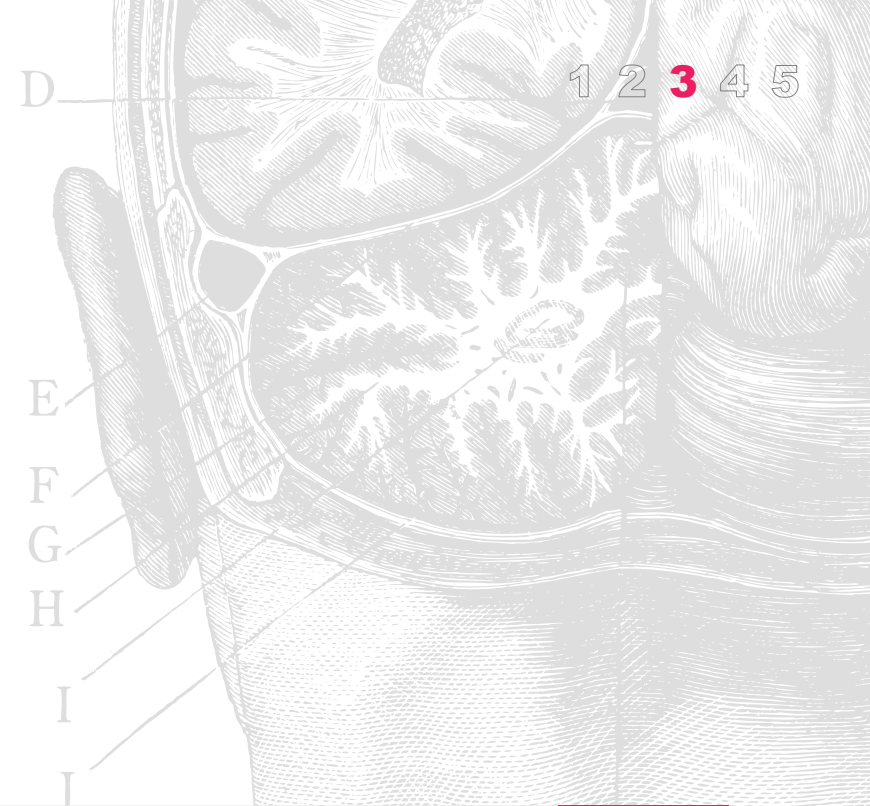
FIRST, LISTEN SECOND,
THEN COMMUNICATE



THERE'S A REASON WE HAVE TWO EARS AND ONE MOUTH.

Ask the necessary questions first, then actively listen. *Then, listen some more.*

Check your understanding by paraphrasing what you hear and allowing employees to correct you. Allow employees to vent. Empathize and re-frame issues where needed. Your goal should be to help them understand what's happening, why it's happening, and how it affects them. Get out of your own way, let go of your ego, and understand that it's not about you—and even when it is, your team is more concerned with your leadership style than your personal flaws.



CHOOSING YOUR BEST COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Once you know what you want to communicate, it's important to think about how you communicate it:



FACE-TO-FACE

when you want to:

- Address topics that require immediate action.
- Discuss complex, confidential, or sensitive topics or issues.
- Gather immediate feedback and input.

EMAIL

when you want to:

- Provide directional, important and timely information to targeted audiences.
- Direct the receiver to a website or online source for more information.
- Share detailed information and data.

VOICEMAIL

when you want to:

- Communicate urgent, brief messages that require quick action but don't require proof that the communication was made.
- Request a same-day or next-day response.
- Communicate with team members who are traveling.



YOU'RE ALWAYS COMMUNICATING...

CONTROL

THE MESSAGE

LEADERS ARE ALWAYS COMMUNICATING WHETHER THEY INTEND TO OR NOT.

Don't assume that because you're not saying anything, you're not sending any messages. Your employees will read into your behavior when you withhold information or avoid communicating just as much as when you directly and openly communicate. You may think you're doing your employees a favor by keeping them out of concerns or in waiting to tell them about change until it's a foregone conclusion, but think again.

By **NOT** communicating, you make your employees feel undervalued and underappreciated. And you create questions and churn—the very things you were trying to avoid. Effective communication provides the right information, prevents misinformation and drama, and can engender a sense of pride, commitment, and trust that keeps employees coming back and giving their best effort. It's also consistent, constant, and honest.

MANAGING THE COMPANY RUMOR MILL

All organizations have a rumor mill, and as much as leaders would like to shut it down, they can't. But they can manage it:

1. Maintain your credibility and use it to your advantage.

Credibility won't stop rumors from developing, but it will unleash the truth. Communicate what you know, when you know it, and make sure your messages are consistent across all touch points.

2. Be open, but be careful. We know that remaining silent in tough times feeds anxiety. But being too open can hurt more than it helps, especially if it adds to people's fears.

3. Pulse your people. Ask your direct reports what they're hearing from their people on a periodic basis. Or, better yet, walk the halls and ask employees what's on their minds. Having a better sense of what keeps employees up at night will help you get ahead of any rumors that might be waiting in the wings. The best part is that employees will know you're listening and that you care about what they are thinking.

4. Anticipate and address concerns. When people are worried about what they don't know, they often imagine the worst and share their concerns with others. If leaders don't anticipate and address concerns, the vacuum will be most certainly filled by rumors. Get out in front of anticipated worries by understanding the mindset that causes them and immediately address those concerns.

5. Include your own messages in the rumor mill.

Engage thought leaders who typically feed and influence the rumor mill. When employees hear the same messages from their supervisor (always their preferred source) or from the CEO, read it on the intranet, and hear it through the rumor mill, they're more likely to believe it and, most importantly, to act on it.





THINK ABOUT WHO ELSE

CAN BENEFIT

FROM YOUR INFORMATION

AT THE END OF EVERY MEETING, OR WHEN YOU MAKE KEY DECISIONS, ASK YOURSELF:

Who else needs to know this information, how will they get it, and who will get it to them? This ensures that you are keeping others apprised of their need-to-know information and everyone aligned.

THE BENEFITS OF AN ENGAGED WORKFORCE

Not sure if it's worth it to communicate key pieces of information to people in your company? It's estimated that actively disengaged employees cost the U.S. \$483 billion to \$605 billion each year in lost productivity. Consider the following benefits that stem from a highly-engaged workforce vs. a disengaged one:¹



LOWER ABSENTEEISM

Engaged employees make it a point to show up to work—highly engaged business units realize a 41% reduction in absenteeism.



LOWER TURNOVER

Engaged workers are more likely to stay with their employers. In high-turnover organizations, highly engaged business units achieve 24% lower turnover.



LESS THEFT

Highly engaged business units experience a 28% reduction in inventory loss and a 40% reduction in quality defects.



FEWER INJURIES

Engaged workers are more mindful of their surroundings. Work groups with engagement scores in the top quartile realize a 70% decrease in employee safety incidents in the workplace.



HIGHER CUSTOMER SCORES/SALES

Work groups with higher levels of engagement achieve 10% higher customer scores and a 20% increase in sales than those on the lower end.



HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY/PROFITABILITY

Work groups in the top quartile of engagement are more present and productive; they average 17% higher productivity, and 21% higher profitability.

EVERYTHING A COMPANY
AND ITS LEADERS WANT
TO ACCOMPLISH **HAPPENS**
THROUGH PEOPLE, MAKING
COMMUNICATION A CRITICAL
BUSINESS TOOL AND AN
IMPORTANT DIFFERENTIATOR.



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David helps leaders drive productivity and get the results they want through authentic and courageous leadership and communication. He's a sought-after speaker and advisor to Fortune 500 leaders, and three-time author. His latest book, "No Cape Needed: The Simplest, Smartest, Fastest Steps to Improve How You Communicate By Leaps and Bounds," recently won the Pinnacle Book Award for the "Best in Business" category and the Beverly Hills International Book

Award's President's award. His other books include, "You Can't NOT Communicate: Proven Communication Solutions That Power the Fortune 100," now in its second edition, and its follow up, "You Can't NOT Communicate 2". His leader**communicator** blog is also ranked the #1 blog on communication by Feedspot. David counsels leaders at top organizations to unleash the power of strategic internal communication and drive performance. Clients include CVS

Health, Eastman Chemical, Health Quest, Hill-Rom, Johnson & Johnson, Kimberly-Clark, Lockheed Martin, McDonald's, NYU Langone Medical Center, Tenneco, and Wyndham, among others. He's Founder and CEO of The Grossman Group, an award-winning Chicago-based strategic leadership development and internal communications consultancy, and teaches at Columbia University in NYC.



David has been featured in:

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

NIGHTLY NEWS

TODAY

Chicago Tribune

Los Angeles Times

Book David to Speak to Your Group or Team About Authenticity in the Workplace

In a session that's focused on self-awareness, attendees will learn what authenticity is and isn't, how to know how you're doing at being authentic, along with ways to build your emotional intelligence, examples of leaders who reap the benefits of authentic leadership and how they build trust, and more.



To speak with David about your need or book him for an event, call us at 312-829-3252



Or email results@yourthoughtpartner.com



For more information on David Grossman visit www.yourthoughtpartner.com/speaking-and-events



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