



Keep the momentum

4th Quarter 2018 Manager Newsletter



Does your megaphone work both ways?

How would your team describe the flow of communication in your organization? ***Read more about the different channels of communications...***



Four ways to be an inclusive manager

From small teams to large, diversity matters. And the more complex the job, the more important it is to use different perspectives and skills. ***Read about the value of open and honest expression...***



We've got to start meeting like this

Many if not most meetings are forgettable. Only the best and worst will stand out in participants' memories. ***Learn some tips for making your meetings memorable, in the best ways...***

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Does your megaphone work both ways?



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How would your team describe the flow of communication in your organization? Do you deliver news to team members all at once or one by one? Can you talk to your superior's superiors without fear?

Top-down communication comes naturally for most organizations. But developing a culture with healthy channels in other directions can make a big difference when it comes to your team feeling heard.

It may help to offer multiple ways for employees to submit feedback. Ideally, these include a mix among these types:

Formal. Most companies already have formal channels in place. These could include quality reviews, production reports and performance evaluations.

Informal. This kind of feedback is everywhere if you just listen. You can gather it by:

- Talking to employees
- Taking questions and comments at meetings
- Reading feedback that comes through e-mail or other electronic media

Peer to peer. Try a new way to generate ideas: Have your team members work together — without a manager at the table — to discuss ideas they'd like to develop. This kind of communication connects coworkers. It also enables them to take the initiative to solve issues they have in common.

Anonymous. The most candid feedback is likely to come from comments submitted without names attached. For example, a suggestion box or online survey can reveal a lot about your team's strengths and pain points. Without the worry of repercussions, anonymous suggestions often include information you won't see anywhere else.

Got feedback? Now what?

Collecting feedback isn't enough. You have to use it to make improvements. If people see their comments leading nowhere, they may not take the time to share their thoughts in the future. Be transparent about the ways their ideas influence changes. That can encourage more sharing and innovation.

Have you identified any new channels you'd like to create in your organization? Give it a try and see what positive changes you and your team can make happen.

Four ways to be an inclusive manager



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From small teams to large, diversity matters. And the more complex the job, the more important it is to use different perspectives and skills. That means being an inclusive manager. Here are four ways you can accomplish that task:

1. Listen and learn

It's easy to get caught up in your own way of doing things. But you can't be inclusive if you think you know it all. Seek employee feedback. And listen to it — really listen. You might be surprised at what you learn.

2. Know how to handle conflict

Believe it or not, an absence of conflict can be a sign of an unhealthy team. Why? Teams that lack trust don't express themselves. An inclusive manager will encourage members to speak up, even if it means there will be disagreement. Conflict, if managed appropriately, can be an opportunity for growth.

3. Be a conductor, not the orchestra

As a manager, you operate like a conductor, giving your team directions and encouragement. They make the best “music” when they play together. And it's up to you to know when to encourage a member to play a little louder or play a little softer.

4. Don't just “open your door”

Many managers assume an open door policy will encourage employee input. That's a great place to start. But it puts the burden of communication on your staff. Be sure to open your door. Then walk through it. And go talk to your staff about how they're doing, what's working and what needs improvement.

Effective teams can tackle complex problems. And inclusive managers create effective teams. Bringing diverse ideas to the table can help you find success.

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Let's face it: Many if not most meetings are forgettable. Only the best and worst will stand out in participants' memories. If running meetings comes easily to you, you may be able to wrangle a spot on the all-time top ten. For the rest of us, we're happy just to avoid the "worst" list.

If you're new to leading meetings, you might be wondering, "How do I do that?" We're glad you asked.

Plan ahead.

What do you want the meeting to accomplish? Do you need to:

- Make a decision?
- Introduce a new member to the team?
- Plan an event?
- Work through a customer service issue?

Write up an agenda.

Make sure to base the agenda on your vision for the results and break down each segment with time markers. Let team members know if you need them to prepare anything in advance.

Share the agenda with the meeting invitation. Participants should always know:

- Why they've been included in this meeting or series of meetings
- What's going to be covered
- What tasks they're expected to complete between meetings
- How to find answers to between-meeting questions

Stick to the agenda. And be flexible.

Some participants may arrive late. That's okay. Start on time and fill them in later. You might get through the agenda early. Also okay. If you only need 12 minutes, there's no need to stretch it out to half an hour.

Follow up.

After the meeting, share notes with all attendees and anyone else who needs to know the plan going forward. Highlight the names of those who'll have deliverables due soon. Promptly answer any questions that come your way.

Making every minute in a meeting count can help your team excel. And that's not to say you can't have fun and spontaneity at meetings too. You can meet in different locations, provide food, take some time for team-building exercises...the possibilities are endless. Just be sure to add it to the agenda.



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