

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION FOR EMS

SURVEY OF STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

EMS LEADER: SCORE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS SAVVY. TAKE THIS QUIZ TO SEE HOW YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION FARE WITH INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.

TRACK THE POINTS FOR EVERY ITEM THAT APPLIES TO YOU. THE CLOSER YOU GET TO COLLECTING ALL THE POINTS, THE BETTER.

1. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

10
points

- Great, effective internal communications supports high performance in my organization.

5
points

- We want to create better, more effective internal communications because we believe that it supports our strategic goals.

0
points

- More successful communications with staff would be nice, but I doubt it would have any bearing on the performance of my organization and our ability to meet our strategic goals.

Research in organizational communication is beginning to show that there is a strong relationship between great leadership-driven communications and highly performing organizations. (Tourish, 2009, p. 10)

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2. COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

- 10

 - We have a communications plan for each important initiative, for staff updates, and for occasional briefs.
- 5

 - We do not have a communications plan, *per se*, but we do well at disseminating information.
- 0

 - Departments disseminate their own information, I think.

/15

You've decided that Laurie Smith, currently an Operations Coordinator, will be the new Director of Operations. Your plan for how this information gets disseminated says a great deal about how your organization views its staff. Of course people in your organization are told when **insert important event here**. But, if your main communications strategy for important internal goings on is to send an email out, you have room to introduce some subtle, culture-building communications methods.

3. COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

- 10

 - We use an intranet, inhouse video, touch screen terminals, information kiosks, and other technologies to facilitate internal communication.
- 5

 - We are on FaceBook.
- 0

 - Everyone at our organization gets an email account.

/15

Technology is there to help your organization communicate better. Are you using it? It will not transform your organization but communications technologies can help you achieve your goals if you assess which ones will work best given your size, demographics, and challenges.

4. TRAINING

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•All personnel, especially senior managers, have ongoing communications training.

5

•I have had communications training.

0

•I can make a mighty fine PowerPoint presentation.

/15

5. RESPONSIBILITY

10

•There is someone I work with regularly whose job title includes the word "communication."

5

•There is someone I work with regularly whose job includes facilitating internal communication.

0

•In EMS, communication is everyone's job.

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The problem with the adage that communication is everyone's job is that it creates no accountability. Create a pathway of accountability for communication in your organization: responsabilize managers for communicating. Every initiative should include a communications plan.

The fundamental responsibility for your organizations' communications is already yours, EMS Leader. The benefit of working with someone whose job is to promote or manage internal communications is that they proactively manage process, deploy the tools, and track the results (Smith, 2008, p. 253). The right communications people will make sure that communications are aligned with strategic goals, anticipate needs, and make sure the work of communicating gets done. (Gillis, 2011, p. 16).

6. VALUES

10

•When someone in the hallway confronts me with a problem, I am willing to acknowledge it if s/he is willing to discuss ideas to solve it.

0

•When someone in the hallway confronts me with a problem, I'm very good at spinning it so that it doesn't seem so bad.

-10

•When someone in the hallway confronts me with a problem, I tell them to go talk to someone else.

/10

No one likes to talk about all the things that are wrong with our EMS organization. OK – some people do. Bringing leadership to communication means using your core values to guide how you respond to these issues. Honestly acknowledging issues and problems, allows you to tap your organizations' creative and strategic abilities to solve the problems. When people are genuinely concerned about an issue, a simple hallway conversation may spark a great idea.

7. LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

10

•I personally hear 1 or 2 good ideas from front-line staff every day.

5

•I personally hear several good ideas from front-line staff every week.

-30

•I personally heard from my executive assistant that our front line staff has ideas.

/15

You are responsible for the ensuring that the strategic goals of your organization are achieved. You yourself contribute a great deal of your time to strategize and plan. Successful leadership in our EMS organizations today also means spending significant time interacting with our staff. Given the responsibilities of leadership, how can you ensure that you have the time to engage staff regularly? See the next question.

8. FACETIME

10

- I do not have an office door.

10

- There is a coffee machine in my office (and I let other people use it).

10

- I sometimes walk through our building(s) for made-up reasons or for no reason in particular.

/30

Transformation leaders use these tactics and many others to ensure that they get face time with staff on a regular basis. A transformational leader is someone who puts vision, core values, and strategic priorities at the base of their leadership mandate (MindGarden, 2011). If you find these communications tactics extreme, but you are a leader with well-defined values and a strong sense of strategic mission, let these tactics challenge you to think up ways to spend half of your time interacting with the people in your organization.

Total: /130

What is called “transformational leadership” is the kind of direction provided by people who have an overwhelming and sustained sense of purpose. They are often called “visionary” but have less ego than you might expect with such a label.

You can see how ongoing communication is intrinsic to this type of leadership: vision, values, and priority direction can only be understood by those around a leader through communication.

Direction comes from you, EMS Leader, but values and vision have to get worked out among the people in your organization. Use debate and dialogue to engage people. Feedback, questioning, and ideas from staff are all part of the process of creating a shared vision, values, and sense of direction. Successful communications are essential for this type of leadership because what is being communicated is no less than the premise of your organizational culture.

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