Improve Workplace Communication—5 Ways to Get People Talking, Listening and Cooperating

by Allie Q. Casey

If you want to improve communication at work you first need to define what improved communication would look like. Does it mean fewer misunderstandings about job expectations, less friction between co-workers, better flow of information between departments, or does it mean more sales? Now, go deeper and quantify or clearly identify what “less friction” or “better flow of information” would look like. Without this information you’ll have no way of knowing if applying improvement tips and techniques has been successful.

Once you have a way of identifying what improvement or success looks like, you’ll need to document the results of each technique you’ve applied so you’ll know what works and what does not. If you don’t, you may find yourself asking the same question next month – how do I improve communication at work?

Don’t make tracking your results another problem. Quantify or identify and keep a simple checklist indicating results and use surveys. Let’s get started.

1. Increase face time. Stop groaning. If you really want to decrease misunderstandings – go talk to people face-to-face. Email and text messages leave far too much room for faulty assumptions and interpretations. If you want your boss to trust you, promote you, or give you choice assignments, have more in-person conversations. Ask for coaching, feedback, or provide a solution. If you’re a manager and want more cooperation then go talk to your staff. Sit down and have a conversation, ask what’s going on and give praise and encouragement. In either situation, note your interaction and results. Give it time.

2. Get people connected. Yes, everyone is busy. But people are more likely to be cooperative when they know more about the people they work with. Help people find common ground. Mix up seating at meetings and then have people introduce each other after sharing something others might be surprised to know about them. Keep it short and fun.

3. Take your co-worker to work. Hold a take your co-worker to work day (or half-day.) Allow others to learn about your job, what challenges you face, whom you rely on and what you find fun about your job. If you work in accounting spend a day in the field with a salesperson. If you work in distribution spend a day with a customer service representative.

4. Create a safe environment where departments can talk to each other. Get distribution and drivers together with the salespeople and let them share stories. Make it an “I didn't realize that” opportunity, not a gripe session. When I held such a session where these two teams could share stories about customers and delivery issues the sales team realized there were simple things they could do to prevent misunderstandings, delays, and customer complaints. Likewise, the delivery team was surprised to know how cooperative sales wanted to be but didn’t know how. As a result they were more likely to call and ask questions before or during a challenging delivery.

5. Show appreciation. Holding “I didn't realize that” sessions worked so well that the sales people decided to hold an annual appreciation breakfast for the distribution center. This was not a catered or take-out proposition. The salespeople created a menu, assigned tasks, arrived at 6:00 a.m. (since drivers had to be on the road at 7:00) and cooked them a hearty breakfast. A little appreciation goes a long way.

Of course, this will not solve every issue, but it opens up the lines of communication and customer surveys indicated overall satisfaction had increased and gave excellent grades to the delivery team.

If you want to improve communication at work – get people talking, listening, and sharing.

Article retrieved from the ETSU website at http://ezinearticles.com/?Improve-Workplace-Communication---5-Ways-to-Get-People-Talking,-Listening-and-Cooperating,4982401. About the author: Allie Q. Casey is a chief communicator, coach, speaker, and trainer, that helps businesses, organizational teams, and entrepreneurs get more clients, make more sales and interact with less conflict and more cooperation. Casey can be reached at info@alliqcasey.com.

Murray to conduct “Clarifying Your Personal Values and Heart Wishes” series

Most of us guide our lives based on our values, whether we are consciously aware of them or not. Would you like to discover, rediscover, or clarify those values? Then join local artist and creative coach Pam Murray, B.A., M.B.A., during July and August 2010 for “Clarifying Your Personal Values and Heart Wishes.”

Murray returns during Summer Semester 2010 to conduct a three-part series that is intended to assist each participant in discovering, clarifying, and expressing their own personal values from their inner core. Both visual and written activities will be used to intuitively reveal them. Truly knowing your own values helps you create a life of
genuineness, and true purpose. Let’s discover our core values, claim our personal authenticity, and send our true heart wishes out to the universe.

Scheduled for July 27, August 3 and 10, all sessions will be held at the Women’s Resource Center, Campus Center Building, room 220, at noon. **Reservations are required.** To reserve a space for this Women’s Personal Enrichment Series or should you need additional information, contact the Women’s Resource Center at 423-439-5772.

---

**Women’s Health Series**

Most of us know that it is easier to make frequent small adjustments in life than to have life force us to make sudden large changes. Have you considered the possibility of learning strategies that can enable you to experience sustainable, lifelong personal transformation? Imagine a tool kit of simple, easy to practice exercises that help you transform stress, get “in the zone,” feel great, heal pain, and have more energy than you thought possible?

Join us on Tuesday, June 29, 2010, for “Somato Respiratory Integration™ (SRI) and Stress Relief Techniques.” Karen Feeley, D.C., of Wellness Way Chiropractic located in Blountville, Tenn., is guest speaker. Location is the East Tennessee Room, D.P. Culp University Center, at noon.

Growing evidence suggests that the lack of higher brain awareness of the body, a lack of internal experience of safety, and a non-flexible self-representation underlies many of today’s health, wellness, and behavior challenges. Somato (body) Respiratory (breathing) Integration™ is a system that facilitates the experience of greater wholeness, connection, and self-awareness within the vessel of the body. By developing the somatic habit of consistent spontaneous reassessments, self-adjustments, and corrections of your body, its structure and its relationship to your life, you can be more flexible and adaptable to the demands and the encouragements in life. Feeley will teach participants how to recognize stored tension within the body and share simple techniques to release that tension. She also will instruct participants on how to begin to self-regulate their tension by listening to their internal cues and help participants to verbalize the connection between body and mind.


When healthcare providers are trying to determine if a patient has a significant heart arrhythmia a cardiac Holter monitor often has been the device of choice. However, with today’s technology-driven medical advances, implantable cardiac monitors now allow healthcare providers to diagnose a heart arrhythmia through comprehensive remote monitoring.

Eldridge will discuss implantable cardiac monitors at length, along with providing an overview of the medical procedure a patient experiences during the implant process. While enabling physicians to diagnose and get to the real cause of the arrhythmia-related problem, implantable cardiac monitors are being redesigned and upgraded as you read this article. Eldridge will discuss what is on the horizon for cardiac monitors.

For more information on the Feeley or Eldridge Women’s Health Series seminars listed, contact the Women’s Resource Center at 423-439-5772.

---

**Saluting the Women of ETSU**

**Pyles elected to the Tennessee Collegiate Honors Council**

In February 2010 Dr. Rebecca Pyles, dean of East Tennessee State University’s Honors College, was elected president of the Tennessee Collegiate Honors Council (TCHC) during its recent annual conference in Memphis.

Next year’s TCHC annual conference will be held at ETSU in recognition of the university’s centennial celebration in 2010-11.

Congratulations, Dr. Pyles!

---

**Cajka receives 2010 YWCA ‘Tribute to Women’ award**

On April 22, 2010, the YWCA of Bristol honored a dozen local women from Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia for their successes in the arts, education, business, and volunteer work at the Tribute to Women Celebration. Dr. Karen Cajka, director of the Women’s Studies Program and associate professor in the department of English, was one of the twelve honorees. She was honored for her service, leadership, and dedication in the higher education arena.

Tribute to Women was born in 1992 from the YWCA’s dedication to empower women to reach their full potential. This exciting program provides corporations, organizations, and businesses the opportunity to publicly recognize the outstanding achievements of exceptional women in the East Tennessee-Southwest Virginia region. Each year, the YWCA honors these individuals and their many contributions to the artistic, cultural, educational, and charitable areas of our lives. A special panel of out-of-state judges considered nominees from the fields of art, education, business, and community service.

Congratulations, Dr. Cajka!

---

Some article contents adapted from the YWCA Bristol web site at http://www.etsu.edu/univrela/accentarchives/2010/05_May_04.pdf.
JUNE – AUGUST 2010
Main Campus Programs

Wednesday, June 16
LOCATION & TIME: Women’s Resource Center, Campus Center Building, room 220, noon.

Tuesday, June 29
“Somato Respiratory Integration™ (SRI) and Stress Relief Techniques” – A Women’s Health Series Lunch Break Seminar. Karen Feeley, D.C., of Wellness Way Chiropractic located in Blountville, Tenn., is guest speaker. Feeley’s seminar focuses on teaching participants how to recognize stored tension within the body and share simple techniques to release that tension. She also will instruct participants how to begin to self-regulate their tension by listening to their internal cues and help participants to verbalize the connection between body and mind. See article page 2.
LOCATION & TIME: D.P. Culp University Center, East Tennessee Room, noon.

Wednesday, July 21
Book Review Group. Participants will meet to discuss *I Feel Bad About My Neck: And Other Thoughts On Being a Woman* by Nora Ephron. New readers welcome.
LOCATION & TIME: Women’s Resource Center, Campus Center Building, room 220, noon.

Thursday, July 22
“Monitoring Life’s Heart Rhythms” – A Women’s Health Series Lunch Break Seminar. Phyllis Eldridge, R.N., N.A.S.P.E., clinical specialist with Medtronic, Inc., is guest speaker. Eldridge will discuss implantable cardiac monitors at length, along with providing an overview of the medical procedure a patient experiences during the implant process. Also, Eldridge will discuss what is on the horizon for cardiac monitors. See article page 2.
LOCATION & TIME: D.P. Culp University Center, East Tennessee Room, noon.

Tuesday, July 27
Tuesday, August 3
Tuesday, August 10
“Clarifying Your Personal Values and Heart Wishes” – A Women’s Personal Enrichment Lunch Break Series. Pam Murray, B.A., M.B.A., local artist and creative coach, conducts this three-session series. Murray returns during Summer Semester 2010 to facilitate this series that is intended to assist each participant in discovering, clarifying, and expressing their own personal values from their inner core. Both visual and written activities will be used to intuitively reveal them.
Reservations are required. See article pages 1-2.
LOCATION & TIME: Women’s Resource Center, Campus Center Building, room 220, noon.

Wednesday, August 18
Book Review Group. Participants will meet to discuss *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman’s Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* by Elizabeth Gilbert. New readers welcome.
LOCATION & TIME: Women’s Resource Center, Campus Center Building, room 220, noon.

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
In Memoriam


A native of LaFollette, Tennessee, Marcia graduated from East Tennessee State University in 1980 with a bachelor of arts degree in special education. She was an active member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church.

An animal and nature lover, an avid reader and a caring wife and mother, Marcia will be greatly missed by her campus family.

Now in new campus location

In April 2010 the Women’s Resource Center moved to a new location. The office suite is located in the Campus Center Building, room 220. A new telephone number has been assigned as well; please contact us at 423-439-5772.

For more information on our programs and services visit our web site at http://www.etsu.edu/wrcetsu/. Also contact with staff of the Women’s Center is accessible through our email address at wrcetsu@etsu.edu.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

ETSU will be closed and classes will not be in session Monday, July 5, and Monday, September 6, 2010.

FALL SEMESTER 2010

Classes begin Saturday, August 28, 2010.

-- End --