




Greetings: My name is [Ron Hequet](#) ; Consultant and Speaker; **Contributing Author – American Management Association, ‘Leading & Learning Ezine’, ‘Affluent Magazine’, ‘The Advisor’ and Presenter for ExecSense Webinars.**

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Management Communication in Stressful Times ©

By

Ron Hequet

Management will not alleviate stress until those in any organization ‘lead’ and not ‘manage’. We manage cash and lead people, we manage inventory and lead people. The best leadership communicates effectively with employees during a time of high economic stress and anxiety.

Effective leadership communicates and communicates often. This is not only important and helpful for employees but for customers too. Although this can be challenging, what most want to know is common to everyone. The usual challenges involved in maintaining open, honest, respectful, productive communication have various common assumptions, i.e. money is very tight, morale is usually low, good employees may be looking for a different job, non-productive staffers are not making eye contact and many are doing the blame game; if we hadn’t expanded..., if somebody would make those guys in the warehouse work..., if we had better salespeople..., if we had new software..., if I had a bigger budget..., if, if, if.

Here are my top three considerations that can lock down positive communication and relieve stress for all but the over-the-top paranoid staffer.

1. **State of Truth:** Tell it like it is. Nothing can kill morale and productivity like peoples imaginations. Don’t let your people wonder. A leader doesn’t have to violate company confidentialities in order to give people a realistic status report.
2. **Have A Plan:** Alright, things are bad, but what is leadership planning to do about it. Presenting ‘what if’ scenarios will at a minimum reduce the element of surprises.
3. **Team Commitment:** There can be no “sacred cows” with good communication. Emotion cannot be part of imperative change decisions. Typically, people want to contribute to turning things around and can be willing to commit to a plan that will save their job or rise to challenges when a desired outcome is known in advance.

For more information and real world examples, contact...

Ron Hequet,
Principal
800.350.5700

Ron@ActumConsulting.com

Web: www.ActumConsulting.com

Blog: www.ActumConsulting.com/blog