THE TEN MOST COMMON COMMUNICATION PITFALLS

Poor Writing	*Make sure all written material is crisp and to the point. Use action verbs and use more periods than punctuation marks. Eliminate prepositional phrases, long words and acronyms.*
Mixed Messages	*Don't waffle. Be certain that your message is consistent. The most classic example of sending mixed messages is to set down specific procedural rules or guidelines followed by vague exceptions. If the guidelines are specific, the exceptions should be equally specific.*
Unrelated Topics	*Overpowering workloads or just plain laziness cause many people to try to deal with several unrelated topics in one communication tool. While on the surface, this may seem like a timesaving technique, it usually confuses the audience. The typical result is that phone calls and queries increase dramatically and these defeat the timesaving purpose. More often, the communication is disregarded altogether because it's too difficult for the reader to figure out which of the many topics is really significant.*
Trying to Cover Up Bad News	*No matter how skillfully you embellish bad news, it is still bad news and your audience will know it instinctively. The more you try to cover it up, the more your credibility will suffer. Employees will accept bad news better if you do not try to cover up.*
Clouding the Real Message with a Series of Add-ons	*A variation on the theme of covering up bad news is clouding the issue. If the real issue is that 50 people will have to park a block away because the building management gave those spaces to a larger tenant, don't cloud the issue with a promise to try to get the building to add two ore more floors to the parking structure. Employees will know it is an unrealistic goal and resent your attempt to mollify them.*
Assuming Employees Don't Care	*Employees are more interested than ever about circumstances that can affect the company as well as themselves. The more they know about company goals and performance, the more prepared they are to make personal commitments (or even sacrifices) to benefit the organization.*
Assuming Employees Don't Understand the Issue	*Employees are not ignorant. When conducting focus group meetings, one frequently finds that employees clearly understand most of the issues confronting the organisation. Sometimes they understand issues better than management does because they are on the front line. It never hurts to state the issue but do it in a way that conveys regard for employees' intelligence.*
Assuming Employees Have the Same Information You Do	*When one works with a set of information for an extended time, it is easy to forget that others have not had the benefit of such concentrated exposure. While employees usually understand general issues, management often forgets or is reluctant to share specifics. Except for very confidential data, it is a good idea to make sure employees have the same information as management.*
Forgetting the Honesty Is Therapeutic	*Bending the truth or trying to deceive employees is a waste of energy. Employees may not be happy about what you have to tell them, but they will give you a lot of credit for guts and honesty. Furthermore, they will usually rally to your support, which is the most therapeutic result you could hope for.*
Assuming that More Is Better	*When organizations are insecure about a message they have to communicate, they tend to succumb to all of these pitfalls and get carried away with verbosity. You do not need a five-page memo to explain why the organization must institute a hiring freeze. You can effectively explain the issue in a one-page memo. Finding the right balance between too little and too much information will be your most significant challenge.*

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