Internal Communication

Communi — community

+Commune — together

+Cation — duties or responsibilities

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Communication

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Executive Summary

"**In** order for people to make decisions on their own, whether it is a work team or an individual, they need to have a framework for making that decision — providing that framework is the role of leadership. Leaders set out the vision and values and what their objectives are. They make sure everyone's aligned. Communication is not something a leader does when s/he has time; it's the very essence of leadership." (Ownes-Corning)

Communication is an intrical part to any organization. The goal of any organization is to have a communication infrastructure (i.e., communication plan, communication person/office, different methods for cascading information) that is open, honest, highly adaptable to change and anticipates, understands, and is responsive to the needs of everyone. The three processes critical to creating a communication infrastructure are 1)Planning - crafting the vision and directives into clear messages, developing a plan for disseminating information, and assisting in the communication plan; 2) Deployment - permeating the organization with the vision and strategic directives. Cascading the message throughout the organization; and 3) Feedback - measuring the communication process to ensure that it is working.

The communication infrastructure in most organizations needs adjusting. Uusally , there are lines of communication open; but there is
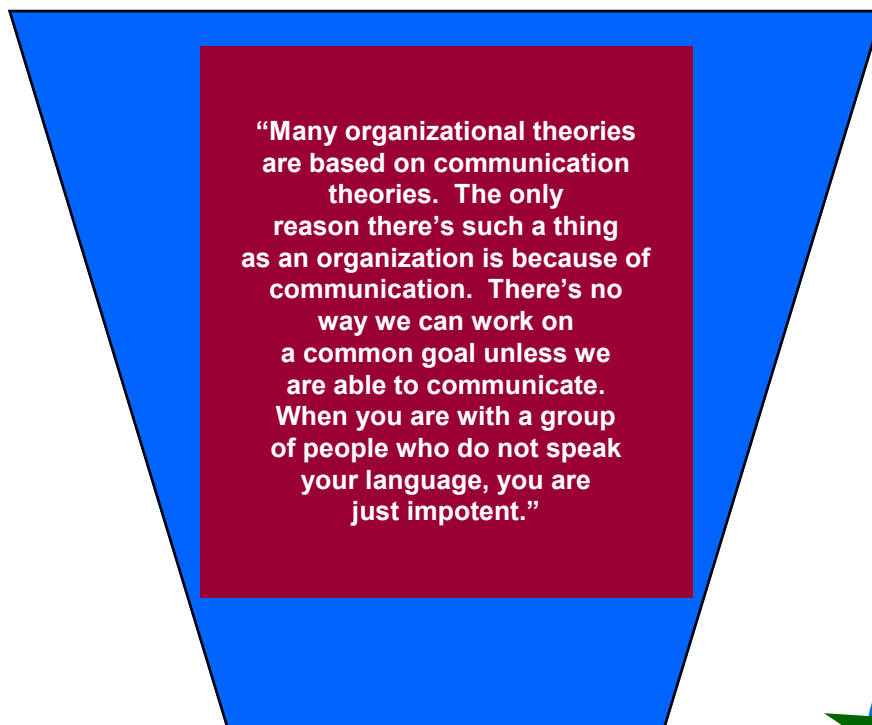
no communication plan in place. No one person is held responsible to ensure that information is communicated within the Organization. The leadership usually holds staff meetings with their managers, but other lower level meetings are usually held sporadically. Communication between staff members at times seems to be stressed. Most personnel feel that they have a good understanding of the roles/responsibilities of the leadership, but would like more interaction.

The following report outlines recommendations for change and improvement toward a healthy, communicating organization. Many recommendations are practices used in Best-in-Class organizations.

"Organization is Communication"

"Many organizational theories are based on communication theories. The only reason there's such a thing as an organization is because of communication. There's no way we can work on a common goal unless we are able to communicate. When you are with a group of people who do not speak your language, you are just impotent."

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Part A

- **Recommendations**

- **Conclusion**

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Recommendations

It is important to look at the whole picture within the Organization and cascade change and improvement in a sensible, logical process. The following are recommendations. Some are in a logical flow to change, while others address new and innovative ideas that introduce a change.

R Design a communication infrastructure

Create a strong communication infrastructure. This is the first step an organization must take toward creating a framework for communication. Everyone in the organization needs to be working toward the same goals and objectives; one mission. The planning process for achieving communication involves full participation. It involves crafting a vision and directives into clear messages and developing a plan to disseminate the messages throughout the Organization. The process involves cascading information throughout the Organization, linking it's objectives with individual's work objectives, reinforcing the key messages through ongoing broadcasting, and creating horizontal alignment between the different Business Units. Each level (top management, middle

management, employees) play a key role in communication. These key roles are illustrated below.

Middle Management is:

The context builders - responsible for assessing the information needs of their teams and workers and communicating a framework for understanding the strategic direction of the organization.

The Feedback Gatekeeper - plays a key role as a conduit for upward communication by gaining feedback from their employees and passing it up the organizational channels.

Top Management is:

A visionary - the one responsible for creating and defining a clear strategic direction and vision for the company.

A champion - a strong supporter and believer of employee communication, willing to empower and collaborate.

A role model - visible to the organization and willing to communicate openly with organizational members.

Credible - being visible and open, willing to communicate bad news as well as good.

Empowering - willingness to trust and empower employees to make decisions to achieve strategic objectives. By sharing the rationales behind objectives as well as the traditionally guarded company information demonstrates trust in your employees, contributes to their sense of involvement, and gives them the needed information to make decisions and act in ways that further the organizational objectives.

Employees

Sharing responsibility - for communication is one solution for getting employees to take responsibility for receiving and internalizing communication. Part of sharing responsibility for communication is providing feedback through the vehicles provided - face-to-face with managers, suggestion boxes, "letters to the editor", open-door policies, and other feedback systems. However, employees need to see that action is taken on their feedback, even if that action is only to confirm that feedback has been received and considered, but not adopted.

Communication

R Develop a communication plan and create a communicator position within the Organization.

Develop a communication plan to ensure that all information is disseminated correctly, timely, using different vehicles, and to all. This plan should create a blueprint and provide a framework of how information will cascade through the Organization.

Establish a communicator position to take responsibility for communication within the Organization, because a plan will not succeed on it's own. The communicator should be responsible for: keeping all Organization information (i.e., telephone directories, bulletin boards, television monitoring system, etc.) current, disseminating Organization information (i.e., memos, policies, etc.), and providing information on upcoming events (i.e., conferences, visitors, etc.)

"A good communications program is honest and direct. It anticipates what people will want to know at every stage. Properly shaped and executed, it rallies people, reduces uncertainty and stress, demonstrates top-level commitment to the reengineering cause, and prevents news of imminent change from paralyzing the organization."

Michael Hammer

Communication

R **Develop a plan to train and educate all personnel in communication.**

> Old school: do communications when you have time, money.
>
> New school: leadership is communication. A leaders job is to communicate.
>
> Bill Hamilton
> Owens-Corning

Design a communication training program for the Organization. This program should provide training to all personnel and should include instruction on communication principles, basic communication skills, a segment on dealing with difficult people, team building, courtesy, and diversity training.

Also, individuals who have recently been selected to a leadership position should be trained in leadership and communication skills. All new and junior staff members look to these leaders for information and guidance. It is important that they have management and communication skills.

Communication

Create a mentoring program for the new managers and also start an apprenticeship program for the new employees.

Develop an in-house New Employee Orientation Program for the Organization (include employees who have been in the Organization for some time and have recently changed Business Units). This orientation program should provide new employees with organizational information (i.e., vision, mission, products and services, lay of the land, etc.) and introduce the employee to the Orgnization's leadership and an understanding of it's expectations. The orientation program should be designed to greet and educate all the incoming new employees as to the goals and objectives of the Orgnization. It should stress customer service, team building, and courtesy. It should be informational with all functional areas represented. The orientation program should be important to the leadership and the responsibility of participating should not be funneled down to lower management. This program is where the Organization should put their best foot forward to set the right tone for the new employee.

The Organization currently welcomes all new employees in a four hour session. This session is facilitated by the Human Resource Office. During the session each new employee watches a brief video on the organization and is asked to fill out HR type paperwork. .... *The recommendation is to expand this session to a two day working session where leaders will join the new employees and give them a short introduction into their world. It is important to communicate and share information with the new employees immediately. This is the first look at their new organization.*

Communication

R Encourage meetings at all levels.

Meetings are an essential ingredient in a professional environment. In most companies and agencies, meetings are the driving force behind new ideas, problem solving, and developing corporate strategies. In fact, most Federal employees, particularly managers, spend 40% of their day in meetings. It is critical that the best use be made of this time.

USPTO Effective Meeting ToolKit

Provide effective meeting training to all managers within the Organization. To encourage meetings and the exchange of ideas it is important to understand the dynamics of an effective meeting. The Office of Quality Management can   provide you with an Effective Meeting ToolKit. It is   recommended that this ToolKit be   provided to all of the managers and   supervisors and that staff meetings   be used as a platform to provide   Effective Meeting training.

Provide all managers and supervisors with a copy of the ToolKit. It can be downloaded off of the Office of Quality Management Home Page.

Communication

Meetings are important. With the computer age taking charge of our daily working lives direct communication with others is occurring less and less.

Fact:
- Leader's seldom, if ever, attend lower level staff meetings.
- Managers seldom have staff meetings.
- Organizations seldom have meetings to share information.

When meetings are held all levles of the staff should be invited. However, there is a perception that issues that affect the lower support staff are usually decided without their input and in some instances they are left out of the loop completely.
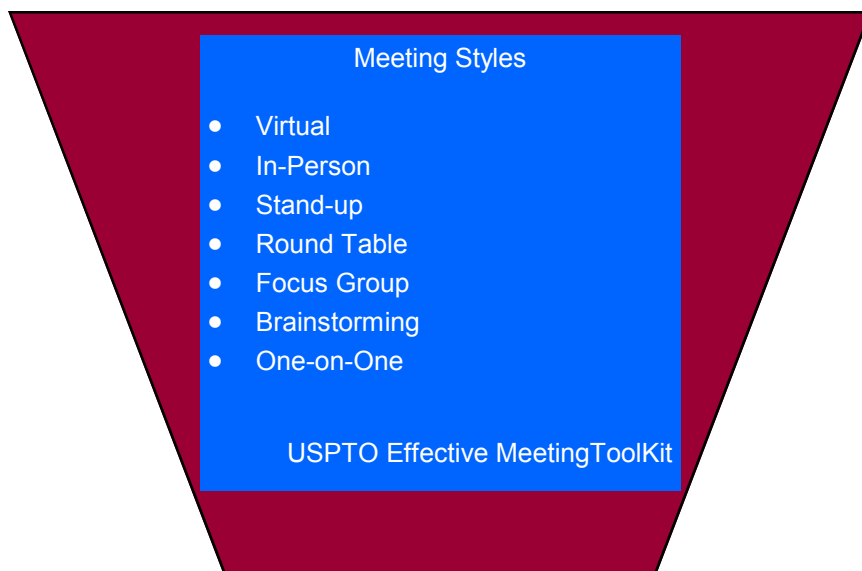
The Management should hold an all employees meeting at least twice a year. The all employee meeting should be used as a learning day. The format for the meeting could be: a town hall meeting - sharing information followed by a Q&A session; a picnic or field trip; a strategic planning session; or a conference setting with speakers and a structured program agenda. The meeting (no matter what format is selected) should be used to communicate to the staff the goals, objectives, initiatives and needs of the Organization.

Communication

Establish regular scheduled management meetings. The managers need to decide how best to schedule and format the current weekly management meeting. They also need to insure that they are regularly meeting with the staff as a group and if needed in individual working groups. The meetings need to be interactive and informative and must include all levels of staff. The meetings can be used as a learning/educational session where participants will leave with important and usable information.

Meeting Styles

- Virtual
- In-Person
- Stand-up
- Round Table
- Focus Group
- Brainstorming
- One-on-One

USPTO Effective MeetingToolKit

How often should a meeting be held? There is no one right answer as to how often you should hold a "regular" meeting. The schedule for regular staff meetings that has proven to be most successful is once a week for about an hour. Other options to consider are: daily (15-20 minutes), bi-weekly (30-60 minutes) or monthly (1-2 hours).

Communication

Establish regular scheduled meetings. Meet at least once a month (more if needed). These meetings should be used: to discuss organization/unit business or for staff members to seek assistance and advice, for sharing experiences and knowledge, to let staff members vent and express opinions on issues, and as an educational forum. These meetings should be informative, interactive and must include all levels of the staff.

The Communication person can create a meeting matrix for the organziation. S/he could provide meeting planning information and also ensure that scheduled meetings are being held and facilitated properly.

Communication

R Role Reversal at all levels

Is there a quiet and polite tension in the Organization? Is there some stress and misunderstanding as to roles and responsibilities within the Organization? Can you see it in the meetings and can you hear it when there is an interaction between employees? Are changes and policies usually dictated without input from those being affected; and is favoritism commonly given to certain personnel?

Team building can address some these issues; but role reversal can make a drastic difference. It is important that you walk in the other person's shoes. It is recommended that the Leaders, management, and professional staff spend time in the technical/ administrative support area performing the daily technical jobs and that technical/administrative support staff shadow managers and professional staff to see what is involved in their daily duties. It is also important that all employees spend time on the telephones and at the reception desk fielding calls from customers. This will give the staff first hand knowledge and experience as to what the customer (internal/external) traffic is really like and what they really want and need.

Employees treated internally with respect and honor will most often give that same treatment to customers.

World Class Courtesy
Best Practice Study

Communication

R   Use innovative communication techniques

Leaders have little face time with the staff. With their busy schedules they barely have time to address and resolve daily issues. Although leaders usually have an open door policy, they seldom are in their office. When they are the line seems to wrap around the building. Many managers/supervisors would appreciate a visit by a member of their leadership. It is always a terrific buster to the morale of the staff.

Management By Walking Around (MBWA) is

used by Best-in-class organizations as a communication tool. MBWA gives upper management the chance to meet and talk with the staff in a non-threatening environment. This type of management style is used to meet the staff in their own working environment and to build a better relationship with them. In some instances this is the only time a staff member might have the opportunity to meet and talk with upper management. This tool is not used to gather data against the staff or to use negative information during performance time. It is strictly face to face time. MBWA is not programmed or scheduled. Once you start this type of management, it must be continual. It must be sincere and natural. This type of management style is not for everyone.

Communication

An Organization or Business Unit Intranet Home Page

An Organization or Business Unit Intranet Home Page would provide a PC based internal broadcasting system to all the staff. The Intranet Home Page should be used in two different ways: 1) a knowledge management/sharing system, where individuals could share findings, research, lessons learned, and experience with others, and 2) a flash info-mercial for issues, projects, changes, and other going-ons.

A flash message (similar to a flash message received each day when you turn on your PC) would be activated for important Organization/Unit information. The flash would appear on the system and if interested the user could click onto the selected item and receive more information. This flash would not be daily, but only as needed.

This should fall under the responsibility of the Communication Person.

Electronic Meeting Note File

Electronic Meeting Note File is an electronic file folder that is located on the Intranet and available to all of the staff. The electronic meeting note file contains notes from all the meetings held within the Organization/Business Unit. It becomes the Organization/Business Units historical repository of information and is available to all. It will help in educating current and new employees updating them on past issues, projects, happenings, and decisions. It will refresh memories when needed and it will update a staff member that has been away on a work assignment or extended leave of absence.

Because of FOIA only certain information can be captured in this electronic file.

Communication

Television Monitor Broadcasting can be

used in communicating with all of your staff at the same time. Several Best-in-Class organizations use televisions to broadcast organizational information. In some large organizations they have their own television broadcasting centers that link all systems together to disseminate information as it is happening (i.e., briefings, hearings, interviews, speeches, etc.)

The Organization can strategically position television screens throughout the building(s) and broadcast information to all the staff, at once. These television screens can communicate either a slide presentation (power point) or can transmit video communications. In the future they can provide possible broadcast information from an auditorium.

This should fall under the responsibility of the Communication Person.

Breakfast with the Boss is another way to meet your

staff. Invite them to a breakfast meeting with coffee, juice, and donuts/bagels. Have an open forum where questions can be asked and answers can be received. If for some reason a question cannot be answered then ensure that the answer is given as soon as possible, for all to hear. The "Breakfast with the Boss" can be organized in different ways: 1) by Business Unit, 2) randomly selected invitees, 3) voluntary participation, 4) weekly, monthly, and/or quarterly breakfast with a specific area, or 5) formal and/or informal. Once you start this type of program it should be continued until all the staff has had an

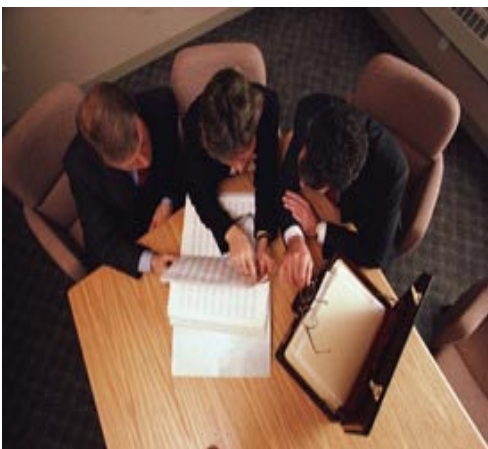opportunity to have "Breakfast with the Boss".

Communication

The Team Center is the brain-child of Mike Vance who was Walt Disney's innovation guru. He created the Disney University and years ago worked with Frank Wright. He now has his own con-

Lloyd sulting firm and specializes in creating the "Kitchen of the Mind" or "Team Center". The concept of the "Team Center" is to create an area where staff members can go to relax, talk, share experiences, and to find out what is going on within the organization (i.e., issues, projects, objectives.) It should create an environment where the mind is stimulated. Of course, in large organizations these rooms are huge and designed by the staff with the assistance of Mike Vance. They are continually updated and turn out to be a work of art. If designed correctly they become a tool used by the staff to stay current on all aspects of the organization.

A Team Center for the Organization/Busienss Unit would be on a much smaller scale. It could be one room or several different small rooms designated by work area, a hallway, or the elevator lobby(s). The "Team Center should have a coffee pot, white board, bulletin board, books, table and chairs, a visual board to display projects, television screen, etc. The "Team Center" should be designed by the staff and reflect their interests.

Different manager's offices can be set up as small Team Centers because many staff members visit these offices on a regular basis. Information can be disseminated in different techniques to attract staff members.

Communication

Establish a Center wide Bulletin Board System

that will keep the staff updated. Bulletin boards should be placed around the Organization. These boards must contain current Organization type information and therefore, will need to be updated continually. At the Ritz Carlton, for example, this type of board is visible every where. They provide the employees with the thought of the day, visitor information, statistics from the day before, and anything that is important for the current work day. They are a real source of information. They also reflect the goal and objective of the Ritz Carlton and their mission.

This should fall under the responsibility of the Communication Person.

Create and provide Procedural and Product and Service Manuals

which provide another form of communication. These documents will stipulate the roles and responsibilities of the staff, and the products and services provided to customers (internal/external). This type of document not only will start communication between different levels within the office but it will also provide guidance for each level. Who does what, how, when, and why.
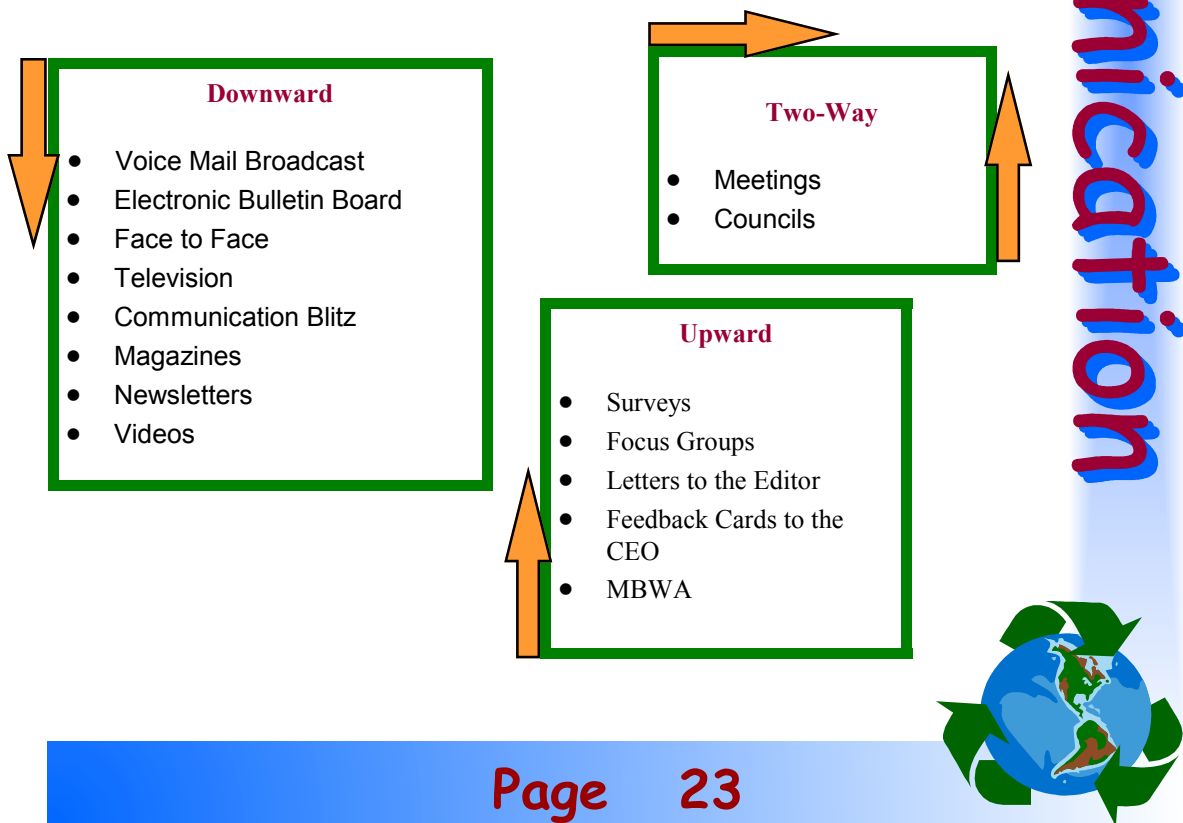
Communication

Create a Newsletter to keep people informed. This is another excellent form of communication. It would be informative and useful. It should not become a who's who or birthday listing, but should be used to keep employees informed.

This should fall under the responsibility of the Communication Person.

There are several different ways to communicate. There is Downward Communication, Upward Communication, and Two-way Communication. The following are listings of the vehicles used by Best-in-Class organizations to provide these types of communication.
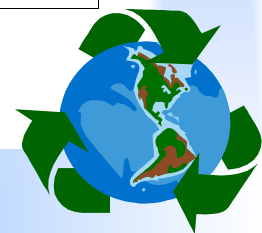
Communication

Downward

- Voice Mail Broadcast
- Electronic Bulletin Board
- Face to Face
- Television
- Communication Blitz
- Magazines
- Newsletters
- Videos

Two-Way

- Meetings
- Councils

Upward

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Letters to the Editor
- Feedback Cards to the CEO
- MBWA

Conclusion

In order for Communication to succeed in an Organization and become part of the culture it is important that implementation is approached in a logical and holistic methodology, keeping in mind the end result; better communication from top down and bottom up. In order to implement changes in a logical process, design a "Blue Print" to use as a road map with a realistic time table. The following is a matrix for assistance in designing the "Blue Print".

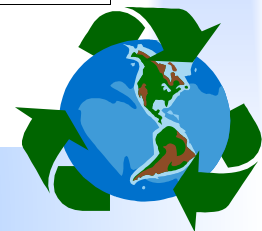| Recommendation	Implementation
Establish a Communication Person (CP) position within the Organization.	♦ **Select appropriate person for position.**
Design a communication infrastructure.	♦ **CP should meet with leadership to discuss goals and objectives.** ♦ **CP along with leadership and managers should design communication infrastructure.** ♦ **All decisions and information should be communicated to staff.**

Communication

Recommendation	Implementation
Develop a communication plan.	♦ **CP designs a communication plan.** ♦ **Communicate plan.** ♦ **Implement plan.**
Develop a communication training/ education plan.	♦ **Discuss objectives of plan.** ♦ **Discuss desired results.** ♦ **Design plan.** ♦ **Communicate plan.** ♦ **Locate appropriate instructors for training classes.** ♦ **Schedule staff for training.**
Create a more structured communication environment with the leadership and managers.	♦ **Meet to discuss roles and responsibilities.** ♦ **Develop a matrix of all management positions.** ♦ **Communicate roles and re-**
Develop a New Employee Orientation.	♦ **Design a New Employee Orientation Program.** ♦ **Pilot program.** ♦ **Implement program.**
Schedule meetings at all levels.	♦ **Develop a meeting schedule.** ♦ **Provide Effective Meeting training to all leadership.** ♦ **Provide all leadership with Effective Meeting ToolKit.** ♦ **Communicate meeting schedule.**
Implement Role Reversal within the Organization/Business Unit.	♦ **Discuss the concept of role reversal.** ♦ **Design a plan to implement.** ♦ **Communicate plan.**

Communication

Recommendation	Implementation
MBWA.	♦ **Discuss objectives and method with leadership.** ♦ **Implement.**
Intranet Home Page	♦ **CP meet with IT Staff to discuss Intranet Home Page.** ♦ **Design Home Page.** ♦ **Pilot Home Page with management staff.** ♦ **Debug system.** ♦ **Disseminate to all staff.**
Establish an Electronic Meeting Note File.	♦ **Design Electronic Note File.** ♦ **Put file onto Intranet.** ♦ **Implement file.**
Television Broadcasting Monitor System.	♦ **Discuss objectives.** ♦ **Decide where televisions should be located.** ♦ **Purchase equipment.** ♦ **Create slide presentations/ videos.** ♦ **Install equipment.**
Breakfast with the Boss	♦ **Design event.** ♦ **Schedule event.** ♦ **Implement event.**
Establish a Team Center	♦ **Communicate to staff the concept, get feedback and ideas.** ♦ **Design.** ♦ **Decide on location(s).** ♦ **Communicate decisions.** ♦ **Purchase equipment.** ♦ **Install equipment.** ♦ **Grand opening.**

Communication

Recommendation	Implementation
Establish a Bulletin Board System.	♦ **Decide on procedures.** ♦ **Decide on locations.** ♦ **Purchase appropriate equip-** **ment.** ♦ **Install.** ♦ **Fill with information.** ♦ **Measure success.**
Create Procedures and Product & Services manuals.	♦ **Interview all functions within** **the Oganization/Business Unit** **to gather information.** ♦ **Create the manual.** ♦ **Publish manual.** ♦ **Disseminate the manual to in-**
Newsletter.	♦ **Discuss the idea of a newslet-** **ter with leadership.** ♦ **Decide goals and objectives.** ♦ **Select editor.** ♦ **Design newsletter.** ♦ **Disseminate newsletter to**

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♦ **Bibliography**

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Bibliography

Research provided the bulk of the information for this study. The following is a listing of resources used.

- Internal Communication Benchmarking Study (APQC)
  (Best-in-Class organizations studied were: Florida Power & Light, Hallmark, Levi Strauss, Motorola, Owens-Corning, Texas Instrument, 3M, Weyerhaeuser, Xerox Corp.)
- World Class Courtesy Best Practices Study - NPR *(site visits to Office of Comptroller, USA Today, SSA).*
- Technology Center 1600/2900 and 1700 Communication Report
- Trademark Communication Plan
- USPTO Internal Communication Study
- Effective Meeting ToolKit *(Publications, Interviews, Case Studies, Books)*
- Extensive Database Research

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