

# ■ Don't be fooled – it has little to do with communication!

by Tom Terez

You've probably heard it first hand. Perhaps you've said it yourself. Maybe you've seen it surface in an employee satisfaction survey.

*There's not enough communication around here!*

Ask any employee anywhere in the universe, and it's safe to say that they'll point to "a lack of communication" as a big improvement opportunity in their workplace. This person might be getting five informational e-mails a day, ten major memos a week, and two in-depth briefings each month. But it still comes up as the apparent holy grail: We need more communication!

The fact is, rarely are people referring to communication in the sense of e-mails, memos, and meetings. They're hinting at something deeper and more important – something that can't be discerned from a quick comment or a survey checkmark.

So what are they really saying? Here are a few possibilities:

- Our workplace is divided by status and rank, and I feel like a second-class citizen.
- When I ask the same question to two managers, I get two very different and conflicting answers.

- My job is seen by management as being unimportant.
- People don't value my opinion.
- Management is trying to hide something.
- There's a serious lack of trust in our workplace.

The next time you hear that "there's not enough communication around here," don't take the comment at face value. Put on your Sherlock Holmes hat and begin to ask questions. "What do you mean by communication?" "Where exactly is communication breaking down?" "What are some of the other issues that relate to this?" "How is this impacting your work?"

Questions like these will help you uncover the real story – and stop you from "solving" the problem by sending more e-mails and memos.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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