

January 2008



Doug Hall

Useful Information
Resources:

Web Sites

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[Employee Retention
Guide](#)

[Career Journal -
WSJ Online](#)

[The Society for
Human Resource
Management](#)

[Employee Retention
Strategies](#)

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Building Your
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Valued Clients and Potential Clients:

I think you will agree - your **key employees** are expensive to find, expensive to train, and expensive to lose. If you can keep and grow these individuals, most likely your profits grow, the value of the firm increases, and you have more fun managing the business.

What are you doing to hold on to these important business assets?

One proven strategy for building and maintaining a loyal and productive staff is a focus on improving **Internal Communication**. This means making sure that the right information gets to the right people at the right time in the right way. Clear and open communication with employees builds trust and respect for you and the firm.

Critical information to be communicated to employees includes: your vision for the firm; the firm's organization; job expectations and feedback; policy changes and updates; important events; project successes and problems; new jobs; and staffing decisions.

It's also important to think about how best to provide this information, how often to provide it, and how to obtain useful feedback from the staff.

The following is a survey for employees at professional services firms. The objective of the survey is to benchmark how well owners and managers communicate with the staff.

How would your folks complete this survey? Why not ask them?

Please contact me if you have any questions or need more information. Send me an email if you would like a copy of the survey in Microsoft Word. My email is wdhall@austin.rr.com

Doug Hall (512-306-8444)

Internal Communications - Desired State

A Survey for Professional Services Firms

Guts & Borrowed Money by Tom Gillis (1997)

Building the Awesome Organization by Katherine Catlin and Jana Matthews (2002)

The Rules of Management by Richard Templar (2005)

Growing Pains by Eric G Flamholtz and Yvonne Randle (2000)

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R Covey (1990)

Human Resources Nuts & Bolts edited by Susan Marshall of Zweig White & Associates (1998)

Communication Miracles at Work by Matthew Gilbert (2002)

You're in Charge - Now What? by Thomas J Neff and James M Citrin (2005)

- **"The Big Picture"** – I am aware that a Vision for the firm exists. I know what we want the firm to look like and how we want to be perceived in three years. I know the "why" behind the Vision. I have been given an opportunity to have a voice in the Vision's development. The Vision is clearly articulated and well communicated to the employees on a frequent basis.

What Vision?.....We are there!

0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

- **Up-to-Date-Organization Chart** – I know where I fit in, who is responsible for what, and to whom I am accountable.

What chart?.....We are there!

0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

- **Job Description and Performance Appraisals** – I have a clear understanding of what is expected of me in my job. If not, I am comfortable asking for clarification. I receive frequent feedback on my performance.

No clue?.....We are there!

0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

- **Policy Updates & Changes** – Communicated information is clear, credible, sensible, timely and relevant. I feel information is not withheld from me without a good reason.

Not even close?.....We are there!

0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

- **Active Listening is Encouraged and Practiced** – Communication involves both sending and receiving information. Without listening, there is no communication. Our managers and employees understand that active listening is not only polite but also establishes a welcoming rapport that builds relationships with respect and dignity.

Not even close?.....We are
there!
0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

- **Team Attitude** – Cohesiveness and mutual support result in allegiance toward achieving a common Vision. Competitive energies are focused on professional development of employees and the overall improvement of the firm. There is an emphasis on all of us being in One company, aligned toward common goals.

Not even close?.....We are
there!
0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

- **Staff Meetings** – Each office has regularly scheduled staff meetings that include all employees. We have a clear agenda and set a time limit. During these meetings we hear about new jobs; new proposals; client meetings; client visits to our office; networking opportunities; technical meetings and new personnel. Management uses these meetings as opportunities to give positive feedback and recognition, to discuss changes, and to answer our questions.

Not even close?.....We are
there!
0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

- **Open Door Policy** – Management is easily and often accessible to me to answer questions or hear new ideas.

They are willing to receive my input by email, telephone or face-to-face opportunities during the day. They even have suggestion boxes in the offices. I am similarly available to managers and am willing to listen to the manager's ideas, issues and suggestions

Not even close?.....We are there!
0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

Rumor Mills and Active Internal Grapevines
– Our internal communication is so effective that we seldom have to spend valuable time and effort handling rumors about the firm. We find our system minimizes in-fighting, careless errors, low morale, waste, and duplication.

Not even close?.....We are there!
0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

We don't "Shoot the Messenger for the Message" – I feel there is a presumption of good faith and respect among the employees of the firm. Because of this attitude, I feel free to communicate with the timeliness, clarity and credibility that are essential for the continuing success of the firm.

Not even close?.....We are there!
0.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9...10

Remember - If you don't Ask... You won't Get and you Need to Ask!

Call me if you have questions or need a boost getting started. Good Luck. Doug Hall

My Motto -

"Less wear and tear and still get there!"

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[Client Retention](#)

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