

“Translating Your Company’s Vision into Action”

Developing Communication Strategies for Leadership Teams

In May 2007, New Zealand CTPM Australasia members from Auckland and Wellington met at SCA Hygiene Australasia – Henderson site to discuss the “Challenges of Communication” as the Learning Group Network Meeting theme. Discussion was particularly focused on communicating improvement activities by Leadership Teams. Attendees included SCA Hygiene, Cryovac Sealed Air and Winstone Wallboards Ltd. Proceedings started with a discussion on the following questions:

“How well is your site’s improvement vision communicated into action?”

“Can all of your employees on a daily basis undertake at least one action to towards achieving the company / sites vision, or are you too busy fire fighting?”

These questions then led the meeting to conduct a brainstorming activity on the “Key Challenges and Barriers” that companies need to address when developing a communication strategy to deliver a vision. The list of impediments generated from the brainstorming was extensive here are just a few;


- Making the site vision (or company vision) actionable.
- People’s mental models (Paradigms)
- Too much communication around what the company vision is and not enough from the receivers perspective (“What is in it for Me”)
- Inconsistent message from Management Verbal / visual / non verbal
- A vision that is not inspiring or relevant
- Time and resources
- How people take things on board and learn

- Listening
- Seeing
- Doing
- Exposure to lots of fads
- Cultural differences
- Communication needs of different departments eg Technical, Engineering and production.
- Consistency between shifts and teams

Trevor Rowland the Site Manager at SCA shared some of his learning’s with a short presentation, including the two slides below:


Communication

- Verbal/written Communication requires consideration of timing, content & presentation.
- Non verbal Communication must reflect the above – ‘walking the talk’ – reflecting the appropriate behaviours is where most Leadership teams fail.

SCA HYGIENE AUSTRALASIA


Communication

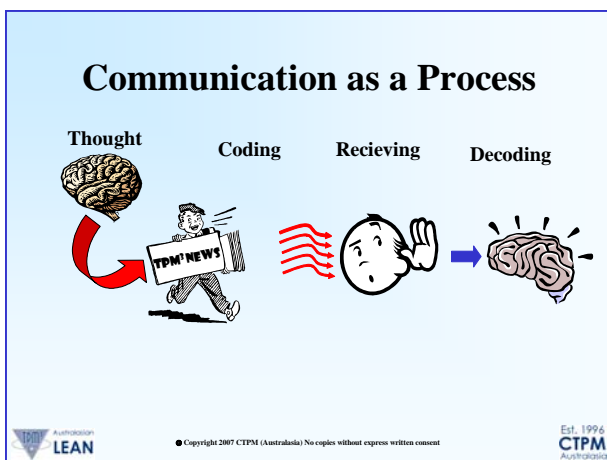
- Communication within organisations must be managed. There must be a relentless unified decision to drive communication at all levels of the organisation.
- Communication includes what is said and what is done.

SCA HYGIENE AUSTRALASIA


A second brainstorm session was conducted to list “**Methods of Communication**” that can be used by Leadership Teams to deliver the improvement vision. Once again this proved to be a fruitful exercise, with a number of great suggestions generated below:

Management & Supervisors	Between Shifts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Briefings • Shift hand over • News Letters • Emails • Visual Communication • Non Verbal communication • Notice boards • Posters • Site Leadership Team Meetings • Team presentations • Encourage sharing of learning not competition between shifts. • Improvement activity kick-offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Meetings • Shift hand over • Between shift meetings • Team presentations • Visual communication • Very hard between shifts particularly 4on 4 off. • Poor communication leads to poor standardisation • Manual vs Electronic • Scoreboards • Notice boards • There can be huge amounts of information for people to try and retain

In today’s society people are inundated with data, and it is very difficult to get your message through when people are constantly bombarded with copious amounts information. This presents a real challenge for Leadership Teams. They need to be able to deliver their message (vision) in such a manner, that it reaches all levels of the organisation and promotes two-way communication. When delivering your message ensure it addresses all parts of the “Communication Process” as depicted in the slide below.



Also a good quote to remember when you are developing a communication strategy is;

”What I hear, I forget.

What I see, I remember.

What I do, I understand.”

- *Kung Fu Tzu (Confucius)*

The last activity for the meeting was the Learning Group exercise. This involved participants, dividing into 4 groups and conducting a role play. Then four participants were asked to deliver a briefing to an Area Based Team, using a sample Leadership Team, Noticeboard as a method of communication. The briefing group were asked to communicate an improvement vision to enable the team members to undertake actions to achieve that vision. This proved to be a good learning experience for most participants.

It was concluded that for a company’s vision to become reality, everyone on site has to be undertaking at least one activity towards achieving its vision. This type of engagement truly demonstrates that everyone in the company understands the vision and is committed to making it happen. If your site or company leadership team cannot communicate its vision in a way that captures the heart and soul of its workforce, this will definitely make it more difficult to implement and sustain your improvement activity and hinder the company’s journey to World Class Performance.

Thanks again to SCA for hosting an excellent Learning Group Network Meeting. We look forward to seeing more delegates at the next New Zealand Learning Group Network.

For more information about TPM³ – Australasian Lean or NZ Learning Group Meetings, contact Anthony Burt, NZ Managing Navigator on 0272 408 509, CTPM Australasia Head Office on +61 2 4226 6184 or visit www.ctpm.org.au.