



## Trust and Communication

### by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

If you are the manager of a group where trust is low, people are likely to hear what they think you were going to say rather than what you actually said. It is critical to frame up the message in multiple ways to help people hear and absorb what you are really trying to convey.

A simple Town Hall Meeting is not sufficient to communicate sensitive information. According to Richard Edelman in his "Trust Barometer," people need to hear things from 3-5 times before they believe the information about a company is likely to be true. Here is a true story that illustrates the problem.

I once inherited a new group that did not have high trust in their prior manager. I could tell by their body language that they were skeptical of anything the managers said.

Before I had a chance to rebuild the trust, I had an occasion to communicate some good news to the workers. They were afraid that the operation would be shut down and moved to China. I called a special meeting to tell them that the proposed outsourcing was *not going to happen*. Later that day, I heard that the workers thought I told them we would be shutting down. Rather than hear what I actually said, the workers heard only what they thought I was going to say. This miscommunication happened because there was low trust in management, and I did not use multiple ways to communicate the message clearly enough.

**Exercise for you:** Today, test the level of understanding of some information from management. Ask some questions to see if people are able to understand and believe the input with just one exposure. It is more difficult than you think to get the message across in the first exposure. Now begin to think of creative ways to get messages to people in different ways that really set the message.

Good communication requires consistency, and that often means repetition. Get creative with the methods you use to communicate information to other people. It can be fun and it will really improve your leadership effectiveness.

**The preceding was derived from an episode in “Building Trust,” a 30 part video series by Bob Whipple “The Trust Ambassador.” To view three short (3 minutes each) examples at no cost go to <http://www.avanoo.com/first3/517>**

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