Translating Assessments into Actions

The results of the **Workplace Communication Assessment** reveal the current status of the organization. Once you know what issues people are seeing in their work environment, determining a plan for moving forward is critical. Failing to act on the results of the survey can impact the atmosphere of trust and confidence in the organization.

Resolving Workplace Issues with Four Conversations

To translate the workplace issues identified by the survey into "communication solutions", you will want to use the summary document "Resolving Workplace Issues with Four Conversations", available here - http://usingthefourconversations.com/resolving-workplace-issues-with-four-conversations.

Each type of workplace issue has its own unique recommendations for which conversations to have with your people, including how to go about clarifying what the issues are, gathering ideas about what can be done about them, and choosing which communication practices will be most important to begin practicing right away.

"Top-Line" Reports

In addition to the general report of all the survey data, you have three "top-line", or summary reports, that display the highest-ranked survey data in ways that will support your post-survey discussions about the results.

All three reports begin with the general name: "<u>analysis-report-oa</u>" (the "oa" is for Organization Analyst, the package you purchased). After that prefix, report names are:

- **Top-ten-overall** – Lists the 10 most frequent issues noticed by the whole set of respondents to your survey.
- **Top-five-all levels** – Lists the 5 most frequent workplace issues as observed by each of the organizational Levels you selected to survey.
- **Top-five-all-groups** – Lists the 5 most frequent workplace issues noticed by each of the different Departments or groups you selected.

These reports will be useful to support discussions with the people in your organization who took the survey – or those who just want to know what the survey revealed.

Plan Your Meeting Schedule

After you have closed out the **Workplace Communication Assessment** and looked at the reports on the results, there are several ways you can begin the process of translating those results into actions to reduce the number and types of workplace issues observed by survey participants. You can set up your post-survey communications in different ways: small-group

meetings, larger presentation meetings, and/or discussion groups that will focus on specific issues, specific Levels, and/or specific Departments.

The purpose of these meeting(s) is to share the results of the Assessment, identify the key issues each group sees as needing priority attention (use your top-line reports), and discuss communication solutions for those issues (see the "Resolving Workplace Issues" summary).

If you chose more than one hierarchical Level for your survey sub-groupings, you'll want to create a schedule for meetings with people on the different Levels.

- Some organizations want to give Executives and Senior Managers the first view of survey results, along with an opportunity to discuss ideas for solutions.
- Others prefer having a larger meeting to include all Executives, Directors, Managers, and Supervisors – i.e., people with leading roles at all levels of the organization.

If you chose more than one Department or sub-group for your survey, you'll also want to create a schedule for meetings with people in the different Departments or sub-groups. Each Group will want to see their unique results and discuss solutions.

Agenda for Debrief Meetings on the Communication Assessment Results

1. **Close Out the Survey**
   First, acknowledge the fact that the survey is finished, and say how many people participated in the survey. Remind them that the survey focused on identifying "workplace issues" as they are observed by people in the organization, and the results will show what different groups have to say about those issues.

   These reports about workplace issues are not "bad news". The **Workplace Communication Assessment** is not "negative" because it focuses on "issues" instead of happier topics. The value of having people report their workplace problems and barriers is that they see those things clearly, and likely never had the opportunity to report or discuss those issues productively, much less to identify solutions. The issues all point to which kinds of communication will be most effective to strengthen the organization. This is a fast way to learn what will make the organization more effective and pleasant.

2. **Review the Top Line Reports**
   Share the three top-line reports with people in your meeting.
   - The "**Top Ten Overall**" report shows the 10 most frequently occurring workplace issues as observed by the organization as a whole. Everyone will be interested to see and discuss this information because it is a profile of the organization's communication

culture. They will also want to know what every other group has to say about the survey results, so you may need to schedule follow-up meetings.

- The "**Top Five All Levels**" report makes it clear that workplace issues are different when seen from different perspectives. Participants who are Executives, Managers, or Supervisors will be especially interested in these differences between Levels, and letting everyone at all Levels see this report is an education on the different problems people have in different tiers of management. It is an opportunity for useful discussion.

- The "**Top Five All Groups**" report is another way of seeing that workplace issues are observed differently from different points of view. Each sub-group has its own perspective, and a discussion about the differences and similarities can provide useful ideas for where to focus attention, and what solutions Group members see.

3. **Focus on the 5 Issues Most Relevant to Your Meeting's Participants**
   Select the "Top Five" issues that were reported by the group(s) you have in your meeting – and read them aloud. ***Prepare to capture their comments, either on a whiteboard or a computer.***

   - Encourage them to add some specifics to each issue (if they are willing to do so in the presence of others). When does this issue arise? What do you see as the cause of this issue? What would solve it?
   - Talk about the costs of these workplace issues. Do they affect productivity or performance, or do they have more personal or social impacts?
   - If you could only pick two or three issues to focus on resolving, which ones would they be?

   This discussion gets everyone acquainted with problems they may have already known about, but have not really discussed before in this way. When they are ready to move to problem-solving, you can go to the final portion of the meeting.

4. **Review the Communication Solutions and Create a Plan for Action**
   Share the summary document "Resolving Workplace Issues with Four Conversations" – http://usingthefourconversations.com/issues-and-the-conversations-needed-to-resolve-them.
   Facilitate discussion – and take good notes!

   - There are four "productive conversations" that can be used to resolve these workplace issues. Which ones does it look like we're good at? Which ones keep showing up as needing more practice?
     NOTE: For this discussion, you'll want to look at the "Category" of the top workplace issues. Which Category – or Categories – keep coming up on the reports? Frequently observed Categories of issues in the "Top Ten" are important to resolve.

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The "Resolving Workplace Issues" document tells you which of four productive conversations are associated with each Category:

1. **Initiative Conversations** are used to propose a project, a goal, or a change of some kind. They specify <u>What</u> you want to accomplish, <u>When</u> you want it finished, and <u>Why</u> it matters. These conversations are associated with clear goals and purposes, that should relate to the overall mission.
2. **Understanding Conversations** are dialogues to clarify <u>Who</u> needs to be involved in accomplishing something and the role they will play, <u>Where</u> the resources will come from and <u>Where</u> the results will be delivered, and <u>How</u> it will be accomplished. A draft plan may be sketched out, or steps and processes clarified. These dialogues will ultimately include everyone affected by the work being proposed.
3. **Performance Conversations** are made up of requests for people to take an action or produce a result, and promises by people to take actions or produce results. In other words, they create agreements between people for action and results by specifying <u>What</u> is to be accomplished, <u>When</u> it will be finished, and <u>Why</u> it matters. These agreements for actions and results provide the first half of "accountability".
4. **Closure Conversations** create completion and certainty for people involved in requesting and promising results. They provide follow-up to see that the job is done (or not), or they give an update on the status of a request or promise. This is the second half of "accountability", reporting what has happened on a promise or a project. They can also be used to close out an ineffective way of operating.

Every organization has a pattern of communication that may vary with different sub-groups. It is useful to determine which one or two of these conversations needs more practice.

- Use the "Resolving Workplace Issues" document to get specific about how to start putting some of these recommended practices in place. What do we need to start, change, or stop doing? What about our meetings and meeting agendas? Personnel issues, or policies, or procedures? What situations call for practicing some of those "productive conversations"?

- Finally, select the set of new practices – for communications, interactions, and purposes – that the people in your meeting agree are important and need to be implemented. Get specific about:
  - What, exactly will be done, or implemented?
  - When will it begin?
  - How will we know it is being done?

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- o Who will be responsible for seeing that it happens in certain situations?
- o Why is it important that we encourage and support these actions?

Meet ● Share information ● Take notes ● Discuss ● More notes ● Follow-up ● Repeat

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