



PRODUCTIVITY BY DESIGN

## **THE ART OF COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **UPWARD COMMUNICATION**

Upward communication can be seen as moving information from the lower organizational hierarchy to the higher levels of management.

There is positive and negative upward communication in each organization. Unfortunately, the smaller the organization the more negative communication is fed upwards.

#### **Positive Communication**

Positive upward communication can be seen as useful and positive information that can be used by top management to base future plans and decisions on that will benefit the organization. These will include:

- Productivity reports
- Minutes from meetings
- Work group discussions
- Worker suggestions and comments
- [Team building](#) exercises (If managed well)

#### **Negative Communication**

This is the type of communication that can cause serious damage to the organization's ability to make positive decisions and build strong team morale. It is a great trust breaker and can also leave top management open for victimization claims at the CCMA. These can include:

- Gossip
- Grapevine channel
- "Undercover" long time employees carrying stories
- Incorrect reporting
- Negative comments from [negative people](#)
- Unknown sources from outside the organization

Positive communication channels were used very successfully through history by many top organizations to enhance growth, build trusting relationships and motivate their



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workers. Unfortunately, this has changed in many ways and can be seen throughout the industry and the effect this has on the economy is devastating.

Through the last twenty years, it could be seen that the dynamics of this information changes with the size of the organization. This has been an international trend but South African business started feeling this shift more so over the last fifteen years. It is also possible that this change is because the small and medium size business sector growing. These are normally family run or one man shows who rely on communication but because of inexperience and trust issues they thrive (and take a dive) on negative communication.

Due to serious lack of experience and possibly low ethical or moral standards at top management level the shift is more towards the negative communication channel. This can also be seen in bigger organizations and companies but the reasons for this can also be seen as inexperience and a case of "I know it all".

## REPAIRING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH COMMUNICATION

To ensure that positive communication can assist you with running an effective and efficient workforce keep the following basics in mind:

- Put the word out that you only accept positive communication.
- Put communication positive channels in place such as daily reports, workers meetings and management feedback sessions.
- Punish negative communication by dismissing it openly.
- If there is a need to investigate rumors and gossip investigate it quietly and discreetly without involving the carriers.
- Keep [communication channels](#) short and sweet.
- Ensure that everyone has some form of access to a communication channel.

**"GOOD COMMUNICATION CAN BE USED.**

**BAD COMMUNICATION CAN BE ABUSED."**