OASIS Alert

Human Resources: Keep Employees Informed In Changing Times

Establishing a personal connection can help foster better communication.

The changes in home care keep coming ⬚ from the OASIS-C1 to ICD-10. And successfully navigating these changes requires excellent communication practices. Consider these expert tips to help keep your agency on track.

"Leaders have talked about transparency for a long time, but it's never been more important than it is now," says Quint Studer, author of Straight A Leadership: Alignment, Action, Accountability. "Remember, we share information with employees for a couple of reasons: one, it's the right thing to do, and two, it's good for business. And most companies can use every possible edge these days."

Here's how you can create a more transparent organization:

1. **Strategic Rounding.** Based on the physician rounding model, leaders take time each day or so to touch base with employees, make a personal connection, find out what is (and isn't) working well, and so forth. Besides being a proven leadership tactic, says Studer, rounding is a great way to keep people up to speed on changes in the organization's "big picture" and to solicit any questions or concerns.
2. **Employee Forums.** Hold these company-wide meetings regularly. They are great opportunities to hold financial impact crash courses, to update people on changes in the external environment, and to solicit their feedback and ideas.
3. **Newsletters**. These should not be "data downloads" or senior leader photo-ops. Rather, fill them with articles about important external changes and the company's response to them. Really connect the dots for readers. And be sure to include tips on what employees can do personally to make a difference in the company's bottom line.
4. **Communication Boards.** Studer recommends putting physical (not just virtual) bulletin boards in a common area that convey an ever-changing "snapshot" of the company's bottom line. Include monthly and year-to-date financial reports as well as how the numbers break down by department. You can also include info about industry changes, new hires, community impact, and so forth.
5. **Standards of Behavior Updates.** Standards of Behavior guidelines spell out how employees are to present themselves while working: dress codes, communication etiquette, how to respond to gossip, key words to use when customers ask tough questions, etc. You may already have a Standards contract in place ... but was it written five years ago? Maybe it's no longer relevant. Make sure your Standards reflect your company's reality today. If not, ask employees to rethink and revise them. It's a great way to get people deeply engaged in thinking about the new reality and how they can best respond to it.