



# Improved Frequency

How clear communication leads to stronger relationships and better results

**T**he best managers communicate with their advisors with greater frequency and greater clarity. As a leader, every piece of verbal and non-verbal communication sends a message. Your intentionality should come from a robust communication plan that touches your people across all mediums — face, phone, email, and text. In today's fast-paced world, you cannot afford for your message to be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

So, what are three critical approaches that a manager must use to strengthen communication with their team?

## 1. GET TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE.

How well do you know the advisors on your team? Like *really* know. What is their spouse's name and occupation? Can you name each of their children? What about their pets? I would argue that unless you can confidently answer the above questions, you don't know them well enough. And while these questions may not have a lot to do with business, they have everything to do with trust and the relationship you have with your advisors. You see, to build a trusting relationship, it takes more than chit-chat. Just because you are chatting, doesn't mean you are building a relationship or helping advance their business.

One of the least complicated and most effective ways to get to know your advisors and build trust is through weekly one-on-one meetings. These meetings help improve performance and retention. They will also help you get to know your advisors at a deeper level. Managers who know how to get the most out of their advisors achieve better results.

Through structured one-on-ones, you'll learn about your advisor's strengths and

weaknesses. You'll learn what motivates them. This information will help you create more effective skills development plans for them. You'll also be able to key in on what really motivates your advisor. Carrot-and-stick motivators do not work. The single greatest long-term motivator is helping your people make individual progress every single day.

## 2. OVER-COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS.

Your advisors will evaluate you based on the quantity and quality of your communication. For most professionals, it's simple: Hearing from their manager more often about how they are performing improves performance. This truth shows that in many cases we are only getting a small percentage out of our advisors' true capabilities.

That is why it's necessary to over-communicate performance expectations and performance feedback.

You over-communicate your expectations to avoid ambiguity and to help ensure you and your advisors are on the same page. You must make it clear that results matter and that there are no rewards for effort alone. It's tempting to be the cheerleader. It's tougher to look people in the eye and tell them that their performance is unacceptable or that they need to upgrade their skills. If you don't find a balance, you risk ending up with a happy team that doesn't get anything done.

It's for this reason that you must over-communicate performance feedback. If performance communications are rare, then each takes on greater significance. If you don't point out a mistake, your advisors will assume that you don't care enough to correct them. Or worse, they may assume they are doing things acceptably. To get your

message across, you should make every effort to be *10 times* clearer than you think you should be when it comes to feedback.

## 3. ESTABLISH YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN.

Great communication does not happen by accident. As leaders, we must be deliberate in how and when we talk to our advisors.

For one-on-ones, it's best to conduct them weekly. The simplest reason is that you structure your work life in weekly increments. You'll also *gain* time by holding them weekly.

If you are like most managers, you get interrupted. A lot. Those interruptions will decrease when you meet with your advisors weekly. Over time, and with your guidance, your advisors will begin waiting until their one-on-ones to bring up non-urgent issues like case preparation, financial plan reviews, and one-off questions. If you have your one-on-ones biweekly or monthly, you lose this benefit.

When it comes to communicating about performance expectations and giving performance feedback, more is better. Think about professional sports. Most of us would prefer to watch a professional league rather than a high school game (unless your child is playing) because the calibre of play is much higher.

The underlying reason is elite athletes are provided performance feedback their entire career. These principles are the same for your advisors. If you want high performance, you're going to have to talk to your advisors frequently. I recommend giving feedback once daily for each of the advisors whom you work with directly. And with so much technology at our disposal, there is no excuse. While face-to-face is best, a timely text or email is also effective.

Communication is at the heart of building great relationships with your advisors. Becoming an elite communicator won't happen overnight, but implementing this guidance will lead to stronger results and stronger advisors. 📌

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