Communication Fundamentals for Information Management Projects

Published by: Kevin Dywer, Change Factory

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Effective communication, in an Information Management Project, involves much more than sharing information – it is about building trust. Leaders who are trusted, even in times of what people perceive as difficult, are skilled communicators.

Use the following communications fundamentals when managing change in an information management implementation.

1. Communicate Relentlessly

Now is not the time to keep quiet. Records and Information Management (RIM) leaders need to be able to communicate information, thoughts and ideas clearly and frequently in different media. Find many ways to share information; keep processes open and transparent.

2. Listen

Good communicators are also good listeners. Allow people to air their gripes and complaints about the new processes, about their loss of control or their misapprehensions about the EDRMS and about how unworkable the business classification scheme is. Pay attention to what others are saying, thinking and feeling. What is said? What is left unsaid? What does this mean in terms of the blockers to change which may need to be assuaged, and what are the motivators for change which can be leveraged?

3. Explain the Change

People are often sceptical of change. Share your thinking and the trade-offs you've weighed – not just the final decision or strategy. Explain the benefits of better information management practices in their words not yours. Ensure you do explain the benefits and not just the features.

4. Make an Appeal

Draw on a sense of loyalty, courage, morality, or other principles that tie the organisation's change strategy to what is important to people. It might be about how better information management processes and better access to information at the point of need to those with a need to know can save lives, improve profitability, make jobs easier, improve decision making or improve customer service or even in some cases improve the environment.

5. Articulate Expectations

Clearly explaining why, how and when things need to happen, sets expectations and creates a healthy level of stress and pressure. It also establishes a mechanism for monitoring and addressing performance. Be clear about what the role of users and superusers, if you have them, are. Make it clear that good information management practise is a user and a line management responsibility and the RIM team is accountable for creating a good framework and responsible for providing advice.

6. Be Visible

If you communicate well, you won't be out of sight. Find ways to interact with all of your stakeholder groups. Talk to the business about the changes. Ask them about the opportunities to solve problems with the functionality of the EDRMS.

7. Confront Problems and Conflict

Don't postpone dealing with challenging issues or conflict. By avoiding the difficult people or difficult issues, you can do great harm to yourself, your co-workers and your organisation. Seek out opportunities to solve problems and bust the myths and stories which pervade organisations who have had a failed implementation of an EDRMS with low levels of adoption. Welcome the nay-sayers. They are much better to deal with then the passive aggressives who say nothing about their fears but still act in negative ways because of them.

8. Be Honest and Open

A commitment to genuine change requires honesty, clarity and truth. An effective leader will ask the hard questions and foster an environment of honesty and candid discussion. Be clear about what the scope of the Information Management Project is. Be clear about the responsibilities staff may have in addition to their existing tasks. Sell the benefits of having information available from a single source of truth at the point of need as the trade-off, rather than diminishing the changes people may have to make.

9. Show Respect

Treat people with genuine concern and sincere consideration. Spend time with them, ask them about the things they are interested in and consider their needs as important as your own. Ask them about their processes and current ways of doing things. Respect their fears.

10. Make Room for Doubts

Establish a climate that processes resistance rather than attempting to squash it. Don't dismiss, write off, or label employees too easily or too quickly. For example, listen to their concerns about security of the information they wrongly believe is theirs, and show them how the EDRMS enhances security whilst enabling others to benefit from that information.

11. Don't Dismiss the Old

Ignoring, demeaning, or dismissing people and "the way things used to be" prevents them from moving on. Help people through transition by acknowledging their history and attachments. Ensure that the lessons of the old ways of doing things in managing records and information ae learned and transferred to the new information management processes.

12. Trust People to Handle the Truth

Tell them what you know and own up to what you don't know. Avoid putting a false positive spin on decisions or events that are inherently negative or difficult to handle. Let people know when decisions might be made about issues such as the BCS, security, document types, policies, processes and training and post-launch support if you don't know what the decision is.

13. Demonstrate that you can Handle the Truth

People may not readily tell you the truth or give you feedback. You have to set the tone and model the behaviour that makes truth telling okay. Stay connected to a broad circle of people and make it clear that you want them to share their concerns and ideas. If you do have what you consider a cohort of passive aggressive people, go on the front foot and use a negative brainstorming session or a challenge session to flush out the negative thoughts so they can be dealt with in the open.

http://www.changefactory.com.au/our-thinking/articles/communication-fundamentals-information-management-projects/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=KiP+12&utm_content=KiP+12+CID_0b8c37af9422ba8ea5e3718dc7e8eabe&utm_source=Winds%20of%20Change&utm_term=Read%20on

Submitted by: Ruth Edge Cardinia Shire Council