



Improving Workforce Communications and Engagement



Executive Summary

Communication is the driver of employee engagement in all organizations, and the State of Missouri is no exception. Unfortunately, communication is not given the priority that it critically needs. Despite an 11% Quarterly Pulse Survey increase for *understanding organizational direction*, wide variations emerge between departments and even divisions. In order to accelerate our progress, communication must be prioritized, strategic, and intentional. We can and must do better.

Why is it important?

Prioritizing communication allows leaders to maintain control of the messaging to ensure consistency in delivery and interpretation. It is key to empower and support middle management and frontline supervisors. When organizations place focus on improving communication, it increases transparency and creates a better work environment.

A framework for change

Change must start from the top, and it begins with *mindset*. *Standard processes* for communications need to be built into how the organization runs. Staff need the *skills* and knowledge on how to effectively communicate. Lastly, leaders must be *role models* of the desired behaviors.

Recommendations

We recommend the following:

- Each department has been asked to review their Vision/Mission Statement in their next senior leadership meeting to ensure it connects with all staff levels.
- Each department implement themed Engage meetings that connect each staff member's role in the Vision/Mission of the department.
- Each department hold at least one Town Hall at a major facility or regional location within the next 6 months.
- Each department should introduce a message house template to ensure consistent messaging throughout the organization.
- Each department require all division directors to forward all staff emails with additional context to reinforce messaging.
- Each department connect their vision and mission in external communications.
- Prior to promoting supervisors or managers, have department leaders meet with candidates to ensure they have a clear understanding of and commitment to the department's mission.
- Each department set a minimum number of "communication" competency hours to be required by all managers within a year for the new Leadership Development rule.
- Each department leaders identify key staff that understand the message and meet with them quarterly.
- Each department record one "mock" Engage meeting demonstrating the connection in an employee role with the mission/vision and share with all department staff.
- Each department leader commit to engaging in 10 informal conversations with at least 10 different front line staff regarding their understanding of mission/vision.