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Times Getting Better? Don't Let Up On Employee Communications

Most employers plan to scale down employee communications with the onset of recovery – the opposite of what they should do!

In the past year many companies increased their employee communications about business performance, benefits and pay because of changes brought on by the recession. However, according to a recent Watson Wyatt study*, less than a quarter of companies surveyed plan to increase recession and recovery-based communications in the next 12 months. That could be a **critical mistake**.

At a time when employees are still concerned about their jobs, finances and the economy, **communication is the glue that can hold it all together**. Credible, candid information – beyond pay, job and benefit cuts – helps you **keep employees productive** on the job, **retains high performers** and **prepares workers for change** in a leaner business climate.

**Watson Wyatt 2009/2010 Communication ROI*

A great opportunity

Now is the perfect time for you to seize the opportunity and communicate the big picture. Educating and preparing workers for what is expected of them and what the company is willing to contribute can help allay fears and keep your employees engaged.

It's very important for employees to understand where they stand overall, in the short-term and the long-term, and employers need to communicate that.

New communication rules for a new era

With the corporate paradigm shifting dramatically, **old-school HR communication rules** that are primarily designed to announce changes **no longer apply**. What are these new rules?

DO:

- **Keep it coming** – Continue to explain ongoing changes – don't limit it to just what is being taken away. Also talk about what's staying the same, what employees can expect from the company and what the company expects from employees.
- **Tell them how to shine** – Let workers know how their performance can contribute to the company's future success and new vision, allowing them to set goals and remain motivated.

DO, continued...

- **Emphasize the status quo** – Reassure employees about what benefits are staying the same. Without this knowledge, high performing employees may be more receptive to outside offers with a higher salary but lesser benefits.
- **Toot your horn** – Tell workers the good news about how the company plans to remain competitive. Give them facts and figures along with strategy, so they feel secure in the knowledge that you're in control and you appreciate their support and loyalty.

DON'T:

- **Just push it out** – Don't just focus on getting out what you want to say or what you think people need to know. Take the time to understand what people will actually hear and believe.
- **Think short-term** – Employees appreciate getting a long-term view about what to expect and what is being planned. Employee satisfaction and engagement are greatly enhanced when they can share in a future vision.
- **Limit the conversation** – Recent research shows that a majority of workers feel their company's leadership should be communicating more about current economic problems. Employees want to hear from company leaders about the impact of the financial crisis on their company.

Companies that appreciate the necessity of continued and expanded communication will remain one step ahead of their competitors in these changing times – with an engaged and loyal workforce to show for it.

BeneCom Associates stands ready to help your company compete in the new world of business **with affordable and creative communication tools and resources.**

To learn more about us call **860.674.2626** or visit us [online](#).

This newsletter is brought to you by the employee communication specialists at BeneCom Associates, The Write Source and Red Jasper.