

Book Review on
“The Manager’s Communication Handbook”

by David Cottrell and Eric Harvey

(Review by Gary Tomlinson)

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What is the greatest frustration for most employees? Could it be they think they’re not getting paid enough? Or that the workplace is cramped or noisy? Maybe they think management expects too much from them? Could organizational bureaucracy or politics be number one on the frustration list?

All of these possibilities are easy to imagine...and justify. However, in survey after survey, employees place **communication problems** at the top of their frustration list?

Yes, communication! Most managers spend so much time and effort communicating, it’s hard for them to believe it could be a major problem. The paradox is that while employees are frustrated by a perceived lack of communication with their managers, most managers feel they are outstanding communicators. For this reason, I have chosen Cottrell’s and Harvey’s *The Manager’s Communication Handbook* for this month’s book review.

A manager can (and often does) make or break an organization. Most of the time the determining factor of a manager’s success or failure is not the strategy, it’s the tactics...how well the strategy was communicated and executed. Many great plans have failed because of communication breakdowns within organizations.

In this handbook, Cottrell and Harvey will share with you the four critical dimensions of communication that are so obvious, yet so often overlooked. Their four critical dimensions of communication are:

- 1. Build Trust:** The core of communication is developing trust.
 - a. Clearly establishing the acceptable standards of behavior eliminates confusion.
 - b. Err on the side of employee fairness when there is no obvious right or wrong.
 - c. Pass the trust test by living up to your commitments.

- 2. Share Knowledge:** Knowledge is power. Equip your team with as much knowledge as you can.
 - a. Show the team how all the pieces of the picture fit together.
 - b. Demonstrate how the team makes a difference to the customer.
 - c. Teach employees the vital signs of the business.

- 3. Provide Feedback:** People need to know where they stand.
 - a. Let employees know what is required of them.
 - b. Tell them how they’re doing.

- c. Show them that you care.
- d. Tell them how they're doing as a team.

- 4. Walk the Talk:** We have to walk out talk personally and professionally.
- a. People watch everything you do.
 - b. You are always leading.
 - c. Everything counts.

The Manager's Communication Handbook will help you move from activity-focused communication to outcome-focused communication. This will allow you to connect with employees and create the understanding, support, and acceptance critical to your success. Along with their four key dimensions of communication, Cottrell and Harvey will teach you how to eliminate communication static and will share with you 44 tactical and practical tips that address the most common forms of static found in phone and voice mails, e-mails, memos, meetings, presentations, and feedback.

As a manager, communication is one of the most powerful tools you have. Rather than think of it as an activity, Cottrell and Harvey believe you should think of communication as an outcome. Their handbook will help you stay focused on the message. Eliminate the static. Work to build understanding, support, and acceptance. And when you do, you'll be well on your way to ensuring the success you desire for yourself, your co-workers, and your organization. Cottrell's and Harvey's desire is that you will take the concepts outlined in their handbook and make a positive difference for yourself and those you lead.

Enjoy this month's selection, *The Manager's Communication Handbook* and share it with others in your life because as Alvin Toffler says; "*The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.*"

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