

Overcoming Communication Issues in the Workplace

Communication issues hinder productivity and efficiency, which ultimately cost your business money. Here are the three most common communication issues and how you can overcome them in the office:

Language Barriers: One way to better communicate is by listening to understand. As you communicate, take the time to carefully consider context and connotation, rather than just denotation. Remember, words have different meanings to people, so consider what the individual means as well as what the word actually means.

Personal Feelings: When personal feelings affect the way we communicate in the workplace, it becomes a larger issue that affects the entire organization. When communicating, stick to relaying facts and information, remain objective, and above all keep your personal emotions in check.

Lack of Response: One-sided communication not only slows productivity, but it also halts progress. It is essential to make sure you provide feedback, even if it is just a simple acknowledgement of receipt. This way the communication channels remain open and progress continues.



Tips to Avoid Unproductive Conference Calls

Set a time limit - Thanks to our fleeting attention spans, humans find it difficult to focus on one thing for longer than eight seconds. The longer a conference call, the more likely that the participants will find other things to occupy their minds. Set your next conference call for 10 minutes or less.

Keep the guest list short - Another way to increase productivity in a conference call is by ensuring only those vital to the meeting participate in the call. A general rule of thumb is that a conference call should involve five people or fewer.

Have a set agenda - If you're unsure of the need for a conference call, then it may be likely that you don't need one. Having a clear agenda helps expedite a conference call and keep it within the parameters of its purpose. You can outline goals, keep track of decisions made, and easily pick up where you left off. This makes a quicker, less painful process for everyone.

Document Management Makes Life Easier for SMBs

Did you know that staying organized with tools like document management software can actually save you time and money? Here are a few key ways document management makes life for SMBs easier.

Streamlines Records - With document management, you reduce the amount of physical storage needed to maintain records. Better still, the software is designed to help you remain compliant, so you don't have to worry about your next audit.

Facilitates Communication - Document management provides an SMB with the ability to easily communicate, as teams operate without fear of misplacing a paper document or working on an outdated version of a file.

Enhances Security - This software allows you to limit access to HR and accounts payable records containing bank account information, social security numbers, credit card information, and more, keeping your confidential data secure.

Improves Disaster Recovery Backups - Document management solutions nearly always come with a disaster recovery plan that backs up your data in the event of an emergency or if your files are held for ransom (ransomware).

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Avoid Pain Points by Outsourcing Your IT

As organizations become increasingly more reliant on technology for their day-to-day business operations, IT is a critical area for businesses both large and small. Managing your IT infrastructure is a complex, demanding, and fluid endeavor. It is a task that most companies simply aren't capable of adequately tackling themselves due to lack of time and resources. Today's IT-driven work environment presents your team with a number of pain points that will inevitably arise.

By outsourcing IT services to a Managed Services vendor, you can alleviate a number of pain points associated with an in-house approach to IT including:

Expectations to do more with less - As technology advances exponentially and IT responsibilities grow, team size and company resources remain stagnant. As IT expectations increase and pressure builds, it is nearly impossible to keep up with demand in-house. However, an outsourced IT vendor can stay ahead of your IT needs at a standardized rate.

No room for amateurs - An IT environment is an extremely complicated arena, one that requires skilled, knowledgeable, and well-trained professionals. You need more than someone who knows how to set up their own computer to keep your network and systems up and running. An outsourced partner invests in the continued education of their team of pros so you don't have to.

Remote workers make security more challenging - As technology makes it possible for employees to work and collaborate smoothly from anywhere, people working outside of the office is now the norm. These remote workstations, along with more mobile devices accessing your files, make your IT infrastructure vulnerable to attacks. An outsourced IT vendor secures your environment, allowing for this new flexible style of work while protecting your data.

Turnover and new users are a huge headache - Employee turnover seems to be at an all time high, as the era of 'employment for life' is behind us. This influx of new users puts an increased burden on IT staff to quickly and accurately set up new accounts, while ensuring former employees can no longer access company files. An outsourced IT vendor makes your office's transitions easy and secure.

Working with a Managed IT Services provider will help you avoid the pain points that pop up in today's IT environments. Contact us to learn more about how our IT services can help your business today.



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Modern Employee Motivation Techniques

Motivating employees is a simple task in theory. However, understanding what motivates each unique individual on your team and then adjusting your management style accordingly is easier said than done. Consider these three steps to motivate your employees by making them feel good about the work they do:

Let Them Know Their Work Matters

Share the context of the work they are doing—how is this task relevant to the organization, project, and/or team as a whole? Employees are motivated when they know their work is an important part of the big picture.

Recognize and Value Their Efforts

Acknowledging your employees' contributions is effective in sustaining their motivation. Recognizing goal achievements, project completions, and exceptional results make employees feel appreciated and ultimately will keep them motivated.

Assess Your Own Motivation

Employees are attuned to their leader's involvement in the workplace. If they can sense that you are not motivated about the work you're doing, their morale also drops. Ensure that you are as engaged and motivated as you expect your employees to be, and they will reciprocate.



Can You Really Trust Remanufactured Ink Cartridges?

One area many companies seek to save money on is their office equipment; specifically, printer consumables. This often leads purchasers to turn to remanufactured ink cartridges for their printers, as they generally cost less than new cartridges. But can you really trust a remanufactured printer cartridge? Consider the potential drawbacks of using remanufactured ink cartridges for your office printers.

Inferior quality – Remanufactured ink cartridges are rarely held to the same quality and consistency standards as those from a reputable office technology vendor, which have multi-million dollar research and development programs behind them along with rigorous testing protocols.

Lower page yield – Reputable vendors can provide accurate page yields for their printer cartridges thanks to their thorough testing and consistent production processes. However, a remanufactured cartridge simply can't be counted on to produce a predictable page yield.

Damaged printers – By utilizing lower quality ink in a remanufactured cartridge you run the risk of doing permanent damage to your printer. Repeating poor print jobs will lead to an increase in wear and tear on your office equipment, while low-quality ink can lead to buildup on heat resistors and cause clogs that lead to failed or damaged nozzles.



How to Manage Needy Employees

Assess the Source of the Neediness

The first step is taking a look at what may be causing this neediness in your employee. Take the time to consider both your employee's past experiences as well as their current situation. There are several reasons an employee could feel the need to have their projects double or triple-checked, and figuring out the underlying factors is a great starting point to address the issue.

Begin a Dialogue

Once you've given the underlying reasons some thought, have an open and honest conversation with the employee. It's crucial in this step to come from a place of understanding and problem solving; be mindful not to come off condescending or get impatient with your employee.

Set Clear Boundaries

When assigning work, be sure that you are clear with your expectations and deadlines. Think ahead to answer any questions your employee may have before they arise by giving specific and detailed instructions. If the needy behavior continues, begin implementing boundaries to help your employee become conditioned to working independently.

Reconsider Their Role and Responsibilities

If the behavior persists after implementing these steps, it may be a sign that there is a deeper issue affecting your employee's job performance. Take the time to reevaluate your employee's role within the company.

Monochrome Printers Are Growing in Popularity

Monochrome, or black-and-white, printers are used extensively across the globe by offices, organizations, universities, and in homes. This trend is expected to grow, according to a new report penned by TMR Research titled "Monochrome Printer Market - Global Industry Analysis, Size, Share, Trends, Analysis, Growth, and Forecast 2017 - 2025." The sustained demand for paperwork in sectors such as retail, education, and government—as well as the growing demand for printers in the workplace and to maintain office workflows—are key developments in the growing popularity and expected increase in demand for monochrome printers. Other key factors cited for this growth include:

- growing demand for user-friendly and scalable printing solutions among workplace supplies and stationery
- manufacturers are launching customizable solutions to meet the demand for specific workflows in various office environments
- the advent of automatic monochrome printers with intuitive user-interfaces

Black-and-white printers continue to be a fixture in the modern office and will remain so well into the next decade.



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