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<p><b>2-Way Compass</b> is a publication produced each month especially for managers and employees at Fortune 500 companies and other large firms. It contains practical suggestions for communicating with others in the workplace. Inside are tips and ideas to take action on, as well as a forum to get answers to your communications challenges</p> <p><b>L.M. Dulye &amp; Co.</b>                      52 Kain Road, Warwick, NY 10990                      Phone: 845.988.5855                      Email: ludlye@lmdulye.com</p>	

## Motivating Team Members During Tough Times

*“Employees can get caught up in worrying about ‘what if?’ situations, often when they can’t see how they can control or influence those situations. For example, they may start worrying about their company’s stock price. When this happens, great managers refocus their teams by saying things like, ‘You know, we can’t control the stock price. But here are specific things we can influence every day as a team and as individual employees that will make us more productive.’”*

--Curt Coffman, co-author of the best-selling book, *“First, Break All the Rules.”* For more from a recent Q&A with Coffman about motivating during tough times, [click here](#).

One of the main challenges in a down economy can be a depressing workplace where employees feel down, which can reduce overall productivity and get in the way of opportunities, teamwork and creative problem solving. Try these simple suggestions to keep employees engaged during this economic downturn.

1. **Host informal "coffee talks"**. Pull an entire work team together to openly talk about what's going on in the world and how it affects business. Encourage employees to ask questions. This decreases negative rumors and also gets employees focused on work rather than on griping.
2. **Offer "depressor" activities**. Hire a local massage school to offer free 10-minute chair massages once every couple of weeks. Look for other distinctive and fun way to convey that your organization recognizes the rough times and cares about your staff's well-being.
3. **Form "new business attack teams"**. The goal of these employee teams is to investigate new business development options. By encouraging your team to focus on the future, motivation can rise quickly.
4. **Support community involvement**. Provide company time for teams of employees to serve dinner at a local shelter, help build houses, adopt a family for a holiday, or collect money for a common charity. It not only serves as a motivator in that people feel they are doing something with a purpose, but also creates a positive public image.
5. **Develop "individualized" motivation plans**. Talk with key team members about the types of projects, training, experiences or mentors they would like to have. Times may be tough for people to get jobs, but your best people are also the most marketable. One of the main reasons people leave or are unmotivated is because they don't feel valued by their manager or company.

--Adapted from "Workforce" magazine

## L.M. Dulye & Co. Presents at Measurement Conference

L.M. Dulye & Co. President Linda Dulye will present “How to Use Two-Way Communications to Improve Business Performance” to Human Resources leaders across America on July 22. The workshop -- which is part of the HR Measurement Summit and sponsored by Shared Services & Outsourcing Network (a division of IQPC) – will teach business leaders how to use 2-way communications practices to build organizational vitality. [Click here](#) to learn more.

## 5 TIPS FOR MOTIVATING YOUR TEAM

More than ever before, companies are restructuring work environments and downsizing because of the depressed economy. Some of our own clients have recently experienced symptoms of low morale at their companies, such as employee health problems, leaves of absence, absenteeism and dips in productivity. Here are some suggestions from our own experience to help you motivate and enhance the performance of your workforce in these challenging economic times:

1. **Communicate goals.** Communication cannot be overemphasized, particularly in down times. Positive communication should indicate where the company is going, and begin to align employee-performance goals with the changing objectives of your organization.
2. **Make employees part of the solution.** Employees need to be involved in decision making, because their buy-in is critical for motivation and performance. They should be involved in even the most difficult decisions.
3. **Offer alternatives.** In uncertain times, employees need more, not less, structure and focus. Reviewing goals frequently is a critical element in keeping people on track. While there may be no increases in pay available, there may be training programs, career development, cross training, flexible work schedules and other steps that can be taken within budgetary constraints. Ask your team to develop goals for professional or skills development that will help them achieve the team’s contribution to the whole.
4. **Measure.** Make sure employees can measure their own performance against the key performance factors of the business. This is a key element of employee motivation because if they cannot measure their progress, it is unlikely their progress will improve.
5. **Reward.** It is especially important that employees feel a sense of accomplishment in their work. By setting up the proper recognition and rewards, they can feel a sense of team work and be acknowledged for their efforts during these difficult times. If rewards are structured properly, your team will appreciate their involvement and stay motivated, even in the absence of monetary rewards or stock options.

*Remember: It is easy to forget the importance of employee motivation and recognition, especially in down times, but it is far more difficult to replace a key team member who contributes in hundreds of ways that are unseen each week and year.*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### Look for Good Team Players

Your employee retention efforts should be selective: Your objective is to retain the best people on your team. But how do you identify them? Lots of key traits can’t be quantified. In any work group, though, the most valuable people will share two important characteristics: They are good team players, ready and able to support the team’s goals above their personal objectives; and they make people around them look better by teaching, coaching and supporting their work. --Adapted from “Keep the People Who Keep You in Business” by Leigh Branham

### Share “Crucial” Information

Research by *Harvard Business Review* found that quick, informal huddles – rather than formal meetings – were more effective in sharing crucial information. The huddles alerted everyone to urgent issues and concerns that would emerge over the day or week. These quick get-togethers were most effective when held at the start of the day.

### Positive Feedback: Use a Mix of Styles

When giving positive feedback, it’s good to mix up the style of the messages. While a quick “Good Job” in the hallway is effective every now and then, when this fast feedback is used too often, it loses effectiveness and can seem insincere. Once in a while, more specific feedback is necessary. “I liked your write-up for the upcoming project. It gave the important points without getting bogged down in details.”

### Ask Them to Rate It “1-5”

You can’t drop everything when a team member brings a problem to your attention. But urgency is in the eye of the beholder – and sometimes people expect an issue to be a top priority for you because it is for them. Encourage your team members to rate the problem’s urgency on a scale of 1 to 5 before they approach you. It will help them determine how important an issue really is.

### Bad News? Focus on the Future

When you have bad news for your team, remember what they want to know most about is the future. Some team leaders spend too much time explaining why a difficult decision was made. Instead, let them know what is coming next. Focusing on that will help reduce their uneasiness.

## **3 LEADERSHIP QUALITIES FOR TOUGH TIMES**

***PFAST FACT: Forget the old stereotype of the employee who wastes time at the water cooler, shooting the breeze with fellow employees. A new MIT study shows that employees who discuss work and share ideas are more productive than those who don't.***

In today's turbulent economic market, even the strongest and most powerful corporate icons are challenged to find ways to improve their efficiencies. As they require more work from fewer numbers of people, their top priority is having effective leaders and managers who can propel their group to greatness. Unfortunately, many young managers and leaders have never seen a tight economy, or at a minimum, have only a faint memory of what it can be like. It's during these times that leadership skills are put to the test. The following three leadership qualities are extremely valuable during robust times, and absolutely essential during challenging times.

1. **Lend an empathetic ear.** While denial is the natural response when things get tough, ignoring the emotions of your team members only causes greater challenges. Create a forum for people to share their feelings so that they can release them and move on. When people sense that another doesn't truly understand their emotions, they tend to stay charged and keep whining. If you don't want to be listening to the same complaints over and over, then listen with emotion. If someone's voice is loud and angry, say back in a loud voice, "I feel terrible because I see you are so upset." Then continue the conversation by dropping your voice slowly to a normal range. Watch the magic as they defuse by simply knowing you "really got it."
2. **Don't buy into the "ain't it awful" story.** Everything you hear could be true. Quarterly profits could be down, market share may be shrinking, and turnover could be high. These and other measurements are feedback that an organization isn't doing what it should be doing. Lead your team to the understanding that even during the darkest times, many do well, and you intend to be one of them. Your team needs to shift out of its doomsday view and into one with possibilities. When people say, "We can't because," the response should always be, "How can we?" With enough repetition, people will soon come to understand that results can be achieved no matter what the circumstances.
3. **Acknowledge the steps along the way.** Frustration runs high when things aren't working well. Employees' confidence is shaken. When confidence is low, performance weakens, thereby feeding into the cycle of lower motivation and performance. It doesn't have to be this way. Appreciate the little steps along the way during challenging times. Let your team know that you appreciate not only the things they do, but also who they are and the efforts they make. Build fun into your appreciation. Good organizations, departments and managers thrive during rough times because they learn to hone their skills like never before. They've discovered that it's the bad times that make them so much better during the good times.

--Adapted from "Motivating Employees During Tough Times" by Roxanne Emmerich, author of "Thank God It's Monday: How to Build a Motivating Workplace."

**VOTE ONLINE!**



**Cast your vote** on L.M. Dulye & Co.'s online poll. Visit [www.lmdulye.com](http://www.lmdulye.com) for the latest question about communications in the workplace. While you're there check out our **practical and portable** 2-Way Communications tips.

### **Self Quiz of the Month**

**Do you have what it takes to be a "leader?"** Place a checkmark next to the abilities you feel you have. Then ask a co-worker to rate you and compare the results.

Do you:

- Communicate effectively
- Set priorities and action plans
- Learn and improve procedures
- See how your responsibility relates to the big picture
- Analyze problems and make sound decisions
- Adapt to changing conditions, influences and environments
- Accept risk and take on difficult assignments
- Inspire excellence and commitment in others
- Stand up when under fire
- Learn from your mistakes
- Exhibit strong social and interpersonal skills
- Focus on the end product
- Demonstrate a high tolerance for stress and pressure

Scoring: If you scored 8 or higher, your leadership potential is high. Take corrective action on the items you or your co-workers left unchecked.

--Adapted from *The Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC*

## **6 LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP FROM THE MILITARY**

*“The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them.”*

*--Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State*

The discipline and motivation of the men and women serving in the U.S. armed forces is something most managers admire. Who wouldn't want to lead a team of enthusiastic, energetic professionals with the courage and determination of a U.S. Marine? Military leaders have much to offer leaders in the civilian world during both war and peacetime. Here are six principles and practices that successful military leaders use to keep their teams focused and motivated:

1. **Correct the small details.** Good military leaders at all levels know that attention to detail can make the difference between life and death. You're more concerned with profit and loss, but the principle remains the same. If you get into the habit of overlooking minor errors to avoid making trouble, you could end up ignoring mistakes that spell disaster.
2. **Involve your people in important decisions.** The Marine Corps urges its leaders to involve their immediate subordinates at every opportunity. You get the benefits of their knowledge and experience; they get a chance to see how you think and to develop their own decision-making skills. This will help them get ready to move into leadership positions later on.
3. **Encourage people to ask “why.”** Blind obedience may sound ideal, but it often runs people off the edge of cliffs. The Marines expect officers and soldiers to ask about the reasons behind decisions. An employee who understands the reasoning behind your instructions will do a better job; someone who asks a question when confused will make fewer mistakes, whether on the battlefield or in the workplace.
4. **Don't chase problems away.** Read the quote from Four-star Gen. Colin Powell above. Why does he say this? If your team isn't coming to you for help, they've probably lost confidence in your ability to solve problems, or they've decided you don't care. In either case, you've failed as a leader. You need to know what your people's challenges are. Don't force them to hide and cover up difficult situations.
5. **Consider everyone a leader.** “Every soldier is a leader regardless of his rank or position,” reads Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-65. Platoon sergeants are expected to be ready and able to take command of a platoon in the platoon leader's absence. Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are expected to show initiative – to get things done without waiting to be told by a superior. Manage your team with an eye toward their own advancement into management.
6. **Be flexible.** You think you're overwhelmed by change? In a military operation, the environment can change moment by moment. The Army's tool for rapidly changing course is called a Fragmentation Order, or “Frago” for short. Any change of plans is signaled by use of the word “Frago” in the revised orders, letting soldiers know that previous orders have been superseded. Be willing to change direction when circumstances demand it – and be sure to communicate your new plans so your team members know what you expect.

**LESSON FROM THE FIELD:** Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers founder Dave Thomas was more than a behind-the-scenes business owner. He was also Wendy's pitchman, setting a record for appearing in more than 800 advertisements. Thomas had presence. More than 90 percent of the public said they could identify with his picture. What was it about his communication style that attracted millions to his business?

1. **His low-key manner.** He may have been a millionaire, but people felt free to approach him on the street.
2. **His self-deprecating sense of humor.** His ads said, “I'm serious about the quality of my business. But I don't take myself too seriously.”
3. **His “everyman” appearance.** Always dressed in plain white, short-sleeve shirt and red tie, he actually looked like many working Americans.

Thomas never intimidated. He never condescended. His style instantly made people feel at ease with him. **Do you?**

**KEEP YOUR TOP PERFORMERS**

*“The best way to keep your stars is to know them better than they know themselves – and then use that information to customize the careers of their dreams.”*

*--Timothy Butler, James Waldroop in “Harvard Business Review”*

According to career experts Timothy Butler and James Waldroop, “job sculpting” can help you keep your best team members. The concept, explained in a recent issue of *Harvard Business Review*, is this: Good people will stay only in jobs that “fit their deeply embedded life interests – that is, their long-held, emotionally driven passions.”

To adapt this approach, spend a lot of time listening. For each team member, identify what life interests are dominant. Then work together to customize assignments. “In some cases, that may mean simply adding another assignment to existing responsibilities,” explains Butler and Waldroop. “In other cases, it may require moving that employee to a new position altogether.”

What kind of interests are you looking and listening for? Butler and Waldroop say these eight identifiable areas of interest are what people are drawn to in their business careers: Application of technology; quantitative analysis; theory development and conceptual thinking; creative production; counseling and mentoring; managing people and relationships; enterprise control; and influence thought language and ideas.

## **10 QUESTIONS TO ASSESS LOYALTY**

***PFAS FACT:** In a 2002 study, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 67 percent of American workers want to change their professions. Since motivation is intrinsic, the study suggests that the majority of the workforce is not as fully productive as they might otherwise be. The lesson? Mindful communication can help employees to connect personal goals and values with opportunities and assignments at work.*

In the aftermath of September 11, and because of today’s depressed economy, many employees are now questioning how satisfied they are with their work. The odds are that some of your best team members may be considering pursuing another job. Use these questions by management consultant Donald P. Crivellone to gauge your team members’ contentment. Will your team members say yes? Note: This is also a good test of your own job satisfaction. If you answer no to two or three questions, it may be time for a pointed conversation with your own supervisor.

1. Do I understand what is expected of me?
2. Have I received proper training?
3. Are refresher and continuing education courses offered?
4. Do I have room to grow in my job?
5. Is there room to exercise judgment?
6. Have I been exposed to other functional areas?
7. Has my boss discussed possible routes of advancement?
8. Do I have good working conditions? Are they safe? Well-equipped?
9. Is the boss reasonable? Does he regularly ask for my feedback?
10. Does the boss ever tell me I’ve done a good job?

**TRY THIS LEADERSHIP TIP:** Do your team members simply show up for work or shine on the job? There is a big difference. Effective managers and team leaders look for ways to keep commitment and motivation high.

Here is one idea that can make a difference: Spend private, one-on-one meeting time with each of your direct reports. This can be as little as 15 to 30 minutes every two weeks. Your team members should see this as their time to use.

Introduce this idea by asking, “What’s on your agenda today?” One team member might want to discuss a project she wants to launch, another might need advice on how to improve a working relationship with a direct report, and yet another might want to discuss the feasibility of increasing the training budget for people on his team. This kind of private time is win-win. It signals that you care—which will cultivate commitment and motivation in other. Moreover, the practice helps you stay touch with what’s going on.

## **GIVE FEEDBACK THAT COUNTS**

Feedback is an important tool for leaders, but like all tools it can be misused. Giving the wrong kind of feedback can damage relationships and destroy trust in your workplace. Here are four factors to consider before offering feedback::

1. **Relevance and importance.** Does the feedback you want to offer contribute to your employees' abilities to do their jobs better? Will it improve productivity, efficiency, or the bottom line? Don't waste time on feedback that won't make a positive difference.
2. **Accuracy.** Check your facts, and check your interpretation of the facts. Are your opinions or personal feelings clouding your perception? Is there more than one way to look at the situation? Don't take the truth of your information for granted.
3. **Action.** Does your feedback allow the employee to take action – to do something, change something, stop something? Telling employees that they made a mistake isn't helpful feedback; explaining what to do in the future to avoid similar errors is.
4. **Necessity.** Does the employee really need to hear this? Test yourself by thinking about what would happen if you didn't say anything. If the answer is nothing, you may want to think twice before inflicting your feedback on the person.

--Adapted from: "Flooded With Feedback," by John Brandt, on *IndustryWeek.com*

## **TRY THESE...COMMUNICATIONS HELPERS**

Each issue, you will find suggested activities to help you become a better communicator. Start a file for these tips and access them frequently. After you try them, let us know if you found success by e-mailing [dina.gomez@lmdulye.com](mailto:dina.gomez@lmdulye.com). Please also share activities that have worked for you.

1. **Build morale one person at a time.** One of the best ways to keep morale up starts by simply walking around your workplace. Make a daily point of finding one person doing his or her job exceptionally well, and tell the individual how much you appreciate this. Be sincere; don't gush or embarrass the person. Show a genuine interest in what he or she is doing, and then quickly move on so it doesn't look like you are micromanaging.
2. **Makeover your meetings.** Recognize team accomplishments each week by having team members write down three good things that they helped make happen. Then at the next team meeting, have each member read what he or she wrote.
3. **Think in new ways.** To help your team develop a fresh approach to a problem, try this: Take a common object, such as a door knob or frying pan. Ask: "Does this have to be this way? How could it be improved?" Tossing around ideas can reignite the creative spark.

## **FEEDBACK ZONE**

***We're listening!** Send us your questions about 2-way communications, comments about 2-Way Compass or any feedback. Forward them via email to 2-Way Compass editor [dina.gomez@lmdulye.com](mailto:dina.gomez@lmdulye.com). Thank you!*