

2-Way TIPSHEET

SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR
**L.M.
DULYE
& CO.**
COMMUNICATIONS
CHALLENGES

GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE 2-WAY COMMUNICATIONS™ IN THE WORKPLACE

Tip #23

Ways to Encourage Upward Communication

Upward communication is extremely important to business success, particularly in organizations undergoing change. Unfortunately, in most organizations, internal communication is frequently one-way, directed downward from top management to the employee, says Linda Dulye, president of L.M. Dulye & Company, a leading change management and communications consulting firm.

The downward cascade excludes one of the most important and valuable elements of internal communications—feedback. The ideas, questions and comments of employees are priceless. Feedback fuels knowledge as well as promotes improvement in the practices and products of an organization.

When upward communication channels are shut down or omitted from day-to-day workplace practices, frustration, apathy and poor morale are likely to overcome employees.

So how do you open and keep open upward channels? Dulye recommends these five techniques:

1. **Be consistent and gracefully accept feedback**, even if it's critical, to help build trust.
2. **Involve employees in decision making**. By involving them, you're more likely to win their support and they are more likely to have the information and tools they need to do their jobs.
3. **Offer options that allow for anonymous input**, such as suggestion boxes, anonymous surveys and "graffiti walls," where employees and leaders can exchange concerns and ideas.
4. **Invite employees from different areas to sit down** for a discussion on certain issues.
5. **Hire a neutral party to gather feedback** and provide for anonymity of employee responses.

Most of all, you can create a climate for two-way communication on a daily basis by being honest with co-workers and by listening more. Both show respect and invite others into exploring issues, airing view and being part of solutions.