

Communication Aids

Communication plays an invaluable role in our transformation to the PMBP way of doing business. In that context, it can be viewed as the sharing of information directed at changing behavior - our culture - "what it takes for each of us to be successful around here." This section of the deployment kit offers communication aids to help in curriculum deployment as well as describes some principles to think about regarding communication in the context of our transformation to the PMBP.

The Communication Context

"Employee communication should be about the hard, day-to-day business of changing frontline employee behavior" (Larkin, 1999).

DEFINITIONS

Communication: Information that changes behavior

Change: New directions requiring an adjustment in individual behavior

Goal: Improving performance, changing the way the organization's members do their work.

Curriculum objectives:

- ❑ To assist individuals in learning to interact together in a way that gets the work done effectively in teams.
- ❑ To facilitate the repetition of the experience of successfully working in teams until it eventually becomes the new way we do business. From that new behavior - a new or modified cultural value emerges.
- ❑ To continually reinforce the new way by facilitating its integration into the organization's systems - e.g., how we train, how we reward, how we recruit, etc. - in order to become institutionalized as our way of doing business.

The curriculum strives to communicate key messages in multiple ways to appeal to various learning styles - e.g., individual learners versus group learners - and personality styles - e.g., intuitive versus facts based. In using small group discussions, it seeks to maximize to the extent possible face-to-face communication.

Communication Ideas Collected from the Field

- Publish a PMBP Question of the month - electronic and have people respond to it; publish responses and leadership thoughts. Use for gap analysis and action planning. Questions touch on both facts and attitudes/behaviors. Tailor questions to the key learning points of the curriculum course, focusing on issues of particular relevance to your organization.
- Pose a PMBP Question of the month for discussion at the PRB
- Use as many existing organization forums (staff meetings, PRB, etc) to talk about what people are learning from the curriculum. Invite people to tell "real application" stories.
- Translate the change and tailor the specifics of communication to show how it affects each department/division. Challenge each functional area to come up with a "Press Release about what PMBP means to them". Have a contest for the "best" Press Release.
- Assess where your functional group is and together at a staff meeting, planned offsite, or small group discussion session, develop "from" and "to" as shown in Course 1, engaging employees in the culture description. Post the results in your work area to show a picture of PMBP culture as it applies to you and your work group.
- Connect desired behaviors to organizational success - invite stories, metaphors, case examples where PMBP principles are working and not working and the results. Talk about what can be done about them.
- When communicating change, talk more about performance and less about values. Communicate performance directly - e.g., have we done well or not. Be as specific as possible - ask for suggestions for improvement at the local work area level - working through and engaging the first line supervisors.
- Develop briefing cards sized to be carried easily (index cards) and used for communicating key facts regarding the PMBP and its goals.
- Prepare a "talking paper" with key information about the PMBP program and the curriculum to be used by management/PDT/others to send a consistent message about what we are trying to achieve.
- Communicate reality by letting people know about uncertain information and that the plan is evolving as it is implemented. Otherwise, they will fill the voids with their own perceptions.
- Communicate simultaneously with plan development by communicating probabilities. (E.g. the probability that we will get a new software

- program is 100% - the probability that it will be P2 as currently envisioned is 90. **NOTE:** This is an example not a fact!).
- Communicate the most likely scenario - employees have the best response to change when their managers communicate early and often, even if management doesn't know for sure what will happen. This can help to form a bridge between employees and management and indicates to employees that they are to be trusted with the information.
 - Develop and publish FAQs (see the FAQs on the PMBP curriculum website).
 - Post key learning PMBP principles as well as places for employees to post their implementation ideas and lessons learned around conference rooms, hallways, the coffee pot and cafeteria.
 - Put up posters throughout the organization (some provided as part of this kit)
 - Talk to customers about what we are doing and what we hope to achieve - ask them for their observations and suggestions.
 - Senior managers hold discussion sessions with supervisors; then invite supervisors to provide opinion reports to senior management regarding their concerns and issues related to the PMBP
 - Make random calls to supervisors and employees to invite their feedback and their understanding of PMBP. Let them know that you will be doing that.
 - Include communication as a performance objective. *An idea: Supervisors evaluate their managers' communication; feedback is shared with other managers, as well as first line and senior managers as a learning experience for continuous improvement in communicating.*
 - Invite employees to be a part of the district's communication process - to actively participate in communication as well as to offer suggestions and ideas for improving communication. Tap into your emerging leaders, local leadership development classes and alumni - a huge and growing resource!

PMBP Lessons Learned Discussion Forum

The PMBP Lessons Learned Discussion Forum is a feature available through the PMBP Portal. Its purpose is to serve as a place for Corps team members to provide feedback, sharing ideas and lessons learned, and posting issues for discussion related to the PMBP. Accompanying the roll-out of the PMBP Portal will be a

Portal User's Guide (included in this Kit) and PowerPoint presentation to aid in communication about this new tool available to Corps employees from their desktop computers.

PMBP Portal

<https://pmbp.usace.army.mil>

Click on: PMBP Curriculum

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