

Communication

THE REQUEST:

To assist in opening up communication between employees and management

ATTENDEES:

80 members of a manufacturing and retail business, from dock workers to the CEO

THE EVENT:

A 7-hour workshop

WHAT WE DID:

The facilitators began by presenting a comedy skit, exaggerating everything that can go wrong with communication in a company. This set the tone for people to laugh, open up, relax and be receptive.

A short debrief followed, pointing out what didn't work in the humorous skit and showing a "toolbox" of good communication skills which we would reference throughout the day.

The participants were then divided up into 8 teams and given instructions on the "project" they would work on together: meant to be a microcosm of actual team projects at their company, each group would have 30 minutes to create their own comedy skit about communication in the workplace.

Because it was a short time frame and this was unfamiliar territory for most, they had to drop all agendas and really connect and communicate with each other. Each member of the team realized they were a unique and important part of the process.

Our facilitators rotated throughout the room, offering guidance where needed. The skill of bringing out the best in each other was emphasized and an atmosphere was created where every idea was accepted and followed with curiosity. Not every idea made it through but, by not shutting each other down with judgments or worry, each contribution led to

a great collaboration and successful end product.

At the end of thirty minutes, there was a "show". The teams took turns presenting their skits to much appreciative laughter and applause. Each one was brilliant and the teams delighted in their success. In just a few minutes, this group of non-performers and non-writers from different departments had come together and easily created a way to share what they really wanted to convey.

Instead of listening to a long lecture and taking notes, this group had actually *experienced* great communication.

"After reading through the questionnaires at the end of the day, the conclusion is unanimous that this was the best workshop ever."

After lunch, we did role-plays with debriefs on what worked and didn't work in their communication – and how to get their desired outcome in a win-win way.

The rest of the day was full of profound and long-lasting revelations as they kept building on the foundation of the morning activities.

RESULTS:

The president of the company appreciated the information the skits and role plays provided about what was really going on. The employees were able to convey their needs without confrontation. Each department felt heard and respected. New skills were learned. The door to communication was now wide open and a new, healthy, refreshing company environment was created.



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