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THIS MONTH'S HUB GUEST EXPERT

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ASK THE EXPERT

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: MANAGER AND LEADER COMMUNICATION

Q. Do you have any real-life examples of how senior managers leading by example have made an impact on the success of programs?

A. Savvy leaders know the importance of leading by example. They realize that their people are watching not only what they say, but what they do. Here are some examples of casting the right shadow.

Taking swift action

During the annual climate survey, a senior leader completed his survey right away and communicated that to his team, encouraging them to complete their surveys and reminding them about the importance of their input in creating a future everyone can feel good about.

Sharing individual efforts

At a town hall meeting where a senior leader was discussing some much-needed business changes, the senior leader shared how he was planning to work differently given the business climate – what specifically he was planning to do differently, encouraging his employees to think about how the changes each of them need to make.

Communicating the need to plan wisely

A senior corporate communications manager often felt as if her work was reactive and non-strategic due to last-minute requests. We showed her a simple approach to planning – dg&a's "Take 5" process (see page 12) – to create better communications, whether it's a face-to-face conversation or a presentation for 1,000 people. By applying this discipline to every request from her business unit leads, she's been able to help them understand the importance of planning. As a result, the

business unit leads have become more self-sufficient and the manager has been able to focus on her long-term communications plan.

Providing a seat at the table

A senior communications professional we've worked with didn't feel as if his function was valued by the divisional president and his leadership team. Communications was often an afterthought for these senior leaders, and it had no role in moving the business forward. When it came time for the strategic planning meetings for the next fiscal year, the communications manager – who was in charge of agenda creation for large, internal meetings – devoted an equal time to communications planning as he did to other areas of the business.

During that time, he demonstrated to the leaders the value strategic communications brings to engaging employees and moving the needle in their functional areas. Now, communications has a seat at the table before business decisions are made, and communications plays a significant role during the strategic planning process.

Communicate common methodologies

A senior manager had a new internal communications team – some were new to

the organization but with strong internal communications skills, others were new to internal communications but veterans with the company. Their varied skill sets could either be a hurdle or an opportunity. The manager took advantage of this unique opportunity to level set with his new team and bring everyone up to speed on common methodologies, processes and tools they should use as they consult with their clients which was a terrific leadership strategy, centered around the principle being: spend time with your team teaching them the right methodologies and outlining the key behaviors and expectations that you want them to deliver.

Make communication a priority

We worked with this manager to gauge the communication and consulting skill sets of his team, which then formed the basis for comprehensive training. This senior manager had a winning strategy that benefited his team, the clients this department serves, and also reinforced his leadership and consulting style. He led by example by making communication and learning and development a priority for his own communication team so they could be grow and be add more value to the company.

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