

LEADERSHIP & CULTURE

Communication Between Functions is Vital

By Leyla Hussein • 4 December 2018



I once sat in a meeting where the marketing team and the operations team discovered, twenty minutes in, that they had spent a month solving the same problem from opposite ends of the same building without ever speaking to each other. Both had the shared spreadsheet. Both had access to the same calendar. Neither had picked up the phone. That is the quiet cost of convenience, and it is everywhere.

Why Communication Breaks Down

Businesses small and large fill their [workforce](#) with people dedicated to the many parts of daily operations. Depending on your size, that might be large tiered departments or small, tighter functions. Splitting the company into functions like human resources, finance and marketing helps each one coordinate its aim and pull toward the overall success of the business. Companies have been built this way for years. But over that time, something has slipped: the communication between those departments has thinned out.

Modern technology handed us shareable calendars and shared spreadsheets that lay out all the information we assume we need to know the ins and outs of another team. But we should never assume, and for all the genuine help IT brings, it should not replace the thing that was never broken in the first place, which is good old-fashioned communication.

Talking, Not Just Typing

By that I mean picking up the phone and talking. A face-to-face meeting. Walking a floor up or down to visit another department and see how they actually work. This is essential. Not occasional. Essential.

The problem is convenience. It is convenient to glance at a spreadsheet, to fire off an email, to do your role exactly as you understand it. It is convenient to stay inside your own department and chase your own goals without a thought for the rest of the company. But that is not what communicating effectively means.

Communicating effectively takes alignment, transparency, a shared vision, and a real understanding of how every part of the business fits together. It means doing whatever it takes to understand the company as one working unit. The businesses that manage it already have a healthy culture that they actively maintain and enforce. They do not lean solely on technology. They empower their people to work with their own team and, just as importantly, with everyone outside it.

The Takeaway

So whatever your role, I would urge you to stretch your communication in a way you have not before. Go and talk to the department you have only ever emailed. It is almost always worth it.

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