Challenges & Strategies for Improving Department Communication

Himanshu Shah, MD

Midwest Radiology Chairs Meeting
Chicago, Illinois
January 6-7, 2017
Definition

• Communication
  – From Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning "to share"
  – Act of conveying intended meanings from one entity/group to another
  – The imparting or exchanging of information/news
Effective Communication

**PEANUTS CLASSICS** By Charles M. Schulz

1. **The goal is to develop trust**
   Trust is the foundation of all good relationships and friendships. Trust in other team members is the cornerstone of high performance within the team.

2. **Learn to listen**
   We all have two ears and one mouth – use them accordingly.

3. **Seek to understand the other person’s point of view**
   What is their goal?

4. **Focus your communication on the goal**
   Don’t focus on problems or obstacles, focus on solutions to overcome them.

5. **Make communication a top priority**
   Set goals and take action to improve your communication.

6. **Handle conflict immediately**
   Use differing opinions as stepping stones to clearer communication. Resolve conflict early and constructively.

**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

**Indiana University Health**
Effective Communication: Why is it so Important?

- Managers (leaders) spend most of their day (70-90%) engaged in communication [Mintzberg 1973, Eccles & Nohria, 1991]
- Builds & maintains relationships, fosters cohesion
- Promotes engagement, motivation, satisfaction
- Allows alignment with mission, vision & goals
- Builds an effective team, bi-directional info sharing
- Builds trust, transparency, facilitates innovation
- Discourages gossip and misperception
Importance of Effective Communication

**Left Cartoon:**

AND THAT IS WHY WE LIFT ON THREE...

**Right Cartoon:**

No! No! NO, Nurse!!!!!
I said "SLIP" off his SPECTACLES!!!!!
Strategies for Effective Communication

• Shut up & listen (active listening)
• Watch your body language
• “Honest communication”
  – Sharing of info, issues, ideas, appreciation
• Consider communication preference
• Social events, informal conversation

The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply.
Strategies for Effective Communication

• Do not have unnecessary meetings (or emails)
  – Have an agenda and share it prior to the mtg
  – Allow everyone to make a contribution
  – Make it clear who will make decisions
  – Stay on time

“Here are the minutes from our last meeting:
Marty wasted 12 minutes, Janice wasted 7 minutes,
Carl wasted 27 minutes, Eileen wasted 9 minutes...”
Strategies for Effective Communication

• Be aware of your tone
  – Email, social media

• Be personal, engaging, caring
  – “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care”
  – Stories, questions, humor, data
  – Speak to groups as individuals

Indiana University Health
Barriers to Effective Communication
Barriers to Effective Communication

• Physical Barriers
  – Faculty/staff distributed in different buildings/sites

• System Design
  – Unclear organizational structure – Confusing to know whom to communicate with
Barriers to Effective Communication

• Ambiguity of words/phrases, offensive tone
  – Not being clear and concise
  
  “I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant”

• Attitudinal barriers
  – Personality conflicts, disengagement, resistance to (or difficulty coping with) change, dissatisfaction

“To be understood by another person, one must not authorize validity to the very prospect of invalidation which has the potential to assume its own assumption of deficiency within the very milieu of the message. That is the key to clear and effective communication!”
Barriers to Effective Communication

- Technological multi-tasking
  - Pocket sized smart devices - 24/7 bombardment with emails, texts, social updates, etc
  - Changing how we communicate & connect
Barriers to Effective Communication

• Cultural misperceptions & language differences
  – Some words/gestures may have different meaning

MEANINGS OF HAND GESTURES IN DIFFERENT CULTURES.

The well known O.K. sign... can put you in troubles at different parts of the Globe – lets see....

USA = OK
JAPAN = MONEY.
RUSSIA = ZERO
TURKEY/VENEZUELA (South America) = HOMOSEXUAL.
BRAZIL/ITALY = INSULT (=middle finger = swearing)
ARAB COUNTRIES = YOU WILL SEE!!!
Barriers to Effective Communication

- Information overload

**HOW TO DEAL WITH INFORMATION OVERLOAD**

- The Internet is only 23 years old, and already every 60 seconds...
- 160 million e-mails are sent...
- 98,000 tweets are shared on Twitter...
- 694,445 Google searches are completed...
- 1,500 blog entries are created...
My Biggest Barriers
Challenges/Opportunities as a New Chair with Respect to Communication?
Challenges/Opportunities for My Barriers to Effective Communication

• Attitudinal – Disengagement/Difficulty coping with change
  – Leadership change (chair, administrator)
  – Entry into IUHP
    • Salary & benefit reduction; Unclear organizational structure
      – Role & reporting of Clinical Director/SLL, SLA
  – Exit from VA Hospital & downsizing of Residency
  – Enterprise alignment – Funds flow, governance

• Physical - Geographic dispersion

• Information Overload
Challenges/Opportunities for My Barriers to Effective Communication

• Geographic Dispersion:
  – IUSM 9 regional campuses
  – Clinical practice
    • 10 hospitals
    • 35 other practice locations
  – Research & Educ. Divisions, Rad Tech Program, CNS also dispersed
Faculty Communications - Core

Chair

Chair Admin Asst

VC Clinical
  Division Chiefs
  Geo Directors

VC Education

VC Research

VC Administration
  Communications Coordinator
Communication Strategies: IU Radiology

• New Efforts
  – Chair bi-weekly email update
  – VC clinical operations bi-weekly email update
  – “Chat with the Chair” small group sessions
  – Advertise “Open Door Policy” & my cellphone #
  – Committees - Education Innov. & Mentorship

• Revamped/Revised Efforts
  – POC → CPC: ↑ representation, elected positions
  – Academic Council: ↑ representation incl clinical
Chair Bi-Weekly Email Update

From: Shah, Himanshu
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 5:27 PM
Subject: Bi-weekly Chair Update

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Friday! Hope you are keeping warm given our unseasonably cold weather the last couple days. This will likely not last for the year.

A few things to share with you:

1. All Physician Meeting 1/13/16 – Thank you to those of you who were able to attend. The presentation from the meeting is posted on our intranet.

2. Enterprise Alignment – Work on the Funds Flow Model continues. The initial modeling is complete and the model is now being refined. Things look positive for us so far and the goal of a simpler and more transparent model is being realized. The plan is to have 2017 be a “shadow” year and then implement the funds flow model starting 2018.

3. High Value Practice Research Alliance – Our department is a founding member of this new alliance. We are one of roughly 70 institutions around the country participating. There are opportunities for faculty and trainee participation. The goal of this multi-disciplinary effort is to enhance the value of the care provided to patients by reducing unnecessary tests, procedures, and treatment. This will involve high quality research to assess the outcomes of high value interventions to enact these changes in practice. I encourage you to browse their website for more details at http://hvpra.org/. Mark Frank is our physician champion for this effort. Please let Mark or I know if you are interested in participating.

4. Machine Learning – Barely a day goes by that there isn’t something in my inbox related to machine learning and this was also highlighted at the recent RSNA meeting. If you attended you may have seen or heard about the “Eyes of Watson” exhibit. My personal feeling is that we need to embrace it and help lead the change. We are exploring opportunities in the space and are currently in dialogue with a potential industry partner for a research collaboration. More details will be forthcoming. In the meantime, I want to gauge the department’s interest in this area and see if anyone wants to participate in a more formal department committee or workgroup related to machine learning. If so, then please send me a short email expressing your interest.

5. Radiology Medical Student Clerkship – We are expanding our leadership of the clerkship. Richard Gunderson is currently the statewide clerkship director and we will be internally recruiting for an assistant statewide clerkship director. We will be announcing this position soon and will start the recruitment process in late December/early January.

Have a great weekend!

Warmest regards,

Him

Himanshu Shah, MD
Chair, Radiology & Imaging Sciences
317.944.1866 office
317.407.8970 cell

Please don’t forget to submit your images to me for inclusion in future updates!

A few pics from my trip to South Carolina in October:

Boone Hall Plantation & Gardens, Charleston, South Carolina:
America’s most photographed plantation. Founded in 1681. In 1743 two evenly spaced rows of oak trees were planted along the drive to the house spanning over 1 kilometer. It took 300 years for the trees to grow so that the moss-draped branches would meet overhead. This is called the “Avenue of Oaks”. The mini-series “North and South” was filmed here as well as the movies “Queen” and “The Notebook”.

Indiana University Health
The Survey Says …
Survey Results

Importance of Communication - Faculty Engagement

- Very Important: 93%
- Important: 7%
- Neutral: 0%
- Not Important: 0%
“If real estate is all about location, an academic radiology department is all about communication”
Survey Results

Communication Tools:
Chair Update E-mail

64% Yes
36% No

Weekly: 22%
Bi-weekly: 22%
Quarterly: 11%
Sporadic/PRN: 44%
Survey Results

Communication Tools:
Group Meetings - Entire Faculty

- Yes: 100%
- No: 0%
- Monthly: 71%
- Quarterly: 29%
Survey Results

Communication Tools:
Chair Meetings with Practice Leaders

- Yes: 100%
- No: 0%
- Bi-weekly: 7%
- Monthly: 71%
- Quarterly: 21%
Survey Results

Communication Tools:
Chair Department Rounds

- Yes: 57%
- No: 43%
- Bi-weekly: 25%
- Monthly: 38%
- Quarterly: 13%
- Sporadic/PRN: 25%
Survey Results

Communication Tools:
Chair Open Office Hours

- Yes: 93%
- No: 7%
- Open Door: 100%
- Other: 0%
Survey Results

Communication Tools:
Department Newsletter

- Yes: 62%
- No: 38%

Frequency:
- Weekly: 13%
- Monthly: 13%
- Quarterly: 38%
- Semi-annual: 25%
- Annual: 13%
Survey Results

- Update dept website weekly in lieu of dept newsletter
- Discontinued monthly dept newsletter due to lack of dedicated personnel resources
Survey Results

Communication Tools:
All Faculty Retreat

- Yes: 57%
- No: 43%
- Annual: 38%
- Sporadic/PRN: 63%
Survey Results

• Annual leadership retreat in lieu of all faculty retreat (too many faculty)

• Annual research faculty retreat in lieu of all faculty retreat (question whether all faculty retreat would be productive)

• Need to have all faculty retreat soon
Survey Results

Communication Tools: Department Annual Report

- Yes: 64%
- No: 36%
- Digital: 40%
- Hardcopy: 0%
- Both: 60%
Survey Results

• Stopped annual report 5 years ago – moving to digital annual report
• Annual report mostly for C-suite
• Lack of dedicated personnel resources for annual report creation
Survey Results

Communication Tools: Department Intranet

- Yes: 64%
- No: 36%
Survey Results

Communication Tools: Faculty Annual Reviews

- Yes: 100%
- No: 0%
- All: 64%
- Some: 36%
Survey Results – Most Effective Communication Strategies

• Face to face - One on one, Small group
• Faculty/dept meetings
• Chair dept rounds
• E-mail, targeted e-mail
• E-mail for sharing good news/in-person for bad
• If detailed info to be shared ⇒ provide in advance
• Digital board in reading room hallway
Survey Results – Least Effective Communication Strategies

• Email, E-mail blasts
• Dept newsletter
• Chair column in weekly dept newsletter
  – Frequency might diminish the impact
• All faculty meetings
• Facebook
• Mandarin Chinese
Communication Strategies

Effective Communication Matrix

Effective

Impersonal
- Media (TV, mags, radio)
- Blog
- Tweet
- Direct Mail

Personal
- Face to face
- Video conference
- Personal letter
- LinkedIn message
- Email
- Facebook message
- Text

Ineffective
Survey Results – Other Comments

• Tried monthly breakfast session – poor turnout

• Semi-annual Dept "State of the Union“ Mtg
  – All physician & allied health staff, 900+ attend
  – Broadcast live video feed, clinical schedules held
  – 10 min chair update, 5 other groups present 10 min stories - unique activities impacting pt care

• Chair's ability to "touch" the faculty depends on dept size and activity of vice chairs/section chiefs

• Difficult to motivate/direct faculty w/o clarity from Dean’s office
Other Thoughts?

“What if, and I know this sounds kooky, we communicated with the employees.”

Communication within the company is really bad according this report.

And why wasn’t I told about this?