

TEAM COMMUNICATION

FIELD GUIDE

HOW TO KEEP YOUR TEAM
ENGAGED AND PRODUCTIVE



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HOW TO KEEP YOUR TEAM ENGAGED AND PRODUCTIVE

Have you ever walked into a company where it seems like everything works well? The employees are pleased and passionate about their jobs, sales are through the roof, and everyone gets along. The atmosphere just feels happy and productive. So what's their secret?

It's really simple, and it's something you can start working on today. One of the hallmarks of winning businesses is they are very intentional and effective at communication. When it's done well, a business will run like a well-oiled machine.

It's like Dave says: "Communication is the grease in the gears. You can have great gears in your company but it will still freeze up, grind to a halt, if you don't put the grease of communication in the engine."

This guide is designed to help you get started creating a culture of communication and greasing those gears. It includes the tools we use every day at Dave's company, plus how to handle difficult conversations and making the most of meetings. Check it out and start improving your communication today.



METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

KEY RESULTS AREA (KRA)

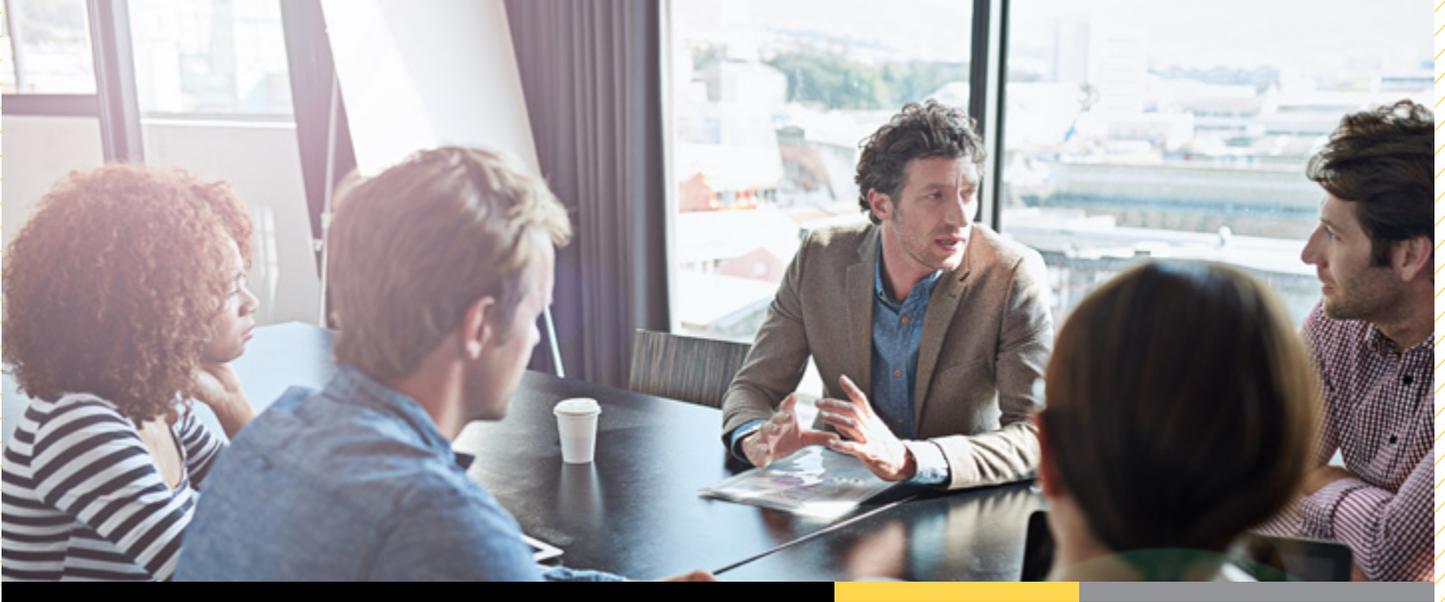
The KRA—a written, detailed job description—answers the question for each team member “What does winning look like?” It shows what results are expected, what is measured, and what is reported. On day one, it is reviewed by the new hire and the leader, agreed upon, and signed by both.

TELL THE STORY

As a leader, it’s your responsibility to pass on the legacy of your journey from an idea to a full-fledged company. Share your story often, including your hardships, sacrifices, and victories as well as all the times you refused to quit. It lets your team know they are part of something that’s bigger than them. They’re participating in work that matters.

SHARED PURPOSE

Want to unify your team like never before? Repeatedly share your dreams, vision statement, mission statement, and goals with your team.



METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

STAFF MEETINGS

Get everyone from your leaders to your newest team members together at least once a week in person or electronically to let them all know what's going on and to fire everyone up. Ramsey Solutions weeklies include:

- Reports from departmental leaders, who share both good and bad news
- Introduction of new hires
- Recognition of employees, from anniversaries to a job well done to awesome customer service to birthdays
- Update on profit and sales
- A quick lesson from Dave on the company's core values or operating principles



METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

STATIC MEETINGS

Schedule necessary meetings in advance so they can't be missed. They're needed for teams, team segments, and individual team members.

When Dave first started his company, he didn't schedule any meetings. If he had a question, he would simply find the person and get an answer. Before he knew it, no one was getting anything done. "We spent all day interrupting each other," he says. Once he started scheduling set meetings, everyone's schedules opened up.

THE WEEKLY REPORT

This mandatory one-page summary is filled out by each team member and answers the question "Why should (insert leader's name) be glad I work here?" It also includes a low and high point of the week that can be personal or related to work. The key to the success of the weekly report is you actually have to read them and react to them every week or they are wasted. (See template on page 13.)

ANNUAL CHECK-IN

Though you should be in constant contact with your team members or their leaders throughout the year, an annual meeting gives them a chance to share their ideas or problems, and it gives you the opportunity to review their income.



HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS

In the world of awkwardness, difficult situations, and just plain don't-want-to-do-it, almost nothing ranks higher than having to tackle a tough conversation with a team member. And when that person's a family member, it only gets worse. No one wants to tell a son or daughter they're just not cutting it. The easiest solution is to put it off.

So how do you handle these tough situations when your natural instinct is to totally avoid them? Here are a few dos and don'ts of dealing with conflict.

DON'T PUT IT OFF.

Revenge may be a dish that tastes best served cold—at least according to Don Corleone—but if you are having an issue with one of your team members, it needs to be handled as soon as possible.

Procrastination not only hurts you and the person involved, it also hurts your whole staff as they watch incompetence or bad behavior go unacknowledged. Like Dave says, “If you allow people to misbehave, underachieve, have a bad attitude, gossip, and generally avoid excellence, please don't expect to attract and keep great talent. Please don't expect to have an incredible culture.”



HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS

DO GET IT ON YOUR CALENDAR.

Schedule an appointment for a meeting with the person who is having an issue and block out enough time to get the problem solved. It's not fair to either of you if you rush and wind up without a resolution.

DON'T BE CRUEL.

Nothing is ever accomplished by being a bully or being mean, even when you are justifiably upset. In this situation, you have power and control, and they have neither. Plus, the idea of the meeting is to course correct and teach—not to embarrass and demoralize the person or lose your cool.

DON'T LOSE FOCUS.

For most of us, the first response to an uncomfortable conversation is to shift to a different subject. But as a leader, it's the last thing you want to do. You have to concentrate on the problem at hand and keep on course.

DO BE PREPARED.

The easiest way to stay on track is to be ready before the meeting. Write down the preferred outcome and the talking points you need to cover with the team member to accomplish this goal. Keep the list close at hand. If you feel yourself starting to drift, grab it to remind yourself of what you need to cover.



9 HACKS FOR HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Spending too much time in meetings and not getting a lot done? Here are nine ways to get you and your team back on track, so meetings can be productive instead of time-sucking snooze fests.

1. SET AN AGENDA

Establishing an agenda allows everyone to prepare and give input in advance, plus it helps everyone keep on track once a meeting starts. It should include the clear purpose of the meeting and items to discuss.

2. RESPECT THE CLOCK

Setting a time limit will keep things moving. If someone begins to digress, you can remind them that time is limited and you need to stick to the agenda. If an issue isn't resolved, assign someone to work on it and report back by a certain date, then move on.



\$37 BILLION

ESTIMATED COST OF UNNECESSARY MEETINGS
EACH YEAR



9 HACKS FOR HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

3. LIMIT ATTENDEES

In general, the more people at a meeting, the less effective it is. It's also expensive. If you invite six people for an hour, that's six hours of loss productivity. Before you invite anyone, ask yourself if they really need to be there. Try the Pizza Rule from Amazon's Jeff Bezos: Never invite more people than can be fed by two pizzas.

4. START ON TIME

Let all your team members know in writing that being late to a meeting is not an option. Be kind but clear. Your meetings will start on time, no matter how many people are missing.



47%

PERCENT OF WORKERS WHO BELIEVE MEETINGS ARE THEIR BIGGEST WASTE OF TIME



9 HACKS FOR HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

5. GO DEVICE-FREE

Several studies have shown that multitasking not only drops your IQ by 10 points, it annoys everyone around you at a meeting when you're answering emails or texts instead of paying attention. The White House, the Vatican, and many Fortune 500 companies have begun banning devices at meetings to keep everyone focused.

6. FEED THEM

If you slate a meeting around lunchtime, make sure there's lunch. Nothing will get someone off track as much as the siren song of the leftover pizza being reheated in the microwave next door.



37%

PERCENT OF TIME EMPLOYEES SPEND
IN MEETINGS



9 HACKS FOR HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

7. HOLD OFFICE HOURS

While still at Google, Melissa Mayer used to hold office hours once a week, where any team member could get a few minutes with her on a first-come basis. It was a great opportunity for her to hear ideas and feedback without additional meetings.

8. TRY A DAILY STAND-UP

Want to get more energy in the room, keep everyone focused, and take less time at meetings? Try what's now standard in the tech industry: the daily standup meeting. Most are limited to 10 or 15 minutes and focus on quick updates, so everyone knows what's going on and if anything needs attention.



91%

PERCENT OF PEOPLE WHO ADMIT DAYDREAMING
IN MEETINGS



9 HACKS FOR HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

9. THINK LIKE A DIRECTOR

Most people dread meetings for one simple reason: They're deadly boring. But they don't have to be. Patrick Lencioni, author of *Death by Meeting*, says the cure is thinking more like directors and screenwriters. "We need to give our people something to care about, something worth engaging in conflict over," he says. "We need to raise their level of anxiety about what could go wrong if we don't engage. And we need to raise these issues at the beginning of our meetings, before our audience checks out and starts thinking about what movie they're going to see that night."



31

HOURS SPENT IN UNPRODUCTIVE MEETINGS
EACH MONTH

WEEKLY REPORT

NAME:
FOR THE WEEK OF _ / _ / _

Why should (Owner's Name) be glad I work here?
(List what you've accomplished this week.)

WEEKLY HIGH POINT:

WEEKLY LOW POINT:

NEXT STEPS

To help you on your path to becoming a better business leader, check out the resources EntreLeadership has to offer:

ENTRELEADERSHIP PODCAST

Our highly rated EntreLeadership Podcast features interviews with some of the top business and thought leaders across the country.

EntreLeadership.com/podcast

ENTRELEADERSHIP ADVISOR

Watch your email inbox to receive Dave Ramsey's EntreLeadership newsletter twice a month.

ALL ACCESS

Want to put into place the principles you've learned today?

All Access, our online coaching and community program, features all 20 EntreLeadership Master Series video lessons, weekly eCoaching with on-demand playback, Mastermind groups, expert interviews, video coaching tips, and tons of premium content.

EntreLeadership.com/allaccess

UPCOMING EVENTS

EntreLeadership 1-Day: EntreLeadership.com/E1D

EntreLeadership Summit: EntreLeadership.com/Summit

EntreLeadership Master Series: EntreLeadership.com/EMS