

How Transparent Should You Be With Your Employees?



At some point in your career you've probably worked for a boss that always made you feel like you're constantly walking on egg shells. You never knew where you stood with this person. They rarely provided feedback, instruction or guidance on how to do your job or what they expected of you. You always were left wondering if the work you were doing was exceptional or didn't make the grade. The closed-door meetings you were left out of caused you undue stress and no matter how hard you tried you never received the praise you thought you deserved. At work the word used to describe the culture was fear.

Having learned from your own past experiences, you make it a point to be transparent with your employees. Such begs the question though, how transparent is too transparent?

Being Transparent Has Its Benefits

There is no denying that being transparent has its benefits. Perhaps the most obvious positive is that being transparent builds trust. By being transparent as a team lead or manager, you make clear what the expectations are for everyone in the organization. When transparency is present at the top, roles are clearly defined and people are free to do their jobs without having to wonder if they are meeting expectations.

Another benefit of being transparent is that it makes employees feel valued because they are more likely to be involved in the decision-making process. When employees feel like the job they do is important and they are valued as people,

your organization will experience far less turnover and everyone will be much better positioned to maximize productivity and efficiency.

Avoiding Information Overload

While it's beneficial for everyone when transparency exists, the fact remains that employees don't need to know absolutely everything to do their jobs. For junior employees who aren't charged with the responsibility of a C-suite executive, there's no need to give them information they don't need. In fact, overloading people with unnecessary information can create a sense of anxiousness and stress. When this happens, people have a hard time focusing and their [productivity suffers](#) as a result.

Should You Make Salaries Public Information?

It is becoming more and more a trend for companies to make public the salaries of all employees. While this is considered risky business by some, the practice has some potential benefits. Those that employ it believe it demonstrates openness and equality. The policy takes many of the unknowns out of the hiring process, makes expectations clear amongst [team members](#) and leaves plenty of room for people to grow within their respective roles.

The Importance of Maintaining an Open-Door Policy

There's no worse feeling for someone than wondering if they fit into an organization. When employees feel that they can comfortably come to you and ask even difficult questions, trust is created and you make it clear to everyone that open lines of communication exist. By keeping an open-door policy you foster a culture of inclusion and openness that can only be a benefit.

Working as a Team

When transparency exists within an organization, space is created for individuals to come together, share ideas, openly communicate and work as a team toward a shared goal. If everyone is on the same page and can get behind the vision and mission set forth by people in positions of leadership, the sky is the limit for how successful an organization can become.

Creating Transparency

If your company is in its infancy or you simply feel greater transparency is needed, it's a process that has to start from the top and be implemented at every level clear to the bottom and back up again. In order for it to work, transparency is something that has to be embraced by everyone in the entire company. Information and expectations need to be clearly stated in order for habits to change. If more open communication is what you're after, you may have to make an investment in new technology or infrastructure that makes the sharing of information easier.

You'd be hard pressed to find someone in business that says transparency is a bad thing. The truth is no one likes to feel like they are walking on egg shells, not valued enough to be included in the decision-making process or left wondering if they are meeting expectations. Transparency has many positive characteristics that can help organizations grow and become more cohesive. It's important to make sure you are transparent in the right ways however. The last thing you want to do is give people so much information that they become crippled. If implemented in ways that create a cultural of inclusion, open lines of communication and trust, your organization will be in a position to flourish.

Interested in learning more about a [productive workplace](#)? Contact [Jeff King](#) with RQ Focus. He is a [Regulatory and Quality Recruiter](#) in the Bay Area.