

## Why Can't I Get Through to These People?!?!

Unfortunately we ran out of time at last week's meeting and couldn't get to all the excellent issues that were raised and that take good communication skills for an effective response.

Here they are, with suggested approaches. In some cases, I wanted more information, but couldn't come back to you because I didn't ask writers to supply their names. In some cases, like the first one, the questions go beyond communications skills into HR and other issues (which is beyond my pay grade). In others, I have to answer a question with a question.

If you feel that you'd like more information than you received in the answer, just give me a call or send me an email.

MJ

### 1. How do you get an employee to go that extra mile?

This is a motivation issue. The best way to get anyone to do anything of course is appeal to their self-interest. It would help to know what type of person you're dealing with. For some employees, self-interest means raises and bonuses, which are few and far between in today's working environment. Can your company pay for course work toward a degree or provide other economic incentives?

For others, feeling like part of the group and contributing to a group effort is more important. For this type of employee, praise and personal recognition would work better as a motivator. Maybe an Employee of the Month or other recognition program would help. So would lunch with the boss, as long as it's not perceived by other employees as preferential treatment.

An excellent resource is [workforce.com](http://workforce.com). If you search for "motivation," you'll find lots of helpful articles.

### 2. How do you deal with a supervisor who makes decisions before he or she has all the facts?

It would help to be a good prognosticator. Can you predict the type of situation that is likely to trigger PDS (premature decision syndrome)? Can you supply the missing information before the decision is made?

### 3. How do you confront an employee about quality (rework) issues? The employee was told that although the product was out of spec, it was acceptable and the employee would not accept rework on his performance report.

This may be more of an HR issue at this point (definitely beyond my pay grade). The communications issue is what the employee is being told about the standards that make a

product acceptable. Is he or she receiving conflicting information? Performance standards have to be clear and agreed upon. If meeting spec defines acceptability, that standard should be communicated in no uncertain terms to the employee and he or she should be counseled to ignore all information to the contrary.

- 4. How do you get people from manufacturing to use a new quality tool?**
- 5. Quality is important and it deserves support, e.g. for report design.**

These two issues, like the first one, deal with getting people to do what's best for the company. You'd like them to do it because it's their job to do it, but that tack doesn't always work. Especially in an environment of short resources and many priorities.

So what's their self interest? Will a new quality tool make their job easier or faster in the long run? Or short run? Will it result in less rework? Can a new report design pay off for everyone? Can you do some reciprocal back scratching here: "You design my report format and I'll....." ?

- 6. How do I tell my supervisor that we need to provide more explicit training when a courier is to run a route for the first time?**

Would seeing the need in black-and white make a difference to the supervisor? The workforce.com web site has needs analysis forms. A good form will be clear about the cost to individuals, the department and the company when training is not done and problems crop up as a result.