

Communication

One tool that can help bring success to any institution -- be it a church, a civic organization, a business or marriage -- is communication. In fact, when there is a breakdown in any relationship or organization, the failure to communicate is generally cited as a significant cause.

Regrettably, in the business environment, all too often when employees who crave and seek better communication rise to higher levels of management, they forget the need to communicate with those they manage.

That wasn't the case with Sally Frame Kasaks, who became the chief executive officer of Ann Taylor in 1993. She placed a new emphasis on quality with "more and better communication with employees at all levels." In 1994, sales rose 31.3 percent.

Paul Kahn had a similar agenda when he became chairman and CEO of SafeCard Services in 1993. He and his head of operations, Richard Interdonato, changed the internal company strategy to emphasize (1) open doors, (2) visibility -- spending time just talking with people, and (3) sharing information through a daily newsletter and frequent forums with employees. The company had record revenues in 1994, with earnings up 13.1 percent from the year before.

In Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home, we prefer the term, "associate," instead of "employee," because that suggests a team approach. And for a team to be successful, effective communication must be paramount. It's true on a basketball court, a football field and in the centers and offices where we work.

--Beecher Hunter