

Article

January 2006

How Are We Doing?

At a recent business planning session, my client's program included a tour by the management team of their company's local plant where we were holding our meeting. It was designed as an opportunity to view some new improvements and to communicate with the shop floor.

At the conclusion of the tour, the CEO suggested that we process that event—get a self-assessment from those who did the tour and feedback from the two guides. Now this is no 'touchy feely' organization. But they are on a track to move from a good to a great organization, and the CEO knows the manner in which people relate to each other, has a big impact on their ability to improve.

Initially, the tour was assumed to have been a success. As it turned out however, the two men who gave the tour were less than enamored with the participants' behavior and felt frustrated about the situation. They complained of inattentiveness, and small groups drifting away. They also reported that some of the group behaviors were probably counterproductive in terms of the perceptions gained by the factory staff. So what appeared as a "nice to do" event really was in some way a lost opportunity.

The group learned two lessons about organizational communications. First don't assume how your behavior is impacting people, periodically check in and solicit feedback. Second, when a behavior issue arises don't let it fester. We are accountable to get proactive and deal with it.

