RUMOR CONTROL

In this session, the speakers discussed the presence of rumors in the workplace and the negative side effects. They began by describing the main categories of and reasons for the rumors. The leaders focused on the possibility of turning the effects of rumors from a negative to a positive management tool. They used a video to describe the ways in which a lack of communication helps to reinforce rumors. Then they divided people into groups and had each come up with ways to deal with different ways to communicate with employees and coworkers.

Negative effects of rumors:

- Drain on morale and productivity of the work place.
- They can create lawsuits that could ultimately cause the company to cut back on staff.
- Rumors can also damage careers.

The positive side of rumors:

- Creates a grapevine that informs people of the changes that are taking place at work. It is important that people are not misinformed through the grape vine.
- Often rumors are developed as a way for people to feel as though they are in control of their environment. Helps reduce anxiety associated with uncertainty in the work place.

Why rumors happen:

- Some people develop them because they are looking for a source of entertainment.
- Human nature.
- It is a form of informal communication

Ways to counter the effects of harmful rumors:

- Talk with people, be open and upfront and make people feel as though they are part of the team.
- Make sure that people know they can ask their supervisors questions and that management is open to suggestions.
Tips for a positive grapevine:

- Act quickly, repetition fosters belief.
- Hold regular meetings that keep people abreast of current events and change in the workplace. Make sure that you talk with everyone and that you are delivering the same message to everyone.
- Dispel rumors that are incorrect.
- Ignore outrageous rumors that will die quickly.
- Pay attention to patterns and changes that are happening among employees.
SECRETS OF THE WORKPLACE

Christy McCormick
Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands

Amy Lorek
Indiana University
Why do rumors happen?

- Anxiety
- Uncertainty
- Unexpected
- Unexplained
What are the results?

- Productivity and Morale DRAIN
- Lawsuits
- Career damage
THE POSITIVE SIDE OF THE GRAPEVINE

A tool for management
Two domains of the grapevine

- Organizational change
- Personal change
Let’s return to why

- Human nature
- Part of camaraderie, teamwork, organizational culture
- Anxiety, uncertainty, unexpected, unexplained
- Is communication consistent?
A management tool

- Pulse of organization (morale)
- Mine for assessing organization
- Creating organization culture
- Teaching organizational customs
## Tips for creating a positive grapevine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Act quickly – repetition fosters belief</td>
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<td>- Neutralize and dispel rumors</td>
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<td>- Ignore individual or outrageous rumors that die quickly</td>
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<td>- Consistent communication</td>
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<td>- Announce coming changes</td>
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<td>- Pay attention to patterns or subtle changes</td>
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<td>- Tap into the grapevine</td>
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Thank you!