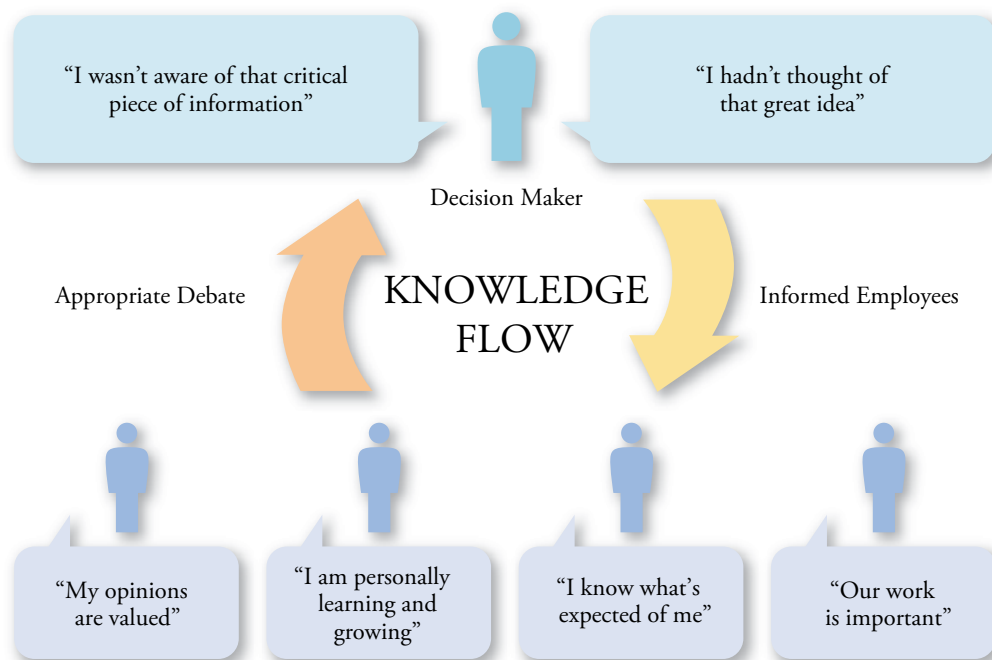


Getting Started: Best Practices In Connection Cultures

During my presentation I laid the foundation for connection. Now that you are back in your offices, here are a few reminders about best practices that increase connection. By staying connected with your colleagues, you will experience the productivity, prosperity and joy that come from keeping your team united and growing together.

Group And Individual Knowledge Flow Sessions



1. Vision: Leaders and decision-makers use group Knowledge Flow Sessions to inform and listen to members of their team. The leader should begin the session by sharing a Vision. The Vision should address what you want to do, why it's important, how you plan to do it (including critical tasks, processes and values) and when you plan to do it. Create a Vision document to use in each meeting that can be updated as circumstances change.

2. Voice: Leaders should tell participants that "no one has a monopoly on good ideas and we will only be our best when

we all contribute our opinions and ideas." Ask them to tell you "what's right, what's wrong and what's missing" from your thinking about the issues you raise in the meeting. Listen to them and consider their ideas. Implement the good ideas and give credit where credit is due.

3. Value: Constructive criticism is healthy. Sometimes it can feel personal if the speaker is not careful to safeguard relational connections. Don't nuke people who disagree with you. Everyone's opinions and ideas must be considered. If you disagree with someone, say so but do it in a respectful manner.

4. **Follow-up:** After the session, leaders should follow up in writing to summarize what they heard, what actions are necessary, who is responsible for each action and when each action should be completed.
5. **Frequency:** The frequency of Knowledge Flow Sessions will depend on the content. When new employees arrive they should participate in a Knowledge Flow Session on your organization's history, mission, values and broad strategy. Major initiatives and annual plans should be communicated in Knowledge Flow Sessions with the number of participants small enough for conversation to occur. As plans change, hold Knowledge Flow Sessions to keep everyone in the loop.
6. **Individual Knowledge Flow Meetings:** Make a list of the people you must interact with in order to perform your tasks well. Hold individual Knowledge Flow Sessions with each person. Share your Vision, and ask them to tell you what's right, what's wrong and what's missing from your thinking (Voice). Consider their ideas and opinions to learn from them and show you Value them. Ask them to share their Vision with you.
4. Affirm your colleagues when they do something you appreciate by personally telling them so.
5. Return emails and phone calls promptly and within 24 hours.
6. Make mentors available for anyone who wants one. When pairing people up, assign a mentor who is strong in a certain area with a person who wants to develop that same strength.
7. As a team, set a challenging goal. Working together to achieve it will increase connection and energy among the team.
8. Meet periodically with your team to brainstorm innovative ways to improve quality, efficiency or reduce costs. List the ideas, prioritize them, assign responsibilities and track their completion. Make this information available to the entire group.
9. Decentralize decision-making as much as possible. This meets the human need for autonomy that allows people to experience personal growth.

Twenty actions to increase connection and keep your team's emotional batteries charged

1. Get people in the Right Role that fits their strengths and provides the right degree of challenge.
2. Meet individually with the people you lead and identify specific ways you can help them stay challenged and growing.
3. Send your colleagues any information you come across that may help them do their jobs better or that relate to a topic they are interested in.
10. Minimize excessive rules and controls and establish guidelines instead. Being micro-managed feels disrespectful and impedes our ability to grow.
11. Go easy on the criticism. If you must criticize, do it in private. Be sure it's constructive and that you have sufficiently charged your colleague's emotional battery so that the energy won't be drained out of your relationship.
12. Eliminate excessive signs of hierarchy. You don't want a "we and them" class system that breaks connection.
13. Treat and speak to all employees as partners.

14. Hold a monthly re-connect meeting with your direct reports. Give everyone in attendance a few minutes to share with the group. They can share an idea, a concern, something new they discovered or anything else they feel is relevant.
15. Sales managers, call your salespeople regularly. Sales can be lonely and salespeople should feel you are on their team and want to help them achieve their potential. Be sure to see how the salesperson's life is going outside of work too. There is a lot of truth to the old saying that "people don't care what you know until they know you care."
16. Take your team through the list of values in the Montpelier Command Philosophy on pages 56-59 of *Fired up or Burned Out* and discuss which values are most important to your team's success and what you can do to live them out. Follow up with a written summary of action items, responsibilities and due dates that come out of the meeting. Meet periodically to review and revise the action plan.
17. Review the "Questions to Assess Organizational Culture and Connection" in Appendix A (page 203) of *Fired Up or Burned Out* and consider what actions you might take to improve connection on your team.
18. Part III of *Fired Up or Burned Out* has 20 inspiring stories of great leaders who created Connection Cultures (see pages 132-194). Take your team through one story each week and discuss how you can employ the practices in the chapter in your workplace.
19. Periodically, select a book for your direct reports or team members to read. Meet to identify ideas from the book that you can implement on your team. Click on "book reviews" at MichaelLeeStallard.com for book suggestions.

20. Celebrate your successes as a team with a group event. If you can afford it, have them bring a significant other to join in the celebration.

Additional Resources

1. Sign up at FiredUpOrBurnedOut.com for our free **monthly e-newsletter** that includes ideas to increase connection.
2. Follow **Michael Lee Stallard's blog** at MichealLeeStallard.com for insights about leadership, teams and Connection Cultures.
3. **Free e-book on Connection Cultures** at this link: <http://www.changethis.com/44.06.ConnectionCulture>
4. E Pluribus Partners **workshops, consulting, measurement and coaching.**

Remember:

Task Excellence + Relationship Excellence = Sustainable Superior Performance

Relationship Excellence is the result of a Connection Culture

Vision + Value + Voice = Connection Culture.

Wishing you all the very best of connections at work, at home and in your community!

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