**Examples of Miscommunication at the Workplace**

by George N. Root III, Demand Media. *Houston Chronicle* (no date)

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Good communication is essential to maintaining an efficient workplace. Miscommunication can lead to employee conflict, a drop in morale and turnover. In certain cases, neither side of a miscommunication issue is aware of the problem until it is pointed out to them. One of the first methods to use in combating miscommunication is to get both parties into a room and clarify the issues.

Job Duties

A task is assigned to a group, but the group is unsure of who is responsible for which aspects of the task's execution. Some members of the team look to clarify their roles, while other members assume that they know what is expected of them and proceed with their jobs. This example of miscommunication in the workplace derives from a lack of clarification of job duties. Employees need to be given comprehensive instructions with each task and need to be trained to get job duty clarification rather than proceed down the wrong path.

Important Details

A bus following its normal route radios back to its dispatch center that the engine is making strange noises. The dispatchers get this sort of message frequently, especially about this particular bus. Rather than issue a warning to the technicians in the field, the dispatch office ignores the warning as it has done many times before. The bus driver did not mention that an important indicator light had come on. When the bus was reported 30 minutes late for its next run, that is when the driver reported the important detail of the indicator light. This sort of miscommunication in the workplace happens frequently. Someone mentions an event that seems routine but leaves out an important detail that should escalate the event to emergency status.

Communication Techniques

The way in which different people present information can cause a miscommunication in the workplace. For example, if an employee who has a tendency to include unnecessary details in an explanation tries to relay information to an employee that only deals in essential facts, the meaning can get lost. The person who is used to succinct and focused communication may not be able to find the core meaning of the person who is providing extra details. The detailed communicator may be simply trying to explain where a technical manual is located, but he adds so much information about the information in the manual and the location it can be found that the receiver is not sure what core statement is being made.

Misinterpretation

Employees that misinterpret instructions can get caught in a cycle of workplace miscommunication. For example, if two employees are given instructions to move a new stock delivery into the warehouse, one employee may interpret those instructions as requiring the product to be put on the shelves while the other employee determines that the product need only be placed in the warehouse off the loading dock. The company needs to provide detailed instructions along with training employees to seek clarification of directions in order to cut down on misinterpretation.