

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 87

You need to communicate simply and frequently if you are to communicate effectively...

Communicate to Innovate...

"Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much." Robert Greenleaf (Researcher in to Leadership). *"And not communicating them often enough..."* John Brooker



"Welcome mat"

Have you something to communicate?

Last Monday morning, I took the lift at the Judge Education Institute north of Beijing (a highly recommended training location). On the floor, beautifully woven in to the lush Chinese carpet in both Mandarin and English, was the name of the day; Monday. The next day, in a different lift, a different carpet informed me it was Tuesday.

As I was in Beijing and seven hours ahead of my normal time zone, I found this incredibly useful because at 7 a.m. I was wondering what day of the week it was!

I was delivering a Powerful Communication Course out there and I thought the carpet was a perfect example (if rather lavish!) of frequent communication, something that is vital in the implementation stage of the innovation cycle. And if we look at Kotter in his book *Leading Change*, it also meets a number of other criteria:

- It is simple (see quotation)
- It is repetitive / frequent

- It is a different location from the normal workplace (Kotter says "different forum") so the message can be seen amongst all the clutter

The carpet is just like a frequent advertising flyer! Kotter has a few more criteria and I have included these at the end of the article.

SO

In the current economic climate, I do not recommend you go to your Chief Operating Officer and request woven carpets for your next change initiative, but let's take Kotter's criteria above and think about how you can communicate simple and repetitive messages throughout the company.

Using the word frequently as a prompt, I thought about all the things people do frequently at work and from this developed a list of potential places to communicate e.g. some people use the stairs frequently, so put the vision statement on every stair.

You can see the rest of my ideas at the end of this article but for now, consider taking the action that follows.

ACTION

- Think of something you want to communicate
- Using the word "frequently" as a catalyst, generate a number of places where people frequently go in your workplace and where you might communicate

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- Choose one location to communicate.

If you are interested in different styles of leadership, go [here](#) for his ideas on “Servant Leadership”.

TO CLOSE

During the Communications Course I joked with the delegates that having the day woven in to the carpets was a great idea, but it would be outstanding to have the date as well! So here is a challenge for you.

There are two lifts and each has a different carpet for every day of the week and date (e.g. Friday, 3 October). How many carpets would they need to cover every combination?

Have a communicative week...

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What people do frequently, not at the desk:

- Go to rest rooms
- Go to lunch room / local vendors
- Go to water machine / coffee machine
- Use lift / stairs
- Look at the clock
- Go to gym
- Go to / through reception
- Go (outside perhaps) to smoking area

Kotter's tips for communication:

- Keep it simple
- Use metaphors, analogies, examples
- Use many different forums
- Repeat, repeat, repeat
- Lead by example
- Explicitly address seeming inconsistencies (e.g. justify high expenditure on something when the message is “cost cutting”)
- Listen and be listened to (get feedback)



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