



MRC VALUE | COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION – AN EFFECTIVE TOOL

“I know you think that you understood what I said, but I am not sure that what you heard is what I said...”

Most of the information we receive on a daily basis comes not from what is being said, but from how it is being said. Thus, understanding each other's thoughts is the key to effective communication.

Hear the tone: Tone (how you say something) is the most important of all as it decides the 'actual' or 'real' meaning of the statement or word. Meanings of words or statements can be interpreted differently, depending on tones.

Hear what is not said: Listen for silences and hesitations. Wait, try to get what is not being said, but always keep contact by showing you are still listening, by nodding or smiling.

Transparent communication: Transparency and openness in communication plays an important role in any given situation. A lack of transparency and open environment in a team or organisation can result in people working in isolation. It is important that the goals are clearly, openly and transparently identified, in consultation with the team and communicated to members in order to meet organisational strategic objectives. In the event of specific goals not being met, this should be communicated in a transparent manner to the team or organisation. With this open communication, one can certainly build up the culture of participation and involvement of one and all.

Watch for non-verbal signals. During communication, it is important to look out for non-verbal signals (body language). These signals should be seen as reinforcement of what is said and should not be seen as negative influences. Body posture, body language and movement of hands, eyes, heads, etc. can destroy positive communication through mis-interpretation.

Effective communication is important in any organisation. The success of an organisation depends on how effectively the employees communicate with their colleagues and stakeholders, at all levels. It is not

RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



enough to say that to manage a business well is to manage its misunderstandings and misconceptions resulting from communication leaks. Having a sound communication strategy can alleviate any leaks or misunderstands.

Freedom to challenge: In the event of misunderstandings resulting from communication breakdowns, challenge is important, since overcoming challenges and difficulties can build confidence to take on further responsibilities. People who are not offered, or are sheltered from challenges will, when change is imminent, shrink away from the uncertainty or react negatively to change

If our words, both written and spoken are to carry weight as well as meaning, we need to learn the skills of clear communication with assertiveness. The correct use of assertiveness combines good listening with good communication skills.



Corporate Culture: All the above aspects are closely linked to the corporate culture within an organisation. It is taken for granted that we understand what it means, especially in a diverse organisation like the MRC, which takes us to the question of whether we actually understand what corporate culture means. In short, it refers to the look, feel and atmosphere of the organisation especially the people within it. It is based on people's perceptions and

assumptions of how things get done within the organisation. The culture of an organisation consists of largely unspoken values, norms, and behaviours that become the natural way of doing things.

The difficulty in identifying the traits of culture and changing them is borne out by the fact that culture is not merely climate, power, and politics, but all those things and more. There can be several subcultures within an organisation. Changing or renewing corporate culture in order to achieve the organisation's strategy is considered one of the major tasks of organisational leadership - change is hard to achieve without the will of the leader.

Corporate culture is not something that one can define. It is intangible: a state of mind, a feeling, a collective consciousness that is injected into an organisation and its employees.

Every organisation, large or small, has only four basic elements with which to create a living, successful culture for its organisation. These elements are: strategy, structure, people and process, which flow from a clear statement of the organisation's mission or purpose. Through the interplay of these elements, the culture is formed and reinforced.

"The communication bondage between the giver and the taker has to be of utmost faith, trust and empathy."

D. K. Bakshi

Number of projects	Staff	Masters students		Doctoral students		Peer-reviewed publications	
		Enrolled	Graduated	Enrolled	Graduated	Published	In press
HIV PREVENTION							
	219 staff: 8 senior scientists 3 junior scientists 200 technologists 8 support	7 (8)	2 (0)	0 (2)	0 (0)	3 (6)	0
SOUTH AFRICAN AIDS VACCINE INITIATIVE (SAAVI)							
34	223 staff: 21 principal investigators 18 senior scientists	8	2	8	1	23	7
TUBERCULOSIS EPIDEMIOLOGY AND INTERVENTION							
18	29 staff: 6 senior scientists 2 junior scientists 18 technologists 3 support	2 (4)	0 (2)	1 (-)	0 (-)	4 (2)	2 (3)
CLINICAL AND BIOMEDICAL TUBERCULOSIS							
24	48 staff: 9 senior scientists 2 junior scientists 35 technologists and technicians 2 support	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (6)	0 (2)	6 (11)	2 (3)
MOLECULAR MYCOBACTERIOLOGY							
4	13 staff: 5 senior scientists 5 junior scientists 2 technical staff 1 support	1 (2)	0 (0)	3 (4)	0 (1)	6 (6)	3 (1)
MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR BIOLOGY							
33	16 staff: 9 senior scientists 4 junior scientists 3 technologists	23 (10)	3 (2)	6 (16)	10 (3)	28 (24)	6 (8)
CHRONIC DISEASES OF LIFESTYLE							
7 (14)	16 staff: 6 senior scientists 4 junior scientists 2 technologists 4 support	1 (4)	1	3 (4)	1	12 (17)	6
INTER-UNIVERSITY CAPE HEART							
Cardiovascular							
7	5 staff: 5 senior scientists	2		4		6	0
Lipidology							
5	2 staff: 2 senior scientists	1	1	2	2	6	1
Hatter Heart Research Institute							
13	3 staff: 3 senior scientists	3	1	4	0	6 (0)	0
9	Prof. A Lochner: 7 staff 4 senior scientists 2 junior 1 admin	4	0	3	0	2	3

2007 figures shown in brackets

Number of projects	Staff	Masters students		Doctoral students		Peer-reviewed publications	
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DIABETES							
5	10 staff: 4 senior scientists 4 technologists 2 support	3	0	1	0	0	0
	Dr A Madiehe 4 staff: 2 senior scientists 2 technologists	2	0	1	0	0	0
EXERCISE SCIENCE AND SPORTS MEDICINE							
69	25 staff: 16 senior scientists 3 junior scientists 6 technical	12 (15)	6 (3)	18 (19)	2 (5)	52 (45)	5 (11)
IMMUNOLOGY OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES							
10	12 staff: 6 senior scientists 4 technologists 2 support	12 (9)	5 (4)	10 (12)	5 (5)	30	2
DIARRHOEAL PATHOGENS							
8	11 staff: 3 senior scientists 4 technologists 3 interns 1 support	5 (3)	0 (1)	2 (3)	0 (1)	10 (9)	3 (2)
INFLAMMATION							
6	6 staff: 3 senior scientists 2 junior scientists 1 support	2 (3)	2 (1)	2 (3)	1 (0)	10 (7)	1 (5)
RESPIRATORY AND MENINGEAL PATHOGENS							
25	76 staff: 8 senior scientists 7 junior scientists 24 technologists 24 nurses 23 support	3 (5)	1 (-)	3 (6)	1 (-)	31	3
MALARIA							
5	32 staff: 3 senior scientists 6 junior scientists 20 technologists and technicians 3 support	5 (4)	0 (0)	5 (6)	0 (1)	13 (18)	2 (5)
GENITAL ULCER DISEASE							
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CRIME, VIOLENCE AND INJURY							
15	20 staff: 6 senior scientists 5 junior scientists 6 technologists 3 support	4 (4)	4 (3)	9 (2)	1 (0)	11 (21)	3 (5)
MOLECULAR HEPATOLOGY							
7	8 staff: 3 senior scientists 4 junior scientists 1 support	1	3	6	0	11	12

2007 figures shown in brackets

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CANCER EPIDEMIOLOGY							
6	4 staff: 2 senior scientists 2 technical	3 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (-)	9 (6)	3 (1)
PROMEC							
18 internal 24 external	19 staff: 8 senior scientists 2 junior scientists 9 technologists 3 support	6 (2)	1 (1)	12 (10)	2 (1)	9 (18)	9 (6)
OESOPHAGEAL CANCER							
8	11 staff: 6 senior scientists 2 technical 1 support	7 (9)	2 (2)	9 (15)	1 (4)	7 (9)	5 (10)
ONCOLOGY RESEARCH (Newly established)							
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BURDEN OF DISEASE							
9	10 staff: 6 senior scientists 2 junior scientist 1 technologist 1 admin	3 (2)	1 (0)	4 (1)	0 (-)	25 (9)	2 (1)
BIostatistics UNIT							
208	22 staff: 9 senior scientists 6 junior scientists 6 technical 6 support	3 (-)	0 (0)	2 (-)	0 (-)	63 (60)	0 (23)
COCHRANE CENTRE							
7	10 staff: 7 senior scientists 1 junior scientists 2 support	2 (0)	3 (1)	3 (1)	0 (0)	26 (20)	1 (3)
HEALTH POLICY							
25	23 staff: 6 senior scientists 13 junior scientists 4 support	12 (15)	3 (3)	10 (14)	2 (2)	15 (11)	(9)
HEALTH SYSTEMS							
15	26 staff: 6 senior scientists 12 junior scientists 7 technologists 1 support	5 (3)	2 (2)	8 (4)	1 (1)	26 (23)	7 (2)
RURAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH TRANSITION							
28	18 staff: 6 senior scientists 4 junior scientists 6 technologists 2 admin	15 (7)	3 (1)	10 (5)	1 (0)	27 (10)	9 (16)
ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE							
23	23 staff: 4 senior scientists 9 junior scientists 1 technologist 4 support	2 (2)	0 (1)	3 (3)	1 (0)	5 (20)	7 (6)

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HEALTH PROMOTION RESEARCH AND BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS							
5	14 staff: 4 senior scientists 2 junior scientists 6 technicians and technologists 2 support	2 (0)	0 (0)	5 (6)	3 (2)	14 (5)	2 (6)
GENDER AND HEALTH							
7	16 staff: 5 senior scientists 5 junior scientists 3 technologists 3 support	2 (5)	1 (4)	3 (6)	0 (0)	11 (10)	2 (3)
MINERAL METABOLISM							
4	9 staff: 2 senior scientist 6 technical 1 admin	3 (3)	0 (0)	4 (5)	0 (1)	13 (10)	7 (3)
MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH CARE STRATEGIES							
10	7 staff: 1 senior scientists 6 junior scientists	12 (4)	5 (-)	4 (6)	1 (-)	8 (12) 4	5 (8) 7
NUTRITIONAL INTERVENTION							
28	29 staff: 9 senior scientists 16 technologists 4 support	0 (0)	0 (1)	2 (2)	0 (1)	17 (9)	0 (8)
ANXIETY AND STRESS DISORDERS							
8	15 staff: 3 senior scientists 2 junior scientists 4 support 6 research assistants	6 (4)	2 (1)	9 (6)	1 (3)	37 (39)	0 (0)
MEDICAL IMAGING							
20	10 staff: 8 senior scientists 2 junior scientists	23 (12)	4 (7)	15 (7)	1 (1)	23 (19)	8 (6)
BIOINFORMATICS CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT							
9	14 staff 4 senior scientists 3 junior scientists 3 technologists 4 admin	3 (4)	1 (3)	9 (4)	2 (0)	20 (4)	5 (7)
BONE RESEARCH							
4	6 staff: 2 senior scientist 1 junior scientists 2 technologists 1 support	0 (1)	0 (2)	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (9)	8 (3)
HUMAN GENETICS							
4	8 staff: 3 senior scientists 3 junior scientists 2 admin	7 (12)	0 (3)	8 (7)	0 (1)	6 (8)	4 (0)
HUMAN GENOMIC DIVERSITY AND DISEASE							
1	6 staff: 1 senior scientist 5 research assistants	5 (4)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	4 (4)	0 (0)

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RECEPTOR BIOLOGY							
11	7 staff: 4 senior scientists 3 technologists	3 (6)	1 (0)	5 (4)	1 (1)	12 (13)	0 (1)
LIVER RESEARCH							
17	22 staff: 13 senior scientists 6 technologists 3 support	3	1	4	-	16	3
ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH							
11	11 staff: 6 senior scientists 3 junior scientists 1 technologist 1 support	4 (4)	6 (-)	11 (6)	2 (2)	23 (13)	2 (4)
SOUTH AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINES							
15	8 staff: 2 senior scientists 3 junior 2 technologists 1 support	10 (4)	2 (3)	8 (12)	3	20 (21)	1 (3)
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS							
	8 staff: 2 senior scientists 2 junior scientists 3 technologists 1 support	1	2	2	-		
e-HRIP (E-Health Research and Innovation Platform)							
8	8 staff: 2 senior scientists 1 junior scientist 1 technician 4 support staff	1	1	2			
Primate unit							
	9			2		2	One book chapter

2007 figures shown in brackets

