Engineering Your Business For Success™

Communication Tempo©

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Powered by

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Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to inform CEOs and Leadership Teams:

1. The benefits of having a *Communication Tempo©*
2. How to establish their own *Communication Tempo©*

What is a *Communication Tempo©*?

The name "*Communication Tempo©*" implies communicating in a synchronized and fluid manner. In many ways a well-executed *Communication Tempo©* is similar to the performance of an orchestra with the agendas serving as the sheet of music that coordinates each musician's performance. Ultimately a *Communication Tempo©* is about more than just creating fluid communication, it is about driving results and increasing employee engagement by building on natural human tendencies. For example:

- Human thinking patterns are optimized by separating discussions about future operations from present day operations and an excellent well-designed *Communication Tempo©* provides dedicated time for both strategic and tactical discussions
- Humans are naturally curious and want to be "in the know;" a well-designed *Communication Tempo©* creates and drives frequent communication and improves employee engagement by 49% *(Source: Kenexa® Worktrends™ Report)*
- Humans tend to be deadline driven and a well-designed *Communication Tempo©* requires that significant work be accomplished against goals every 30 days thus driving results and accomplishments

Although excellent agendas are a key component to realizing the benefits of a *Communication Tempo©,* a leadership team also needs to function in a specific manner by:

1. ***Conducting Meetings in a Disciplined Manner:*** There is a real cost to meetings, so a culture of discipline must be cultivated so that tactical "Working *IN* the Business" meetings are executed in a disciplined manner. When conducting meetings in a disciplined manner, meetings begin and end on-time, and the individuals attending the meetings come prepared, pay attention, and engage in discussions.
2. ***Using Meetings to Make Decisions as a Team:*** High achievement companies use meetings to debate, challenge and make decisions as a team, and when the meetings end the decisions that were made remain intact. Being disciplined about making decisions as a team mitigates political game playing and increases trust among team members and confidence in the decisions.

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Recommended *Communication Tempo©*

Based on both Synergy Business Group's personal experience and our experience of working with over 100 leadership teams, we recommend the following *Communication Tempo©*:

Strategic - Working ON the Business:

- Annual Strategic
- Quarterly Strategic

Tactical - Working IN the Business:

- Monthly "No Surprises, Show and Tell"
- Weekly Pulse ™
- Daily Huddle
- Semi-Monthly One to Ones

Strategic "Working *ON* the Business" *Communication Tempo©*

Strategic meetings focus on proactively "Working *ON* the Business" and deciding how to use the company's finite resources of time and money to most prosper the company now and in the future. When Leadership Teams take time away from the business to work on the business, they create space to focus on what is important and not urgent, critically examine the company internally and externally, and define a path for success, growth, and profitability.

Our recommended *Communication Tempo©* consists of strategic meetings that are conducted on a quarterly basis with one meeting held as a 2-Day Annual Strategic session, and three meetings held as 1-Day Quarterly Strategic sessions. The two types of Strategic "Working *ON* the Business" meetings are outlined as follows:

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2-Day Annual Leadership Strategic Meeting

The 2-Day Annual Leadership Strategic Meeting focuses on "Working *ON* the Business" by

- Examining the business from different lenses and perspectives to flush out both opportunities and blind spots
- Assessing the internal infrastructure, such as systems, processes, facilities, leadership development, organization structure, etc.
- Vetting growth opportunities
- Establishing 3 Year Goals, 1 Year Goals, and Quarterly Goals

Occurrence: Annually, replaces quarterly once every 12 months

Duration: 2 Days

Format: Professionally Facilitated/Led (We, Synergy Business Group, are excellent at conducting these)

Attendees: CEO and Direct Reports

Tips for Conducing This Meeting:

- Off-Site Meeting
- Mandatory attendance - No one is allowed to miss; Vacations are scheduled around this meeting
- In reference to the sample agenda below, Agenda item 10 – "Information Cascade": The purpose of the Information Cascade is to communicate a common message to the rest of the company. At first glance this may seem less important than the other agenda items, however the Information Cascade agenda item represents an important opportunity to build trust and employee engagement. Specifically, according to the *Kenexa® Worktrends™ Report*, one of the fastest ways to improve employee engagement by 49% and increase trust in the leadership team is through consistent and timely communication. The Information Cascade agenda item is the means to perform consistent and timely communication and build trust and employee engagement.

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Sample 2-Day Annual Leadership Strategic Meeting Agenda:

ID	Agenda Item
1	Good News Check-In (What went right? Who made a difference?)
2	Review Previous Quarter's Goals, Metrics and Establish Lessons Learned
3	Review Previous Year's Goals and Metrics
4	Compile Successes and Lessons from Past Year
5	Examine Business from Different Lenses/Perspectives
6	Identify Dangers and Opportunities
7	Set 3 Year Goals
8	Set 1 Year Goals Aligned to 3 Year Goals
9	Set 90 Day Goals Aligned to 1 Year Goals with Accountabilities and Metrics
10	Information Cascade Messages – Identify what information from this meeting needs to be shared with and whom
11	Wrap-Up with 1 Sentence Reflection from Each Participant

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1-Day Quarterly Leadership Strategic Meeting

The 1-Day Quarterly Leadership Strategic meeting focuses on "Working *ON* the Business" by:

- Examining the business to ensure that the decisions and goals established in the 2-Day Annual Leadership Strategic session are still the most important goals
- Identifying lessons learned from last quarter and incorporating this learning into the company for continuous improvement
- Closing out the previous 90 Day Goals and establishing 90 Day Goals for the next quarter

Occurrence: Quarterly, 3 times per year

Duration: 1 Day

Format: Professionally Facilitated/Led (We, Synergy Business Group, are excellent at conducting these)

Attendees: CEO and Direct Reports

Tips for Conducting This Meeting:

- Off-Site Meeting
- Mandatory attendance - No one is allowed to miss; Vacations are scheduled around this meeting

Sample 1-Day Quarterly Leadership Strategic Meeting Agenda:

ID	Agenda Item
1	Good News Check-In (What went right? Who made a difference?)
2	Review Previous Quarter's Goals, Metrics and Identify Lessons Learned
3	Revisit Dangers and Opportunities to Ensure No Major Changes
4	Revisit One Year Goals to Ensure they are Still the Most Important
5	Discuss Hot Business Issues for the Coming Quarter
6	Set and Prioritize Quarterly Goals Aligned to 1 Year Goals with Accountabilities and Metrics
7	Information Cascade Messages – Identify what information from this meeting needs to be shared with and whom
8	Wrap-Up with 1 Sentence Reflection from Each Participant

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Tactical "Working *IN* the Business" *Communication Tempo©*

Tactical "Working *IN* the Business" meetings focus on the execution of strategic goals and running the business. Our recommended *Communication Tempo©* consists of four types of leadership team meetings: Monthly "No Surprises, Show and Tell", Weekly Pulse™, Daily Huddle, and Semi--monthly One-on-Ones with the CEO and their Direct Reports. Each meeting type is outlined below.

Monthly "No Surprises, Show and Tell"

The half day Monthly "No Surprises, Show and Tell" meeting focuses on "Working *IN* the Business" by:

- Reviewing performance metrics
- Ensuring that the 90 Day Goals are being executed by having the Goal Owner prove that he/she is on track by showing facts/figures/evidence that demonstrates goal progress.
- If the goal is not on track it is the responsibility of the leadership team to chart course corrections so this goal will be completed.

Occurrence: Monthly, replaces Weekly

Duration: Half Day

Format: Leadership Team Members serve as Facilitator and Scribe and the roles are rotated

Attendees: CEO and Direct Reports

Tips for Conducing This Meeting:

- On-Site Meeting
- Mandatory attendance - No one is allowed to miss; Vacations are scheduled around this meeting
- Everyone comes prepared with evidence on progress for 90 Day Goals

  Example:
  90 Day Goal: Build and launch a new website by xx/xx/2018.
  Evidence: Showing the website layout and design to the other leadership team members.

  NOTE: The job of the leadership team is to discern if the evidence presented demonstrates that the goal is on or off track.

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Sample Monthly "No Surprises, Show and Tell" Agenda:

ID	Agenda Item
1	Good News Check-In (What went right? Who made a difference?)
2	Review Financial Data and Performance Metrics and Make Decisions • Month End Financials • Leading Indicators • Critical Numbers • Other
3	Review Last Week's Action Items
4	Review Quarterly Goals
5	Collective Intelligence/Chart Team Course Corrections for Goals
6	Information Cascade Messages – Identify what information from this meeting needs to be shared with and whom
7	Review Action Items
8	Wrap-Up with 1 Sentence Reflection from Each Participant

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Weekly Pulse™

The Weekly Pulse™ meeting focuses on "Working *IN* the Business" by:

- Aligning the Leadership Team once per week on information that is important and not urgent
- Having time available to solve problems and/or address issues

Although all of these meetings are proven to drive results and achievement, the **Weekly Pulse**™ meeting provides the most immediate impact. Specifically, companies that execute the Weekly Pulse™ meeting consistently and with excellence experience a 50% improvement in company leadership and alignment in 100 days. (Source: Synergy Business Group's client experience survey)

Occurrence: Weekly same day and time

Duration: 1.5 hours to 2 hours

Format: Team Members serve as Facilitator and Scribe, and the roles are rotated

Attendees: CEO and Direct Reports

Tips for Conducing This Meeting:

- No one misses except for vacation and illness
- Everyone comes prepared to report out
- In reference to the sample agenda below, Agenda Item 3 – "Review Employee Happenings": This is all about alignment and also connecting and recognizing our colleagues. According to the *Kenexa® Worktrends™ Report*, employee recognition is a key driver to increasing employee engagement by 72%. This agenda item is the means to perform consistent and timely employee recognition.
- In reference to the sample agenda below, Agenda Item 9 – "Department Updates": This is about sharing key bits of information about key departments in the company. The information shared in this section is designed by asking the other team members what they want to hear on a weekly basis from sales, engineering, accounting, etc. This succinct and frequent update is critically important to functioning as a cohesive leadership team and mitigating the tendency of focusing on individual functional areas.

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Sample Weekly Pulse™ Agenda:

ID	Agenda Item
1	Good News Check-In (What went right? Who made a difference?)
2	Review Customer Feedback
3	Review Employee Happenings • Star Performance • Performance Issues • Personal Happenings
4	Review Leading and Lagging Indicators
5	Review Last Week's Big 3 Goals
6	This Week's Big 3 Goals
7	Review Last Week's Action Items
8	Review Quarterly Goals
9	Department Updates
10	Collective Intelligence
11	Information Cascade
12	Review Action Items
13	Wrap-Up

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Daily Huddle

The Daily Huddle meeting is an extremely tactical meeting because it focuses on the next 24 hours.

Occurrence: Daily at the same time

Duration: < 15 minutes

Format: Stand Up or Call In

Attendees: CEO and Direct Reports

Tips for Conducting This Meeting:

- Optional meeting
- Extremely tactical, focuses on the day at hand
- No problem solving in this meeting, problem solving is done outside of this meeting

Sample Agenda: Go once around the group, sharing:

- "My focus today is…"
- Communicate any issues or barriers that are in the way

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One-on-Ones

The semi-monthly One-on-One meeting focuses on discussing topics that are important and not urgent with your direct reports.

Occurrence: Semi Monthly

Duration: 60 to 90 minutes

Format: CEO and 1 of his/her Direct Reports

Note: There are 2 types of One-on-Ones:

1. Business One-on-One
2. Development One-on-One

We recommend that CEOs meet with their Direct Reports two times per month for 60 to 90 minutes with one One-on-Ones being a Development One-on-One and the other being a Business One-on-One:

- Development One-on-One: We refer to this meeting as ***"Getting People Done Thru Work.***" This One-on-One focuses on the Direct Report and their development.
- Business One-on-One: We refer to this meeting as ***"Getting Work Done Thru People."*** This One-on-One focuses on the business, goals, their department and team performance.

Development One-on-One, "Getting People Done Thru Work"

The foundation of leadership is influence and the only way to influence someone is to know them. There is a well know quote that states, "I don't care how much you know, until I know how much you care." This quote speaks to the power and importance of knowing your Direct Reports and creating a relationship/connection with them. The purpose of the Development One-on-One is for the CEO to make a real connection, build rapport, and strengthen the relationship with his/her Direct Reports.

The focus of the Development One-on-One is on:

- The Direct Report
- Their development
- Their life goals

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Effective Development One-on-One meetings demonstrate how much you appreciate your Direct Report and help prevent burn out and/or losing an A-player to a competitor. Development One-on-Ones create a connection because they help you know your Direct Report as a person and not just as an employee. By truly knowing your Direct Report you will know how to lead, influence, inspire, and recognize her/him in a meaningful manner. Leadership is about influence and the only way to effectively influence someone is to know them. If you can't connect, you can't lead. In addition, the Development One-on-One offers a unique opportunity to align your Direct Report's life goals with the company's opportunities and goals.

Development One-on-Ones feel and look different than Business One-on-Ones. We recommend that the Development One-on-One be held outside of the office or in the Direct Reports' office and occur once per month for approximately 60 minutes.

During the Development One-on-One the CEO's job is to listen and stay focused on the Direct Report. The Development One-on-One is an opportunity to align as much as possible your Direct Report's life goals with business goals and opportunities. For example, your Direct Report might be interested in living in another State or another Country; A great bit of information to know especially when the company seeks to expand into new regions.

Development One-on-Ones discussion topics include:

- Life Goals
- Understanding what success looks like for the Direct Report outside of work
- Checking in on work life balance
- Identifying professional development goals
- Reviewing progress on professional development goals
- Checking in on job satisfaction
- Sharing "bits of brilliance" that you as the CEO have observed in them over the last month
- Learning how to recognize your Direct Report in a manner that is meaningful to them

Two times per year the Development One-on-One should include a discussion on delegation. Specifically, the CEO should ask the Direct Report to identify one item that he/she can delegate to one of their Direct Reports forever, and one item that the CEO should delegate to this Direct Report. By doing this the CEO and Direct Report are constantly developing and exposing team members to more and more of the business.

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What the CEO should NOT do:

- If your Direct Report is having personal problems such as martial or family problems, do NOT counsel them. Let them know you want to support them and refer them to your employee assistance program or a counselor.
- Do NOT become BFFs (Best Friends Forever) with your Direct Report. Do NOT vacation with them or invite them over for holiday dinners with their families. There is a fine line between appreciating them and supporting them and becoming BFFs. At the end of the day you are still their boss and creating a BFF situation is confusing for both you and them.
- Avoid telling your Direct Report your stories, your life goals, etc.
- Avoid giving them work assignments during the Development One-on-One

Business One-on-One, "Getting Work Done Thru People"

The purpose of the Business One-on-One is for the CEO to focus on information that is important and NOT urgent. The Business One-on-One is a focused update on the company, their department, their goals, their team members, etc.

There are 2 parts to the Business One-on-One:

- Part 1: A defined set of agenda topics such as metrics, development plans for team members, etc. (see sample agenda below)

- Part 2: Walk In topics: This is an open time for your Direct Report to talk about anything else they want to discuss/share with you. This is a great opportunity to see how your Direct Report thinks and leads. This open time can also be used by the CEO to discuss/share information, ask probing questions, get feedback on initiatives you may be considering, ask for feedback, opinions, input to important decisions, etc. (see sample agenda below)

The Business One-on-One should feel and look different than the Development One-on-One. We recommend that the Business One-on-One be in the CEO's office and occur once per month for approximately 60 minutes. We like to refer to the Business One-on-One as "Getting Work Done Thru People" because it focuses on the company and department performance.

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The format and agenda of the Business One-on-One is jointly designed by you and your Direct Report and should reflect how your Direct Report leads, thinks and operates. The Business One-on-One involves discussions around:

- Updates on projects
- What can be expected for next month
- Identification and removal of barriers that hinder the company and/or the department
- Review performance metrics, quotas, or project updates
- Review and become familiar with the performance of their direct reports
- Recognize Achievements

Business 1:1

Purpose: Systematically collaborate and maintain focus on performance, team members, & objectives
Attendees: Direct Report and CEO

Agenda:

	Agenda Item	*Time*	*Lead*
1	Establish agenda for this 1:1	2	
2	Review success metrics (green/yellow/red) + shipments vs backlog for the month + loss time accidents by plant + on-time delivery by plant + 5S status by plant	5	
3	Review Performance and Development of Managers/Leaders + Kath + Vira + Paul + Scott + Morgan	5	
4	Next 30 Days – What can we expect	10	
5	Review progress on Actions from last meeting	10	
6	Walk In discussion items	15	
7	Review Action items	5	
8	Wrap Up	2	

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Roles and Mindset for an Excellent Communication Tempo™

The roles of Facilitator and Scribe are rotated and assigned for a duration of 1 month. The logic behind this is that everyone that attends these meetings are leaders, and as a leader it is critically important that they know how to run and actively participate in an efficient and effective meeting. By facilitating, scribing, and actively participating in these meetings the:

1. Leadership Team creates a common model and template that can be used to design Weekly **Department** specific Weekly Pulse™ meetings for their functions.
2. Leadership Team members become comfortable with challenging and holding their colleagues accountable through the simple act of facilitation

Meeting Roles:

- **Facilitator**: Responsible for starting the meeting on time, moving the agenda along and ending the meeting (Role is rotated on a monthly basis and NEVER assumed by the highest ranking team member)
- **Scribe**: Documents actions, decisions and information cascade (Role is rotated on a monthly basis and NEVER assumed by the highest ranking team member)

Mindset:

Typically the people that attend the meetings outlined in the *Communication Tempo©* are part of the company leadership team and also responsible for one or more functional areas of the business such as sales, finance, operations, etc. The mindset required to make these meetings as powerful and effective as possible is when the meeting participants think and operate from two different mindsets:

- *Company Leadership* – Participating from a Company Leadership Mindset implies that when the other members of the Leadership Team are presenting/sharing information, you are listening in a manner similar to the way that a Board member would be listening and asking questions from that perspective. For example, listen as if you are an advocate for your employees, culture, shareholders, and be asking/thinking, “Is this item in the best interest of our company? Will this item prosper our company?”
- *Functional Leadership* – When communicating the Big 3 Goals for the week or the Department Update communicate as if you are communicating this information to a Company Board. Be succinct and prepared.

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For More Information

For more information about *Communication Tempo*© and how to drive results, contact Kathie McBroom at Kathie.mcbroom@thinking-organization.com, 859-552-4991

Synergy Business Group, LLC is skilled at providing execution based strategic planning and advisory services to companies across the United States seeking to grow and get results. We have the experience and tools to help Executive Teams:

- Become High Achievement Leadership Teams™
- Engage in sound strategic thinking
- Discover the goals which will provide the greatest ROI
- Grow profitably

Synergy Business Group, LLC is headquartered in Bluffton, South Carolina with offices in Michigan and Kentucky.

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