

York University

Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies

Internationally Educated Professionals Bridging Program

News of the Week Report

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Course

ADMS 3015 - Professional Communication in a Canadian Context

By

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News of the Week Report

Reference:

Fisher, A. (2014, February 6). Four steps to delivering really bad news [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://management.fortune.cnn.com/2014/02/06/4-steps-to-delivering-really-bad-news/>

Topic: Strategies to fire people and increase productivity in the workplace.

Synopsis:

In “ Four steps to delivering really bad news”, Anne Fischer, addresses a reader’s request on “Ask Annie” column career about promotions. M.M., the column reader, states that her department’s performance is low because the person before her did not want to fire anybody. Now she got a promotion and has to give shape-up-or-ship-out evaluations to some employees and have other people go, but she has no experience in firing people and asks Anne Fischer’s advice. Fischer’s answer is based in Geoffrey Tumlin’s professional experiences and his four steps to delivering bad news. According to Tumlin, firing people is a hard process and many managers have this inevitable issue in their departments and teams. For this reason, he helps managers with some steps for getting it done: First, get straight to your core message and direct to the point. The core message is just that one you do not want to say. Second, resist the temptation to get pushed out of your message. Third, explain yourself, but not too much; say what you have to say into a single sentence with no additional information. Finally, get out of the conversation. Be concise, clear with your message and get it done. Stay on your point and be careful in trying to answer any speculative question. The Tumlin’s final point is about feedback. After you fire someone, wait a bit before giving other employee feedback for two reasons. First,

you will see that there is a tendency for change in some people's behavior for the better and second, center your feedback exactly into the point where an employee needs to focus his or her efforts to be a better one.

Analysis:

Communication is the process by which information is exchanged between a sender and a receiver. Audience is everything, and learning to recognize it, it is an important key for good communication. Delivering bad news it is not an easy task. The real difficulty is that it is just as hard for the person who is in charge to deliver the bad news as it is for the person who is in the opposite side receiving it. This article presents strategies to fire people and increase productivity in the workplace. It reflects important concepts of effective business communication, i.e. goal, audience and strategy. As indicated in the article, the goal is either to get the fired people out of the room or to give feedback through evaluations to the retained employees after the firing process done which is also important to increase the employees' productivity. In the process of "letting people go," the managers have to consider the audience, such as the emotions expressed by both sides, the level of friendship, the number of years that the employees has worked for the company and how to shorten the conversation. The face to face is usually the common method to be used because it promotes the synchronization with the news and provoke an immediate, two ways and real time response. Clarify information and specify consequences are some assumptions and considerations that are not appropriate for this situation because the audience would have a misinterpretation of the proposed steps. The style and the tone of delivery are dependent on who you are, the context of the news, and your relationship to the person. Regarding the appropriate communication style and tone, Tulim implies a respectful, calm,

rational and cold manner to make them firm, clear, concise, and attack straight forward to the point. At end Tulim declares that to acquire experience in delivering bad news you have to do it.

Reflection:

Delivering bad news to someone is not a pleasant task and it is important to know the best approaches to do it. Moreover, delivering bad news in the wrong way or at the wrong time can be even worse. It really breaks the effective communication that conveys the right message, to the right person, in the right way and at the right time. It is something that either you have experienced a similar situation or will have to face one like it in the future. This article provides valuable steps on the effective ways to deliver really bad news. I agree with all viewpoints in the article because I had some personal experience in my job. I have been Music School Director and professor for seven years. Recently I was in a similar situation where I had to fire a guitar professor because his productivity and performance were in not accordance with the school's policy. I am very sensitive to emotions and I feared that this bad news would alter his expectations for the future because he needed the job. It was hard to do it, but hiding the emotional part, I spoke to him in a firm, clear, concise and direct to the point with the essential information for the situation. At the end he thanked me for the sincerity and objectivity in my approach to delivering that bad news to him.

Questions:

1. In the process of fire someone, would you add any other step to delivering really bad news? What and Why?
2. Giving a feedback is important. If you give a feedback to someone or receive one, do you believe that it really contributes to enhance performance in the workplace?