Many of our clients are concerned around three vital aspects of their organization that rarely get the attention they deserve - but which have a significant impact on clients and on financial performance, productivity and employee morale.

These three vital aspects are:
1. Senior Leadership Communication Effectiveness
2. Information Dissemination – for Awareness, Understanding and Action
3. Interpersonal Communication

Why Measure your Organization's Communication Quotient?

A recent Towers Watson report¹ indicates that – “Effective employee communication is a leading indicator of financial performance and a driver of employee engagement. Companies that are highly effective communicators had 47% higher total returns to shareholders over the last five years compared with firms that are the least effective communicators.”

The CQ diagnostic tool measures your organizations capacity to effectively communicate in all three of these vital areas. The CQ report is further subdivided into scores for each of the areas, with commentary from all levels within the organization, o that your organization can start targeting those weakest areas.

As noted in that same report ... “Measurement is critical. Companies that are less-effective communicators are three times as likely as highly effective communicators to report having no formal measurements of communication effectiveness.”

1. Senior Leadership Communication

Effective communication from senior leadership requires individuals who are perceived as credible and who can communicate ideas and information in a way that ensures awareness, understanding and action on the part of employees.

Among the elements that we look at for this first part of the CQ diagnostic are the following:

- Is senior management believable? Trustworthy?
- Can mistakes be discussed openly?
- Is the culture one of a free flow of ideas and transparency in intentions in both directions?
- Is senior management inspirational?
- How skilled is senior management at crafting messages that motivate others?
- Is it safe to question initiatives, priorities and direction?
- Do people feel that they must drop what they are doing to serve the information requests of senior management? What happens if they negotiate or say “no, not until later”?
- What is the ego scale of the senior leadership?
- How much do people trust the information provided by senior management?
- Do senior leaders behave in ways consistent with the values of the organization? (Examples: treat people with respect and dignity, behave honestly etc.)
- How clear is the direction and strategy of the organization? How clear are its goals and objectives?
- Do they seem achievable? Do people understand how they will be measured on these?
- Are they held accountable? How is feedback on performance provided?
- How effective is senior management at explaining decisions and priorities?
- What gets in the way of effective communication with the senior leaders?
- Is information and feedback from lower in the organization chart reported upward, blocked or filtered?
- Does senior management seem to care about these decisions?

The answers to these questions are rich in opportunities to improve communication in many aspects.
2. Information Dissemination – for Awareness, Understanding and Action

Information is frequently lacking or incomplete or worse, misunderstood, and as a result, decision-making suffers and prioritization gets skewed or ends up mismanaged. In other words, the system used to disseminate information is incomplete or flawed.

In the absence of clear information on goals, objectives, project deliverables etc. that are also measurable, people try to make the best contribution they can (but which may not be aligned with the organization’s vision and strategy). Or they become disengaged and do the minimum possible, as the absence of information that leads to Awareness, Understanding and Action is a source of frustration when direction is lacking. In our experience, many of our clients are surprised at how poorly they fare in this area.

Social media and some traditional media, when combined together, offer significant advantages to organizations.

*Despite the increased use of social media, companies are still struggling to measure the return on their investment in these tools. Highly effective communicators are more likely than the least effective communicators to report their social media tools are cost-effective (37% vs. 14%).*
3. Interpersonal Communication

How effectively are people communicating with each other? What is getting in the way? Are people afraid to speak up because they are disengaged (“I don’t care”) or fearful of the consequences (“Why risk my career?”)?

Our initial research, based on approximately 250 interviews with clients over the past 10 years, indicates that there are four factors that contribute to effective interpersonal communication:

1. Creating the Conditions For Safety And Trust - particularly in relation to all levels of leadership in the organization
2. Mastering Difficult Situations
3. Creating the Conditions for Collaboration
4. Mastering Difficult Conversations skills

The CQ diagnostic measures in an aggregate format these four factors, which can be broken down right to the team level. We also can modify this diagnostic tool to look at your CQ with clients, suppliers and important stakeholders.

In addition, we offer training in interpersonal communication. Our Mastering Difficult Situations and Conversations program is a workshop that we have developed to specifically address these four factors. This comprehensive workshop includes a 360° MDSC report for each participant as well as post-workshop coaching and action planning for each participant.