

Chapter DIGEST

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Motivating Through Tough Times

Communication becomes even more important when you're hashing out solutions to tough problems. To steer employees in the right direction:

- **Put problems in perspective.** Give "where-we've-been and where-we're-going" summaries so everyone understands the situation. Example: "We detected a problem a month ago when sales dipped. The latest numbers show more severe declines. We need to regain lost sales to end the quarter on target."
- **Give an overview of what you're about to cover.** That makes it easier for listeners to follow along. Example: "I'd like to analyze the cause of the problem and propose solutions."
- **Review working assumptions.** Discuss beliefs or priorities that drive your strategy. Ask for input to ensure that you're not operating under false assumptions. Example: "I'm assuming our sales are down because shoppers are staying home. What are other possible explanations?"
- **Agree on the three Ws.** After exchanging problem-solving proposals, decide who does what by when. That increases accountability as you and your team enact solutions.



Adapted from Merna Skinner, Exec/Comm, (212) 252-5845. Jeff Williams, CCM, President of the PA chapter.

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