



The Context Group

For Clients Who Value Results... More Than Advice

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"People will accept your ideas much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first."

David H. Comins

The Context Group

Warren Bobrow, Ph.D.
Kammy Haynes, Ph.D.
Buddy Ruppenthal, C.M.C.

HR Practice Contact Information

Mailing Address:
5812 W. 76th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Phone: (310) 670-4175

New Fax: (501) 635-9850

E-mail:
hrinfo@contextgroup.com

Learn more at our website:
contextgroup.com/hr.htm

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Sharing the Purpose On Purpose

For many organizational change interventions, a key success factor is the employee support. When employees don't understand the purpose of a new process or program, their suspicions are aroused (particularly if morale or trust is low). The tendency is to perceive the intervention as a threat that requires defensive action.

One sure-fire way to improve your likelihood of success is to clearly (and frequently) communicate the purpose of the intervention. Whether you are administering a [survey](#) to measure morale or identify training needs, implementing a new administrative process, conducting a [skill assessment](#), or introducing a new [performance appraisal](#) system, it is important to explain why you are doing it and how the information will / will not be used. By providing this information in advance, you can minimize low response rates, sabotage, and a considerable amount of unwarranted resistance, fear, and stress.

Do not make the mistake of assuming that your staff understands the rationale behind the change efforts. Make the purpose crystal clear so that you are all working for a common goal rather than working against one another. By keeping your employees informed, you reduce the amount of time they spend "around the water cooler," worrying about your motives, and undermining your efforts.

If you want to learn more about implementing more effective organizational change efforts in your organization, please contact [Kammy Haynes](#).

hrunsub@contextgroup.com

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hsub@contextgroup.com

In Strictest Confidence

You have probably been involved in a [survey](#) when someone has questioned why you ask for certain identifiers (e.g., *In Which Department Do You Work; How Many Years Have You Been With the Company*). Your first reaction may be, "As if I don't have better things to do than dig through the surveys, find yours, and report the information to your boss." Hopefully, the more reasoned question you should be asking yourself is, "Why is the person concerned?" It could be that there is a perception that recent confidential information had been released. Or they could just be a crank. Regardless, here are a few quick guidelines for using confidential information in surveys or validation studies:

1. Determine up front which data should be confidential and why.
2. Talk to those who are going to use the data and be sure that the purpose of gathering the data can still be fulfilled with appropriate confidentiality.
3. Communicate the bounds of confidentiality clearly to everyone involved.
4. Don't EVER break confidentiality, unless required by law. Or else you will forever be hearing from people wanting to know why they are asked identification questions on surveys.

For more information on the legal bounds of confidentiality, please contact [Warren Bobrow](#).