TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION GUIDE

For Enterprise Colleagues

BlueCross BlueShield of Florida

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Introduction

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) and its family of affiliates and subsidiaries (the Enterprise) are dedicated to providing caring solutions that protect the health and well-being of Floridians and their loved ones. That is our promise, and we strive to fulfill it every day. Our commitment to strong business ethics has been and continues to be the cornerstone for our success and is fundamental to delivering on our Promise.

As a company, we focus primarily on the health industry and work to provide value through an array of choices of products and services delivered with excellent customer service.

Foundational to achieving our objectives is a commitment to effectively communicate with all stakeholder groups, and more specifically, support and align with the communication and information components of our Enterprise Human Resource Strategy.

You play a critical role in serving the needs of our stakeholders. Frequent two-way communication will help ensure understanding of our mission, vision and values and how the work we do supports achievement of our goals and objectives.

Communication is a competency at BCBSF, and we all have the opportunity to improve and enhance our skills as part of our individual development action plans. A great tool to use for learning more about two-way communication is e-Learning.

What is Two-Way Communication?

Two-way communication is dialogue on topics related to the business. It's an opportunity for colleagues to share ideas, talk about concerns or simply discuss work. Two-way communication is not a one-way presentation of information. It can begin with a presentation, as long as a discussion follows. It is:

1. A forum for everyone to openly discuss the work we do and its impact on individual and team success;
2. An opportunity for team members to publicly recognize each other's achievements; and
3. Sharing ideas, issues and concerns with all colleagues.

Purpose of Two-Way Communication

The purpose of two-way communication is to build awareness and understanding of Enterprise strategic direction and how our individual and team contributions support the work. BCBSF recognizes that understanding drives acceptance and commitment, and through this commitment, we achieve results. That's why it's so important we all take the time to understand the purpose of two-way communication and the process for ensuring it is successful. All colleagues are encouraged to initiate two-way communication opportunities.

There are many ways we engage in two-way communication, both formally and informally. It can be done in small group settings, lunch and learns, large group sessions, one-on-ones, recognition events and through leadership visibility. Regardless of the forum, the most important aspect is to ensure communication is frequent and ongoing.

Roles and Responsibilities

All colleagues have a role in achieving business results, and that is why it's critical that everyone participates in two-way communication. The following responsibilities have been identified to ensure two-way communication is successful.

Leadership

- Ensure ample opportunity for two-way communication.
- Actively participate in the two-way communication process.
- Share information that builds understanding of BCBSF's mission, vision, values and objectives.
- Follow through on action steps that need to be taken and communicate back with the team when action is complete.
- Monitor and evaluate communication effectiveness.

Colleagues

- Participate in the two-way communication process.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Share your ideas for improvement or concerns regarding any issues.
- Provide feedback.

Facilitator*

- Set the climate for an open discussion by showing participants you understand what they are saying and feeling.
- Encourage discussion amongst the group.
- Help the group stay focused on the discussion.
- Follow through on action steps and communicate back with the appropriate persons.

** A facilitator is not required but may be helpful in large-group settings.*

Process to Measure Effectiveness

Note: This process is not required but may be helpful in large-group settings.

- Facilitator identifies a participant to take flip chart notes during the session.
- At the close of the session, ask participants for feedback. A meeting reaction form can also be distributed as an opportunity for individuals to provide feedback.
- Team leader reviews meeting notes and feedback forms for ideas for improvement and next steps that may require action. He or she takes appropriate action and communicates to the team what is being done to address issues or concerns.

Helpful Hints for Facilitators

Before the Two-Way Communication:

Step	Action
1.	Identify meeting notes recorder (optional).
2.	Develop agenda and feedback form if appropriate.
3.	Distribute presentation materials prior to the meeting.
4.	Determine set-up of room to maximize group participation. Round tables and horseshoe often work better than auditorium style.

During the Two-Way Communication:

Step	Action
1.	Remain focused on the objective. Maintain integrity of the process and encourage group interaction.
2.	Encourage participation by asking questions and showing appreciation for each person's contribution.
3.	Actively listen for understanding.
4.	Pay attention to body language.
5.	Limit goals to what can be accomplished in the allotted time.
6.	Begin and end on time.

After the Two-Way Communication:

Step	Action
1.	Agree on what each participant should accomplish before the next two-way communication.
2.	Provide notes and meeting reaction forms for action and follow-up.

Helpful Hints for Participants

Step	Action
1.	Review any materials provided prior to the session.
2.	Come prepared to participate.
3.	Ask questions and engage in discussion.
4.	Ask for clarification if you do not understand.
5.	Provide feedback.
6.	Follow-through on any action items you may have.

Examples of Two-Way Communication Opportunities

Type	Participants
Large Group	**Leaders:** Division or Group Head plus senior leadership team **Audience:** All colleagues
Small Group	**Leaders:** Leadership teams **Audience:** Cross section of all colleagues in regional offices
Celebratory and Recognition	**Leaders:** Leadership teams **Audience:** All colleagues
All Management	**Leaders:** Senior leadership teams **Audience:** All management
Leadership Team	**Leaders:** Department directors **Audience:** All staff

Frequency/Location	Conditions/Topics
Quarterly or more as appropriate Depending on structure of organization, may be regional, divisional and/or departmental	**Duration:** 2 hours **Agenda:** • Special presentation (Corporate Direction, Six Sigma, etc.) • Q&A to address issues, rumors, concerns/ open dialogue • Divisional/departmental updates • Employee Incentive Plan, scorecard updates • Recognition awards
Each leadership member holds one meeting per month (except during month of large group quarterly)	**Duration:** 1.5 hours **Agenda/Intent:** • Leadership member starts with 15 min. introduction then asks for questions (may prompt the audience with questions to get discussion started) • Open discussion
Quarterly or as milestones are achieved	**Duration:** 1.5 hours **Agenda/Intent:** • Leadership members share milestones and achievements • Recognize individual and/or groups for achieving results
3 times per year	**Duration:** 1 to 2 days **Agenda/Intent:** • Business review • Provide ongoing leadership training as needed – coaching, development, etc. • Provide Foundations of Leadership follow-up opportunities • Monitor and evaluate operating plans
Monthly by video or phone conference	**Duration:** 1 to 1.5 hours **Agenda/intent:** • Ensure consistency and coordination across geographic areas • Discuss/monitor progress to plan • Enhance morale and dispel rumors

Template for Two-Way Communication

Subject Title	
General	
What is it?	Brief explanation or definition supported by three key messages
Why are we doing it?	Brief explanation that connects back to the objectives
What are the benefits?	• From a colleague's perspective (What's in it for me as an employee?) • From a business perspective (How will this help us achieve our objectives?) • From a customer, provider or other external stakeholder perspective (How will this increase satisfaction and build loyalty to BCBSF?)
Suggested Topics	
Where are we now?	• Status of work • Progress against plan • What do we as individuals and as a team need to do?
Where are we going?	• Timeline • What needs to be done to complete the work? • How will we monitor and evaluate progress?
What are the issues and action plans?	• Decisions to be made • Current issues or concerns
Closing	

Guidelines for Presentation Development

General Presentation Tips

- Keep your messaging short and simple.
- For PowerPoint presentations, follow the 8 x 8 rule - Use no more than eight lines of copy and no more than eight words per line.
- Keep your text concise - This will help you elaborate during the presentation and spend more time on two-way discussion.
- Begin bullet points with a noun or start all with a verb, but be consistent. If you begin with verbs, keep them in the same tense.

Presentation Tips for Speakers

- **Prepare for the audience** - Some audience members may not understand the topic, support it, etc. Facilitate discussion to achieve acceptance and commitment.
- **Be aware of your facial expressions** - Smile and avoid frowns or grimaces when faced with a question, especially if the question is repeated.
- **Make eye contact** - Make eye contact instead of scanning the audience or looking over their heads. You can build trust and credibility with solid eye contact.
- **Maintain positive body language.**
- **Avoid the use of acronyms** – Although we work in an environment that uses a lot of acronyms (typical of all companies), don't assume your audience knows what they mean. Explain all acronyms in first use.

Logistical Considerations

Note: Smaller groups facilitate more interactive dialogue. We encourage you to limit the number of participants as best permitted by the size of your organization.

- **Small groups (up to 10 people) – conference room or small meeting room**
  Make this a discussion format. It may be helpful to use visual aids – either an overhead projector or a projection system. Standing during your presentation and using projection allows the full impact of the visuals and gives you "presence." If you want to remain seated around the table with the group, photocopy the visuals as handouts instead of projecting them.

- **Medium groups (10 to 40 people) – meeting or training room**
  Be sure the projected image is large enough to be seen easily from every seat in the room.

- **Large groups (40 to 500 people) – meeting room, cafeteria, theater, stadium**
  You may need to use a wireless lavaliere microphone, which will give you the flexibility to walk around the room.

Preparing for Two-Way Communication

Background An introduction of the topic to be discussed
Communication Challenges Issues likely to inhibit the facilitator's ability to achieve understanding during two-way communication
Communication Goals What you need to accomplish in the given timeframe to achieve the goals of the two-way communication
Audience Colleagues attending the two-way communication
Strategies How best to accomplish the goals of the two-way communication
Key Messages The most important points you need to communicate to create awareness and understanding
Communication Tools The media you can use during two-way communication to achieve the goals of the session

Example Feedback Form

I have a good understanding of the Enterprise Corporate Performance Indicators (CPIs) results against plan:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

I have a good understanding of how I contribute to the outcomes we need to achieve:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

I have a good understanding of our Enterprise direction this year:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

I have a good understanding of the Enterprise CPIs:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

I have a good understanding of my sector or enabling area's scorecard:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

I have a good understanding of my group/division/ department's operating plan:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

I have a good understanding of my role in achieving our desired outcomes:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Overall, the discussion and communication was effective:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding the plan discussions or suggestions you may have to improve future communications:

Please select the area in which you work: **(List out the departments within your organization)**

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