

Communication Trumps Uncertainty

Certainly these are times of uncertainty – in just about every way we can imagine. Everyone is a little edgy – wondering about their stability, their firm’s stability, even our country’s stability. While communication is always a good idea, it is essential now.

Our employees want to know what they might expect; our clients want to know what they might expect. Yet, because we may not know what to say, many firms are silent right now.

I just read a great article in this month’s issue of *The Futurist* that talked about lessons learned by the senior editor while he watched the meltdown in Fukushima from his apartment in Kyoto, Japan. He chronicles the missteps that were taken in handling the situation, and leaves us with basic truths about how to communicate during times of crisis or uncertainty.

During these times, he says that people have three questions they need answered from those in charge:

- What happened?
- What do you expect to happen?
- and What are you worried *might* happen?

These questions construct the basics what we need to communicate to our employees and our clients too. Our employees want (*need*) to know what they can expect in their employment situation; our clients want our insights into what they can expect in their situations.

Many of our firms have served as trusted advisors to their clients for years – maybe decades. We are in the position to come along side them now, in this time of uncertainty, and help them construct possible future scenarios and how they can manage through them.

Likewise, we should be over-communicating to our employees right now to help them manage the impact of uncertain economic times on their employment. No news is not necessarily good news to them.