

Bad News Gets Easier

Although many organizations have improved their internal communications lines by encouraging employees to report important information, including bad news, up the management ranks, many workers are still not fully comfortable delivering bad news to their bosses, according to a survey by Sirota Survey Intelligence.

While only slightly more than half of employees (51 percent) overall said it was OK to communicate bad news to their bosses a decade ago, this has increased to 65 percent of employees today, according to Sirota's most recent survey.

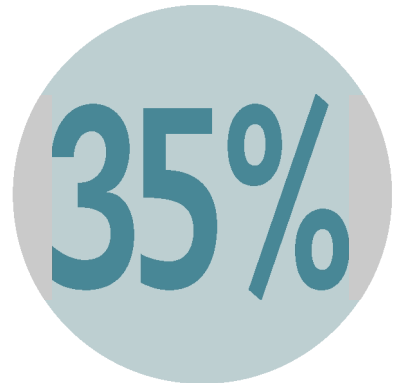
Still, more than one-third (35 percent) of employees overall surveyed between 2001 and mid-2005 tend to believe that the top management at their companies does not encourage reporting important information up through the management channels even if it's bad news.

This includes 37 percent of non-managers and 26 percent of those managers who are unsure about delivering bad news to their bosses. While 74 percent of managers claim their organizations encourage the reporting of important information, including bad news, up the management ranks, only 63 percent of non-managers feel that way, according to Sirota's survey of organizations. In all, Sirota surveyed more than 900,000 employees at 68 companies between 1991 and mid-2005.

"Even with this trend toward increased openness between corporate leadership and employees, more than one-third of non-managers, and more than one-quarter of managers, do not feel so encouraged to share bad news with their bosses," said Jeffrey Saltzman, Sirota's chief executive officer.

"This means a significant number of both managers and non-managers tend to feel their observations of problems, such as faulty processes, missed financial numbers, and even a lack of compliance with standards and moral practices, may not reach the executive suites of their organizations," added Saltzman. "In some companies, a fear of retribution may be at work."

The BIG Number...



A survey suggests that more than a third of employees believe that the top management in their own companies does not encourage the reporting of vital information—including bad news—up the corporate communication chain.

Top management encourages reporting important information up the management line—even if it's bad news

