Communication: It’s Your Reputation

Don’t put your reputation on the line because of communication. At times you may walk a fine line between being too aggressive and being too relaxed. As a leader, you need to ensure that you do not get a reputation for leaning one way or the other. Consider the following questions as you find your way through challenging situations:

- How do you know when to stay out of an issue and when to get involved?
- Is there something you shy away from, conflict for example?
- Do creative, off-the-wall ideas scare you so much that you ignore them?
- Even if it is damaging do you want to know the data?
- Do you get nervous with a boss who is the “shoot the messenger” type?
- How do you respond when errors are identified? Yell and blame? Become depressed and quiet?
- Are you equitable when defending ideas of others?
- Do you give credit where credit is due?
- Do you get involved in the unimportant things that should be left at a lower level?
- Are you able to deliver a solution-oriented, succinct statement that clearly describes what you are promoting?
- Do you have a measure for which ideas should be promoted and which should be left on the drawing board?

Make a list of the communication concerns that you have. How do you address them now? What do you need to know? How do you want to address them in the future? Meet with your manager or a colleague who is a good communicator to discuss these issues. Ask if they can describe the behaviors that would be too aggressive and those that would be too relaxed.