Mindful Online Communication

Communication can be tricky. Sometimes, what we wish to say is not received as intended. With online communication, the potential for miscommunication increases. In the workplace, it is important to be mindful of how we communicate online (whether internal to the organization or externally) to ensure the meaning of our words comes through with clarity.

AN EXERCISES ON MINDFUL ONLINE COMMUNICATION:

Read the following two passages and reflect on the similarities and differences between them. Note the impact each one has on you and any questions you might be left with. Remember, there is no right or wrong here. Simply observe what you notice.

1. *"Department heads: We will be having a meeting this afternoon at 2pm in the conference room. Please be on time."*

2. *"Hi team. I know that it's last minute, but we're having a quick meeting today at 2pm in the large conference room. A new policy has come in from upper management that we'd like to brief you on. See you there."*

Now consider: How would you write this type of email? Practice putting it into your own words. If you are doing this exercise with a colleague, share your reactions, reflections, and personal preferences with one another. Did you each hear the same thing and react the same way?

A MINDFUL PAUSE BEFORE SENDING...

Before hitting 'send' or 'post' on your next email, social media update, or message to a coworker, pause to ask yourself the following questions. This mindfulness exercise is not about determining if your words are *right or wrong*, but a tool for optimizing the efficacy of your message by applying curiosity.

- What do I intend to communicate here?

- Is my choice of wording clear or is there room for misinterpretation or confusion?

- Is my tone appropriate for the situation and is it friendly or personal?

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS...

What does research say about the challenges of computer-mediated communication in the workplace? Recent findings suggest online communication presents the following challenges:

- Changes how we view those we interact with by dehumanizing them

- Increases self-disclosure (perhaps inappropriately)

- Triggers more frequent and intense acting out than if in-person

- Increases risk of misinterpreting what someone said or drawing the wrong conclusions