

Is silence killing your company article review examples

[Business](#), [Company](#)



MEMO: SILENCE Page 1 of 3

Introduction: The article “ Is Silence Killing Your Company?” has interesting information about creating healthy communications in a company. The purpose of this memo is to share and discuss the main points in the article because they are helpful to company management. Both of the articles referred to in this memo can be found in the Harvard Business Review which is a peer-reviewed journal.

Silence is Unhealthy: Unfortunately people that speak out are famous as being whistleblowers who lose their jobs. They may even become ostracized from their profession. Speaking out is not thought of as a wise career move. It is really too bad because talking out problems and working out conflict are good strategies. Silence in a company is an obstacle to successfully reaching project goals. Silence also puts a psychological weight on people who remain silent. Silence creates a lose/lose situation. Gentile (2010) lists the four most common reasons for staying silent.

Everyone here does it. I need to be quiet and follow the rest of the employees who have been here longer.

Nothing needs to be changed unless the customers are complaining.

It is not in my job description, someone else is in charge of it.

The company will think I am not a team player if I speak up.

Price of Silence: It is important to speak up when something is not going well in a project. Often though an employee is not encouraged to speak up and when they do, their manager may refuse to listen. A manager ruins the chance to learn something new that may be valuable for a project's success if they do not listen. If the employee does not find a positive way to pursue the issue then they will suffer, too. Perlow and Williams (2003) share an example about Robert who was in charge of his law firm's support staff and Linda who was in charge of the head of the library. Linda approached Robert with a problem but he pressured Linda to drop the issue. Finally, over time, because of Robert's refusal to listen and help solve the problem, the law firm suffered from a big turn over in the library staff.

MEMO: SILENCE Page 2 of 3

How to Start Talking:

Take responsibility for failures because it encourages other to speak up and/or to start a conversation that can solve the problem.

Wherever a person works in the hierarchy of company, top, middle, or bottom, each person has the power to speak out.

Speak out even if there is an atmosphere of silence in your company. Perlow and Williams (2003) describe it as an act of deviance but not one that is dysfunctional. " Acts of deviance can point to areas where organizations need to change and can result in fruitful alternatives" (8).

Observations: I agree that silence is a very dangerous characteristic to encourage in a company. Even though it is difficult to speak up when you know there will be a disagreement, it really is the adult thing to do. There are

many ways to keep trying to get your message across until you find the style that your boss can 'hear.' People have different styles and being able to hear something negative can take a certain style to allow them to hear what is being said. For example a possible good result Linda could have used for talking with Robert was to bring a solution to him. She could have described the problem without being judgmental towards either party, and then she could have suggested an alternative that might work to solve the problem.

Conclusions: A culture of silence in a company is a sign that some changes need to be made. When people do not speak up it probably means they are afraid to speak up. People who are afraid to change the status quo cannot be creative. They also may not be willing to make ethical decisions if it goes against what they think the company wants. If no one speaks out a tiny problem can grow so big that the whole company may suffer. Two good ways to change a culture of silence are (a) to encourage self-confidence in employees, and (b) to have some healthy mechanisms for airing out problems. A strategy an employee can try, is to find other employees who have the same perspective and organize a group to present a problem together to management. Overcoming the fear of speaking out is well worth the effort.

MEMO: SILENCE Page 3 of 3

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