

Title:

Information overload: don't let them overwhelm you

Word Count:

319

Summary:

Managers are drowning in information, much of it from the people who report to them. The answer lies in their own hands.

Keywords:

information overload, communication, management, managing people

Article Body:

It's becoming more and more difficult to sift the nuggets of true knowledge from the mountains of data thrown at us from all directions. Of course, we do this to ourselves to a certain extent, because in this age of unlimited access to information through the Internet as well as all the traditional sources, most of us try to take in just too much. No wonder we feel overwhelmed.

But if you are an executive or manager, there's one way you can cut down on this data dump: stop the flow you get from your own people in the form of e-mail messages, memos, reports and presentations.

I'm not suggesting you refuse to accept any information from your people, but honestly, haven't you ever received a half-inch-thick written report when you only wanted the salient facts or the main figures?

Have you ever sat through a monthly financial presentation in which your people stood in front of a slide covered in figures, turned around and read them out, and then --- just in case you missed anything --- gave you a copy of the slide as a handout? The message of these presentations generally is, "Here's what the budget said we would do, here's what we actually did, so here's the shortfall or surplus."

Just think of all the time this took, both for the people who laboured mightily to put it together (sweating bullets as they did because they dread the presentation to much), and also for you to listen to it. And did it really help you? Or did it simply add more data to the dump?

Fixing this universal problem not only saves companies money, but it also has

the potential to cut down on workplace stress at all levels. But it won't fix itself. If you don't speak up, you'll listen to these presentations and read those long-winded reports every month till the end of your career!