

## **Pssst! Your Corporate Initiative Is Dead and You're the Only One Who Doesn't Know**

*New research says 90% of employees know far in advance when projects are doomed but feel incapable of speaking up*

PROVO, UT – February 8, 2007 – From the Airbus A380 to the Denver Airport baggage handling system, the failure of major projects seems to be a common theme in today's business landscape. According to a new study, it's not just big business that suffers from project failure. Research released today from a Crucial Conversations Online Survey revealed that 82 percent of employees say there are significant organization-wide initiatives underway in their workplace that will likely fail, and 78 percent say they are personally working on a "doomed" project right now.

Among the survey's other key findings:

- More than 90 percent say they know early on when projects are likely to fall short
- 77 percent compare their failing projects to "slow motion train wrecks"
- 81 percent say approaching a key decision maker about the project is nearly impossible

According to the survey, only 10 percent feel they can effectively speak up about the "slow motion train wrecks." More than 71 percent say they try to speak up to key decision makers but don't feel they are heard, and 19 percent don't even attempt to have the conversation.

Joseph Grenny, coauthor of the national bestseller *Crucial Conversations*, says the reason most employees don't speak up when they know a project is doomed is that they don't know how to speak up in a way that solves the problem.

"There is a strong tendency for people to 'go silent' on important issues because they expect the conversation will go badly," says Grenny. "With the right set of skills, employees and senior leaders should be able to discuss crucial issues that, if resolved, can ultimately save companies billions of dollars in wasted time, squandered resources, lost jobs, and sagging revenues."

Some of the reasons people cite for being unable to discuss crucial issues with a decision maker include worrying about damaging their credibility or reputation, as well as fear that the decision maker might get angry or defensive.

Backed by Grenny's previous research study, *Silence Fails: The Five Crucial Conversations for Flawless Execution*, released by VitalSmarts and The Concours Group late last year, 85 percent of all project failures can be attributed to "organizational silence." The study points to five key conversations that, if held quickly and effectively, can decrease failure rates by 50 to 70 percent. More at [www.silencefails.com](http://www.silencefails.com)

"If senior leaders can eliminate silence or avoidance within their organizations and create cultures where people feel safe openly discussing key issues, they can prevent the failure of high-stakes initiatives," says Grenny.

The *Silence Fails* study provides recommendations for senior leaders on how to develop a business case for change, measure behaviors, invest in skills, hold senior management accountable, and make heroes of early adopters.

### **About VitalSmarts**

An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts is home to Crucial Conversations® Training, an award-winning program that delivers powerful influence tools that enrich relationships and improve end results. The Company also has two *New York Times* bestselling books, *Crucial Conversations* and *Crucial Confrontations*. VitalSmarts has been listed twice on the Inc. 500 list of fastest-growing companies and has trained more than 500,000 people worldwide. [www.vital-smarts.com](http://www.vital-smarts.com)

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