

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A Building Block of Successful Organizations

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Abstract

Effective Communication is significant for managers in the organizations so as to perform the basic functions of management, i.e., Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling. Communication helps managers to perform their jobs and responsibilities. Communication serves as a foundation for planning. All the essential information must be communicated to the managers who in turn must communicate the plans so as to implement them. Organizing also requires effective communication with others about their job task. Similarly leaders as managers must communicate effectively with their subordinates so as to achieve the team goals. Controlling is not possible without written and oral communication. Managers devote a great part of their time in communication. They generally devote approximately six hours per day in communicating. They spend great time on face to face or telephonic communication with their superiors, subordinates, colleagues, customers or suppliers. Managers also use written Communication in form of letters, reports or memos wherever oral communication is not feasible. Thus, we can say that “**effective communication is a building block of successful organizations**”. In other words, communication acts as organizational blood.

Keywords: *Effective, Communication, Successful organization*

Introduction

Communication is a vital management component to any organization. Whether the purpose is to update employees on new policies, to prepare for a weather disaster, to ensure safety throughout the organization or to listen to the attitudes of employees, effective communication is an integral issue in effective management. To be successful, organizations should have comprehensive policies and strategies for communicating with their constituencies, employees and stakeholders as well as with the community at large. Most HR professionals and organizational leaders agree that linking corporate communication to business strategy is essential to effective and consistent business operations.

Meaning of Communication:

The meaning: The origin of the word “communication” is “communicare” or “communis” which means “to impart”, “to participate”, “to share” or “to make common.” The sense of sharing is inherent in the very origin and meaning of “communication.”

Definitions

“Communication is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.”—**Louis A. Allen.**

“Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.”—**Keith Davis.**

“Communication as any behaviour that results in an exchange of meaning.”—**The American Management Association.**

“Simply stated, communication means the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another. Communication, fundamental and vital to all managerial functions, is the process of imparting ideas and making oneself understood by others.”—**Theo Haimann.**

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION:

The basic elements of communication are:

1. Communicator:

The sender, speaker, issuer or writer-who intends to convey or transmit a message.

2. Communicate:

The receiver for whom the communication is meant. He receives the information, order or message.

3. Message:

The subject matter of communication i.e., the content of the letter, speech, order, information, idea or suggestion.

4. Communication Channel:

The media by which the information and understanding are passed from the sender to the receiver. It serves as link between the communicator and the communicatee i.e., the levels of organization or relationships that exist between different individuals or departments of an organization.

5. Response or Feedback:

The effect, reply or reaction, of the information transmitted, on the communicatee i.e., successful, no communication or miscommunication.

THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION:

1. **Sender:** The sender or the communicator is the person who initiates the conversation and has conceptualized the idea that he intends to convey it to others.
2. **Encoding:** The sender begins with the encoding process wherein he uses certain words or non-verbal methods such as symbols, signs, body gestures, etc. to translate the information into a message. The sender's knowledge, skills, perception, background, competencies, etc. has a great impact on the success of the message.
3. **Message:** Once the encoding is finished, the sender gets the message that he intends to convey. The message can be written, oral, symbolic or non-verbal such as body gestures, silence, sighs, sounds, etc. or any other signal that triggers the response of a receiver.
4. **Communication Channel:** The Sender chooses the medium through which he wants to convey his message to the recipient. It must be selected carefully in order to make the message effective and correctly interpreted by the recipient. The choice of medium depends on the interpersonal relationships between the sender and the receiver and also on the urgency of the message being sent. Oral, virtual, written, sound, gesture, etc. are some of the commonly used communication mediums.
5. **Receiver:** The receiver is the person for whom the message is intended or targeted. He tries to comprehend it in the best possible manner such that the communication objective is attained. The degree to which the receiver decodes the message depends on his knowledge of the subject matter, experience, trust and relationship with the sender.
6. **Decoding:** Here, the receiver interprets the sender's message and tries to understand it in the best possible manner. An effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the message in exactly the same way as it was intended by the sender.
7. **Feedback:** The Feedback is the final step of the process that ensures the receiver has received the message and interpreted it correctly as it was intended by the sender. It increases the effectiveness of the communication as it permits the sender to know the efficacy of his message. The response of the receiver can be verbal or non-verbal.

The Noise shows the barriers in communications. There are chances when the message sent by the sender is not received by the recipient.

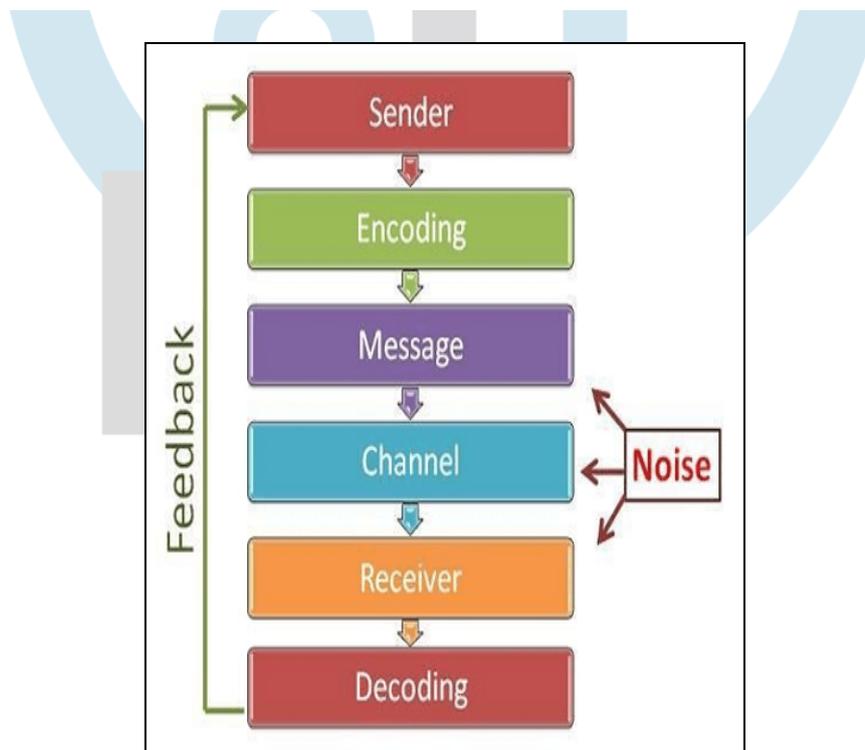


IMAGE SHOWING THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION MODELS

Meaning of Model

A model is widely used to depict any idea, thought or a concept in a more simpler way through diagrams, pictorial representations etc. Models go a long way in making the understanding of any concept easy and clear.

Types of Models

Aristotle model of communication
 Berlo's model of communication
 Shannon and Weaver model of communication
 Schramm's model of communication
 Helical Model of communication
 Westley and MacLean's model of communication

ARISTOTLE MODEL OF COMMUNICATION. According to this model, the speaker plays a key role in communication. He is the one who takes complete charge of the communication. The model says that the speaker communicates in such a way that the listeners get influenced and responds accordingly. The speaker must be very careful about his selection of words and content in this model of communication. He should understand his target audience and then prepare his speech. Voice tone and pitch should also be loud and clear enough for the people to hear and understand the speech properly. Stammering, getting nervous in between of a conversation must be avoided. Voice modulations also play a very important role in creating the desired effect. Blank expressions, confused looks and similar pitch all through the speech make it monotonous and nullify its effect. Aristotle model of communication is the golden rule to excel in public speaking, seminars, and lectures.

BERLO'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

While the Aristotle model of communication puts the speaker in the central position and suggests that the speaker is the one who drives the entire communication, the Berlo's model of communication takes into account the emotional aspect of the message. Berlo's model of communication operates on the SMCR model.

In the SMCR model

- S - Stands for **Source**
- M - **Message**
- C - **Channel**
- R - **Receiver**

S - Source

The source in other words also called the sender is the one from whom the thought originates. It is done with the help of communication skills, Attitude, Knowledge, Social System and Culture.

- **Communication Skills**
 An individual must possess excellent communication skills to make his communication effective and create an impact among the listeners. The speaker must know where to take pauses, where to repeat the sentences, how to speak a particular sentence, how to pronounce a word and so on
- **Attitude**
 A person might be a very good speaker but if he doesn't have the right attitude, he would never emerge as a winner. The sender must have the right attitude to create a long lasting impression on the listeners.
- **Knowledge**
 Knowledge is the clarity of the information which the speaker wants to convey to the second party. One must be thorough in what he is speaking with complete in-depth knowledge of the subject.
- **Social System**
 Speaker must not ignore the social set up of the place where he is communicating. He must remember the sentiments, cultural beliefs, religious feelings of the second party.
- **Culture**
 Culture refers to the cultural background of the community or the listeners where the speaker is communicating or delivering his speech.

M - Message

When an individual converts his thoughts into words, a message is created. **The process is also called as Encoding.**

Any message further comprises of the following elements:

- **Content**
 Content is actually the matter or the script of the conversation. It is in simpler words, the backbone of any communication. The content has to be sensible, accurate, crisp, related to the thought to hit the listeners bang on and create an immediate impact.
- **Element**

It has been observed that speech alone cannot bring a difference in the communication. Keep on constantly speaking and the listeners will definitely lose interest after some time. The speech must be coupled with lots of hand movements, gestures, postures, facial expressions, body movements to capture the attention of the listeners and make the speech impressive. Hand movements, gestures, postures, facial expressions, body movements, gestures all come under the elements of the message.

- **Treatment**

Treatment is actually the way one treats his message and is conveyed to the listeners. One must understand the importance of the message and must know how to handle it. If a boss wants to fire any of his employees, he has to be authoritative and can't express his message in a casual way. This is referred to as the treatment of the message. One must understand how to present his message so that the message is conveyed in the most accurate form.

- **Structure**

A message cannot be expressed in one go. It has to be properly structured in order to convey the message in the most desired form.

- **Code**

Enter a wrong code and the locks will never open. Enter a wrong password, you will not be able to open your email account. In the same way the code has to be correct in the communication. Your body movements, your language, your expressions, your gestures are actually the codes of the message and have to be accurate otherwise the message gets distorted and the recipient will never be able to decode the correct information.

C - Channel

Channel - Channel actually refers to the medium how the information flows from the sender to the receiver.

How does one know what the other person is speaking ? - Through **Hearing**.

How does one know whether the pasta he has ordered is made in white sauce or not ? - Through **Tasting**.

How does one know that there is a diversion ahead or it's a no parking zone? - Through **Seeing**.

How will an individual come to know that the food is fresh or stale ? How do we find out the fragrance of a perfume ? - Through **Smelling**.

How will you find out whether the milk is hot or not ? - Through **Touching**.

All the **five senses are the channels** which help human beings to communicate with each other.

R - Receiver

When the message reaches the receiver, he tries to understand what the listener actually wants to convey and then responds accordingly. This is also called as decoding.

The receiver should be on the same platform as the speaker for smooth flow of information and better understanding of the message. He should possess good communication skills to understand what the speaker is trying to convey. He should have the right attitude to understand the message in a positive way. His knowledge should also be at par with the listener and must know about the subject. He should also be from the same social and cultural background just like the speaker.

SHANNON AND WEAVER MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Shannon and weaver model simply proposes that a message actually originates from the person who gets the thought or has the information. The sender is also called the Source of information or the Information Source. The information then gets transmitted from the brain to the mouth and comes out as a signal which then reaches the recipient after joining hands with several noises and other disturbances. The recipient then further passes on the message to its final destination or other minds of other individuals.

Information Source (Thought / message)

↓

Transmitter (Brain to mouth) [Along with noise and distractions-external barriers]

↓

Signal

↓

Recipient (Receives the signal)

↓

Final Destination (Finally gets the message)

SCHRAMM'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Wilber Schramm proposed the model of communication in 1954.

Information is of no use unless and until it is carefully put into words and conveyed to others. Encoding plays a very important role because it initiates the process of communication by converting the thought into content. When the information reaches the recipient his prime responsibility is to understand what the speaker intends to convey. Unless and until the second party is able to understand or decode the information what the sender wants to communicate, the message is actually of no use.

Thus encoding and decoding are two most important factors of an effective communication without which information can never flow between two individuals. Schramm's model also revolves around the above principle. According to the Schramm's model, coding and decoding are the two essential processes of an effective communication.

He also emphasizes that the communication is incomplete unless and until the sender receives a feedback from the recipient. Schramm believed that communication is actually a two way process between the first party and the second party.

Sender
M ↓ ↑ M

Receiver

M - Stands for message

Schramm believed that an individual's knowledge, experience and cultural background also play an important role in communication. Individuals from diverse cultures, religion or background tend to interpret the message in different ways.

To conclude according to this model of communication when a sender passes on the information to the receiver, the receiver must interpret it in the desired form the sender wants and give him the feedback or respond accordingly. Any communication where the sender does not get the feedback, the communication is not complete and thus ineffective.

HELICAL MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Another very important model of communication is the Helical Model of communication. The **Helical Model of communication was proposed by Frank Dance in 1967** to throw some more light on communication process.

What is a Helix?

A Helix is nothing but a smooth curve just like a spring which if goes upwards also comes downwards.



The Helical model of communication was designed by Frank Dance keeping the simple Helix in mind.

According to the **Helical model of communication, the process of communication evolves from the very birth of an individual and continues till the existing moment.** All living entities start communicating from the very first day of their origin. When seeds are planted, they convey the message to the gardener that they need to be watered daily and should be treated well with fertilizers and manure.

When a plant emerges from the seed it also starts communicating its need for water, sunlight, manure and fertilizers, thus supporting the Helical model of communication. The same also applies for animals, birds, fishes and all living creatures.

According to the Helical model as the process of communication moves forward it also comes back and is largely dependant on the past behaviour of the individual.

The model believes that communication process is just like a helix which moves forward as well as comes backward and is dependent on the behaviour patterns of the past definitely with some modifications and changes.

As the child grows up, he does make slight changes in his past body movements or past pronunciation or facial expressions. *He makes certain changes, modifications in his communication and tries to get rid of the communication errors.* An individual will definitely get less nervous in his teenage days as compared to his childhood days, thus a slight change in his behaviour.

Child (Day 1) communication evolves

↓

Communication continues

↓↑

(Communication depends on past activities)

↓

(Current day) communication continues with modifications

The *Helical model of communication understands communication in a broader perspective* and considers almost all the activities of an individual from day one to till date. It cumulates all the activities occurring in the complete span of an individual that affects the process of communication, which in turn goes forward and also depends on the past activities.

WESTLEY AND MACLEAN'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Yet another achievement in the discipline of communication was the Westley and MacLean's model of communication proposed in the year 1957

This model considers a strong relation between the signals from the surroundings and the process of communication. According to this model the process of communication begins with receiving messages rather than sending messages.

(Receives message)

Environment-----Sender----then sends message

(Communication starts)

In this model it is not necessary that the signals coming from the surroundings are intentionally sent to start the process of communication. Sometimes events might accidentally occur or the thought can be accidentally received

To conclude this model of communication supports the initiation of communication from receiving messages rather than the sender sending it.

These are the initiatives by great scholars to simplify the process of communication and help in the better understanding of "Communication process".

Importance of Communication:

Communication is the heart of any organization. Everything you do in the workplace from the results of communication.

1. Increase productivity

An organisation will experience an increased productivity rate if employees communicate effectively within the organisations hierarchy. The simple act of providing adequate and needed information at the right time will save a lot of work time, allowing for more things to be done. Communication is also important to improve employee and employer relations. The idea behind this theory is that employees who relate well to each other will be able to work better as a team. Good teamwork is a recipe for increased productivity. Understanding what needs to be done is another gift of communicating in an organisation as it helps to get work done faster.

2. Motivation

Communication is also a basic tool for motivation, which can improve the morale of the employees in any organization. Having good relations with other members of an organisation is motivating and it boosts the morale of an employee because one is comfortable to share their thoughts, feelings and other ideas without worry. Inappropriate or faulty communication among employees or between manager and subordinates is a major cause of conflict and low morale at work. Nobody wishes to dread a colleague in the workplace. A manager should clarify to employees about what is to be done, how well they are doing and what can be done for better performance to improve their motivation. Recognition, admonition and encouragement communicate a lot to and about the organisation.

3. Create a comfortable work environment

No employee or employer will be comfortable not being able to communicate with his/her subordinates or colleagues. It would cause mental chaos. Man cannot do without communicating, so man must communicate. Communication brings about understanding and understanding births mutual respect and healthy working relationships. Being able to relate comfortably with your colleagues, subordinates and superiors brings about a comfortable work environment. This is crucial to the personal fulfilment of every member of the organization. A comfortable work environment brings about happiness, happiness is motivating, and motivation increases productivity. An increased productivity level will help the company to attain organisational goals at the appointed time. This comfort can also be seen as a sense of security for every employee and employer.

4. Build organizational relationships

Every institution thrives on relationships therefore, it is essential to constantly build relationships to survive. In order to survive, an organisation must build healthy relationships within and outside the organisation. These relationships will play a major role in achieving organisational goals. Relationships are built through communication, communication reveals an employee's likes, dislikes, work ethics, background and their person as a whole. This will determine what and how they are communicated with and to which extent. Communication also reveals the intentions of an employee. All this information can foster a relationship amongst employees which best suit their characters. Peer motivation is also known to be one of the most effective forms of motivation.

5. Effective top-down relations

In an organisation, communication flows in various directions, top-down, bottom-up and vertically. Communication is the tool with which top management relays instructions to the subordinates. Good communication in this chain is key so as to not come off as condescending, rude and just so subordinates understand your wishes. This form of communication is called communication because messages are not close-ended, they allow feedback. If good communication of this flow is practised well, employees will feel part of the conversation.

6. Effective bottom-up relations

Good communication will allow bottom-up communication. In this communication process, the message flows from lower management staff to higher management staff. It is important for higher management to open up to messages from subordinates because this will help them understand work experience in their position. As much as an organisation belongs to someone or a group of people, the subordinates make up the organisation, therefore, it is essential to provide a good working environment and the required resources for them to carry out their daily duties. Messages from lower level management could reveal a lack of motivation, displeasure, need for change or a new solution. Communication is a two-way process and both parties must be involved in the communication process.

7. Avoid conflict

The absence of communication is the presence of misunderstanding and as everyone should know, misunderstandings lead to conflict. It is important to communicate in an organization because understanding is the key to the success of any organisation. Continuous conflict will crash the organisation, there will be zero productivity, no motivation, the organisation will not prosper. This would all eventually lead to the loss of money, time, effort, reputation etc.

8. Decision making

To make decisions in an organisation, numerous stakeholders must discuss. In order to discuss communication must take place. In exchanging ideas and understanding various factors that must be considered before making a decision, communication takes place. This will enable the organisation to make the right decision in achieving company goals.

9. Branding

Every organisation has a brand image and this image is communicated in numerous ways. A brand is also built through communication. An organization communicates its brand through logos, colours, mission, vision, operational style, staff, owners, campaigns and other marketing strategies. A good brand image will attract customers and investors. It will also place the organisation ahead or at par with its competition.

10. Altering individual's attitude

Communication also plays a crucial role in altering individual's attitudes. For instance, a well-informed individual will show a better attitude than a less-informed individual towards their work and the organisation. Organisational communication can be achieved through magazines, journals, meetings and various other forms of oral and written communication help in moulding employee's attitudes. A good attitude is essential for the growth and productivity of any organisation.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1) Clarity of Information:

The communicator must be clear in his mind with the information he wants to communicate. Communication should always be in common and easily understandable language so that it may not be misunderstood by the persons receiving it.

(2) Adequacy of Message:

The message to be communicated should be adequate and complete in all respects since incomplete information turns out to be dangerous from the viewpoint of business. The adequacy of information being transmitted depends upon the intellectual capabilities of parties concerned.

(3) Consistency of Message:

The message to be communicated should not be mutually conflicting rather it should be in line with the overall objectives, policies, programmes and procedures of the organisation. Self-contradictory messages always create chaos and confusion in the organisation which is highly detrimental to the efficient running of the enterprise. If the message is amended from the previous one, the fact should be clearly stated so that the chances of confusion can be reduced.

(4) Feedback:

Feedback is an important method of ensuring effective communication. It refers to the confirmation of the idea communicated whether the message has been understood by the receiver in the same sense in which the sender makes or whether the recipient is agreed or disagreed to the proposal of the communicator, makes it essential on the part of the sender to confirm it from the receiver.

(5) Understanding the Receiver:

Understanding is the main aim of communication. The communication must create proper understanding in the mind of the receiver. Killian advised, "communicate with an awareness of the total physical and human setting in which the information will be received.

(6) Consultation:

It is generally desirable to consult others in planning communication. This will provide additional insight and objectivity to the message. An important advantage of consultation will be that those who have been taken into confidence while planning communication will lend active support.

(7) Determine Medium:

After having decided the subject matter it should be determined as to how best this message is to be communicated. All aspects of oral or written communication must be carefully examined.

(8) Tone and Content:

The communicator must be careful about the language he uses while speaking or writing. His tone, expression and emotion will have a definite impact on the effectiveness or otherwise of what he is trying to communicate.

(9) Timing and Timeliness:

Proper attention should be given to the timing and timeliness of the communication. The same message will be received or responded differently by different individuals and groups at one time and differently by the same individuals and groups at different times.

Even in an emergency one dare not overlook the situational, psychological and technical aspect of timing. Moreover, it is also necessary that information should be given in time as out-of-date information is as bad as or worse than none at all.

(10) Support with Action:

It is highly necessary that the actions of the communicator should support his communication. This is because action speaks louder than words. The most persuasive communication, it should be noted, is not what one says but what one does.

(11) Listening:

A very important aspect of effective communication is that executives and supervisors should be good listeners. It is dangerous to be inattentive or indifferent when others are attempting to communicate.

(12) Environment of Trust and Confidence:

F.E. Fischer has pointed out that 'communication grows best in a climate of trust and confidence'. Every effort should, therefore, be made to win confidence by reporting facts honestly. Employees need to be convinced and feel that the company is truthful and sincere in its contacts.

(13) Keeping the System Always Alive:

The system of communication should be kept open and alive all the year round. It is only by honest attempts that good communication relations can be developed.

Conclusion

Communication is key to the existence of man and therefore, a business venture. Communication is the exchange of texts, signs and symbols between parties to create understanding. There are different types of communication in an organization. It could either be oral or written communication. In an organization, communication is a tool used every day to achieve company goals as it is a tool for socializing, educating and informing stakeholders and shareholders in an organization. There are common communication barriers which affect organizational communication, such as clarity of the message, use of an inappropriate channel, network issues and more. All of this must be deployed to achieve effective communication within an organization. An effective and efficient communication system requires managerial proficiency in delivering and receiving messages. A manager must discover various barriers to communication analyze the reasons for their occurrence and take preventive steps to avoid those barriers. Thus, the primary responsibility of a manager is to develop and maintain an effective communication system in the organization. So, organizational communication refers to the forms and channels of communication among members of

organizations such as corporations, nonprofits or small businesses. Studies have found a strong relationship between the levels of communication in an organization and job performance and satisfaction. Organizational communication can be formal or informal, flow in various directions and make use of various media.

Communication plays a vital role to every business today. Employers who invest time and energy into effective communication often build trust among employees which leads to increased output, productivity and morale. In addition, employees who communicate well with the customers and colleagues are viewed as important assets to an organization. Effective communication helps managers to identify hidden talents in the organization, its benefits are facilitating team building, improving people's attitude, increasing innovation, helping in management, enhancing motivation and increasing loyalty. Thus we can say effective communication is a building block of successful organizations.

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