

Effective Team Working & Communication

BMSK4002

Student ID 1710388

Syeda Amina AMBIAH

Lecturer: Richard SMALL

Employers have many different ways that they engage and communicate with their employees in the workplace, i will discuss some of the most effective way that this can be achieved and the the most least effective way, going on to state also how this can be improved and incorporating examples of how this has had an impact on somebody that i know of and what their experiences are of this.

Engaging with an employee is a two way flow of information between the employed and the employer, this is on a majority of times gained through a manager or at times directly, holding regular meetings is a key aspect and is effective for this working relationship to be achieved, it is important to consider that using language that the employee can understand as opposed to jargon is beneficial to this two way flow of information. Promoting regular discussion with them can be achieved by by keeping them focused, relevant and timely, if the the employer requires ideas to be extracted then attempting open ended questions is a method worth considering. The employer also needs to factor in that there may be other workers who are absent, this can be due to sickness or maternity and paternity leave and consider how they will engage with them, a friend of mine who works for a government organisation states that there employer ensures that regular one-one contact is maintained by managers on a regular basis by visits at home or at a mutual location convenient to both, a log of this is then maintained so that this can be accessed by the human resources department. Utilising company social events is a great way of building trust and breaking down barriers.

There will be times where employers are required to communicate controversial and or sensitive issues, it is important that this is managed face to face as this is the most direct way to manage the facts and dispel rumours. Employers may also utilise written communication for the employee as this is accurate, brief and concise.

Employers often require effective lines of communication, this is essential to motivate staff and and cultivate a strong team of workers, referring back to my friend above who works within the government the employer arranges yearly team building activities, an example of this is in the year 2017, funding was provided for an adventure outing namely GO APE, an outdoor exercise which had no connection with their day to day working, whilst promoting a source of teambuilding and away from the workplace she stated that this had a positive effect on the workers and a sense of motivation upon returning to work. Most companies also engage in company dinners the most common being the "Christmas Party" every year, it is an integral part of most employees that this can be done and in the interest of the employer to allow this if possible, at the same time being considerate to others who may not want to engage in this

either through cultural or religious reasons and communicating this to all employees as some may feel isolated.

My friend states that her employers provide regular written communication to all by way of a monthly newsletter, this incorporates company details and failings and what can be done to change things, i have discussed her views on this with her and the response was positive in that there was a sense of belonging and that the company failings were an individual one, she goes on to state that there were no feelings of finger pointing and was very informative and up to date.

The most common, key and positive way that an employer can communicate is through regular meetings as said meetings are the central form of team communication (Boerner, Schaffner, & Gebert, 2012, Myers & Anderson, 2008). My friends organisation hold regular face to face meetings including and up to three a day, the first being face to face, and any further being through phone conferencing to discuss any outstanding actions from the initial, i have deduced that the initial meeting conducted where she is is set out in an informal room, rather than tables and chairs where everybody is circled around they have utilised sofas, plenty of natural light is taken advantage of and allows a positive flow of input of employees, she states that not all of the employees can be present at the meetings due to shift work, so to allow for this written summaries are distributed to all employees, and given the option to engage in the phone conferencing at further points throughout the day, her views on this were very positive as being an employee on shift work does not have the opportunity to always attend meetings if they are held on the same day at the same time, the informal setting made her feel comfortable and relaxed as she did not feel intimidated or put under pressure discussing targets and failings. This form of gathering is relatively a new adoption by her organisation and the number of attendees have stated that they feel a lot more positive towards the employer.

In order to provide effective communication whilst on the topic of meetings is to ensure that an agenda is distributed in advance to attendees and or all employees so that this can allow comment by individuals, not only this but gives an idea as to how long or short a potential meeting can be, i discussed this with my friend and the agenda of her company, they are usually short with new and old items being discussed or actions as referred to by her employer, the chair usually leads and goes through the agenda with the vice chair and secretary making notes. The attendees are usually relevant to the meeting and the contents of the agenda will dictate the attendees, having said that she states that it is open for others to attend and have an input as the agenda allows for this, i asked her opinion of this and she states that this was a positive thing and seen as open and fluid.

Communication is a vital part on part of the employer, not just in terms of trust to its employees but a sense that it builds and fosters a great working relationship, if this breaks down there is a great deal of impact on the employer and to its employee, i have discussed this my friend that is employed by the government, she stated an example of one of the ways in which her employer has adopted this, the mediation process, it has both been a cost saving tool from litigation and

has become an effective conflict management tool, her organisation utilises an outside company that trains existing employees to become mediation champions, in the event of a dispute from an employee and employer a champion is assigned throughout and has turned out to be a key part of this process. Mediation offers significant savings and helps to repair and maintain employment relations (Saundry and Wibberley, 2012).

Another option available to the employer to aid communication in the workplace is the use of outside agencies, this is adopted by the larger organisation and can be costly to the more small or medium size business, as I have chosen my friend who is employed by a very large organisation they regularly obtain the services of outside companies to attend and incorporate workplace training, my friend informs me that this has aided her employer in that making key decisions, communicating policy and handling problems.

The use of an annual review has been around for a great deal of time, this is used to evaluate the performance of an employee at work and gives the employer a broader picture of the employee itself, my friend's organisation use this annually and is monitored on a monthly basis, incorporated within are objectives and tasks that require completion prior to the yearly review, this is handled by her manager who is responsible for 6-8 employees at a time which is then filtered up to senior personnel, although this is a tool to analyse an employee's performance it can be seen as a medium of communication by the employer.

I have discussed the forms of communication available to the employer and utilised my friend's experience of this within her workplace, what works and what does not perform well, there is room for improvement on part of the employer, in order that effective communication can be aided the employer can break down barriers, take a more relaxed sense of approach, adopt a more comfortable setting to allow the employee to open up, after all a relaxed person will dispel anxiety and foster a greater working relationship, this was evident in my friend's organisation whereby the meetings have become more relaxed and open. The annual reviews should be improved by the employer, I have discussed this at length with my friend, it appears there is a great rush at this time of year whereby a sense of panic sets in amongst employees and although a form of yardstick by the managers a change would be to conduct regular monthly sessions with each employee in turn to monitor progress and review what has been achieved or not, this is also an ideal opportunity for the employer to discuss the feelings of employees and discuss any needs, the employee can also send out feedback sheets to their peers regarding their performance, this can be in the form of surveys which is also a concept that can aid improvement.

Using the above approach this can be extended to the whole team on a monthly team meeting if not monthly then weekly, a more informal meeting not related to work (unless the team agrees) then work can be discussed, this will provide a sense of belonging and can be a form of improved communication on part of the employer.

Another recommendation for improvement would be to set up a platform for anonymous feedback, most employees are hesitant about making a complaint, therefore this can be seen as great way to share feelings and for the employer to allow a sense of an open organisation, my friends workplace adopts this process and is working well.

As discussed in this report employers need to be fluid and require interaction with their employees, this can be achieved through training at all levels of supervision, barriers need to be broken down through the use of external agencies which can allow a valuable training platform in order to achieve this, communication is key to foster a greater working relationship and in order to build trust amongst the workplace, without this employers will be left isolated and the risk of productivity is shortened not to mention the cost implications. There may be cost implication to the employer to adopt a change attitude, however this in the long run will save money through investing in its employees. Allowing employees to open up is key, i have discussed how to improve upon this by utilising real life experience of a friend within a large organisation and have gauged that this is working to a great degree, as they have been going through austerity measures and morale was low, her employer has chosen to listen to them, has already in place some of the improvements that i have touched upon within this report and allows constant monitoring of the wellbeing of its employees, to a point of even having a design restructuring to incorporate a more relaxed setting, this has had an impact in that sickness levels are low, morale is up and the productivity has increased, which follows suit from the likes of google and facebook who are seen as the innovators in the adoption of this type of casual working environment. Providing a sense of belonging to the employee is a vital element, and rather than treating them like an employee it may be beneficial to treat them as individuals.