

UWTSD
EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

ASSESSMENT 1

GROUP 8 TERM 2

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Executive Summary

All organizations need to establish a good means of communication and team collaboration to reach their set objectives. However, many of them are often faced with obstacles that hinder information flow within and outside the office.

This results in misunderstandings amongst the employees and failure of the company to meet customer demands. Thus, many theories were formulated over the years, which established the basic communication skills that every person in the firm must have in order to facilitate effective communication and teamwork.

Some of these skills include relaxation and empathetic listening, which if employed during a conversation, it is likely that the communication will be a success, and the consequent team coordination will follow suit. Furthermore, communication still has other barriers which it faces, such as noise which can be either internal or external, as explained by Shannon Weaver's model of communication.

In general, communication is precious to every organization, and the process of achieving it along with effective teamwork is critical but involves multiple complicated procedures.

Effective Teamwork and Communication

Introduction

Effective communication forms an essential part of every human interaction, although, in the work environment, it is necessary for the success of the business. It results in better relationships, lesser conflict, and improved team effectiveness within an enterprise where it is observed. Additionally, it can either take the form of non-verbal or verbal interaction (Maund, Shriek, and Tinkler, 2017). Every entity always strives to streamline communication within themselves to lead to effective teamwork and eventually realize their business goals. Moreover, several communication modules have been developed over the years to help explain the process and assist the firms to understand how they can use it within their organizations to their favor. For effective communication to be established within any organization, all the modules of it must be completely engaged in the process. Indeed, achieving effective communication and teamwork is a delicate yet complex process that every firm must follow to ensure progress and achievement of their goals.

Discussion

One of my friends, Jane, hired at the Mark and Spencer firm, had an experience with the effects of miscommunication amongst colleagues. She was happy to be a part of the group, but after a while, the environment started becoming uncomfortable for her. Once hired, they were grouped into five and asked to work together to see which team could find the best way for customer outreach. Each team elected a leader who would link the group to their direct manager. Her team leader decided that they would always meet online after work to discuss the methods they would use. Despite this, Jane lived in a low network area, which meant she could not easily connect to the internet, let alone attend an online meeting. She failed to attend most of the meetings and the rest made plans that they would use direct calls. Over one of the meetings she attended, Jane was assigned the role of determining the details and challenges they had left out of their plans, but this was cut out by her network failure, so she failed to get the message. Jane then told the group leader that she could not connect to the online meeting, to which he passively responded to her to get a better laptop. Feeling unheard, she went to the manager in charge of their groups and asked her to speak to their group leader to understand her situation. Their group leader saw her walking out of the manager's office and assumed she was trying to overthrow him, and he decided to defame her before the manager accusing her of laziness and lack of involvement to which she was ultimately fired.

Poor communication hinders collaboration within the team along with the appropriate allocation of responsibility. The case study reveals the results of miscommunication within the units of an organization. Communication aligns all team members to committing to shared goals and promotes interdependence (Maund, Shriek, and Tinkler, 2017). Everyone within an organization ought to aim to create conditions within the workplace that can enable them to achieve more together as a team rather than as individuals. The team is supposed to improve communication between the company and its clients by engaging their customers in interviews. Jane does not collaborate with the rest of the group since it is not communicated to her what her role will be. She is marginalized from the conversation amongst the members, and the responsibility that she is given is not well communicated to her. Moreover, the poor network of her area of residence cannot allow her to engage in the process which the team has chosen as the method of outreach. She has a poor cellular connection and calling customers cannot be practical from her area.

Conflicts and misunderstandings arise continuously due to ineffective communication. This is proven through the clash that arose between the group leader and Jane. Jane has no idea of it, but the group leader is biased against her. He feels that she is willingly snubbing her responsibilities to the team, so he decides to get her fired. Moreover, he feels that her personality does not match his neither does it that of the workplace. Serious interpersonal problems developed amongst them to a point it would soon hurt their team performance (Managing Conflict., 2021). Either party failed to see the essence of improving communication amongst them in order to work on interpersonal relationships between them. Nonetheless, Jane is subjected to hostility within the group when the leader has her fired, and the virtue of trust is never developed. When she tried to talk to the group leader directly, he failed to employ the communication skill of empathetic and critical listening. She, therefore, felt that her needs were not cared for and misunderstood.

Many people fail to pay attention to the factors and barriers that may hinder their effective communication. Shannon Weaver's mathematical model of the communication process in 1949 expresses noise as one of the challenges affecting the channels of communication (Coffelt and Smith, 2020). This is among others such as failure to focus, bar the receiver from the message. Jane falls victim to external noise when the network cuts out her leader's instructions to her. Notwithstanding, behind all the vocal interactions, the non-verbal communication always takes place in the background of any dialogue, and the involved parties always send and receive the signals sub-consciously, which still affect their interaction. The other communication skills such as relaxation, eye contact, body posture, and

sincerity usually affect how a message is perceived. If the skills displayed by both the receiver and the sender are complementary, then the message is well received, interpreted, and the relevant feedback provided (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2017). However, if not, there is misunderstanding and chaos. For instance, a sitting posture with crossed arms and legs sends the signal that one is not interested in the exchange.

In addition, team coordination fails when the participants do not communicate openly. The members of Jane's team were not willing to give open communication and positive feedback. Each participant within the work environment must be willing to give and receive constructive criticism to help build up each other (Communication in the Workplace, 2021). Jane is not open about the troubles that make her incapable of attending the online meetings after work. This ends up creating an impression amongst her colleagues of her being lazy (Morgan, 2020). Also, when the group leader thinks that Jane is going behind his back to speak about his conduct, he reacts negatively by defaming her. This is evidence that he is not willing to receive any criticism about his leadership. At times when the interpersonal relationships at the workplace are hostile, the feedback from members can tend to be ill-intended, which harms unity and promotes mistrust (Problems that face Teams, 2021). The interpersonal attacks may initially seem only to affect individual members but soon evolve to affect the whole team and disrupts their productivity at large.

Conclusion

Overall, the communication process takes many forms and affects the general mood or accomplishment of an environment based on how well it is handled. Various models have been set up to represent the communication process, and in all these models, there are four consistent parts: the sender, message, receiver, and feedback. Any distortion to the flow of information amongst these four channels results in miscommunication and misunderstanding. Barriers such as noise can usually pose a challenge to effective interaction. Furthermore, the communication skills such as critical listening improve the effectiveness of communication and help create interpersonal relationships, which eventually evolve into beneficial teamwork. Effective communication builds effective teamwork that ensures coordination of office activities and the eventual success of any business. Thus, every business should invest in improving effective communication within them and ensure the teamwork commits to the unanimous goal of bringing success to the firm.

Recommendations

Interpersonal skills are necessary to promote an interactive workplace without hostility. They help to improve relationships within the professional environment and limit discriminatory treatment (Belbin, 2012). For example, an employee with a character of pride could be very good at doing their job; however, the rest of the colleagues might feel resentment towards them and become unwilling to work together. Their goals thus become repellant of each other, and the focus could become outdoing one another, which can result in unhealthy competition that makes a hostile workplace (Problems that face Teams, 2021). This is like Jane's case, whereby her group leader was insecure and had her fired. Nonetheless, other workers might lack the back up of good non-verbal; communication when they interact with others. The intention might mean well, but the message delivered might cause division in such scenarios (Maund, Shriek, and Tinkler, 2017). The sender formulates and encodes the message; the receiver gets the message, albeit they do not decode it correctly. The message is misinterpreted, and the feedback could be irrelevant to the message. According to Berlo's model, it could be factors such as the culture, communication skills, or attitudes of the sender that distort the content of the message and affect how the receiver interprets it.

Critical and empathetic listening must be considered important in any exchange of information. It is the main reason behind the installment of a customer service department in every successful organization. Listening to the customers helps the firm get a grip of what the customers demand and how they want their services offered to them (Doyle, 2017). Additionally, whenever the managers fail to listen critically to what their employees are saying, then the essence of feedback is overlooked. The workplace could feel uncomfortable for the employees, and thus, their service delivery could fall below par (Effective Listening, 2021). This was the result for June and her team leader. The result of this is high worker turnover rates that end up making the firm unstable, as they have to go through the recruitment and hiring processes repeatedly. This scenario is also witnessed in the first case study whereby Barry, the manager of a restaurant, does not have any time for his workers. The training he offers them is hurried, and instead of instructing them of his requirements directly, he used a sign. This sign does not accommodate any form of feedback, which may help him understand why they have difficulty following his instructions, and he fails to understand what is ongoing under him (Belbin, 2012). Overall, this leaks the capital base of the company, and the losses result in its eventual demise.

It is necessary to promote practicing and training as a team to improve communication and teamwork. Every employee hired comes with a different set of talents or skills and are of varied origins. When these employees are put in a group and trained together, they learn the skills the other possesses, and to work around each other's weaknesses (Maund, Shriek, and Tinkler, 2017). The differing personalities, hence, instead of being polarizing to the office, become complementary of each other. Moreover, the potential future conflicts are recognized early while training, and are handled. The employees also get a chance to synchronize their goals and commit to the business's success. The development of interpersonal relationships during this session is beneficial through teamwork. The organization can thus get to achieve some of the stages of Bruce Tuckman's team formation even before the employees are indulged in work (Tuckman, and Harper, 2012). They could undergo the processes of forming and norming all while being trained as a team.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Refer to Figure 1 to learn about critical and empathetic listening.

The figure consists of three slides from a PowerPoint presentation. Each slide has a blue header with the title 'Effective Communication' and a blue footer with the University of Wales logo and the motto 'Trafnodwch Addysg; Trafnodwch Bywydau' (Transforming Education; Transforming Lives). The date '3/27/2021' is also in the footer.

Slide 16:

Effective Communication

- **Three Types of Listening**
- **1) Informational:** *Where you listen for acquiring knowledge as you are doing now.*
- **2) Critical:** *Where you listen to make a decision.*
- **3) Empatic/Empathetic** (next slide)

Slide 17:

Effective Communication

- **EMPATHIC/ EMPATHETIC Listening**
- Verb: *empathise: to be able to understand how someone else feels. -To put yourself in someone else's place.*
- Noun: *empathy*
- Adjective: *empathic or empathetic*
-

Slide 19:

Effective Communication

- **EMPATHIC/ EMPATHETIC Listening**
- To use empathic listening, you must listen **patiently** to what the other person has to say, even if you do not agree with it.
- **Concentrate fully** on what is being said and how the speaker feels and, above all, **look** at their body language.
-

Figure 1: The notes on Effective Communication from slide 16, 17, and 19 on the Effective Listening PowerPoint

Appendix B

To learn about barriers to effective listening go to Figure 2

LISTENING – BARRIERS to LISTENING

- **NOISE:** *External noise* such as audible talking, shuffling of papers, a cell Phone ringing. Language differences . Different levels of technological communication, Wherever possible, you should take steps to limit noise.

Internal Noise: If you are doing something important, don't try to listen to someone else talking to you. (See Maund p.91). Your own attitudes. See next slide.
- **FAILING TO FOCUS**
E.g Speaking, listening or reading your phone when someone is speaking to you.
- **FAILING TO LISTEN ACTIVELY**
There is a difference between Active Listening and a Passive Listening



*Trausnewid Addysg; Trausnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives*

Effective Communication

Listening

Barriers to effective listening: Internal Attitudes

- I don't need to hear what you've got to say; I know it already
- I don't want to hear what you've got to say; it might embarrass me
- I don't care what you say; so I'm thinking about my reply
- I don't want to listen to you because I don't like you
- I'm getting bored because you are taking too long to make your point
- I'm getting confused because you're going too fast for me
- I've got more important things on my mind right now
- I'm more interested in what is going on over there
- I'm in a hurry, and if I show any interest you might keep me here longer

(O'Reilly, 1993)

Figure 2: Notes on Effective Communication on Slide 3 and 4 of the Communication PowerPoint

Appendix C

To learn about the case study involving Barry and the communication barriers refer to Figure 3.

COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY adapted from The University of Iowa Food Safety Project

Case Study 1 – Barry and Communication Barriers: Effective Communication as a Motivator

As you read their case, think about how you might help communicate with the employee to remedy the conflict. Answer the critical thinking questions at the end of the case.

Barry is a 27-year old who is the manager of a restaurant. He is responsible for supervising and managing all employees in the kitchen. Employees working there range from 16 years old to 55 years old. In addition, the employees come from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For many, English is not their primary language.

Barry is qualified food safety officer who tries his best to keep up with food safety issues in the kitchen, but he admits it's not easy. Employees receive "on the job training" about food safety basics (for example, appropriate hygiene and handwashing, time/temperature, and cleaning and sanitizing). But with high turnover of employees, training is often hurried, and some new employees are put right into the job without training if it is a busy day. Eventually, most employees get food safety training of a kind. The owners of the restaurant are supportive of Barry in his food safety efforts because they know if the Health and Safety Inspector found standards to be poor, their restaurant could go out of business. Still, the owners note there are additional costs for training and making sure food is handled safely.

One day Barry rushes to get into work on time. He had been working on his car until 2 a.m. and realized that he didn't have a clean uniform. However, he managed to find one that was not very dirty. As he dressed, he realized that he needed a haircut and a good hand scrubbing, especially after working on his car.

When he rushed into the kitchen, he noticed several trays of uncooked meat on the work tops. They appeared to have been sitting at room temperature for some time. Barry is frustrated and doesn't know what to do. He felt like he was beating his head against a brick wall in trying to get his employees to practise food safety.

Barry has made many efforts to get them to learn how to handle food safely. He has put large signs all over the kitchen: KEEP HOT FOOD HOT AND COLD FOOD COLD and WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN. All employees are given a thermometer when they start so that they can assess the temperature of food. Hand sinks, soap, and paper towels are available for employees so that they are encouraged to wash their hands frequently.

Figure 3: This contains information on the case study sourced from page 1 on the Communication Case Study document.

Appendix D

Refer to Figure 4 to learn more about the basic communication skills.

Communication

Communication is not just a matter of uttering words but, in all of these, there are certain basic skills necessary to make communication effective :

1. CLARITY
2. EMPATHY
3. SINCERITY
4. RELAXATION
5. EYE CONTACT
6. APPEARANCE
7. POSTURE

(Stanton, 2009)



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COMMUNICATION

1. **CLARITY** -Being able to express your thoughts and ideas by speaking in clear simple language and by not using long complicated words.
2. **EMPATHY** -Always try to be courteous and friendly and try to understand the other person's point of view.



Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywcydau
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COMMUNICATION

3. **Sincerity** – Try to be yourself and do not pretend to be someone else.
4. **Relaxation** - When our muscles are tense we have difficulty relaxing and speaking naturally. Take a deep breath.
5. **Eye Contact** – Direction and length of gaze Are important in synchronizing speech and making it friendly

Figure 4: Contains information on Communication Skills sourced from slide 7, 8 and 9 on the PowerPoint on Communication in the office.

Appendix E

Refer to Figure 5 to learn more about the barriers to listening such as noise.

100 Quintanilla, K.M. and Wahl, S.T.

Discuss the barriers to listening and how to avoid them:

- External noise includes distractions such as audible talking during a meeting, ruffling of papers, or a cell phone going off in the next cubicle. Whenever possible, you should take steps to control the external noise that might interfere with your ability to listen to others, as well as their ability to listen to you (p. 50).
- Internal noise encompasses any internal condition or state that interferes with the communicator's ability to focus on the message. Controlling internal noise in others can be difficult, as it may be hard to predict. Still, you can minimize some internal noise in others. For example, holding long meetings without food or bathroom breaks will guarantee internal noise in your team. Minimize the noise by providing food and breaks (p. 50).
- Message overload occurs when a speaker includes too many details in a message, making it difficult for the listener to comprehend. As the listener tries to make sense of the specific details, he or she loses focus on the primary message. If the jargon or message overload comes as part of a conversation, not a presentation, engage in active listening (p. 52).

Describe strategies for developing and sustaining professional excellence using active listening skills:

- An active listener focuses on asking questions and will often listen to the message and then paraphrase it for the sender (p. 54).
- Another technique is that of reflection. Jalongo (2008) categorizes reflective listening as different from ordinary listening in four important ways. Reflective listening means the listener (1) listens thoughtfully to the meaning of the speaker's words; (2) considers the content of the message, both stated and implied; (3) thinks about the feelings associated with the message, attending to the speaker's verbal and nonverbal cues; and (4) makes every effort to reflect that message accurately (p. 55).
- Questions are another tool used by the active listener. By asking questions, you can develop a better understanding of the speaker's message and provide support to the speaker (p. 55).

Define the six-step process of listening:

- The HURIER model refers to a six-step listening process: **H**earing, **U**nderstanding, **R**emembering, **I**nterpreting, **E**valuating, and **R**esponding (Brownell, 1994, 1996). Hearing refers to concentrating on and attending to the message. The first step toward better listening is making sure you can properly hear the other person (p. 56).

- Understanding is the process of attaching meaning to the verbal communication, or comprehending the literal meaning of the message (p. 56).
- Remembering includes recalling the message so that it can be acted on. Listening not only requires us to be present, in the moment, and mindful but also necessitates anticipating future interactions (p. 56).
- Interpreting is the step where we make sense of the verbal and nonverbal codes to assign meaning to the information received or the sensitivity to nonverbal and contextual aspects of the message (Brownell, 1994). Interpreting is an important part of the collaborative process of communication (p. 56).
- Evaluating is the logical assessment of the value of the message (Brownell, 1994). Learning to evaluate a message without bias, distractions, apprehension, or gender/cultural differences takes time and patience (p. 57).
- Responding is the last step and involves giving some form of response to the message, either verbally or nonverbally. Communication would not be collaboration if not for this vital step. Paraphrasing, summarizing, reflecting, and asking questions demonstrate responsiveness (p. 57).

Apply the KEYS approach to conduct yourself with professional excellence while developing your listening skills in the workplace:

- Know yourself. Understand the components of being an active listener and critically apply them to your professional interactions. Realize your strengths and weaknesses as a listener and adapt accordingly (p. 59).
- Evaluate the professional context. Learn whether your professional environment uses formal or informal communication. Also, pay attention to jargon used at your work. Use active listening to create understanding of words or phrases you are not familiar with (p. 59).
- Your communication interaction. Take what you have learned from the first two steps and try communicating with fellow business professionals. Are you using the workplace jargon correctly and effectively? Be critical about the responses you receive from your peers (p. 59).
- Step back and reflect. Ask yourself if you and your communication partner(s) came away from the interaction with mutual understanding. Think about what was effective and what was not. Repeat the process to gain greater and more effective strategies for being a good listener and a good communicator (p. 59).

Figure 5: This includes the information on barriers to listening from the pdf titled Listening on page 100.

Appendix F

To get the source of the points on interpersonal conflict refer to the Effective teamworking and Communication PowerPoint on slide seven.

Tuckman's stages of team formation are found on fifth and sixteenth slides of the Term two-week two PowerPoint on Tuckman

Refer to the document titled Tuckman Stages on pages 1 and 2 to get more information on the points made about the team stages in Tuckman's model.