

E325 ION STELIAN STANCIU HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE EFFECTIVE TEAM WORKI

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1 Effective Team Work and Communication

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Introduction

In a workplace setting, communication and teamwork are considered the essential elements because via appropriate communication, team members shall be able to effectively carry out their business operations. A positive workplace essentially incorporates positive employee interaction. The report shall be written to get an insight into the ways by which communication and teamwork occurs within workplace settings. It shall cover some examples of teamwork and communication related to health and social care settings. Additionally, after analysing the workplace experiences, a firm conclusion shall be outlined.

Task

Employer's workplace communication

The degree of communication within the workplace can either enhance or reduce workplace performance. Here performance covers areas such as productivity, morale and attendance. It is known that employers who communicate effectively with their employees in the workplace are likely to increase greater degree of "employee engagement". In order to promote healthy communication, the employer need not be an extrovert. Rather he/she should know the intricacies of building trust and honesty among employees through genuine communication. It should be noted that straightforwardness and transparency are the ways of fostering better communication. In different workplace settings, face-to-face communication is the most commonly used method used by employers (Turnage and Goodboy, 2016). Here, the employers get the opportunity to listen to the employees' concerns. Communication is a two-way process and rather than speaking, "*active listening*" is more relevant (Fer, 2018). In this manner, employers are able to take inputs of the employees seriously. After listening to the concerns, the employers are supposed to address it effectively. Thereafter, a feedback mechanism like a suggestion box can address the concerns of those who like to express opinions via writing messages.

In the context of health and social care setting, again communication plays a vital role because care workers are supposed to deal with diverse service users. Further, it has been observed that effective workplace communication is a method of overcoming workplace barriers. For example, the care workers have the prospect of observing and discussing the concerns of clients through refined communication styles. Moreover, communication is more about *making and retaining contacts*. Therefore, an understanding of communication cycle is crucial. In this cycle, certain stages are followed one after the other. In the first stage, an idea occurs and the person develops the idea (Phillips *et al.*, 2018). Then, the message is coded (verbal means or non-verbal means). Following that, the message is sent to the receiver and the receiver again decodes it. Lastly, the receiver understands the message.

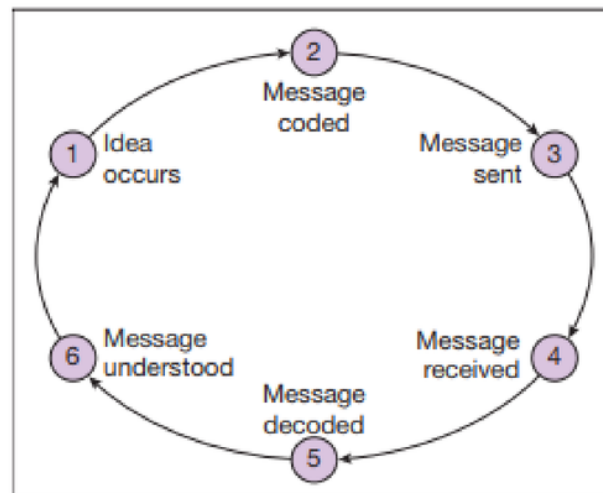


Figure 1: Communication style

(Source: Resources.collins.co.uk, 2019)

The cycle is repeated with the second person as well and this, in turn, helps in maintaining a conversation in the workplace. Care workers understand the importance of non-verbal communication because service users often arrive with multiple needs. For example, maintaining *eye contact*, understanding *facial expressions* and providing *emotional support* are also a part of communication (Kee *et al.*, 2018). Only after assessing the needs of the service users, it is possible for care workers to develop care plans. While using verbal mode of communication, the care workers usually give responses to the various queries or questions. They also have a say in team meetings. Particularly, while breaking shocking news to the service users or their family members, the care workers need to demonstrate their empathetic skills. In most cases, it is quite challenging the care workers to listen to the concerns of clients without interrupting them. It might have a negative impact upon the service users. In case of patients, who are suffering from hearing disabilities, certain technological aids are utilised by the service providers. It mainly includes hearing aids or electronic communicators. Apart from that, emails and text messages can also be helpful in promoting communication.

Certain barriers in communication also exist in healthcare settings. Employers might face trouble while sending a message and while making the clients realise certain care plans. For example, the workplace setting, seating arrangements or noise levels might have a negative impact upon client-user communication. In a care setting, if patient's privacy is not maintained then, it might severely affect upon communication. In public places, service users might often feel quite uncomfortable and therefore, care providers are supposed to maintain

an effective inter-relationship. While communicating with patients suffering from disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism or visual impairment, it might be a barrier for the service providers.

Theoretical perspectives regarding teamwork and workplace communication

Communication techniques have been modified over the years because of the changing business environment. Workplace communication has undergone changes because various theoretical perspectives of prominent individuals such as George Cheney, Philip Tompkins and Max Weber have been used to guide organisational communication. According to Weber, communication within the workplace is *structured and hierarchical* in nature because almost all organisations encompass responsibilities and visibly defined r for their workers (Reichertz, 2015). The message is usually sent from top to bottom and therefore, a rigid structure is followed. Additionally, Tompkins' theory has been developed from Weber's organisational theory. It has outlined that within the organisational setting, four types of "control" are exercised. The types include technical, simple, concertive and bureaucratic. Depending upon the organisational progression, different types of control exists. Tompkins' model is slightly different from Weber, because he focussed upon communication as well as control. Thereafter, another theory of workplace communication is the *Post-Positive theory*. It outlines that within an organisation, order is quite natural. Hence, an employer will treat misunderstandings, disobedience and conflict as undesirable occurrences (Quintanilla and Wahl, 2018). Naturally, the employer would like to focus upon sending messages in such a manner that it becomes obligatory for employees to comply with the rules.

The *Information Theory* focuses upon the degree to which information among individuals' travels. When an individual consider communication as a way of seeking information, then they are most likely to identify the communication gaps and "fix messages" accordingly. Communication can also act as a tool of maintaining accuracy. In this case, the recipient as well as the sender is accountable. Lastly, it is necessary to throw some light upon the *Critical Theory*. It assumes that in a workplace setting, conflict can occur naturally and here communication acts a tool for resolving conflicts (Ladegaard and Jenks, 2015). The senior management within an organisation is responsible for motivating the lower management. Therefore, conflict within groups can be solved by conducting team meetings.

Teamwork is considered another way of connecting groups of people who have similar goals. Teamwork essentially requires the team members to follow a procedure and obligation to workplace responsibilities. Multiple theories of teamwork has been outlined below-

- **Douglas McGregor's X and Y theory-** It essentially outlines the motivating factors behind an individual's behaviour. X and Y are contrasting theories (Aithal and Kumar, 2016). Theory X is focussed upon the managers who possess a pessimistic view regarding their employees. It assumes the fact that members within a team tend to dislike their work. Consequently, managers believe that it is essential to constantly punish or prompt their employees so that they complete their job duties. Contrarily, managers who tend to follow Theory Y possess a positive mindset and they people that employees are satisfied with their job roles. The employees are self-motivated by nature and they like to take up responsibility. In terms of acceptability, Theory Y has gained wider popularity. In the workplace, employers might favour both the theories; however, it has been note that for achieving organisational success, it is necessary to understand the requirements and desires of the team members.
- **Myers-Briggs' MBTI theory-** It is a persona test and it can make employers understand about the personality and probable behaviour of individuals within a team. The team members also get an insight regarding each other's behavioural patterns. According to them, there exist 16 different types of personality within MBTI (Teambuilding.co.uk., 2019). By understanding the personality types, individuals within the team can easily relate themselves with each other or they might learn to value differences.

Ways to improve performance and communication of employers in the workplace

Performance and communication within any workplace setting can be improved by establishing long-lasting relationship. The employers and managers can reduce up to 50% turnover rate in the organisation by establishing effective communication techniques. Certain methods of improving communication and performance has been outlined below-

- **Avoiding rapid assumptions-** In the workplace setting, missed signals and misunderstandings might be a common occurrence. When an employee is unable to cope up with the performance of the rest of the employees, it is necessary for the employer to confront the issue. Hence, an *open line of communication* is an effective way of enhancing performance of employees (Trenholm, 2017).
- **Using person-centred communication approach-** It essentially means that rather than forcing one's opinion upon the employees, it will be more beneficial to understand the perspective of the employees. Here the focus is upon the "person".

- **Offering productive feedbacks-** Feedbacks of managers can essentially break or make relationships. Hence, constructive feedback should focus upon the behaviour of the employee and not upon the employee's character (Hall, 2016).

In case of healthcare settings, *synchronous communication* is essential because the risk of clinical errors is always present. Communication among healthcare workers determines the flow of patient-related information. Within hospital settings, communication can be improved by effective use of e-mails, face-to-face communication and voicemails as well. The wellness and safety of patients depends upon the precise exchange of data and information. In order to make improvements within the healthcare settings, several techniques has been outlined-

- **Assessments of present communication method-** In the hospital setting, the authorities need to assess the ongoing communication styles before making improvements. Depending upon the feedback, the organisation can develop a strategy to improve internal communication. For example, the care managers can allow the healthcare staffs to express their voice openly. They must show their interest to listen to the opinions of the staff.
- **Mobile collaboration-** In several healthcare settings, usage of pagers is mandatory. It helps in alerting the staff and the patients in case of emergencies. However, it is not always an effectual way of maintaining two-way discussion. Communication between peers can occur by HIPPA. A mobile app allows service users to register complaints (Abrams *et al.*, 2018).
- **Giving the healthcare staff a voice –** Performance within the organisation can only improve when staffs are capable of expressing their needs and wants. Here, it implies that every staff should possess the equal opportunity of expressing their opinions. Every individual has the right to make his/her voice heard.
- **Encouraging the usage of face-to-face communication-** Technology might have increased the usage of mobile apps but it would be inappropriate to eliminate face-to-face communication. This form of interaction adds value to individuals. For example, when staffs lose motivation to work, "in-person" meetings can solve the issues (Colbert *et al.*, 2016). It helps in multiplying the enthusiasm levels of employees. Here, the manager can play a vital role by becoming an active listener.

² In order to improve the performance of the employees, the healthcare organisation needs to have clear and distinct goals for its staff. This in turn, will increase the satisfaction levels of the service users. After setting a goal, planned actions should be implemented. Further, the process of communication can be improved by eliminating misunderstandings among co-

workers. Annual evaluations and reviews can also improve the overall performance of the staff in the workplace because it can help in understanding the performance gaps. Lastly, healthcare staffs must be given different avenues for communicating their concerns.

Conclusion

The report has been written to understand the intricacies of workplace communication and teamwork. It can be concluded that depending upon the inter-relationship among the employees and the supervisors, the overall performance of the team can either reduce or enhance. In the beginning of the report, the degree to through which employers utilise communication tactics has been outlined. The model of communication cycle has been described. Thereafter, certain theoretical perspectives regarding workplace communication and team-work have been discussed as well. Lastly, based on the examples of workplace communication, certain recommendations have been suggested so that employers can improve their workplace relationships.

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