

Effective Teamwork and Communication

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Introduction

Communication is one of the most important aspects of effective workplace management. Good communication can separate effective teams from ineffective teams and this will affect the company's ability to manage an efficient workforce. Many businesses have stressed this factor in their training processes and other areas to help develop better communication skills amongst employees (Khan et al., 2017). However, the impact of communication is often ignored by many managers. While communication generally refers to the transfer of ideas, thoughts, and instructions between employees, it is not only bound to individual tasks. For example, the communication of the business's vision and mission from the upper management to all levels of employees can help facilitate business growth. Similarly, good communication is about getting the right message across and ensuring that there is no ambiguity (Bulus et al., 2017). On the other hand, many managers may not communicate effectively and this could lead to problems with employee performance. In fact, poor communication is detrimental in industries where high-quality standards are prioritized. There are some cases where poor communication can cause significant loss to the business and can even be harmful. Therefore, there should be effective procedures in businesses to ensure that effective communication strategies are being implemented in the business (Giudici and Filimonau, 2019).

The relationship between good communication and employee performance has been widely discussed in the research. Many businesses have viewed this as a means to implement better communication processes in the workplace. Businesses that have better communication processes are more likely to have a productive workforce as compared to businesses that do not. In some studies, like Ewing et al. (2019), employees with more skill and experience performed worse than those with less experience. The difference was the management style and the fact that instructions were clear and each employee had an accurate idea of what to do. There are many other examples where effective communication is linked to employee productivity, employee satisfaction and other aspects that are key to employee performance. Good communication is often described as an essential part of good leadership. One of the key areas where communication plays an important role in business is in teams (Sadia et al., 2016). With many modern business systems structured in terms of teamwork, this process is crucial to the success of teams. Good communication will help reduce misunderstandings and enhance

cooperation between team members. Many workplace errors are the result of poor communication. Some

studies have indicated that up to 70% of all workplace errors occur because of poor communication (Ewing et al., 2019). This report will highlight the issues with current communication models and the reasons behind poor communication in businesses. It will also shed light on the various strategies that businesses can use to improve communication amongst employees. It will also look at a specific case study to demonstrate how effective communication is essential to proper workplace management.

Communication methods

There are many theories regarding the different communication methods that can be implemented in a business. These theories have distinct ways of addressing how communication can be improved. This report will discuss these theories in light of a nursing home case study and why these are important in ensuring effective communication.

Shannon and weaver model

The Shannon and weaver communication model is based on the communication used in telephones to send a message. Different parts of the communication processes are given labels that show their function. For example, the sender is the one who initiates the conversation or gives them instructions. The encoder is the means of transmitting the information which then goes to the decoder to be processed. Finally, the message is received by the receiver, who then carries out the instructions (Al-Fedaghi, 2012). This is a linear model of communication which

demonstrates the various parties involved in communication processes. The theory also includes the concept of 'noise' which is used to describe the impact of external factors as a disruption to effective communication. This theory can be applied in the case study of a nursing home. The manager may give out instructions as to what each employee should do for the day. This instruction is conveyed via the manager directly, or their assistant/s. It may also be conveyed via email or another platform. The encoder will be how the manager's information is interpreted by the receivers (employees) (Corman et al., 2007). Therefore, this model works on a linear basis and can be implemented in the care home setting. The concept of noise will be applied in case there is a typing error due to the manager being distracted or other external influence that causes the wrong message to be delivered. Therefore, the Shannon and Weaver model are effective in describing simple communication between individuals in the workplace (Al-Fedaghi, 2012).

Schramm model of communication

The Schramm model is quite different from the Shannon and Weaver model in the sense that it is 'circular' instead of being linear. The concept of a sender, receiver, and noise is still used, but the roles can be reversed depending on the situation. For example, if the sender sends a message which may be ambiguous because of the impact of 'noise' then the receiver may communicate and ask for elaboration. This then makes them the sender and the original sender will become the receiver. In this way, this model is circular. The Schramm model does a better job in tackling the concept of 'noise' or external influence in the communication process (Blythe, 2010). For

example, in the case of the nursing home, if one employee gives instructions to another employee and due to an external influence (noise), they forget certain aspects of the message, they may then ask for confirmation or clarification. This will help reduce the impact of external misunderstandings and therefore improve communication between individuals. An important part of this communication model is that the role of the interpreter can be played by both the sender and receiver. This switching of roles makes this model more applicable in real-life scenarios (Khan et al., 2017).

Berlo SMCR model

The Berlo model of communication is a linear model used to describe the communication process and any issues that may arise during this process. The Berlo model views the impact of 'noise' as both internal and external. Based on this model, external factors may affect the flow and effectiveness of the communication process. This noise is the result of sounds that may interrupt the sender or receiver, factors that cause issues in the deliverance of certain instructions that the manager may give the employees (Saud et al., 2014). This may be minor disruptions such as the banging of a door or a major disruption, such as a guest arriving which distracts the manager. All these would come under external influences, including effect misinterpretation and other external influences. For example, in the case of a care home, external noise such as a telephone ringing or a door banging could affect the instructions that are delivered to employees. Many types of disturbances may cause a significant change in communication and the manager

may forget the topic completely. For example, if the manager is delivering a briefing and the external noise comes in the form of a guest/visitor, then the entire briefing may be affected. On the other hand, minor 'noise' such as a door banging may affect the interpretation of the message by the employee. Both cases could cause ineffective communication (Stead, 1972). This model also covers external sources of 'noise'. These include problems in the communication skills of either the sender or receiver, issues with attitude, and lack of required knowledge. For example, the manager may have compiled a written instruction manual on how to care for the elderly. However, some employees may not understand certain terms because of poor reading skills. On the other hand, the manager may be giving instructions, but the employee might be bored or tired. These are attitude factors. On the other hand, the employee might have listened attentively to the manager explaining which medication to give a certain person. However, the employee might not know about the required medication or how to administer it. This would be a knowledge factor that could cause 'noise' in the communication process. In this way, the Berlo model is effective in looking at communication from a people or cultural perspective. It looks at both external disruptions to communication as well as internal disruptions. Therefore, it can be used to link the culture of an organisation to the effectiveness of the communication used there. Organisations, where there is a culture based on authoritative leadership, may experience problems caused by internal noise factors (Saud et al., 2014). By looking at the businesses through this model, disruptions in communication will be easier to analyze. However, it is a linear model and may not describe the feedback process used in many businesses. In the case of a care home, this model may not explain the fact that the employee may ask the manager for confirmation in the case that external noise disrupted the communication. Therefore, it has its limitations.

Communication Skills

There are various methods of communication which are used in the workplace. These include verbal methods, non-verbal methods and listening. Verbal communication is quite straightforward and involves the conveying of information through words. Non-verbal communication may include written instructions, sign language and even expressions. Non-verbal communication is important as it often affects the tone of the conversation. One aspect of communication that is often ignored is the concept of listening. Listening is an important part of the communication process and can affect the quality of communication (Grover, 2005). For

example, in the care home where I work, good listeners will get the instructions right the first time, which will make them more confident in their activities. Bad listeners will have to reach out for more clarification, which may affect overall productivity. Therefore, developing skills is important if one wants to be more effective at communication. One way in which non-verbal communication can be applied effectively is through the use of proxemics. This is varying the space between the two people in order to affect the communication process. Studies like Sadia et al. (2016) have shown that being closer to someone can make the message more dramatic and cause them to pay more attention.

Kinesics refers to the body language, head movement, hand gestures and other movements that may affect communication between individuals. This is often one of the most crucial aspects of interpersonal communication. In the care home where I am working, the manager uses both proxemics and kinesics to make his point. When he wants to praise someone for their good work, he will often get closer to them, which shows sincerity in the praise. He will also use hand gestures when explaining technical aspects, and this helps with better understanding of the subject. Similarly, these aspects can be applied to different organisations to increase the effectiveness of the communication. They can also be taught to managers during the training process so that they can implement these aspects in everyday communication. It is no wonder that research indicates a significant increase in performance amongst employees where managers are aware of their communication style and skills (Ewing et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Communication is a key part of ensuring effectiveness in business processes. Whether it be a large multinational organisation serving worldwide customers or a small business, the effectiveness through which information is conveyed to employees will affect the efficiency and productivity of the employees. Effective communication requires that the effect of 'noise' or external distractions is minimized. Similarly, businesses should ensure that managers are appropriately trained to use all their communication skills to make the communication process more effective. By improving their communication skills, managers and employees can improve their productivity and become more effective in the workplace.

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