



EFFECTIVE TEAM WORKING AND COMMUNICATION

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This report presents the aspects and importance of effective communication in team work in work places. Writer's personal work experience has been presented to relate theories to practical implications. Some recommendations have been made to demonstrate how effective communication can help to improve the work performance in team work.

1. Definition of communication in the workplace

Communication in workplace is the process of sharing information, ideas and thoughts in a workplace. Effective communication includes all the components of communication interworking perfectly for sharing message (Crosling & Word, 2001). Communication in workplace are the sum of components as the individual sending the message, individual receiving the message, the context of the message, the delivery method and the content of the message. All these components ensuring effective communication also depends on workplace environment. Work environment should influence open and frequent communication, more employee involvement, determining common goals (Thacker & Yost, 2002).

Effective communication enhances the performance level of the employees. Gaining understanding is the key to improve employee performance (Rajhans, 2012). Reasons behind employees are not working to the optimal level might be the for some valid issues. The doors of communication should be open to allow free discussion concerning and addressing the issues directly. For instance, when an employees' attendance report shows excessive tardiness, employees should be given a chance and a open discussion environment what is the reason behind this tardiness. That discussion can reveal some clues of solution to overcome the problem (Perkins, 2010).

The discussion on workplace environment has been presented here through pyramid of communication and eight concepts of communication in the workplace.

1.1 Pyramid of communication

Pyramid principles of communication is the methodology to develop structured communication. There are five types of communication such as societal, institutional, group, intrapersonal and interpersonal communication (Eunson, 2010). For any workplace, intrapersonal, interpersonal, group communication is widely used and practiced type of communication.

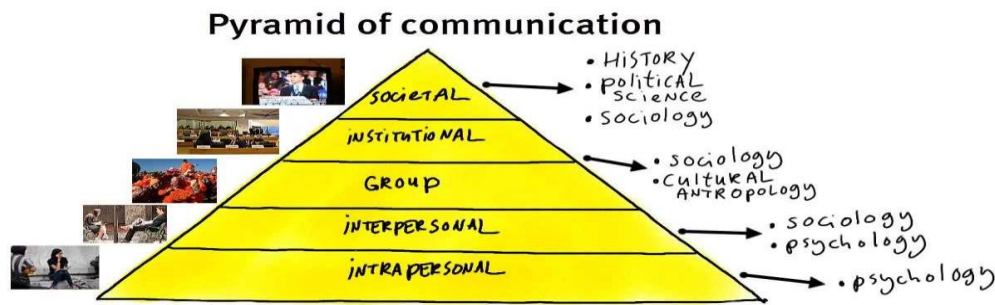


Figure: Pyramid of communication

1.2 Eight concepts of communication in the workplace

In any workplace, communication can be broken down in eight main components (Perkins, 2010) which are discussed below:

Source: source is the person or body who is sending, providing, distributing or creating the message. The message is encoded by the source combining all necessary information and ideas with the right words in right order and send the message to the receiver or audience. Following the receiver's reaction, clarification and additional supportive information also can be provided.

Message: message is the combination of stimuli produced by the sender (McLean, 2005). Words with meaning, through nonverbal, cues, organization, grammar, style and other necessary elements.

Channel: channel is the way in which the message is being transmitted between source and the receiver. Verbal channels are face-to face conversation, speeches, radio, skype etc. and written channels are letter, invoices, memorandums, newspaper, magazines, articles, blogs, text messages and so forth.

Receiver: receiver is who receives the message and interprets in intended way.

Feedback: the response that derives from the exchange of the messages is the feedback. Feedback is composed message the receiver sends back to the sender.

Environment: surrounding, people, technology, everything can impact on the exchange of information and these are known as environment of communication.

Context: context of the communication is the setting that is set by the individuals who are communicating. Language, behaviour, organizational culture impacts the context.

Interference: interference is mainly referred as noise, barriers' that make the communication blocked or changes the expected response in other ways.

1.3 Components of Effective Communication

“Effective communication is a two-way process that includes transmitting and receiving accurate messages” (Chuang, 2013, p. 65). The three most important parts of effective communication are listening, managing stress and emotional awareness. Effective listening means more than just listening what the speaker is saying. To ensure the effective communication, an ability should be developed to recognize the complete message by understanding context and the purpose of the message disregarding any preconceived notion and biasness (Okoro & Washington, 2012). Managing stress is eliminating stress from the conversation which can be ensured through controlling tone, selecting nonpersonal words and appropriate approach. This reduces the conflicts and misinterpretation and misunderstanding in any communication (Dainty, et al., 2013). Emotional stress is to analyse decision making process from a specific point of communication. Choosing the right information from the conversation. Recognizing one's own emotional bias helps to select more effective wording while transmitting the messages.

1.4 Virtual Communication

Virtual communication has become parts and parcel now-a-days because of technological advancements. Virtual communication is mediated by computer, mobiles and through various types of apps in advanced devices without physical interaction (Pauleen & Yoong, 2001).



Figure: Virtual communication

Video calls, voice calls, instant messaging and social medias are making virtual communication obvious part of our daily life communication enhancing knowledge-sharing, problem solving

and facing new challenges in everyday work place communications.

1.5 Leadership in Action

Leadership is those action which motivates people to achieve common goals. Leaders apply different approaches to become effective and operate at different level of any work place (Zulch, 2014). Positive outcomes from any team work can be ensured through effective leadership.



Figure: Leadership

Effective leaders lead the team working with shared goals and being proactive with the vision of future work expectations.

1.6 Barriers of communication:

The process of communication has multiple barriers. The intended communicate will often be disturbed and distorted leading to a condition of misunderstanding and failure of communication. The Barriers to effective communication could be of many types like linguistic, psychological, emotional, physical, and cultural etc (Dainty, et al., 2013). We will see all of these types in detail below.

a. Language barrier:

Language is the most important tool of communication. People coming from different background has different language. Use of jargon, expression marks, word picking are the commonly spelled language barriers people face in work places.

b. Physical Barrier:

In recent years, people working from distance places. Businesses spreading from country to country. Working for same goals and achievements and from different places, even in same organization, are impact by the physical distance. face-to-face conversation can reduce lots of disputes and issues more quickly comparing to communication through different channels.

c. Cultural barrier:

Culture shapes the values, norms, system people tend to follow while working and communicating with team. In a team different people tend to work differently but use of proper communicational tools and techniques can reduce the disputes among them.

d. Psychological barrier:

Some people have some phobia, speech disorder, poor retention capacity, etc. these barriers can be overcome by the selection of right tools and techniques.

e. Organizational structural barrier:

Different organization have different structure which impact on how people communicate in a team. Open and participatory environment influence team member to share and develop an positive work environment.

f. Technological barriers:

Technologically advanced office equipment changed the way of communication. Social media, common platforms to communicate taken over the traditional tools and techniques of communication. The use of technology helping team members to communicate more effectively which also impacting on the improvement of performances in work places.

2. Practical experiences

From my previous work experience I can explain how an effective communication in workplace can improve the level of performance. The discussion has been presented under three highlighted areas.

2.1 Communicating with group members

I used to work in a small construction firm as an assistant to finance manager. My responsibilities were to keep all invoices updated, to distribute all letters, to keep the communication with all the sub-contractors and dealing with disputes with any interdepartmental issues. Communicating with the finance team was not easy for me as each of the members has to be informed about all the correspondences and attend weekly and monthly meetings. I prefer to email to make all correspondence with my team members as some of them work onsite most of the time. I faced miscommunication as people do not reply timely and invoices are not delivered and stored in the system due to delay in reply through

email. This made the whole documentation process full of misinterpretation and as a result delay in payment. This impact on our total work progress and badly hampered our reputation.

2.2 Communicating with seniors

Communication with senior is easy when your leader or senior is open to you. In my experience, I found them to be very busy to communicate properly with subordinates, tend to hide some critical issues which later on impact on the work progress and very importantly, they put very less effort to ensure participation from all the team members because of being bias to some of the employees. So even if/ when they want to communicate with other employees, comfort level is not there.

2.3 Communicating with clients and customers

Communicating with client and customer is comparatively easy from other tow types as mentioned above. For me I am very on my own and thus very disciplined and keen to maintain professionalism. Clients tend to communicate with me over other people in my department. But this could not work when some people are out there who tend to work very causally not maintaining any official discipline. They like to work on the base of personal relation and make decisions favouring people they choose to.

3. How to improve

Open door policy, two-way feedback, building team spirit, effective training all popular solution to make effective communication in any workplace. However, I found communication should be in one single platform to make it effective. Single platform of communication can be ensured and developed through online or through a single software. Large companies have been using this kind of software for their every project. In small companies it is not widely used because of less investments. Owners of the small companies tend to work more based on personal network therefore they do not realise the actual benefit of electronic or online and social media communication.

3.1 Document management system:

Companies can develop document management system to make all the team members to update all necessary information so that responding through email or through official contact number can be overcome. Using separate emails and contacting over phone is time consuming and delays communication process. This electronic system enables team members to respond and update necessary changes to make and thus allows all members to stay connected.

3.2 Social media:

Social media is offering very quick and less expensive communication system not only in work places but in every aspect of our life. People tend to communicate more on social media comparing to other ways as it is fast, inexpensive and new. In workplaces people make text messages on WhatsApp, Facebook and twitter. These ultimately open the door of open communication and easy communication.

3.3 Lesson learning:

lesson learning is the tool to track the learning progress from each of the projects undertaken by the team. Weekly and monthly meetings should continuously monitor the work progress and improvements needed to ensure. I strongly believe it can make team members aware about their insufficiencies and help them to notice the room for improvements.

4. Conclusion

This report discussed the importance of effective communication in team work in any work place. The writer experienced the psychological barriers as people tend to less aware about email replying on time; cultural barriers as people tend to become less proactive; technological barriers as small companies with less technologically advanced equipment. Therefore, some recommendation has been presented how to improve the communicational strategies in team work to achieve goals in work places with effective communication.

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