

EFFECTIVE TEAM WORKING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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INTRODUCTION

In this report I will be analyzing effective team working and communication skills in the workplace. I will be describing each skill and applying it into a work scenario. The aim of this report is to show how effective and important these skills are when applied in a work environment.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the ability to exchange information from one person to the next. This sending and receiving of information can be done through verbal, non-verbal, written, speaking and listening Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Communication at work is very important because managers and employees need to be able to exchange information amongst each other. Communication between employee and customer is just as important, lack of communication could lead to loss of customers for a business. To be able to communicate is one thing but to be able to effectively communicate is another Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Encoding and Decoding is the exchange of thoughts or ideas. Transmission is done by the sender and response is done by the receiver.

Verbal- this way of communicating is done by speech. Verbal communication is the most frequent way that people communicate in the workplace, this form of communication is very helpful especially when team members are working and discussing together. When using this type of communication, the team must make sure to listen carefully to each other as in early group there may be frequent misunderstandings in early stages of group development. The Group Development Observation System (GDOS) was developed by Whilman, Davidson and Tilin in 2003 and it was used as a way of measuring the verbal transactions that take place amongst the group. This theory has been used to analyze groups not individuals Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Dependency Statements- those that adopt the supreme mood of the team and request direction from others.

Counterdependency Statements- those that affirm independence by rejecting the management and direction of the team.

Fight Statements- those that are very argumentative, they trigger others by criticizing and using aggressive words.

Flight Statements- these are attempts to shy away from work and show a lack of responsibility in the team.

Pairing Statements- these are statements of, kindness, togetherness and friendship.

Counterpairing Statements- those that keep a distance and avoid intimacy with people by saying less about themselves. They keep the discussion formal and professional.

Work Statements- these are people that appreciate goal-directed and task-oriented efforts.

Unscorable Statements- these include senseless and incoherent inaudible statements.

Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Non-Verbal - Nonverbal messages can be recognized in the physical or body language so things such as smiling, eye contact, a sad face or a smile. In (1988) Argyle discovered that non-verbal behavior serves four purposes. Number one reason is to express emotion, almost like a moment when something is wrong but you say nothing is wrong but yet your facial expressions show that you are frowning.

In 1981 Mehrabian discovered that there are three ways in which we can indicate non-verbal communications to help make sense of everyday personal satiations or professional situations Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Written - Written communication plays an important role in business and the workplace. Communication using physical words first started with written letters but now that we have the internet a lot has changed. We now use emails, whatsapp, skype and many more.

Virtual communication has brought people together all around the world, it is so easy to share information. The greatest thing is how fast and easy it is to send a message. Letters used to take a long time for the receiver to receive but now one can receive a text message instantly, it has made it easy to organize tasks amongst team members globally (Powell, Piccoli & Ives, 2004).

Putting the people from different countries without the worry of geographic location allows leaders to expand on knowledge, skills and abilities Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Listening - listening is not one's physical ability, however, hearing is. Most people think listening and hearing are the same thing, but they are not. Hearing is what is tested when you go to your GP, listening requires much more like listening to the verbal and nonverbal messages being sent and translate the meaning to those messages. Seibert

(1989) reported that listeners are more likely to be promoted more than those who have poor listening skills. In a business it is important for a company to listen to their customers, businesses such as retailer Best Buy is listening to their consumers by focusing on their customers reviews. This company begun to share their customer feedback with other vendors and has created a platform based on web reviews (Reid,2014). Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

There is method that is proven to encourage listening posture, it is called SOLER. SOLER describes the 5 specific ways in which you could practice effective listening.

S- Square: Look at the person squarely.

O- Open: Make sure to keep posture open, no arms crossed.

L- Lean: Lean forward to show interest including yes, head nods.

E- Eye: Maintain a healthy amount of contact.

R- Relax: Allow conversation to form, be comfortable with silent moments.

Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Touch - touch is the most powerful for of nonverbal communication but there is a downside with style of communication, it may cause misunderstanding amongst employees. Heslin (1974) helped us have a better understanding of how we can manage touch behavior.

Things like a good professional hand shake can leave a good first impression with an employee but on the other hand there are hugs. Social/polite touch is associated with cultural norms like hugs, kisses on cheeks or pats on the back.

An employee may give what they may think is an innocent hug only to realize that the employee they hugged did not feel comfortable with it.

As explained by Heslin (1974), “functional/professional touch serves a specific function, these touches simply take place in a professional relationship and are low in intimacy”.

Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

Space – The effect of space on communication is called proxemics. This is the process of one protecting their space or allowing time to pass before dealing with a situation. An employer having the right to defend and protect their space is detrimental to how comfortable they feel in the workplace.

When speaking about space it is also important consider physical space. Imagine being in a lift and someone is standing too close. That is the type of space that must be practiced in the workplace (Foley & Gentile, 2010). Maund, A. Achriek, M. and Tinkler, P. (2017).

MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Shannon- Weaver

Shannon- Weaver's model of communication was created in 1949. He acknowledged that things could disrupt communication and created solutions in which communication can be more efficient.

An example of how Shannon-Weaver's model process in the workplace.

At 12pm a salon manager contacts employee via mobile phone text and lets them know that their customer has arrived, employee has gone out for lunch and is running late for their appointment.

Manager: "your next customer has arrived, how far are you?" (there's disruption with noise so employee doesn't hear text message tone).

Employee: At 12:15pm replies "I am caught up in traffic so running 15 minutes late", (feedback).

If the employee had heard the text message, they would have been able to reply the message on time but because there was noise in the background, they were not able to hear the text tone. This can lead to misunderstandings so with the Shannon- Weaver's model, one is able to easily identify the problem.

Sender: Manager

Encoder: Telephone company

Channel: Mobile Network

Noise: Distraction in background noise

Decode: Mobile Phone

Receiver: Employee

The advantages and disadvantages of the Shannon- Weaver model is that the idea of noise helps in making commutation easier by removing noise or thing causing noise. This model focuses on the parties involved it takes communication as a two-way

process therefore making it applicable most common communication. It is more applicable to interpersonal communication than a group communication. Receiver plays predominant part in the communication process as the receiver plays the main role that sends messages. Message from sender is prioritized more than message from receiver. Some critics see this type of model as unrealistic and misleading to the true nature of human communication, real communication is not calculated in nature.

COMMUNICATION AT MY WORKPLACE

Case study

The scenario I am about to give happened at my workplace. I had been going through a lot personally and had work the next day. I was going to call in sick but decided to still go in. I walked in and said to myself that I will make sure that I remain professional although I just wanted to go home and cry.

My manager came over and asked if I was ok and I answered, "I am fine". He then answered, "that was rude". I was confused.

I had let him know that I was fine, but he seemed to have thought that I was being rude. At that point I was in no mood to have an argument, so I walked away.

Later that day he came to me and said that I was very rude earlier and that it was rude that I walked away while he was still talking to me.

What went wrong?

In this scenario I think the misunderstanding happened because of my facial expressions. So even though there was verbal communication there was also nonverbal communication because my facial expressions did not match what I had said.

When someone says that they are ok or fine it is best that they follow up with a smile after. That shows the receiver that the person is in-fact genuinely fine, they will be satisfied with that response.

The next part of this scenario is when I walked away. The confusion with that is that I never excused myself. If I had exercised verbal communication before walking away, by

explaining that I am not feeling well and I will not be able to speak at that time and maybe we could schedule to speak later, would have helped greatly.

I think my manager should have seen that I was not myself by seeing my facial expressions. I am normally smiling and bubbly so I thought he would be able to read my body language and see that maybe he should give me space.

Space would have made a huge difference that day because it would have given me time to gather my thoughts.

What needs to be improved?

Based on these experiences the things that need to be improved at my workplace in terms of communication are, clear verbal communication backup up with matching body language. What I would do differently is that before going into work I would have used written communication by texting my manager something like this, "Hello sir, hope you are ok, I have had such a hard week and I am not feeling myself at the moment, however, I do not want that to stop me from coming in today as I do not want to let the team down. I will see you soon and thank you for understanding."

This would have made a great difference as it would have prepared my manager to expect that I will not be my normally bubbly self. It would also have helped me not assume that he should know that I am ok, communication is very important because so many things would have been avoided when the right model of communication is used.

CONCLUSION

In this report I have concluded the importance of communication in the workplace. Communication is not as simple as it may look but it can be made simple by one applying the right methods. Verbal, nonverbal, listening and written are the most valuable hold the foundation of communicating effectively.

The Shannon- Weaver model has helped me understand that there is a process that must be followed in order to successfully add solution miscommunication. That means that in future one would know how to resolve problems effectively.

I have understood that hearing and listening are different. Many times, in conversations people do not listen to each other, they hear what the other person is saying but they don't take in what they are verbally saying. To verbally listen is to be able to analyze the aim of the sender and receive an interpretation of what they are trying to communicate. How the information is receiver concludes how well the receiver was listening to the sender.

I have also understood that touch is a very sensitive way of communicating when in a work environment. It is important to consider that functional/professional touch is very

low in intimacy, this must be something that is respected amongst all employees and managers.

REFERENCES

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