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Effective Team Working and Communication (BMSW4002)

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Abstract

What do we mean by effective communication? Why is a good communication at workplace important? Is teamwork essential in any company? Does communication influence teamwork? In this essay I am going to analyse the different types of communication, how to affect communication in teamwork and what we can do to change or to improve bad communication.

Introduction

"Communication (from Latin communicate, meaning "to share") is the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic rules."

"Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another. Every communication involves (at least) one sender, a message and a recipient."

Communication is the most important thing to work as a team. An effective communication will make our team know what our goal is (where we want to go) and the steps to follow to achieve in the deadline (how we will do it). Communication at my workplace is important for me because it will affect me in my performance. It's easy, our team is not too big, the directions normally are done without mistakes. We work with two supervisors who are running with us in the floor and the manager, who checks up on us regularly and helps us throughout the shift.

David Fattal, founder and CEO of Fattal Hotels was born in 1957 in Haifa, Israel and graduated in Management, Sociology and Pedagogy at the University of Haifa. Fattal hotels wanted to expand their hotels around Europe, so they established Leonardo hotels. Leonardo Hotels, associated with the company of Fattal Hotels, started to work in 2007 in the German market and today has more than 160 hotels (3* to 4*) in Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Netherlands, UK, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic and Poland. The main office is located in Berlin. Fattal Hotels is working with more than 200 hotels through Europe and Israel.

Effective communication

An **effective communication** is carried out without loss of information in the process. This happens when the sender and receiver encode the message in the same way, making clear what you want to transmit. It's necessary to have these skills to execute an effective communication:

- Listening skills.
- Non verbal and verbal skills.
- Para verbal skills.
- Written skills.

To have an effective team work it is important to know who the people you are working with are. You need to know who to give an order under pressure, who you can ask help, who is best doing an specific task..., the same way they should know you. If they feel that you are one of them it makes you more interested in what is being talked about. Credibility will depend on our attitude when we are talking. Talking in a simple, orderly and clear way will give detailed information, this will avoid confusion. When we have to start a conversation with someone from our team, we will do in a sincere and humble way, no more and no less than anyone. Empathising with the coworkers will bring us closer to each other and make us adopt a more relaxed attitude when we are communicating. It is important to know what they think about us to know how to drive each one of them. A confident attitude when we are speaking will give the impression that we know what we are talking about. Effective communication will depend on the context, we have to take into account religion, language, situations, places, culture...

Influences and implications of communication

1. **Source effects.** They are those factors that influence on the sender: credibility, attractiveness, expertise and similarity.
2. **Encoding effects.** There are problems that we can find when we encode a message: different language, colloquial speech, that the other person does not know what we are talking about, symbols that have different meanings...
3. **Media/channel issues.** It is the way we use to communicate. It can be verbal or non-verbal.
4. **Receiver effects.** They are those that influence on the receiver: age, nationality, lifestyle, hobbies, motivations...
5. **Decoding effects.** They are the things that influence you when we try to decode a message: the message was not clear enough, the other person was hearing but not listening, shorts and messy messages...
6. **Feedback.** This is important because we can check if the message has been understood. It is the answer of the receiver, it can be positive or negative. With the feedback we can get more information.

Types of communication

We can talk about two types of communication, **verbal** and **non-verbal communication**. Verbal communication is that what we do with words (oral or written) and non-verbal communication is what we do with our body or something external.

Within **verbal communication** we find oral and written communication.

1. **Oral communication:** we use this communication when we are talking to someone, using words and sounds through the same communication channel. It is the most frequent and easy communication. We use it in our daily lives, greeting a friend, at work giving or receiving an order, when we talk on the phone, watching news on the TV...
2. **Written communication.** It is the one we use to express our ideas, thoughts or feelings writing, using words or signs. This communication happens when we send or receive a message, reading the newspaper, a book, writing a letter...

Non-verbal communication is the way we use to transmit a message without using words (spoken or written). For this type of communication we use facial gestures, colours, movements, signals, sounds... Most of them are international and can be easily interpreted, nodding, thumbs up, sirens, morse or braille code, an applause, etc.

Currently, with the advancement of technology we find that they have developed new communication channels, helping people with some physical disability (hearing, oral or visual). These new channels facilitate the integration of people and makes communication accessible to everyone.

Effective teamwork

Teamwork is a group of people organised in a hierarchical way, who work in coordination to achieve a common goal. Each member must do their best for the team to function properly and succeed in its goal. Working as a team will help us to find better and faster solutions. Sharing knowledge and experience within the team will give a better connection between the members.

In all work teams there are rules to follow that are valid to guide the behaviour of the group. Different roles are also assigned so that all the tasks are covered and efficiency is better. Individual and common objectives are defined, it is very important that the team have them clear. In this way, everyone gets to know what role each one plays and the responsibility they have. Although each team member has different tasks and responsibility on it, the responsibility for the work is joint. Collaboration between different members is essential.

Effective teamwork depends on the characteristics and skills of its members.

- **Empathy.** Being able to put yourself in the other person's shoes and having emotional intelligence to understand your own and others' feelings.
- **Assertive.** Clearly express thoughts or feelings in an honest and direct way, respecting the opinion of others.
- **Listening skills.** Be able to actively listen to coworkers and understand the message.
- Being able to build a **professional and satisfactory relationship** with coworkers.
- **Good attitude** to create a pleasant work environment among the team.
- **Self-critical.** Know what our limitations are, accept our mistakes and find ways to fix them.
- **Independent.** Being able to carry out a task without needing a partner to complete it or the supervisors to follow us.
- **Organisation skills.** Keeping the workplace tidy and clean makes work easier and faster. So we don't waste a lot of time looking for what we need.
- **Responsible.** Being able to carry out the different tasks required, being self-determining to finish them in the deadline.
- Desire for **improvement.**
- **Loyalty** to the team.
- Have **initiative** to improve teamwork and be **positive** in times of tension or stress.

Teamwork is not only important among the members of a department, it is important that there is good teamwork between the departments of the company. Cooperation between them can contribute to an overall improvement, increasing the reputation of the company. This can position us in a better place in the job market.

Communication in teamwork

As I mentioned earlier, communication is the most important part of teamwork. Team members must be able to exchange their opinions clearly, respecting the coworkers and understanding the opinion of one another. Open communication will avoid conflict or misunderstanding. Although these are not always generated by internal factors, it is important that an agreement can be reached before it becomes a real problem. Being able to communicate effectively with a partner will help to work with more confidence in each other and will motivate them when they are carrying out a task together.

Not only is communication between workers important, good communication with superiors will give the team the feeling of being part of something important and everyone is willing to give more of themselves. If superiors communicate with their workers they will know the strengths and weaknesses of them, making the process of assigning tasks easier. Good communication between superiors and workers will increase productivity and creativity, giving different points of view and new ideas. This also helps the worker, demonstrating his strengths (leadership, solving problems...) will have more options to be promoted.

We can say that communication is essential in any work team. Many companies focus on customer care and forget that the most important thing is the workers, who are the ones that make the company work and advance correctly. Poor communication between superiors and workers will affect the morale of both. If the workers feels unmotivated, they will not actively participate by contributing new ideas or measures to improve productivity, they will only do their part. If the superiors do not give the orders correctly this will make the worker not know how to carry out the task, leaving it incomplete or doing it incorrectly.

It is also important that there is a fluid communication between the different bosses. If workers are given conflicting orders or another manager asks them to do something while they are already working, a bad work environment will be created affecting the rest of the team. Bad communication in the workplace will cause us to find obstacles to achieve our objectives. It is also important for supervisors to inform their workers what the short or long-term goals are, and what the result will be when we get them. Not knowing what you're working for can cause confusion. The worst part of bad communication between workers is customer disappointment. Poor management will make them complain about the product or service (which is in poor condition or bad treatment) or the environment among workers. If there is a hostile environment among the workers, the client will perceive it and will not feel comfortable anymore.

Conclusion

Most personal and professional problems are due to bad communication. At workplace, this creates conflicts between colleagues and superiors, creating an unfavourable environment for the team, affecting productivity and efficiency.

Personally, this has a very important role. Poor communication with family, friends, partner, roommate, etc., will cause us to find misunderstandings, affecting our positive thoughts, motivation and productivity at work. I believe that improving our communication skills will help us to have a better personal and professional development.

Most of the time the problems are not due to a bad attitude but due to a lack of knowledge. A person who does not have good communication skills will not be able to express themselves clearly and will not be able to understand what the sender is saying, in this process information will be lost and the receiver will take the wrong ideas or misunderstand thoughts.

It is important to improve this skill because in this way we will know the impact that our words can have for the receiver. We will learn to control our emotions and we can direct ourselves with respect and empathy. Improving this skill from the moment we start our studies will help us to develop professionally, making it easy for us to carry out our work.

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