

Effective team working and communication

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What is effective team working and communication in the work place ?

Effective communication and teamwork will help a business maintain a positive work environment. Effective communication also permeates throughout all areas of business operations, because a positive workplace means happier employees are interacting with the public and with consumers. Effective communication among business teams begins with leadership that sets clear methods and standards.

A key component of communication is listening to what others say. Provide the team with ways to speak to leaders. This includes having open-door policies to address issues. It also includes having tip boxes, debriefings on projects and having team-member surveys. Don't allow these to be superficial or symbolic communication opportunities. Include all feedback into consideration, and take action, as required.

Teams are strengthened when individuals feel empowered to express ideas in a respectful, accepting environment. Host team-building events or provide other opportunities for team members to hang out and get to know each other. This helps promote mutual respect for other team members beyond day-to-day work details. Coach employees about diversification and offer diversity days, which enable employees to celebrate unique qualities that make the entire team great.

GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING

Even when you understand your communication style and those of your colleagues, you will occasionally experience conflicts and misunderstandings, particularly among groups. When problems emerge within a group, you may need to turn to the team for help in finding a solution.

Try organizing a group discussion. This requires good communication, of course! Send out an early agenda, express the purpose of the meeting up front, frame the decision making with key questions, and clarify the leadership. During the meeting, follow these four steps:

Identify the problem. After all, you can't solve a problem if people don't think there is one.

Ventilate feelings. We all need to be heard. Be sure that everyone has a chance to share how they feel about the particular issue at hand.

Describe the problem. Does everyone understand all the complexities involved?

Develop solutions. You might want to propose several possible solutions. Discuss all the options and then narrow them down to the best one.

Workplace communication is the process of exchanging information and ideas, both verbal and non-verbal between one person/group and another person/group within an organization. It includes e-mails, text messages, notes, calls, etc. Effective communication is critical in getting the job done, as well as building a sense of trust and increasing the productivity of employees. These may have different cultures and backgrounds, and can be used to different norms. To unite activities of all employees and restrain from any missed deadline or activity that could affect the company negatively, communication is crucial. Effective workplace communication ensures that all the organizational objectives are achieved. Workplace communication is tremendously important to organizations because it increases productivity and efficiency. Ineffective workplace communication leads to communication gaps between employees, which causes confusion, wastes time, and reduces productivity. Misunderstandings that cause friction between people can be avoided by effective workplace communication. Effective communication, also called open communication, prevents barriers from forming among individuals within companies that might impede progress in striving to reach a common goal. For businesses to function as desired, managers and lower-level employees must be able to interact clearly and effectively with each other through verbal communication and non-verbal communication to achieve specific business goals. Effective communication with clients plays a vital role in development of an organization and success of any business. When communicating, nonverbal communication must also be taken into consideration. How a person delivers a message has a lot of influence on the meaning of this one.

Another important aspect to have effective workplace communication is taking into consideration the different backgrounds of employees. "While diversity enriches the environment, it can also cause communication barriers." Difficulties arise when a coworker's cultural background leads him or her to think differently than another. It is for this reason that knowing about intercultural communication at work and learning how to treat others without offending them can bring several benefits to the company.

Getting the message across efficiently depends on the skills of the communicator such as presentation skills, group facilitation skills, negotiation and written communication skills. Successful communication also depends upon the capacity of the employees to understand the information. This requires providing the employees some basic financial literacy like financial statements, sales, profitability, etc.

When selecting a candidate, most employers seek for those who have strong speaking and writing skills. Problem solving and self-motivation are also highly necessary skills among the workplace. These allow rapidly changing environments to become less of a challenge.

Common barriers to effective communication at workplace:

Physical barriers: Physical structure, location and construction of the workplace acts as a barrier to effective communication. Employees seated remotely from each other hinders effective interaction.

Language barriers: Employees with different native languages will be working in an organization. As everyone in organization are not comfortable with native language of the other person, language acts as a barrier for effective workplace communication. Language barriers, such as differences in slang or register among second language speakers, within a workplace can create issues impeding proper work task completion.^[13]

Cultural barriers: Employees from different cultures, following different practices will be working in an organization. This cultural diversity among the employees can act as barrier for effective communication at workplace.

Emotional barriers: Emotional barriers like fear, inferiority, shyness, lack of self confidence and skills will stop an employee in communicating effectively with his colleagues.

Perception barriers: Employees will have different experiences, values, preferences and attitudes. These may lead to a variety of assumptions and can act as a communication barrier.

Components in Communication

There are five components to any communication and a sixth that is the overall environment of the workplace in which the communication takes place. The components of communication are:

The individual sending the message. The sender must present the message clearly and with enough detail so that the receiver shares meaning with the sender.

The context for the message. The context is how the message is delivered by the sender of the message. Context involves nonverbal communication such as gestures, body language, facial expressions, and elements such as tone of voice. Most of the context for a message is only available when the receiver can see and hear the message sender. Email and IM emoticons, for example, are a poor substitution as the sender formulates them without input from the receiver.

Another piece of the context is the emotions that are involved in the communication circle. Is the sender angry? Is the receiver indifferent to the content of the communication or disdainful of the sender? Normal human emotions affect whether a message is successfully shared.

The person receiving the message. The receiver must listen carefully and intently, ask questions for clarity, and paraphrase to ascertain that the receiver shares meaning with the sender. If the receiver trusts the sender, the chances for effective communication increase.

The delivery method you choose. The delivery method should be selected based on the medium most effective to convey the meaning of the message. Since communication methods are so diverse since the dawn of computers and mobile devices, decisions about the delivery method have become more complex. The delivery method must suit the communication needs of both the sender and the receiver.

Communication methods include verbal communication, instant messages (IM), email, letters, signs, posters, videos, screenshots, telephones, notes, forms, written documents, and more. These methods will continue to expand, and employee expectations for instant communication about everything having to do with their work will continue to grow. In-person communication has increased in importance especially for organizational information that might call for change, provide employee recognition, or allow for on-the-spot questions. In-person communication is also favored because employees have access to the component, context.

The content of the message. The content of the message should be clear and presented and described in enough detail to obtain understanding from the receiver. If the message content resonates and connects, on some level, with the already-held beliefs of the receiver, it is most effective.

How Asking Good Questions Enhances Communication

James O. Pyle and Maryann Karinch add the following to aid effective communication.

From human resources to customer service, bad questions pollute nearly every workplace. Bad questions often prompt incomplete or misleading answers and can undermine rapport. On the other hand, good questions are a valuable tool of efficiency, competence, and rapport-building.

There are six types of good questions: direct, control, repeat, persistent, summary, and non-pertinent. To describe them briefly:

Direct: You pose a simple question with a basic interrogative.

Control: You already know the answer to it when you ask it. It's a way of finding out whether or not the person is lying, uninformed, and/or not paying attention.

Repeat: You ask two different questions that are after the same information.

Persistent: You ask the same question in different ways to explore all facets of the desired information.

Summary: You ask a question that is intended to allow the source an opportunity to revisit the answer.

Non-pertinent: It doesn't pertain to the subject you want to know about, but it's one the person will probably not lie about; it serves the purpose of seeing what the truth "looks like" and getting the person to open up to you. It can also tie into the context of the questioning exchange.

Teamwork: Isn't it a well-known fact that good teamwork is proportional to good productivity, responsibility and integrity? And what do you think is the key factor for a good team? That's right, it is good communication. Effective workplace communication helps employees to form efficient teams.

Employee job satisfaction: Employees feel more valued when they can have upward communication. This type of communication is when information flows upward where bosses or managers listen to their employees and respond with a feedback. Examples include annual reports, research reports, budgetary reports, or when employees submit their suggestions. Employees also feel important when there is downward communication which is information flowing from superiors to employees. An example is when an organization's mission and strategies are explained to the employees.

Positive effect on absenteeism and turnover rates: Communication is important for the employees as it is necessary for the workers to feel they are receiving truthful and updated information from their superiors. Studies have shown that companies with excellent communication are able to retain their surviving employees even after a layoff (a temporary or permanent discharge of a worker or workers).

Entering global marketplaces: Companies that provide workers with an opportunity to excel in their verbal and non-verbal communication skills find it easier to enter global marketplaces than companies who do not do the same. For example, Nike has been able to evolve its global presence through carefully selecting international sponsorships. Learning the etiquettes of your international colleagues and adapting the work environment to fit cultural differences is important in fostering such relationships.