

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1.0 Meaning & Importance

The success of an individual in a team depends greatly on the extent to which he can engage in effective communication. Faulty communication in organizations can lead to lowered efficiency and effectiveness at the organizational as well as individual level. Also most of the interpersonal friction can be traced to faulty communication.

Communication, derived from the Latin word 'Communicare' which means, to share; is the process of transmitting information and understanding. It is the transference of meaning between individuals and the means of reaching, understanding and influencing others. Skill to communicate depends on the capacity of an individual to convey ideas and feelings to another to evoke a desired response. In management, communication is a mixture of personal attributes and organizational aspects. Good communication is necessary for all organizations as management functions in organizations are carried out through communication. Effective management is a function of effective communication.

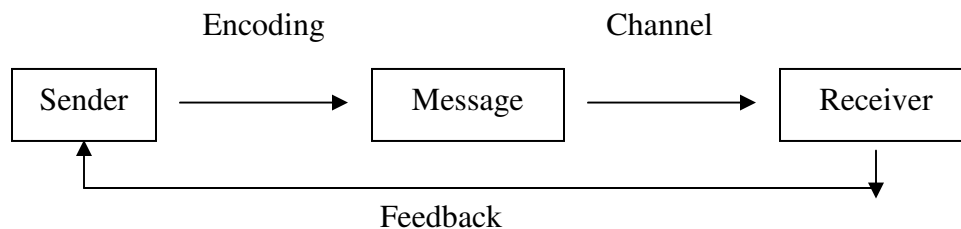
Interpersonal communication takes place every time we interact with others. Communication is considered effective when it succeeds in evoking a desired response from the other person. Moreover failures in communication can be very costly for the organization by way of reduced co-operation and subsequent ill feeling between employees. Communication, to be effective, cannot be a haphazard process. It has to be planned and executed so that it evokes the desired response.

Communication in organizations has the following role

- Helps in fostering motivation
- Aids in the function of control
- Provides information for making decisions
- Gives vent to one's feelings
- Helps in the satisfaction of social needs

2.0 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The process of communication between two individuals can be illustrated below:



Communication is initiated by the sender who conceptualizes the idea that is to be transmitted. This idea is encoded with the help of language, symbols etc. into a message. The message, which is the product of encoding, is transmitted from the sender to the receiver through a channel. Channel or medium can be physical presence (face to face talk) interactive channels (telephone, electronic media) personal static channel (memos, letters) or impersonal static channels (general reports, circulars etc.). The richness of each channel is determined according to its capability in eliciting feedback. Accordingly, face to face talk is considered richest and impersonal static channel is considered to be the leanest. However for making communication efficient, the sender has to choose the channel depending upon the urgency and complexity of the idea which is communicated.

Once the message is transmitted through the channel to the receiver, he decodes it back to the idea and assimilates it. The effectiveness of communication depends upon the extent to which the sender has succeeded in making the receiver understand his idea. This can be evaluated through feedback, where the receiver responds to the sender in the form of clarifications and doubts. Feedback, which makes communication two way is important because it helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication.

3.0 ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

3.1 Verbal communication

Verbal communication (vocal included) contributes to 45% of our communication. It involves the use of language and meaning (either oral or written). Normally the words used in communication are *concrete* or *abstract*. Concrete words represent an object (eg. Chair) and hence convey ideas easily. Abstract words, on the other hand, has a built-in-ambiguity because the ideas conveyed by such words are subjective and so effectiveness of communication is in question (eg. beauty, intelligence etc.). Thus, while concrete words can be compared to a sharp tool, abstract words are often compared to a blunt instrument.

Role of jargons is also crucial in determining the effectiveness of communication. While jargons help to communicate easily in a homogeneous group, excessive use of there can hinder communication. Use of jargons has to be minimized while communicating to someone who is not familiar with the terms.

Verbal communication becomes effective through the choice of right words & emphasis of the same. There should be an optimum use of pauses, non-words and phrases because excessive use of these leads to distraction of the receiver.

3.2 Non-verbal Communication

Non verbal communication is the conscious and unconscious body movements in communication that couple with physical and environmental surroundings. Non verbal communications are those which are not expressed orally or in writing and includes human elements associated with communication. These form an important and inevitable

aspect of the total communication process because it compliments and substitutes verbal communication.

A good communicator should have the right posture, facial expression and body language that are in tune with the words spoken. Lack of co-ordination between verbal and non-verbal contents of communication would only confuse the receiver. So while communicating, care should be taken to ensure a proper blend between words and actions.

3.3 Listening & Feedback

Listening which comprises of hearing, attending, understanding and remembering can facilitate the effectiveness of communication. Listening can be pleasurable, discriminative or critical depending on the degree of application of mind. Listener has to employ the appropriate type of listening depending on the situation and nature of the message. Proper listening requires a reasonable background familiarity, right attitudes, interest, objectivity, patience and rapport with the sender. Absence of rapport with the sender often leads to ambush listening where the receiver listens only till he gets a point for argument after which his main intention would be to interrupt the communication. Lack of interest in the topic spoken by a person with whom we have a rapport would sometimes make us employ pseudo listening. Appropriate listener response serves as a means by which feedback is judged. The feedback should be timely and constructive.

4.0 STYLES & COMMUNICATION

In organizations we often encounter people possessing different styles of management. Each style has to be dealt with in a way such that the desired response is achieved.

4.1 **Result Style** – Officers possessing this style are action oriented and make quick decision with available data. While communicating with such people, use concrete words as much as possible; be brief, state what you want precisely, supply necessary information and wait for an answer.

4.2 **Reasons Style** – Officers with this style are very logical and rely on rational decision on making. While communicating with such people, introduce the topic in a rational manner with all supporting information.

4.3 **Process Style** – Affiliation orientation forms the basis of this style. Officers with this style are informal and try to find solution that is agreeable to all parties concerned. Be as informal as possible, introduce the topic with ample information regarding the background and motivate for an answer.

4.4 Forms of Communication

Communication in organizations can be broadly classified into formal and informal communication. Formal communication takes place through the system in organization.

In this, hierarchy has a very important role to play and the parties communicating should adhere to the procedures in the system. In organizations, formal communication is effected in upward (subordinate to superior), downward (superior to subordinate) and horizontal (between same levels) directions.

Informal communication (grapevine) in an organization is very active and powerful. Nature of communication through this medium is oral and the speed with which the message is spread through this network is tremendous. As a result, distortion at any stage cannot be identified. This is probably the reason why grapevine is said to be the medium for spreading of rumors or false message.

4.5 Making Communication Effective

- ⇒ Use concrete than abstract words wherever possible.
- ⇒ The content has to be made meaningful to the receiver
- ⇒ The message should be framed according to the capability of the receiver.
- ⇒ There should be a proper blend of verbal and non-verbal communication
- ⇒ Eye contact should be maintained
- ⇒ Speak at a moderate rate
- ⇒ Create rapport with the receiver
- ⇒ Select appropriate channel
- ⇒ Encourage listening & feedback
- ⇒ Avoid communicating in extreme emotional states
- ⇒ Make the message

Attractive
Brief &
Clear

Communication involves a number of skills and no one is a complete – effective communicator. Each individual can become a better communicator by sharpening his skills through learning and practice.

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