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A conceptual study on communication influences in business and its effectiveness with special reference to IT companies in India

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Abstract

This paper describes about the necessity and various benefits of communication in business. Now a days, Indian companies has already started practicing westernized management style with cut through competitions, merit and quality considerations and a no-nonsense approach to work ethics. This article develops a theoretical framework for influences of the communication in business of Indian IT companies. It includes understanding and improving the interaction with customers, suppliers, employees, executives, and others from countries and cultures around the world. In these days, there is an increase in the scope of globalization where employees need to live with more than one culture. Cross cultural business communication mainly focuses on organizational behaviour with in countries and cultures. Communication is the exchange of facts, ideas, wishes, and attitudes between or among persons. Communication in business is same in nature. Business communication is the expression, channelling, receiving and interchanging of ideas in commerce-and industry. Communication involves transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages. This study explains importance of communication, its various types, effectiveness, etc. This paper concludes that communication is based on organizational behavioural pattern in IT Company's working environment.

Keywords: Communication, cross cultural business communication

Introduction

In today's workplace requires the ability to communicate effectively with a wide variety of audience. (Paul Gillin). Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between senders and receivers, using one or more written, oral, visual, or electronic channels. Business communication is the sharing of information between people within and outside the organization that is performed for the commercial benefit of the organization. It can also be defined as relaying of information within a business by its people. Effective communication at work is about knowing employees and choosing the right message and channel for transmission. It may be necessary to develop a communications plan to outline strategies. The company's culture is reflected in the nature of office communications, and business can hinge on effective communication. Effective communication is critical to any organization and can help it in many ways. In fact, communication plays a role in product development, customer relations, and employee management - virtually every facet of a business' operations. If employees are informed and engaged, communications with other constituencies are likely to be strong as well. Communication is the exchange of facts, ideas, wishes, and attitudes between or among persons. Business communication is the expression, channeling, receiving and interchanging of ideas in commerce-and industry.

Objectives

- To know about communications in business
- To understand the importance of Cross-Cultural Business Communications
- To understand how effective communication will help an Organization
- To know the ways to improve Communication Within a Business

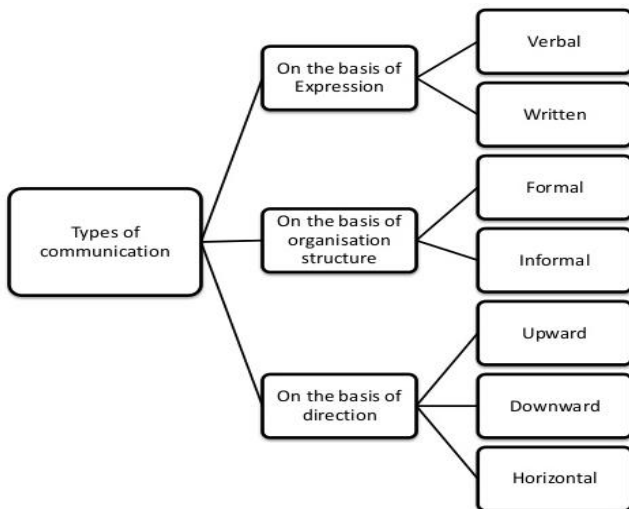
Research methodology

This data collected from secondary data such as books, journals and various website.

Communication in Business

Communication is the lifeblood of an organization. In the business world, good communication is important for the daily operation of the company, but can also affect sales and profitability. Without good business communication, the internal and external structure of a business can face numerous challenges that can ultimately lead to its demise. Any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person, the information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective states. Communication may be intentional or unintentional; it may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes or in simple words. Communication is the exchange of ideas, opinions and information through written or spoken words, symbols or actions. Communication is a dialogue, not a monologue. In fact, communication is more concerned with a dual listening process. For communication to be effective, the message must mean the same thing to both the sender and the receiver. Below diagrams shows the types of communication. (Source: Courtland Bovee & John Thill.)

Fig 1.



Good communication can take on several different forms. The three primary forms of communication are verbal, written and expressed (body language). All three forms of communication are used internally and externally in conducting business. Since each person processes information differently, it is wise to communicate with a combination of these forms of communication. For example, some people take in and process information better when they hear it (verbal) while others process things better when they can see and read it (written). For this reason, many businesses send out information to their employees and their customers in several different ways. A business owner may conduct an employee meeting where an item is announced verbally so employees can hear the information and watch the body language of the presenter. In addition, an email memo may go out to the employees as a follow-up to the announcement. In promoting its product, a business may follow a similar pattern with its marketing communication to its prospects and customers. A written sales letter may be sent in the mail to the same audience a few weeks later and weekly ads may also be printed in the local newspaper to cover reaching those who need to see the information in writing.

Business Communication is any communication used to promote a product, service, or organization – with the objective of making sale. In business communication, message is conveyed through various channels of communication including internet, print (publications), radio, television, outdoor, and word of mouth. In business, communication is considered core among business, interpersonal skills and etiquette.

Types of Business Communication

There are two types of business communication in an organization:

- Internal Communication
- External Communication

Internal Communication

Communication within an organization is called “Internal Communication”. It includes all communication within an organization. It may be informal, formal function, or department providing communication in various forms to employees. Effective internal communication is a vital mean of addressing organizational concerns. Good communication may help to increase job satisfaction, safety, productivity, and profits and decrease grievances and turnover.

Under Internal Business Communication types, there come:

Upward Communication:

Upward communication is the flow of information from subordinates to superiors, or from employees to management. Without upward communication, management works in a vacuum, not knowing if the messages have been received properly, or if other problems exist in the organization. By definition, communication is a two-way affair. Yet for effective two-way organizational communication to occur, it must begin from the bottom.

Upward Communication is a mean for the staff to:

- Exchange information
- Offer ideas
- Express enthusiasm
- Achieve job satisfaction
- Provide feedback

Downward Communication

Information flowing from the top of the organizational management hierarchy and telling people in the organization what is important (mission) and what is valued (policies). Downward communication generally provides information – which allows a subordinate to do something. For example, instructions on how to complete a task. Downward communication comes after upward communications have been successfully established.

This type of communication is needed in an organization to:

- Transmit vital information
- Give instructions
- Encourage 2-way discussion
- Announce decisions
- Seek cooperation
- Provide motivation
- Boost morale
- Increase efficiency
- Obtain feedback

Both Downward & Upward Communications are collectively called “Vertical Communication”.

Horizontal/Literal communication

Horizontal communication normally involves coordinating information, and allows people with the same or similar rank in an organization to cooperate or collaborate. Communication among employees at the same level is crucial for the accomplishment of the assigned work.

Horizontal Communication is essential for:

- Solving problems
- Accomplishing tasks
- Improving teamwork
- Building goodwill
- Boosting efficiency

External Communication

Communication with people outside the company is called "external communication". Supervisors communicate with sources outside the organization, such as vendors and customers.

It leads to better

- Sales volume
- Public credibility
- Operational efficiency
- Company profits

It should improve

- Overall performance
- Public goodwill
- Corporate image

Ultimately, it helps to achieve

- Organizational goals
- Customer satisfaction

Importance of Good Communication in Business

When communication lines are open between a business and its customers, it can directly affect the sales of the business. When a business effectively communicates to prospects and customers how its products and services can benefit them, it converts prospects into customers. Good communication ultimately boosts the bottom line of a business. When the internal forces of a business are working toward communicating the same message to vendors, suppliers and customers, good communication can also lead to a boost in sales for the business. Essentially, good communication creates a win-win situation. The customers who can benefit from the company receive the messages they need to make them aware of the company and to make a purchase, which in turn boosts the sales of the company.

It is needed for:

- Exchanging information
- Exchanging options
- Making plans and proposals
- Reaching agreement
- Executing decisions
- Sending and fulfilling orders
- Conducting sales

When communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist. Individual uncoordinated activity returns in an organization. So, Communication in an organization, is as vital as blood for life.

Choosing Communication Media in IT Company

When choosing a media of communication, it is important to consider who are the respective audience and the objective

of the message itself. Rich media are more interactive than lean media and provide the opportunity for two-way communication: the receiver can ask questions and express opinions easily in person. There are several methods of business communication, including:

- Web-based communication - for better and improved communication, anytime anywhere
- video conferencing which allow people in different locations to hold interactive meetings
- Reports - important in documenting the activities of any department;
- Presentations - very popular method of communication in all types of organizations, usually involving audio, visual material, like copies of reports, or material prepared in Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe Flash;
- telephone meetings, which allow for long distance speech;
- forum boards, which allow people to instantly post information at a centralized location; and
- Face-to-face meetings, which are personal and should be succeeded by a written follow-up.
- Suggestion box: It is primarily used for upward communication, because some people may hesitate to communicate with management directly, so they opt to give suggestions by drafting one and putting it in the suggestion box.

Business communication (or simply "communication", in a business context) encompasses topics such as marketing, brand management, customer relations, consumer behaviour, advertising, public relations, corporate communication, community engagement, reputation management, interpersonal communication, employee engagement, and event management. It is closely related to the fields of professional communication and technical communication. Media channels for business communication include the Internet, print media, radio, television, ambient media, and word of mouth. Business communication can also refer to internal communication that takes place within an organization. Business communication can also be said to the way employees, management and other people of organisation communicate in order to reach to their organisational goals.

The Importance of Cross-Cultural Business Communications

In today's global business marketplace, the ability to communicate effectively and multi-culturally cannot be underestimated. As a communications expert with a background in behavioural and cultural science, I have to know how to effectively manage multi-cultural expectations. Over the years, I've shared my experiences with entrepreneurs and businesses all over the world. Here are some common cross-cultural issues for those entrepreneurs developing relationships with individuals or businesses from different cultural backgrounds:

- Not being proactive and adapting to different cultural business expectations. It's all too easy to get off on the wrong foot and become reactive.
- Not understanding how formality, hierarchy and timing can affect business. These things have a tremendous impact on negotiations and decision-making.
- Being perceived as too aggressive or even impatient in your business approach. Business often takes longer

with different cultures and countries, so plan accordingly.

- A big taboo is unintentionally offending someone with your body language. This can be very difficult to recover from. A basic guideline is to use “opened-handed” gestures. Don’t point with your index finger, use the OK sign or thumbs up and thumbs down.

How Effective Communication Will Help an Organization-IT company

Effective communication is critical to any organization and can help it in many ways. In fact, communication plays a role in product development, customer relations, and employee management - virtually every facet of a business' operations. Employees are a key audience because they often serve as the conduit to other audiences. If employees are informed and engaged, communications with other constituencies are likely to be strong as well.

- **Clear Expectations:** Effective communications help to establish clear expectations for employees and, perhaps surprisingly, for customers as well. For employees, clear expectations will convey how their performance will impact the company and give them an indication of what they need to do to achieve positive feedback. For customers, clear communication can help manage their expectations about service issues or even about how best to interact with the organization.
- **Strong Relationships:** Effective communication builds strong relationships. Trust and loyalty are key factors in any relationship and both are boosted by communication that is focused on meeting individual needs, conveying important information and providing feedback - positive and constructive. Strong relationships with external audiences also build strong solid communication about products, services and company culture and values.
- **Ideas and Innovation:** Open channels of communication can lead to new ideas and innovation in a number of areas. Employees that understand what's important to their companies can focus on making improvements and spotting opportunities for innovation that can help further success. When employees know their ideas will be sought after, that company leaders will have open minds and be responsive to their feedback, they're more likely to contribute their ideas. Customers also can be a source of great ideas to help improve products and services.
- **Customer Ambassadors:** The more employees know about the company, its culture, its products and services, and its response to any negative issues, the better job they can do of serving as ambassadors to the community, their friends, relatives and other business connections. Employees who feel they have a strong, positive relationship with their employers and trust the information they receive from their employers will be more likely to share that information with others. Employees can be a highly valued and trusted source of information about a company and its products and services.
- **Strong Teamwork:** Effective organizational communication will lead to strong teamwork and the ability for employees at all levels of the organization to work together to achieve company goals. In addition, effective organizational communication will provide

employees the knowledge, structure and positive work environment they need to feel comfortable dealing with conflict and resolving issues effectively.

Ways to Improve Communication With in a Business

Communication is critical in any business and doing it well can lead to increased employee satisfaction and productivity, as well as increased sales and customer satisfaction. There are a variety of ways that businesses can improve communication, including identifying and focusing on key audiences and their needs, using a variety of communication tools, and providing the opportunity for feedback and two-way communication.

- **Key Audience:** Improving communication in business requires a thorough understanding of audience needs. Every business will have multiple audiences that it communicates with--internal and external. These audiences are diverse and reflect different levels of understanding, awareness and different perceptions about the business, its products and services and its practices. Communicating with an audience without a good understanding of its current beliefs, attitudes and perspectives can result in a focus on the wrong messages. For instance, when introducing a new benefit program, focusing on the low cost of the new benefits would be the wrong approach if employees were more concerned about access to specific health care providers.
- **Tools:** Focusing on the use of a variety of communication tools can be an important way to improve communication for businesses. One form of communication used one time is unlikely to have the impact that using multiple communication tools over a period of time will have. Businesses should use a broad range of communication tools from the traditional, like print, meetings and telephone, to the new age, like email and social media.
- **Feedback:** Effective communication between businesses and their employees requires a two-way flow of information. Business leaders need to not only convey messages; they need to also receive messages from employees to best understand their perspectives and areas of concern. Opportunity for feedback may occur directly between employees and their managers or at group meetings, through surveys and polls and through anonymous feedback channels like suggestion boxes or hotlines.

Conclusion

Organizational communication standards grow out of the communication choices of executives, managers and other employees. Ideally, organizational communication facilitates sharing of information, event planning, project coordination and social interaction. Poor communication and nonfunctional communication systems leads to confusion, lowered morale and loss of productivity. In IT Sector business leaders must create communication plans and information channels to ensure that employees are kept informed and in contact with each other. Effective business communication delivers a variety of important benefits. So communication in business mainly core related with environment of work place and their cultural relationship with co-workers. The ability to communicate well will play a key role in the success as a business professional.

Developing communication abilities promises a double payoff because the skills that will help advance in the career will also help company succeed in today's competitive global market place.

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