International Journal of Applied Research

Dr. Neelu
Associate Professor, Aditi
Mahavidyalaya University of
Delhi, New Delhi, India

Healthy workplace environment and the role of clear lines of communication: The success story

Dr. Neelu

Abstract
Human relationships and business relationships both depend on clear lines of communication. If you aim at healthy family relations you have to nurture it with the right communication and ensure there is no place for misunderstandings. Similarly, for financial success and a good reputation clear line of communication are essential. Usually it has been observed that as you move up the hierarchy in an organization the managers lack basic interaction skills and this leads to pilferage of information leading to miscommunication. People higher up, struggle to convey instructions clearly and in the absence of clear and effective communication, both the employer and employees suffer. There are no second thoughts that getting communication right in any business is the key element to growth. In fact, the overall long-term profitability and the achievement of goals are also dependent on clear lines of communication in a workplace. Most professionals and those on the uppermost rung of corporate ladder flounder unfortunately, due to inefficient mechanisms to bolster chains of communication. To get business communication right there are certain nuances and triggers that one needs to be wary of in the corporate world. The present paper is an attempt to understand the signals and types of noises in a workplace and learn how to cut down unnecessary noise. It also initiates the efforts to handle business communicate using the hands- on technique and attempts to study the role and important of communication in a business organization.

Keywords: business, communication, misunderstanding, corporate, organization

Introduction

Business communication struggles to establish its roots in business organization and business schools even after due consideration and importance awarded to it by experts. There are definitely problems defining business communication and the consequence of it not fitting neatly into business schools. We all agree that communication involves exchange of ideas, information and messages with another in typical time condition and situations. It may include writing, talking, visual communication or electronic communication. Communication is a vital part of personal life and is also important in business, education and any other situations where people encounter each other (Encarta 1998).

Communication it is said is the glue that binds individuals together and enables them to form and maintain relationships in society and in an organization. The quality of such relations depends on the expertise and caliber one has to handle communication effectively. Healthy workplace environment can only exist if employer and employee share a bond of mutual trust and respect which can thrive on good relations strengthened by perfect communication. The customer service department is constantly at work to organize training programmes and webinars to foster communication regimes and are in routine conversation with supervisors and junior staff to bridge the gap created due to misunderstanding. Gap in communication may be within or outside the organization and may be usually caused due to a breakdown in the information that is sent from the sender to receiver in a top down hierarchy model in an organization. In a workplace environment we need each other to achieve our goals and objectives. None of these goals can be achieved without communication. Communication works like a thread that helps us express our needs, wants, ideas and feelings. The better we are at communication, the more effective we are at achieving our hopes and dreams (Alessandra, Hunsaker 1993) [1]. If the relay of information is not proper it may lead to the risk of giving incorrect information leading to inconsistences between customer representatives and supervisor.

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Neelu
Associate Professor, Aditi
Mahavidyalaya University of
Delhi, New Delhi, India

Identifying the signals and types of noises in an organization
In order to understand the nuances of the communication regimes in any stellar business house it is extremely important to identify the noises inherent there in. They are like a wake up alarm that the message being transmitted from the sender to the receiver is flawed. The fault in broadcasting the message from the communicator to the communicatee is the first signal that all is not well in a workplace. To put it simply, signal is the undiluted message which you are trying to send to the recipient and the irrelevant background noise, useless trivia, sound pollution is the noise which prevents the message from being delivered effectively. If desired result is to be achieved you have to ensure that you have pushed the message effectively and successfully in spite of the noise. You can become a stellar communicator only if you can transmit the signal by bypassing the noise at every stage. Unless you completely understand the signal and noise you will not be able to absorb the nuances of a good communicator. A real professional is one who possesses these skills and uses it when it comes to transmitting their signals and learning the talent to bypass noise when it comes in the way. The understanding of signals and noise can be interpreted at a literal and symbolic meaning. On a literal level you may want to cut down on loud music to understand what the person sitting next to you is saying. On a deeper level it may involve keeping your mail box span free so that important emails from boss and co-workers are not lost. Stellar communication can go a long way to catch the signals on time and trains you to ignore unwanted noises around you. If the signals within an organization are constantly being lost or misread, there are likely some changes that can be made that will immediately clean up the communication path. Cultural changes are also essential at workplace to cut down on unnecessary noise. Noise may also be external in form of loud music. Tranquility is a must in a working environment if you want to get business communication right. Leaders have to play an important role of correcting the noises because unless they do so all the efforts at improving communication as an employee are doomed. If communication protocols lack luster there will be a complete breakdown in the chain of communication. Noise may also be interpreted literally – the humming noise of fan or light, faulty mic system or simply a faulty air conditioner. Those inhabiting open offices specially suffer more severely impeding productivity and communication. Semantic noise crops up due to differences in understanding arising out of use to two much technical jargon. It may also result due unclear instruction so it is advised that the chain of communication from the sender, to the message, to the medium, to the receiver, to the decoding and feedback should have no loopholes. Miscommunication also occurs when there is lack of face to face communication and the visual cues are missed between the two people who are communicating.

Besides physical and semantic noise, managers should also pay heed to the psychological noise breaking down chairs of communication. Psychological noise comprises of your attitudes, internal thoughts and preconceived notions. Negative emotions also lead to less effective communication. Fear of criticism from superiors also deters subordinates from healthy communication and the worry about being reprimanded for poor performance acts as a big barrier. It may also have an adverse effect and their concentration. The case is not only with negative emotions, positive emotions- excessive joy, excitement can play havoc with communication. Emotional disturbance creates a gap in communication too. In order to be better communicators managers should familiarize themselves with common mistakes that they can avoid Learning to speak less and listen more is one tactic that can be safely followed. Digital communicator lacks human element and may often be intimidating.

It can be said without doubt that business communication is one of the most effective tools to increase the value and efficiency of a business. Sealing a deal or missing the bus are all dependent on your talent at communication. Your ability to explain a product convincingly and gain a potential opportunity at sale. It all depends on how you explain the services and policies to a wide varied audience and the efficiency with which you answer questions. To be elusive, pay special emphasis to punctuations, grammar, spellings in written communication. Clarity and conciseness is also crucial. Pristine communication is your ladder to boost the morale and efficiency of the employees and touch the pinnacle of success. The question to ask yourself constantly is whether you are maximizing your communication methods for growth.

Channels through which effective communication can be achieved
Some of the channels that can boost communication are as follows: -

Innovation
Innovation can redefine success in an organization. It is an imperative source that provides the employees a platform to freely communicate and discuss their thoughts, ideas and opinions. If there is sufficient motivation and appreciation the team members develop a keen perception to identify opportunities for innovation. It also induces a sense of confidence to interact with higher level supervisors in an organization. Out of the box thinking can change the prospects for an employee but if communication skills are not polished the desired outcome is not achieved. Brain storming session also make oil rise above water because an employee with good conversation skills knows exactly how to push his / her point across with assertion. Innovation and the ability to think differently adds to corporate dynamics and nurtures talent. If the leaders and bosses are receptive to new suggestions and ideas innovation can serve as a great corporate value.

Collaboration
In an organization where thousands of employees are at work, nothing great can be achieved in isolation. In a cohesive workplace environment, if success is to be achieved and to see a project reach completion, collaboration is a must. You may have a great idea but to put it to execution even the highest director level person needs collaboration. A successful leader is one who identifies the unique skills of each member and puts it to best use for the benefit of the organization. For fostering team work spirit and environment of mutual trust and respect has to nurtured.

If the channels for communication are open, they ensure free flow of critical information along with a clarity of their role in the success of a project. If healthy environment is to be developed regular discussion must be held amongst those involved in a project. All developments which are crucial must be shared amongst colleagues and all members must be on the same page when it comes to planning and execution. Perfect collaboration and synergy between team members ensure that projects run smooth and its advantages can be reaped for the organization. All members must endeavor to pool their diverse talents and expertise to achieve a common goal.

Motivation
If employers are sufficiently motivated, they can prove to be highly productive resources. They are so enthusiastic that they are ready to walk an extra mile to deliver outstanding results. The success of an organization is shaped by such driven individuals who embrace the corporate vision as their own and bring out the best in themselves for the benefit of the workplace. If the leader is dynamic he will keep the team members sufficiently motivated and give absolute clarity of goals and make sure they work towards it with conviction. It also boosts morale of the employees and strengthens interpersonal bonds. Motivation can lead to lasting relationships and help develop the confidence employees which is crucial to success. Motivation can be fostered by encouraging employees to ask question, clarify doubts. Motivation can help build a sense of ownership and greatly increase commitment and ownership. In multinational companies, at times, pressure is very high, timelines are strict and deadlines can be tremendous but with positive and regular communication a leader can keep the team morale high even in testing times. High level of motivation can help overcome organizational barriers and improve the work culture.

Empathy
In a multinational company it is a common practice to point fingers at others and find faults in others. This is because the jobs are high stress and dependent roles are assigned. A good leader is well aware of these facts and makes sure that rules and roles are clearly defined and also of the challenges being faced by colleagues. If the leader is constantly connected with the employees and empathize with the challenges they face, offer them timely advice and help them overcome limitations. It will go a long way in increasing the overall efficiency of the learner. Sessions with the team to discuss issues and resolves conflicts will help members build a sense of camaraderie and understanding. If will also help them bring out the best in them. The difference between a boss and leader is that a true leader puts more efforts to stoop to the level of subordinates, identifies their problems and tries to find a solution in a positive and productive manner.

Trust
They key element behind a high performing team is trust which fosters a feeling of oneness with the subordinates. Honesty always pays in the long run and keeps away grapevine in an office. Tinted perceptions can dampen the morale of employees. If there is a feeling of transparency it builds an environment of confidence among the employees. If they are kept aware of the vital information which is crucial to an organization the leader is said to be doing his job well. For an element of trust to ensure face to face discussion and open interactions are a must. It is equally important to eliminate unhealthy competition and politics. Phenomenal growth can be witnessed in an organization if the team members have faith that their trust and honestly will not be breached and the leaders work in tandem towards common goals. It is not an unusual fact that successful teams build successful organization. If there is day to day interaction between subordinates and managers, they will feel more engaged and committed to achieving the targets of the organizations. A motivated, cultivated and collaborative team can help to take the organizational success to next level. Meaningful dialogue and exchange of ideas amongst employees is the soil that nurtures a good environment in a workplace.

Techniques to develop clear lines of communication
"Intelligence, knowledge or experience are important and might get you a job, but strong communication skills are what will get your promoted" (Mircilli Guiliano) .History is replete with examples of leaders who have left an indelible mark in an organization. They may possess corporate excellence and eloquent and powerful communication skills. Every exemplary business leader from Ratan Tata to Henry ford shine because they are masters in communication and inspire the team to achieve greatness. These legends are examples how communication can open up new avenues and influences and motivates people to attain unparalleled success. When you are equipped with an array of communication skills you are sure to succeed in all realms of business. Let's analyze the techniques to sharpen your communicate skills.

The first important technique involves practicing good office politics. It is a good way to propagate good culture in an organization. Some examples of showcasing good office politics is to have a sense of integrity towards the boss, have a congenial relationship with employees and have good networking skills with all others in the workplace. It earns you respect and you get noticed by subordinates. Showing respect and appreciation also helps strengthen good office politics. Secondly, it is very important to understand that a group may consist of different working styles and personalities. It is important to learn how others think and work. A good leadership resonates all these features. If a leader is able to find out from employees, through one-on-one sessions how they learn and work best, he is said to have achieved the goal of organizational success. Timely reminders for important events and regular follow ups instead of being asked on the spot is also a good technique and makes the employee feel involved. Navigating these differences is a vital tasks and as a leader it will greatly improve effectiveness of the team. Thirdly, conflict resolution is vital for good leadership. Go to its root cause, give a fair hearing, look for solutions and involve everyone who is involved and invested in the matter. Work towards a compromise and try to gain respect and trust from both parties. Thus, will enhance your reputation in the organization. Fourthly as a leader, always be assertive yet humble. Know how to seek feedback on performance and always attempt to be transparent about issues that involve everyone. This helps to gain trust of others and puts them at ease. Fifthly, virtual communication cannot be escaped in today's time and if you do not handle it deftly it might be a

big hinderance in a workplace. It makes life more equitable for people and gives them an equal chance to communicate especially when you are not meeting physically for work.

Job training and coaching can also be done via virtual communication at a lower cost. The sooner you get comfortable with virtual communication the sooner doors of opportunities will open for you. Lastly strong communications across different organizational areas is essential for maximizing productivity.

Conclusion

Business communication rests on clearly defined channels. It is not something one is born with but can be cultivated with good practice. Extensive research on how to strengthen regimes of communication can go a long way in nurturing healthy workplace environment. Hence it is very important to promote business communication as a discipline.

References
1. Alessandra T, Hunsaker P. Communication at work. Fireside, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 1993.
2. Brennan J. The Conscious Communicator; making communication work in the work place. Addisson – Wesley Publishing Co. Reading, MA, 1974.
3. Charles K. Peak Performance the art of Communication. (Electronic Version). Black Enterprise, 1998, 117(1).
4. Clemons J. Avoiding a communication breakdown: keeping employees informed benefits business. (Electronic version). Black Enterprise 2003;34(2):46
5. Aprix DR. Communicating for change: connecting the workplace with the marketplace. Jossy-Bass Publishers. San Francisco, CA, 1996.
6. Fink A, Kosecoff J. How to conduct Surveys a Step by Step Guide. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks. 1998.
7. Galvin R. Communication : the lever of effectiveness and productivity. (Managing Innovation). (Electronic version). Daedalus. Spring 1996;125(2):137.
8. Holtz S. Corporate conversations: a guide to crafting effective and appropriate internal communications. Amacom, New York, NY, 2004.
9. Nucifora A. Employees are customers too. The business Journal. 2003. Retrieved June 19, 2005 from Ebsco Host.
10. MSN Encarta Premium. 2005, Retrieved May 2005 from http://www.msn.com
11. MsnEncarta Premium Magazine Center (2005). Communicating well on the job (Electronic version). USA Today, November 2002;9(1):131-260p Retrieved May 2005 from http: //www.encarta.msn.com
12. MsnEncarta Premium Magazine Center Poor Communication Stifles Productivity (Electronic version). USA Today, September 1999, 2005;128:2652, 9. Retrieved May 2005 from http: //www.encarta.msn.com
13. Salant P, Dillman D. How to Conduct your own survey. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New York, NY, 1994.
14. Schonfeld E. Communication goes flat. Fortune. September 5, 1994;130(5):16
15. Survey Console. 2005. Retrieved may 2005, from http://www.surveyconsole.com
16. Tennen D. Talking from 9 to 5 : how women's and men's conversational styles affect who get heard, who gets credit, and what gets done at work. W. Morrow, 1994.