

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS IN BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Communication is the most vital conditionality for a successful business organization. Normally in business we communicate to inform and persuade. In this paper it has been specified in detail as to what is communication, the nature of communication, elements of communication, process of communication and barriers to communication. The word communication has been derived from the Latin word 'communis', which means common. Thus communication means making the idea common or sharing the views. Communication constitutes a very important function of management. It is the function which decides the effectiveness of management and success of the organization. Organization as defined earlier, is a group of human beings constituted for specific objective. The achievement of objectives largely depends upon proper information of tasks allocated to employees and proper coordination of their efforts. This coordination requires mutual understanding about the organizational goals and only communication can play a vital role of creating mutual understanding and integrating the efforts of individuals in an organization.

Introduction

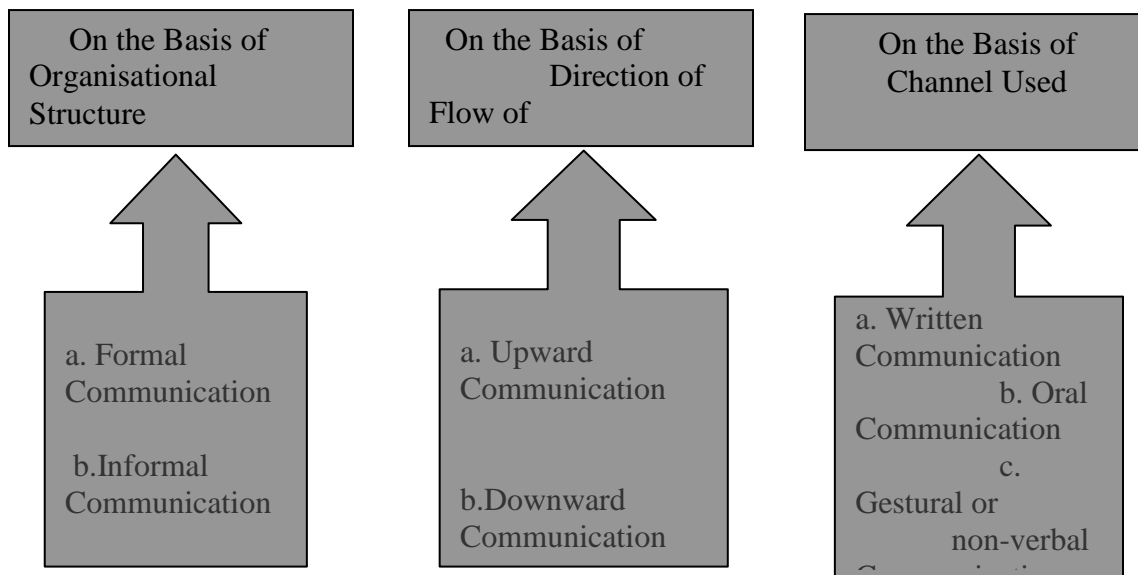
Communication is the most vital conditionality for a successful business organization. Normally in business we communicate to inform and persuade. In this paper it has been specified in detail as to what is communication, the nature of communication, elements of communication, process of communication and barriers to communication. The word communication has been derived from the Latin word 'communis', which means common. Thus communication means making the idea common or sharing the views. Communication constitutes a very important function of management. It is the function which decides the effectiveness of management and success of the organization. Organization as defined earlier, is a group of human beings constituted for specific objective. The achievement of objectives largely depends upon proper information of tasks allocated to employees and proper coordination of their efforts. This coordination requires mutual understanding about the organizational goals and only communication can play a vital role of creating mutual understanding and integrating the efforts of individuals in an organization.

Dictionary meaning of communication is, 'imparting, conveying or exchange of ideas, knowledge, etc., whether by speech, writing or signs.' It is said to be communication whenever anyone transfers information, thoughts and ideas to any other person. Communication takes place whenever someone says and other one is listening to him. It is also communication when one does not say anything but other one understands him. Therefore, communication does not mean merely written or oral message, or gesticulation but it may include anything which creates understanding in the mind of other person.

Communication is too broad to define. It is defined, understood and used in different ways by people from different walks of life. Following are some definitions formulated by various researchers and authors:

In the words of Louis, A. Allen, *“Communication is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.”*

The only way that management goals can be achieved in an organization, is through the process of communication

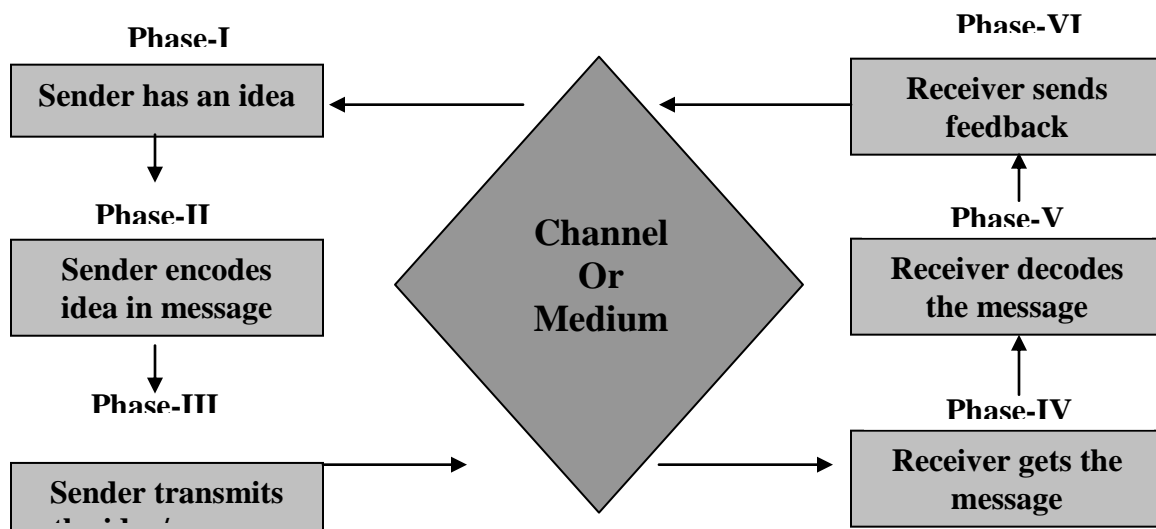


Difference between Formal and Informal Communication

Formal Communication	Informal Communication
1. Official channel	1. Unofficial Channel
2. Deliberately planned and systematic	2. Unplanned and spontaneous
3. Moves according to organizational structure	3. Cut across formal relationship
4. Objective is to meet organizational objective and conveying rules and regulation	4. The purpose is to develop informal relations and satisfaction of individuals.
5. Impersonal/ Official	5. Personal and social
6. Stable and rigid	6. Flexible and instable
7. Slow and structured	7. Fast and unstructured
8. Based on more reliable information and data	8. Can be rumors.

Communication Process

Communication is a process, generally a two way process. The process is a concept which is dynamic and ever changing. Communication being a process attempts to provide information to the receiver and also to persuade the concerned person according to the sender of the message. The sender or source conceives the idea, gives it a shape, decides, the mode of communication which may be used to convey the idea, and conveys it. The receiver receives it, tries to understand it, and finally takes an action which may be either to store the information or to send the message to the original source or take any other line of action as required by the source. The sequencing of communication process, thus, may be depicted as follows:



The Communication Process

Common Problems and Difficulties in Communication Process

For success in business, one of the prime conditions is effective internal & external communication. The organization needs to be careful in designing the communication network in such a way that the source of an idea or the sender must get the feedback from the receiver that the message has reached correctly. Some of the communication problems and difficulties related to communication process are as under:

1. **Noise problem:** It is outside disturbance which hinder keeping attention.
2. **No perceived benefits:** to the audience, sometimes there are no perceived benefits.
3. **Variation in listening skills:** Communication becomes then effective if listening skills of the receiver are proper.

4. **Complex subject matter:** Sometimes message is not well structured and to the point.
5. **Culture Differences:** On account of cultural differences between the sender and the receiver, the message is not corrected conveyed and it may be miscommunication.
6. **Time restraints:** In the communication process time factor is important. The transmission needs to be quick and effective. If time involved in transmitting message and receiving feedback is highly time consuming due to interruption or noise, the basic purpose of communication is defeated.
7. **Personal biases:** Personal biases, hostility too constitute serious problem in two way communication process. These lead to miscommunication or distorted communication.
8. **Side stepping sensitive issues:** Sometimes the message is complicated and illstructured as it does not incorporate the sensitive issue nicely. Besides side stepping may be due to negligence on the part of sender or receiver.
9. **Difficult Situations:** In the communication process difficult situations emerge which need proper handling. These difficulties are-
 - a) Ensuring that the received meaning affects receiver's behaviour in the desired way.
 - b) Achieving accuracy in communicates the meaning.
 - c) Ensuring that the message conveys the desired meaning.
 - d) Ensuring response to difficult questions.

Causes of Miscommunication

Miscommunication takes place when the message received is not the same as the message sent. The causes for miscommunication are many. Some significant causes for miscommunication are as under:

1. **Organizational Structure:** Tall organizations generally have too many vertical communication links; as a result message becomes distorted as they move through the various organizational levels. Irrespective of the size, all organizations have communication policies that describe the protocol to be followed. It is the structure and complexity of this protocol that usually gives rise to communication barriers.
2. **Difference in Status:** When people belonging to different hierarchical positions communicate with each other, there is a possibility of miscommunication. Generally, employees at lower levels of the hierarchy are overly cautious while sending messages to managers and talk about subjects

they think the managers are interested in. Similarly, people of higher status may distort message by refusing to discuss anything that would tend to undermine their authority in the organization. In other words, they may want to retain the importance of their status. This tendency is beneficial neither for the employees nor for the organization.

3. Lack of Trust: Establishing credibility or building trust among subordinates or with colleagues is a difficult task. Subordinates may not know whether their manager will respond in a supportive or responsible way, and hence, it is necessary for the manager to ensure that they have faith in him. Without trust, free and open communication is effectively blocked, thereby threatening the organization's stability. You may be very clear in your communication, but that is not enough. People should trust you to accept or to freely discuss with you on what you communicate.

4. Incorrect Choice of Medium: Choosing an inappropriate communication medium can distort the message and block the intended meaning. One should select a medium that suits the nature of the message and the intended recipients. Face to face communication is the richest medium because it is personal, it provides immediate feedback, transmits information from both verbal and non-verbal cues, and conveys the emotion behind the message. Telephones and other interactive electronic media are not as effective. Written media can be personalized through memos, letters, and reports, but immediate feedback is missing along with the visual and vocal non-verbal cues that contribute to the meaning of the message

5. Closed Communication Climate: An organization's communication climate is influenced by its management style. A directive, authoritarian style blocks free and open exchange of information that characterizes good communication.

6. Information Overload: At times, people load their messages with too much information. Remember that too much information is as bad as too little because it reduces the audience's ability to concentrate on the most important part of the message. The recipients facing information overload sometimes tend to ignore some of the message, delay responses to messages they deem unimportant, answer only parts of some message, or react only superficially to all messages. All these failures lead to miscommunication.

7. Message Complexity: There are two significant reasons for any message to become complex in a business setting-one, the dry and difficult nature of the message itself and the other, the difficulty in understanding it. When formulating business messages, you communicate both as an

individual and as a representative of an organization. Thus, you must adjust your own ideas and style so that they are acceptable to your employer. In fact, at times you may be asked to write or say something that you disagree with personally.

8. Unethical Communication: Relationship within and outside the organization depend on trust and fairness. It does not mean that organizations should not be tactful. By all means it is possible for organizations to avoid illegal or unethical messages and still be credible or successful in the long run. Barriers arising out of unethical conduct may affect communication both within and outside the organization.

9. Physical Distraction: Communication barriers are often physical: bad connections, poor acoustics, illegible copy etc. Although noise of this sort seems trivial, it can completely block an otherwise effective message. An uncomfortable chair, poor lighting, or some other irritating condition might also distract your receiver. In some cases, the barriers may be related to the receiver's health. Hearing or visual impairment or even a headache can interfere the reception of a message. These annoyances do not generally block communication entirely, but they do reduce the receivers' concentration by distracting their attention. Strong relationships must be fostered between the employer and employee in order to avoid misunderstandings and accept each other's viewpoints in order to remove the barriers and to facilitate proper communication in the organization.

Conclusion

Communication should be purposeful and directed to an individual. At the end of the communication, the receiver should not be left to feel that communication had been meaningless or useless. In case the superior thinks at a level, which is different from that of the subordinate and vice versa, it will affect the effectiveness of communication. Therefore, there should be good and proper coordination and co-operation between the superior and subordinate for effective communication. The specialized language should be avoided. Efforts should be made to use the language commonly understood by the receiver and sender of the message. There should be least use of technical jargon in the communication process. Efforts have to be made in a planned way to sensitize people with the organizational philosophy. It should be properly communicated to its employees so that accord proper attention to their day-to-day communication.

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