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COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

The key components in every communication situation include message, participants, medium and environment. Interactions of these elements affect a message sender's success in conveying intended meaning to the recipient. Sometimes the components are controllable; sometimes they are not. Being aware of how each component affects understanding helps you improve your communication. Taking a closer look at these components is the first step in learning how to manage the controllable aspects of business communication.

Key words: business communication, message, participants, medium, environment.

INTRODUCTION

It is by communication that a business receives and conveys information, transmits instructions and suggestions, practices motivation and persuasion. Communication is the life-blood of the organization and the means by which management gets things done thus pointing to a greater importance for business to communicate more effectively in the future.

Communication is something practiced by all, regardless of occupation or level of authority or responsibility. Communication is required to transmit the directives of authority and to achieve cooperation and coordination of the parts. We all need to improve on this very vital skill because effective communication skills will help people succeed in business. People will be able to get their ideas across more quickly and easily, and they will be more likely to get their audience to see ideas their way.

Communication means the exchange of ideas using common symbols. The most important word to remember here is exchange. People communicate only when their audience understands their message since communication is a two-way street. Becoming a good business communicator takes practice, but it is worth the trouble to know you have improved your chances of getting your point across and convincing people to take action in the way you recommend.

COMMUNICATING FOR SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

The field of business communications is a developing area that allows businesspeople to learn how to utilize the concepts, skills and techniques that they have been able to develop through years of experience more effectively and more efficiently. Developing strong skills in business communications helps you transmit your ideas to others effectively in work-related situations. For communication to be successful you have to make your communication understandable, to the point, clear and concise thus increasing the chances of a quick and desirable response. To clearly communicate an idea, simple and concise is usually better than long and detailed.

Effective business communication fosters goodwill, develops good public relations and helps your business make money. Because most people tend to return to businesses where they are treated well. For most business communication, the bottom line is helping your business to make money. A business can save money by using the most efficient and effective strategies to produce good business communications whether from salespeople, phone receptionists or letter writers (doing something *efficiently* is doing it right, but doing it *effectively* is doing it well).

Although communication in business, the exchange of thoughts, messages or information in work situations, is not very different from communication in other segments of your life, the context is different – you have to learn how to communicate in a business environment to get the action you want. Acquiring and then using your ability to communicate effectively and efficiently is a very important tool in managing your career and making a contribution to your company. Your success as an employee will depend on how well you can transmit your good ideas to others inside and outside your company.

COMMUNICATING AS PART OF A BUSINESS

The words communicate and communications are used loosely in everyday conversation. We hear, read and talk about «the communications gap», or, «communications or the lack of them being a major cause for many of today's problems». What do we consider «business communications» to be?

Business communications are *purposive interchanges of ideas, opinions, information, instructions, and the like, presented personally or impersonally by symbol or signal as to attain the goals of the organization.*

Let's examine the meaning of the six major points:

1. purposive: must have predetermined objective in line with attaining the goals of the organization
2. interchanges: always involves at least two or more people including the sender and the receiver.
3. ideas, opinions, information, instructions and the like: content of the message will vary depending on the purpose and circumstance
4. personally or impersonally: the channel may be direct, eye-to-eye, or via television to millions of persons simultaneously

5. symbol or signal: any device or method that can be coded to convey a message or bring about an interchange may be employed, the key is how well the intended message is understood
6. attain the goals of the organization: one of the distinguishing characteristics of any formal organization is a set of goals or purposes determined by the management.

Business communication, whether written or spoken, has some typical characteristics:

- It is written for a business audience (readers or listeners) who will find the information useful rather than simply entertaining.
- It is written under time and money constraints (a letter dictated to a person costs more to produce than a letter dictated to a machine, while a computer-produced letter is less expensive if it runs several pages long)
- It often has more than one purpose (for example, to refuse a request but retain the requester as a potential customer). Goodwill is an important aspect of most business communication.
- Its tone and attitude toward the reader are as important as the actual words used or the information conveyed.

COMMUNICATION FOR ACTION

Communication between people can be understood as a five-step process. For communication to be effective and efficient and to obtain appropriate and desired actions certain considerations are to be remembered at each step of the process if we do not want things go wrong and cause misunderstanding. Miscommunication can result at any of these steps.

The communication process involves *participants* (a sender and a receiver), a *message* to be sent, a *medium* to carry communication *signals* and the *environments* in which the message is sent and received. These elements act and interact in the five-step process as follows:

- Step 1 - the sender decides to send a message
- Step 2 - the message takes the form of a signal or signals
- Step 3 - the signals are sent via a particular communication medium
- Step 4 - the recipient receives the signals
- Step 5 - the recipient assigns meaning to the signals.

At each point in the process, events occur that affect the eventual meaning the recipient assigns to the message. That meaning becomes the actual message communicated whether intended or not. The sender's goal and responsibility are to make sure the recipient assigns the right meaning to the signals and therefore gets the intended message.

Anticipating communication problems can help you eliminate them. Therefore, to make sure the recipient receives the message as intended, the sender can ask for *feedback* from the recipient. Asking recipients if they have questions or

requesting them to summarize what they heard is a standard way to ensure they have received the intended message. The sender should look also for nonverbal indications from the recipient that may suggest either understanding or misunderstanding such as a confused look, frown or head shaking from side to side.

Before delivering the message, the sender should try to find out, if possible, whether the recipient has any pre-existing attitudes or emotions about the message topic. By anticipating and dealing with these, the sender can adjust the delivery to make the message more effective. The sender's job becomes even more challenging in this regard when sending the same message to several recipients. The same delivery approach might not work well for all recipients; not all recipients have the same pre-existing attitudes and emotions about the topic; all recipients may not have the same level of knowledge about that topic.

In the same way the recipient also must play an active role in the communication process by providing feedback to the sender. The recipient has the responsibility to listen carefully to the sender's message and to ask appropriate questions or ask the sender to repeat, rephrase or summarize the message. Doing this well may require the recipient to take notes, not just rely on memory.

The actual communication process is a familiar one. People constantly use it. Yet the importance of examining this process is not in describing each step but in identifying events that can cause communication to go wrong. Anticipating barriers to effective communication gives the message sender a chance to modify the message or modify how, when or where it is sent. Minimizing or eliminating the barriers creates the best opportunity for effective and efficient communication - the transmission of understanding that results in desired action.

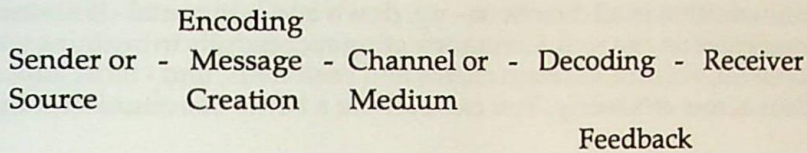
Before discussing further the importance and the role of communications in business, let us examine a simple communication model and identify its parts.

A Communication Model

Everything we do communicates something to somebody. Therefore, a communication or interchange requires as few as two persons, a sender and a receiver, but because of the complexity of the problem, many others may be involved. Regardless of the number the process is something as follows:

- The sender, or the source, decides upon the nature of the message and to whom the message will be directed. Next the message is encoded or put into the language or meaning that would be most acceptable or useful to the receiver. The encoding or message creation may be performed by the source or entrusted to others. The channel is the means or method for delivering the message. It could be direct or face-to-face between sender and receiver or one of the many indirect channels such as advertising media. Decoding is performed by the receiver and is a selecting process. A receiver decodes and accepts what is desired of the message and rejects what is undesired. Feedback is the response to the message and may take many forms such as stimuli for another message, the following of an instruction, the request for samples or more information, purchase of a good, etc. Noise or interference surrounding the steps of the process

represent all physical and psychological conditions that could cause interference.



BASIC GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

If other people do not understand your message as you intended, it is likely your fault, not theirs. Therefore, strive to make sure all your messages are presented *clearly, concisely, considerately and correctly*. These are the "4 C's" of communication that you have to bear in mind if you want to make the communication process and its components more effective.

To communicate in the best possible ways with others, a message sender must

- Understand as fully as possible how the receivers will react.
- Use clear, understandable and appropriate language.
- Recognize appropriate nonverbal behavior.
- Control the environment for effective communication.
- Determine the best ways to communicate a message.
- Use good organizational skills and proper format.
- Be complete, clear, concise considerate and correct.
- Use appropriate feedback.

On the other hand, a message receiver must

- Use appropriate feedback.
- Practice good listening skills.

CONCLUSION

All steps in the communication process help shape your message. By understanding this process, the needs and expectations of your audience, and the craft of writing you can help ensure that the message sent is the message received. All the principles and methods of the communication process help us understand why communication plays a major role in creating favourable or unfavourable impressions.

From a business perspective, communication is the oil that lubricates the organizational machine and makes it run smoothly. When communicating with people in business, or when they communicate with us, all parties want to gain some goal. Learning how to communicate to encourage productive action is an

important thing, because effective communication by employees provides customers with information about a product or service, to persuade them to do business with the company and keeps them coming back.

Communication in all directions - up, down and horizontal - is necessary to make any organization run well. Communicating successfully in business will help you get promoted, obtain and retain clients and customers, and - most important - get your ideas across efficiently. You can become a better communicator by

Analyzing your audience

- Understanding a basic communication model
- Learning which strategy to use to get your message across
- Planning and revising your message.

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Sažetak

POSLOVNO KOMUNICIRANJE

Osnovu svake komunikacije čine poruka, sudionici u komunikaciji, sredstvo komuniciranja i okruženje unutar kojega se komunikacija obavlja. Međusobno djelovanje svih tih elemenata utječe na to koliko će uspješan biti pošiljatelj poruke u prenošenju značenja te poruke primatelju. Vodeći računa o tome koliko svaka od navedenih sastavnica komunikacije utječe na razumijevanje poruke, može se poboljšati komunikacija. A to je ujedno i prvi korak u pokušaju da se uspješno svlada komuniciranje u poslovnom okruženju.

Ključne riječi: poslovno komuniciranje, poruka, sudionici u komunikaciji, sredstvo komuniciranja, okruženje