



Occupational Communication: Problems & Remedies

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Abstract

Communication is something we do endlessly even without knowing it. Miscommunication may produce misunderstandings, affecting one's professional and personal relationships. Therefore effective communication skill is a crucial contributor in one's success. It enables a person to better understand other people or situations build trust and respect, create an atmosphere of mutual understanding so that one can work with others headed towards acquiring the same goal. This paper throws light on the problems faced in occupational communication. And an effort has been made to address these problems and challenges in a feasible manner.

Key words : *Occupational communication; communication; listening; mutual trust.*

Introduction

In the present world of competition we receive, process and send a large amount of data every day, but this doesn't necessarily means that we possess all the basic skills of communication as it is not only about exchanging information but also getting it in its real sense as the sender wants to convey.

"The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is given out; communication is getting through"¹ (Sydney J Harris).

The significance of communication skills in the workplace has been well established over the past 20 years.² As the emphasis on communication increased, so the problems related to it. Miscommunication or misunderstanding in communication raises many problems within organizations. Communication problems at work place may result in low productivity, conflicts between co-workers, misunderstandings among group, communication gap between bosses or managers and it may also add even to frustration. The reasons of these problems might differ from person to person and situation to situation, but we find a common thing among many is their lack of having good communication skills³⁻⁴.

Mirelille Guiliano has rightly stated, "Intelligence, knowledge or experience are important and might get you a job, but strong communication skills are what will get you promoted."⁵ The way we communicate with others ultimately determines our success. The communication at the managerial level becomes special technique. As the manager is the leader of his team. And the performance of the team decides the success of organization, the leader and of the team members as well. As Gilber Amelio says "Developing excellent communication skills absolutely essential to effective leadership. The leader must be able to share knowledge and ideas to transmit a sense of urgency and enthusiasm to others. If a leader can't get a message across clearly and motivate others to act on it, then having a message doesn't even matter".⁶

Problem areas

According to Peter Drucker "The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said."⁷ Problems in communication may arise at different levels such as encoder's or decoder's. Some of the problems can be clearly defined such as barriers in the process of communication



like physical barriers, status barriers, socio-psychological barriers, language differences etc. What can be the other barriers or hurdles that violate the process of communication within an organization?

Organizational barriers include the following. Let us discuss each one in detail-

Organizational structure

Lack of planning

Status barrier

Pre-evaluation and prejudices

Inattentive listening

Inappropriate use of body language

Lack of mutual trust

Semantic distortion

Attitudes

Inappropriate timing of the conversation

Poor listening

Lack of communication training

Emotional status of an individual-

Feeling of not being heard

Lack of feedback

Remedies

It becomes a necessity for an individual to overcome the hurdles of the communication to succeed in this present competitive era. One's communication skills decide one's stability in his/her job. It helps flourish creative ideas and innovative works. Simultaneously it creates an atmosphere of trust and understanding so that work efficiency of individuals and teams increases rapidly. If one feels comfortable and trusted he/she is more likely to cooperate with others and build better work relationships. If employee is satisfied with his work, job profile and with the company he will naturally contribute his best in the growth of the organization. According to Zig Ziglar "In many ways, effective communication begins with mutual respect, communication that inspires and encourages others to do their best"⁸

To overcome the shortcomings of communication one needs to work hard on improving communication skills. Though it is not that tough to overcome the problems but continuous practice is necessary. If one starts paying attention on some minute but important things, the hurdles will start to vanish automatically.

Before transmitting any information one should plan it. The planning of information includes the raw sketch of the information, timing of the conversation, medium to dispatch the information etc. If the message is to be delivered to a new audience one must know his/her audience and should encode the message accordingly. For example while dealing with customer one needs some other type of language or while talking with the boss one might use the other one and the same thing if communicated at informal place the language of the message will change likewise. The speaker has to decide what type of conversation will be effective on his/her receiver.

"Speak clearly, if you speak at all;

Carve every word before you let it fall."

-Oliver Wendell Holmes⁹

One must possess effective listening skills for making communication effective. "Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand" says Sue Patton Thoele¹⁰. One should not hear only with ears but with eyes too i.e. listen using one's mind. That means we must pay attention to the body language, and other non verbal signals. The tone of the speech



is equally important to get the exact meaning of the conversation. Therefore it is said that 'your speech is your words plus your tone.'

Communication and trust are two main ingredients for a successful relationship. An atmosphere of mutual trust must be created within the work place so that the employees feel free to express their ideas and will like wisely believe in the information received from others. It will also help in removing the feeling of inferiority and will build confidence in relationships. The authorities must pay attention on the information received from any employee and must take necessary action so that the employee feels free to communicate in the future too. And will encourage other employees too to express their ideas. On the contrary if they are neglected they will not feel free to communicate in future.

One must not form any prejudice and should clear if any. It works as hurdle in communicating with others as it is hard to believe the other person. According to Sumesh Nair "Many relationship problems are rooted in a communication break-down. These can be as simple as not hearing what other person is saying, because we get caught up in our fixed perspectives".¹⁰ It should be paid attention that the status and position of the authorities must not become a hurdle in the flow of communication. According to Woodrow Wilson "The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people"¹⁰. The authorities must not have their status ego and they must encourage the free flow of communication so that any employee feels free to contact and to communicate. Information received from any source should be respected and paid attention. The best way to understand your employee or client is listening to them and respecting their feelings and ideas. Whenever one gets information to follow, one must follow it without thinking about the source of information.. Always try to pack up your employees with necessary information. Never give them a chance to assume things by their own because in that case everyone of them will have their own assumption and will work like wise resulting in the low productivity. Carla O' Dell clarifies that "If you don't give people information, they'll make up something to fill the void".⁹

The body language of the speaker must be in accordance with his / her communication. We continuously receive information through non verbal communication. For example when we meet a person first time we form an idea about the personality of the man. Not on the basis of what he talked but how he talked, how he was dressed, how was his tone etc. therefore one must pay an important attention on the way one looks, behaves and speaks. While in the conversation with other one must keep proper eye contact so that the attention of the listener can be maintained.

Try to give your employees what they want in return of their day's tiresome work. Give them the feeling of being owner rather than merely an employee so that they can work whole heartedly. The employees must be appreciated for their each contribution so that they feel proud and continue the same work in the future too. Also have trust in the employees and show it time to time. If the employees feel they are trust worthy they are likely to contribute for the organization even more then the past. The conversation should be in a language that is simple but more professional than causal. Always make sure the person is receiving information does not take information in a wrong way. Use simple language free of ambiguous words.

Finally communication is not a thing a person is born with. It can be learn and mastered if practiced and paid attention towards. Brain Tracey suggests that "Communication is a skill that you can learn. It's like riding a bicycle or typing. If you are willing to work at it, you can improve the quality of every part of your life"¹⁰.

Conclusion

Communication is not a rocket science that requires excellent expertise. It can be learnt and improved if paid an adequate attention towards it. Practice plays an important part in gaining good communication skills. One needs to focus on the medium of communication requires as



per its objective. For example if one is at formal place one must use formal channels of communication. While at workplace one should avoid the use of informal communication and should not pay attention to the rumors.

One should possess a positive attitude towards the organization, his work and also to his colleagues. It will help to a great extent to remove the road blocks of communication.

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