

The Concept and the Ways of Managerial Communication

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Abstract

Communication in a broad sense implies exchange of messages (information, opinions, and feelings). Communication affects the atmosphere, the association, the cooperation, the interaction, the creativity, the management, and the motivation. However, all conflicts which occur in the team are mostly a result of the poor communication as well.

Successful communicators listen more, and speak less. The successful communicator is persistent in the representation of the attitudes of ones who are better, and not only of his own attitudes. Therefore, one can conclude that communication as every other skill improves with exercise and requires constant care.

Keywords: Communication; Directions; Types; Barriers

Introduction

Today we are increasingly trying to implement the communication, and it is becoming an increasingly important segment of management in all institutions, enterprises, public administration, hospitals, faculties, etc. Without communication, the enterprise cannot act and perform its basic activity.

In theory it is told that the communication process comprises of sending, receipt and action of the message. The sender, for example, intends to instruct, convince or ask someone about something. His intent will transform into a thought, and it will transform into a written or spoken message. Then the message goes through the communication channel which relates them to the recipient of the message who decodes, that is, understands what has been told. A reaction follows, when the listener starts a new communication cycle. And this follows countless times during the most ordinary conversation, work meeting, every working day.

According to Peter Drucker, communication is based on four basic principles [1]:

- Communication is an observation,
- Communication is an expectation,
- Communication is setting requirements,
- Communication and information are not the same and they are largely opposed, while they are mutually dependent.

Communication can be defined as an asset through which the individuals manage to share information about the operational tasks which are realized in an enterprise [2].

Communication is essential, especially for functioning of the internal part of the enterprise, because it integrates all managerial functions. The following is particularly important for communication:

- Determination of the goals of the enterprise.
- Preparation of plans.
- Organization of human resources and of all other sources in order to be more efficient.
- Management and motivation of individuals, as well as creation of an appropriate climate, so that the last ones can give their maximum contribution.

- To help the individuals to better understand the decision-making process.
- Realization of control of success.

An increasing number of researches indicate the efficiency of communication as a direct indicator which affects the success of the enterprise and the employees [3]. The employees, for example, assess that the communication skills (oral or written) are most important and they affect the success of work (work experience, knowledge, gender, age, personality, etc.).

Structure of the Communication Network

Communication is "the bloodstream" of every enterprise. With the organizational climate and culture, many enterprises research and analyze the communication network, the structure through which information travels in the enterprise. There are different types of such networks: network of friends, network for giving orders, network for exchange of information, network for getting professional knowledge, and status network (Figure 1).

The groups within the enterprise are structured in different ways. This shows who communicates with whom – formally and informally. Often such communication channels are established, which actually follow the existing structure. Each one of them (Tables 1 and 2) has its advantages and disadvantages in terms of the speed of flow of information, their accuracy related to that type of work. In general, centralized networks (such as a wheel) are better when it comes to simple things, while decentralized networks are better for complex things).

The structure in a *wheel* is favorite in an enterprise where the bosses want to have full control in their hands. The bosses can communicate with everyone, while they (the employees) do not have

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	Wheel	Y	Chain	Circle	Complete connection
Speed	Quick	Slowly	Slowly	Slowly	Quickly-slowly
Accuracy	Good	Average	Average	Bad	Good
Saturation	Small	Small	Average	Excellent	Excellent

Table 1: Characteristics of the flow of information.

	Wheel	Y	Chain	Circle	Complete connection
Satisfaction	Low	Low	Low	High	High
Clear guidance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	He
Centralization	Yes	Yes	Average	No	No

Table 2: Characteristics of the members.

this opportunity for mutual communication, and this usually results in their dissatisfaction. Only the boss is satisfied – however this satisfaction may be short-term if the people are engaged in complex works. A *circle* is more democratic, however it is slow. The structure *Y* is similar to wheel. A *chain* is created when the members of the group communicate only with certain people, and they are all somehow related to someone in the group. Here it is not clear who is the leader, rather two or several of them could be leaders. People are more satisfied than in the *wheel*, however not as much as in some other structures. In regard to productivity, it is average in all assignments (both simple and complex). The greatest problem in the *chain* is the lack of coordination: the group does not function as a team, the management is weak. *The chain* is similar to *the circle*. It functions as a chain as well; however here there is still connection between the end members. Where complete connectivity exists, everyone in the group can communicate with everyone. Often it is not known who the leader is. Such type of interaction is required when it comes to complex works. On the other hand, when things are simpler, the performance will be average. Still, a *wheel* is recommended for simple things.

People usually assume that the successful communication is a rule, while the disorder is an exception. Unfortunately, it seems that the opposite happens. Misunderstandings in communication are the rules, while good communication is an exception. Despite of the vast effort in the communication and information technology, the problems in communication are not very reduced. This is understandable in a way, because the communication between the people does not depend on the technology, rather on their psychological motives and their situation. In order to improve communication, we primarily have to understand why and how it takes place [4].

Communication types

Interpersonal communication: Interpersonal communication is an exchange of messages between two people or in small groups. It is very important, particularly in a team atmosphere, because the groups regularly have less than ten members.

- Interpersonal communication can be divided into several typical types.
- Verbal or non-verbal.
- Contained or relative.
- Honest or dishonest.

The classification into verbal and non-verbal communication considers the manner of presentation of messages. Verbal communication goes through several stages:

- *Message* – information that the sender wants to send.

- *Coding* – translation of the message into known symbols or language.
- *Noise or barrier* – everything which can impair the communication.
- *Recipient* – path through which the message is coded.
- *Decoding* – interpretation of the message.

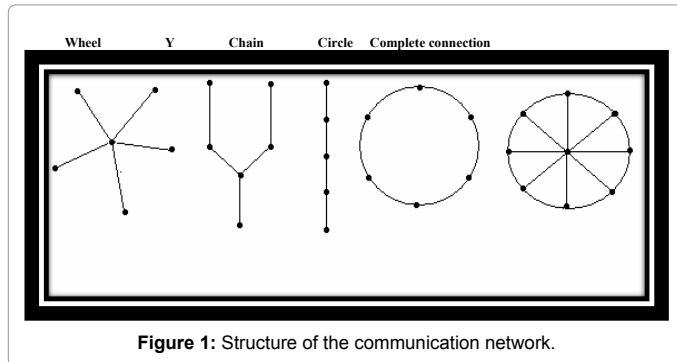
People can stop communicating with their speech; however the messages will continue to run. Facial expression, eye contact, gestures, physical approximation, specific body posture, and characteristic of the voice, its strength and tone, etc. Such form of exchange of messages is called non-verbal communication. Its importance is the same in all situations. Experts say that sometimes only a fifth of the messages are conveyed through speech, while the others are conveyed silently, with non-verbal signs. Non-verbal communication is very important for public communication and in working groups.

The following viewpoint speaks of the messages which arise from the mutual relation of the interlocutors (that is, the communication), unlike the messages which are contained in the speech itself. The recipient of the message will accept the message and will work on its realization if the sender has a positive attitude towards the content of the message i.e. if he accepts it and acts in accordance with it, if the sender recognizes the recipient as a person and treats him positively, and of course, if the recipient has a positive attitude for the sender. Therefore, it arises that the content which we pronounce should be confirmed and it should provide its understanding, acceptance and realization, which is achieved with good relations and non-verbal communication.

The third type is honest and dishonest communication. Honest communication is the one when the speech content is accompanied by the actual behavior; the verbal messages adjust to non-verbal messages. A communication cannot be successful if the speaker says something he doesn't believe in himself, or if he behaves differently than what is required or what his associates expect, or does not respect the interlocutor who he addresses.

Downward, upward, horizontal and diagonal communication: The main goal of communication in terms of the enterprise is its successful functioning. For this purpose, the enterprise must enable communication in several directions: downward, upward, horizontal, and diagonal.

The downward communication originates from the individual from the higher hierarchical level towards the individuals at lower levels. The main goal of this communication is the guidance and management of individuals at lower hierarchical levels. Katz and Kahn identified five types of downward communication [5]:



- Instructions on the way it should be performed.
- The information which explain the task and its relationship with the other tasks in the enterprise
- Information on the regulations, rules, and procedures.
- Information on the performance of the individual, the group or the enterprise.
- Information about the ideological nature in order to create a feeling of a special task or mission.

The downward communication is inadequate and inaccurate in many enterprises. The employees from the lowest hierarchical levels usually complain “that they do not know what is happening” and “that no one ever tells them”. This is a typical sign that the downward communication is bad and that people feel a need of information which is important for their work. The lack of such information causes unnecessary stress in the employees.

The upward communication refers to communication which begins from the lowest hierarchical levels and is transferred to the higher levels. The main goal of this communication is to inform the individuals at the higher levels about the events and developments in the lowest levels. In this manner, they can check the efficiency of their downward communication, as well as the overall efficiency of the enterprise below its level. Therefore, the basic type of information which should be transferred upwards is information about the performance of the tasks. However the information about the personal performance of the individual could be risky. If the superior assesses that you didn’t work well, he may criticize you, punish you or dismiss you from work. On the other hand, if he assesses that you are working well, he may increase his expectations and ask you to work even more in the future.

It seems that of all of these four communication directions, the upward communication is least efficient. The ones above often do not react to the messages which come from below, while the ones from below often like to complain to the superiors, especially when it comes to bad news. Research shows that the superiors are more accustomed to speak more and listen less, while the contrary applies for the subordinates. For this reason most people hesitate to start any communication with anyone from the senior management.

The horizontal communication refers to the communication between the individual and the department in the same hierarchical level. It provides coordination and integration of the departments which perform the tasks relatively independently. The mechanisms in the horizontal communication in the enterprise usually are not prescribed and they are left to the very initiative of each manager. It usually takes place during non-formal meetings, phone calls, messages,

emails, orders, etc. In case of more complex tasks which require coordination of large groups, special commissions or teams can be formed, or special managers can be appointed, whose only function is to establish efficient horizontal communication.

The diagonal communication probably is the mostly used channel, however it is very important for all situations when efficient communication through the other channels is impossible – in terms of the minimum consumption of time and energy, however also in situations when the vertical (downward and upward) channels should be supplemented. For example, the quality manager wants to analyze the structure of costs. He may request part of the required data directly from the sales department instead of using the usual marketing channel.

Barriers and their resolution by means of communication

Barriers at an individual level: For a communication to be successful, the message must get from one person to another, and they should both agree on its meaning and importance. However, different people can have different interpretations of the meaning and the importance of some messages depending on their previous experience, that is, everything that makes this experience, and what is called a reference framework. The communicologists agree that the reference framework is the most important factor for (none) understanding. For example, the manager observes the problem differently from the employee, the people from the different parts of the enterprise have a different perspective about the same problem, and different parts of the enterprise have a different reference framework.

This can easily be observed in the communication between people with different cultures who have different experience. Hence, in western countries, people always come on time for work meetings, while people in some eastern countries people are negligent when it comes to accuracy. If a person from the east arrives late at a meeting in some of the western countries, his colleague would interpret this as rudeness or indifference. Their communication will be impaired from the very beginning because their reference frames are completely different.

From the available information, we usually find, that is, we selectively listen, only the ones which are in accordance with our existing beliefs and attitudes. Other information is not perceived or we distort the other information in a way that suits us better. In another case, if we have a negative attitude towards the person who conveys us a message, probably a lot of attention will not be dedicated to this message, and it will not be carefully observed.

One very interesting barrier in the individual level is the emergence of feelings and characteristics of the person. Almost nothing destroys communication completely, as gentle emotions do. Emotions distort the reality. When people are affected by emotions, they do not listen and they do not see properly. However, some people are very aggressive and arrogant in general; this is not temporary; rather it is manifested as characteristics of the person. They affect the others negatively; they cause anger in the person, thereby instigating aggression. Successful communication can hardly be achieved in such conditions.

On the other hand, emotions can be very useful in communication. Every audience knows that the speaker, lecturer, is actually boring without emotions and enthusiasm.

Other barriers in the individual level of communication are known as well, such as too quick conclusion, gender differences, and cultural differences.

Barriers at the level of an enterprise: *The specific language of specific groups* – Each profession/vocation has its specific way of research which helps the members of this profession to understand better, however when they communicate with the members of other professions, this language becomes a barrier for a successful communication. A typical example is the language of computer scientists by means of which they understand each other well, while in communication with people from the other professions; they encounter great misunderstandings in the communication. This particularly happens when the specific language of the profession is not used as a means of transfer of information and understanding, rather in order to mystify the group and its profession.

Status differences – The status differences in the enterprise are manifested in different ways. People with a higher status have special titles, large offices, personal secretary and other status symbols. This often causes fear or discomfort in people with a lower status which can contribute for distortion of the transfer of information. Therefore the employees are rather silent than asking a question and exposing themselves to the danger to seem incapable or uneducated.

The strait (lack) of time – the managers often do not have the time to talk to each of their employees. The strait of time leads to the “shortcut”, which means that we do not send the information to every person who needs it. The results could be negative, not only in regard to work, but also in regard to the interpersonal relationships, because many individuals will be offended for being “bypassed”.

Information overload – One of the main assignments of each manager is to make decisions. In order to be able to make such a decision, he must dispose of the right information. Sometimes information is hard to reach, however today it is not a problem to get to information, rather how to recognize the important information. Each manager is burdened by the information from different sources, so he cannot pay full attention to each one of them. If the amount of information is excessive, the manager might miss or neglect the importance of this information.

Directions for successful communication - The establishment of successful communication and the improvement of communication skills require that you focus on two things. One is to improve the message which is being sent, and the other is to improve the understanding of the received messages. Therefore, the coding and decoding process must be improved.

A successful communication is undoubtedly affected by many factors. One of them is the regulation of the flow of information such as the quantity in terms of their importance, in order to prevent overload. The effective feedback is an important element of the feedback communication. It opens an opportunity to learn whether the recipient received this information that we sent, and whether it had the expected effect.

The message can be clear if we imagine that we have the role of a recipient, if we indeed try to see this message with the eyes (ears) of the

recipient. The person, whose role is to be a recipient of the message, should pay attention to the following instructions:

- To decide that he will listen,
- To see the person in the eyes,
- To ask (the right) questions,
- To rephrase,
- Not to talk too much,
- Not to interrupt,
- To learn to keep silent,
- To avoid the unnecessary movements,
- To take notes.

Conclusion

For a successful communication, it is undoubtedly necessary to develop a climate of trust. In a research between the American and the Canadian workers it was found that only 38% of them trust their managers. Only 27% of them think that the managers take care of them as individuals. Even the situation in Europe is not better: within a comprehensive research conducted on more than one thousand managers in the middle and top-level management, information have been obtained about the fundamental values of the managers: they are being assessed what they are like, and what they should be like. Among other things, 93% of the surveyed consider that it is desirable for the manager to be able to listen to the associates, while only 44% think that the managers from their surrounding essentially own this ability.

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