Managerial and Organizational Communication: A Strategic Approach

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Abstract

This paper focuses on managerial communication in the organization and its nature and operation. It describes the effective communication and the barriers. The difference between the designs of the formal communication system is considered as well as the types of informal communication channels, which probably will exist in an organization. It also examines models understanding managerial communication and organizational goals integrated in the context of effective persuasion. This paper also discusses the communication strategies and the different layers to get to the core.

Introduction

The organizational level of communication operates within the networks that link organizational members. Henri Fayol, 1976 defines management "To manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and to control.' Management implies and activity rather than a job. To others the term meant a group of people, an occupation or profession. Good communication is absolutely essential in all organizations. Companies seek to attain goals by mans of the collective action of all their members. Not only must individuals be motivated to work towards the organization's goal, but work must be co-ordinate and controlled for the efficient functioning of the organization. At the heart of this must be an effective formal communication system (David Clark, 1997).

For those who deal with customers, effective persuasion includes identifying appropriate markets, developing effective messages, locating appropriate vehicles for conveying messages and keeping ahead of the competition in terms of developing and maintaining cuter loyalty. The flow of information round the organization like bloodstream of a living creature is an essential resource.

Communication may flow through formal and informal "grapevine" (Len Ross, 1997). Persuasion is always a conscious activity. Persuasion and communication are activities involving at least two persons who joint action determine the out comes (Gerald, 1973). Organization enters into relationship with their employees by varying levels of integration. High goal integration exists when an organization creates conditions that allow its members to meet both organizational and personal objectives (Shackleton, 1997).

Models of Organization – Employee Interaction

Doing so requires the ability to communicate and persuade. It means reorganizing the existence of conflict and knowing how to deal with it. It means reorganizing the importance of rewards and knowing ho to use them. Barrett (1977) proposes the existence of three models of organization – employee interaction.

The Exchange Model

Organization operating according to this model provides incentives to employees to increase productivity. Persuasion manifest in such a climate is acquiescence.

The employee relinquishes his or her own personal rules in favor of the organizational rules for at least the eight-hour workday.

The Socialization Model

This model involves leadership. The superior how stresses the importance of organizational objectives, and with conviction calls for them to be persuade with diligence, can accelerate the socialization process. In this case peers also persuade each other to adopt organizational rules and employee socialization becomes a vertical (Superior – subordinate0 and horizontal (peer – peer) process.

The Accommodation Model

The third model introduced by Barrett (1977) steps beyond the unidirectional persuasion perspective of the two model. This model encourages greater self – Autonomy and thus creates a climate conducive to cooperation. Since the employees are included in much of the problem-solving, objective – setting and decision – making activities of the organization, reciprocal rule revision and the generation of mutually satisfying new rules are overtly encouraged.

A Model of Informal and Formal Communication

	Informal	Formal
Oral	Personal contacts interviews and Telecommunication employee plant Tours (Orientation)	Staff meetings public address conference order giving and instruction.
Written	Bulletin Boards Daily News Digests	Briefing company polices Management news lathers Company Magazine Company Reports
Both Oral and Written	Face-to-face contact between superior and Subordinate where written information is exchanged.	Company Meetings where reports and data are presented.
Visual	Sound-action exhibits closed-circuit TV	Motion Picture Slides Chart talks.
(Raymond, 1987)		

Formal and Informal Means of Communication

In all organizations there is a wide range of possible Communication channels for the transmission and receipt of information. The formal Communication Channels can be part of the formal structure of the organizations and will be intended to be used as an aspect of its management. Who communicates, what is to be communicated and how it is to be communicated.

Informal communications are a way of supplementing the formal system. In the informal network there are often elements of the "Grapevine", remover and gossip. In many organizations the grapevine is major informal communication channel. The term itself implies that there is a metaphorical tangle of branches which may distort information.

The second element in our analysis of informal communication is the role of rumor which is a message transmitted over the grapevine and is not based on official information. As a rumor it may be true or false or have elements of both. Rumors circulating outside the company can be particularly damaging.

This is particularly the case in situation in which there is genuine confusion about what is happening and the formally published information is unclear and incomplete.

Along with rumor the grapevine often communicates gossip: idle talk, often of little consequence but it can be hurtful if malicious and about particular people. It can hurt reputations, which are often founded to a degree in gossip. It can have a positive side. It can be a morale booster, a socializing force which spells out group norms, and it can be beneficial to the individual as a means of sharing employment worries.

The communication of a message starts with the sender having a thought, information, or piece of data to pass on.

Imagine an information clerk in a tourist office answering a query from a traveler about where a particular building is in communicating the reply there will be the following steps.

1. The clerk having heard the query thinks about the wide range of data relevant to the information requested and decides what information, in what language and how information is to be communicated.
2. The clerk mentally decides on the actual content or wording of verbal and other messages to be given and any other forms of communication to be used.
3. The message is transmitted by speech and perhaps also by gesture. The clerk may reinforce the verbal message by giving the inquirer some written information, a street plan in this case. The route to be taken may be shown on a map.
4. The traveler receives the messages by listening and perhaps looking.
5. The message is decoded. The language, pronunciation and words used may be difficult to understand.
6. The decoding should head to the complete understanding of the reply given to the original query. Or the reply may not be fully understood.
7. The understanding of the reply may lead to action. The traveler may be satisfied with the answer to be query and exist to office (Victor, 1992).

Communication Strategy

To achieve good communications in an organization management needs a strategy for its formal channels. The implementation of this strategy needs to be supported by continuous education and training in communication techniques and awareness. This should be also regular reappraisals of the way, the communication systems of the organization are usually working. In taking decisions, about the design and operation of the formal communications system, the way they may actually work out and the impact of the inevitable informal communications should not be overlooked. There are four main areas in which decisions need to be taken and where problems can arise:

- **Awareness:**   People need to be aware of the need to communicate.
- **Content:**   People do not know what should be communicated.
- **Method:**   People do not know how to communicate in the most effective manner.
- **Facilities:**   Adequate channels for communication should be available.

Strategy is the result of skilful planning. Jerry Wofford(1977) and others have presented various communication strategies.

The Structuring Strategy

This strategy is used by the manager who is oriented towards establishing order, organizing, scheduling and structuring though the communication process.

The Dynamic Strategy

Managers using dynamic strategy are brief and to the point. The message content is pavagmatic and action oriented.
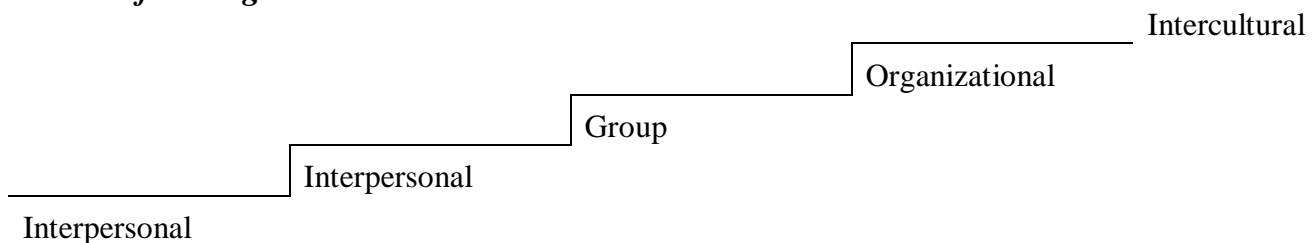
The Relinquishing Strategy

This strategy is often used when the purpose of the communication is to counsel or to boost confidence of course, the relinquishing style works only when the other person is willing an able to assume responsibility.

The Withdrawal Strategy

Indications of the withdrawal strategy include quickly changing the topic, joking about the subject, acting as if a statement were not heard, or even avoiding the person.

Levels of Managerial Communication

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                                                                Intercultural
                                              Organizational
                          Group
          Interpersonal
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Interpersonal

The interpersonal is the first level of communication. It focuses on internal behavior such is observing, listening, reading, speaking and writing. The second category is the interpersonal level of communication. At this level, two or more people exchange thoughts. They may be sharing information, providing feedback, or simple maintaining, providing feedback, or simply maintaining a social relationship. The most frequent form of group communication is meeting which may be either formal or informal the intercultural level of communication concerns interaction among people of different cultures (Humstreet and Baty, 1991). All communication occurs within a culture. Culture is the social glue that binds members of nations and organizations together through shared values, symbols and social ideas. Organizational culture also affects how manger communicate. In some organizations, a common value may be to put every request or suggestions in writing, whereas in another organization writing is waste of time.

Communication Transaction Model

The channel is the method used to convey meaning among people. The type of channel used depends on the message and the approach used to exchange ideas. People encode when depends on the message and the approach used to exchange ideas. People encode when they choose the best symbols to represent their thoughts and feelings the greater the agreement between two people as to the meaning of the symbols, the greater the probability of mutual understanding. Once encoders have chosen and translated the symbols that represent their thought, the communication receiver must decode the message. The person must first perceive the message and then he or she must interpret what has been perceived.

Feedback allows the sender to determine hoe the message was interpreted and if necessary, provide an opportunity to modify future messages. It is the process of binding the sender and receiver (John Akers, 1992).

Strategic Layers Model

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Strategic Layers Model

The strategy approach may be compared to an onion. The strategy is at the very core of the onion, but one must peel away the different layers to get to the core. Success breeds success. Effective communication results in trust and openness, which generally improve job performance. Manager must avoid communication errors that my result in a negative climate Does a trusting open climate exist or does a closed, defensive climate prevail?

Organizational culture also affects how managers communicate. It gives an understanding of generally accepted values. These values must be related to communication. For instance, if independence is valued, a persuasive approach rather than a demanding approach may be required. If formality is valued, a formal typed memo rather than a telephone call may be necessary. If extensive technical details are part of the organizational culture, all reports may require technical elaboration.

Overcoming Barriers to Effective Communication

Three aspects of the receiver are particularly important firstly, are the receiver's emotions and viewpoint understood? In trying to sell to a customer, how are the organizations products evaluated? What is the prospective customer looking? A second aspect is the motivational attitude of the receiver. Thirdly, people may perceive words, concepts and statements quite differently from that of the sender because they have quite different points of view. This viewpoint is referred to, as a "frame of reference".

Step 1:-   To reduce the communication barriers, which arise from failing to understand the person who gets the message one should develop empathy with the person, understand the motivational state and also how things are seen and interpreted in the particular frame of reference.

Step 2:-   Face-to-face communication, indeed all communication should be two ways to be effective. Feedback is the process of obtaining information of the receipt of the message from the receiver.

Step 3:-   the use of multiple channels can improve communication very considerably with the help of repetition. To avoid misunderstandings, a contract negotiated verbally will be confirmed in writing. A good example of a situation where a manager wants to give the least chance of misinterpretation is the way, where organization conducts annual staff appraisals. The staff evaluation may be communicated verbally. The employee is shown the report, reinforced by verbal amplification and the answering of any question. The communication process is completed by the signing in writing that the review has been read and understood.

Step 4:-   Signal must be meaningful. The sender may use words giving one message but the body language and overall attitude gives the lie to the verbal message. For example a fashionable topic in the early 1990's was business ethics. Many companies gave Lip-Service to a code of business ethics and stressed the importance but in practice conformed to the letter, not the intention, of their ethics code.

Step 5:-   Physical arrangement like furniture can reduce effect. A circle of chairs can enhance the effectiveness of group communication.

Step 6:-   The level of sophistication of language and the actual words can be a barrier. The sender should relate the actual words and phrases used to the particular audience. Phrasing needs to be pitched at the right level. Some decry the use of Jargon it can have an important psychological role in receivers feeling of being treated as equal to the sender and they can identify with the speaker.

Information is not the same as communicated knowledge. To avoid this overload, organization should be selective about the amount of information which is circulated. The solution is that the individual should be selective and organize and start though information before starting detailed reading (Herta, 1980).

Team Briefings and Quality Circles

Team briefings and quality circles are both devices for management to achieve the benefits which can come from face-to-face group meetings focused on the exchange of information and the joint solving of problems. The aim of team briefings is to overcome the limitations of joint consultation committees. They also aim to overcome the deficiencies of causal briefings. Many investigator have concluded that an important part of the success of Japanese firms at the shop-floor level was their adoption of quality circles. The technique reinforces group cohesion at the level of the shop-floor, a typical quality circle will be made up of five to ten shop-floor members with a trained leader holding regular short meetings where they approach to the problems systematically.

Conclusion

Number of persuasion-relevant aspects of organizational life needs good communications of information throughout the organization is essential for its survival and growth. Management needs efficient two-way channels of communication to arrive at, and put into effect, the necessary decisions about the new organization's planning control, coordination and motivation.

Telling employees what to do is not as effective as persuading them. It is the best thing to do. An important aspect of communication is that every one should know what is expected of them and how they are performing so that can improve their performance.

The organizational culture, in particular the way people relate to each other should be taken into account. Specific steps should be taken to overcome possible barriers to effective communication such as problems of bias jargon, overload and lack of trust. Good communication effectively and significantly contributes to the success of the organization.

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