



ENHANCING COMMUNICATION FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

Often we would come across organizations that stress on the importance of good communication in management. It's essential for an organization to have a proper communication management. Once this is achieved, the organization is one step closer to achieve its overall business objectives. Communication management refers to a systematic plan, which implements and monitors the channels and content of communication. Effective communication is a prerequisite for any organization to attain organizational objectives. In business, communication is used to promote them in the market and to deal with various business issues. Although technology has opened doors to new ways of interaction, the process is still has multiple barriers that hinders its effectiveness

Keywords: *Effective Communication, Communication Process, Barriers to Business Communication*

INTRODUCTION

We can say that “effective communication is a building block of successful organizations”. In other words, communication acts as organizational blood. Effective communication is essential and indispensable for the success of any business. An effective communication management is considered to be a lifeline for many projects that an organization undertakes as well as any department of the organization. The goal of effective communication includes creating a common perception, changing behavior and acquiring information. In an organization communication plays a crucial role in establishing employer-employee relationship and it assists managers in performing the basic functions of management, i.e., Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling. A good manager should be a people's manager and must have a contingency approach at hand when it comes to communicating with employees.

Communication serves as a foundation for planning followed by organizing and subsequently all the other management functions. The modern business setting requires manager to be a liaising body at certain point of time and must communicate efficiently with their subordinates so as to achieve the team goals. Owing to such greater importance in the organizations communication suffers many setbacks during its flow throughout the organization. Such setbacks which are termed as communication barriers in management terminology need a proper systems of communication. Having such systems would ensure that the organization will have a proper and effective communication process and management.

1.1 NEED OF THE STUDY

Effective communication is a basic prerequisite for the attainment of organizational goals. In organization, no group can exist without communication. If there is no proper communication, Co-ordination of work is impossible and the organization will collapse. Every act of communication influences the organization in some way or the other. It is a thread that holds the various interdependent parts of an organization together.

When communication is effective, it tends to encourage better performance and job satisfaction. Moreover, communication is a means whereby the employee can be properly motivated towards the organizational objectives. It is the means by which behavior is modified, change is effected and goals are achieved.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To understand communication process in the organization
- To know the common barriers of communication.
- To analyze ways to overcome barriers of communication.
- To describe the importance of effective communication in an organization.

1.3 DATA COLLECTION:

Present study is based on secondary data which has been collected from books, newspapers, magazines, journals & various internet sources.

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Allen (1991) tested a model of communication sources along with commitment and perceptions of support. Allen found commitment and support comes from communication with top management and The Business & Management Review, Vol.3 Number-2, January 2013 47 superiors. Communication researchers have described the purpose of communication content in a change process as: spreading a vision [103], minimizing uncertainty (Klein, 1996), gaining employee commitment (Kotter, 1995), involving employees by seeking their input into the content and process of the change (Kitchen & Daly, 2002), overcoming barriers to change (Carnall, 1997), and challenging the status quo (Balogun & Hope, 2003). The Business & Management Review, Vol.3 Number-2, January 2013 46 Tackle Queries of Employees: Communication must address the information of employees, the management of changes and the motivation of employees (Dolphin, 2005). This implies that every person's communication skills affect both personal and organizational effectiveness (Brun, 2010; Summers, 2010). It seems reasonable to conclude that one of the most inhibiting forces to organizational effectiveness is a lack of effective communication (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). A recent study indicated that recruiters rated communication skills as the most important characteristic of an ideal job candidate (Yate, 2009). Generate Community Spirit: Organizational communication is considered as an important antecedent of the self-categorization process, which helps to define the identity of a group and to generate a community spirit, which fits into organizational requirements (De Ridder, 2003; Postmes et al., 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Communication to create a community within organizations shows in for instance high commitment to the organization of the employees, in trust of employees with management and in organizational identification (Elving, 2005). According to the 2002 Fleishman-Hillard survey of employee communication practices and the 2002 Mercer Human Resource Consulting "People at Work" survey, communication is vital to employee retention.

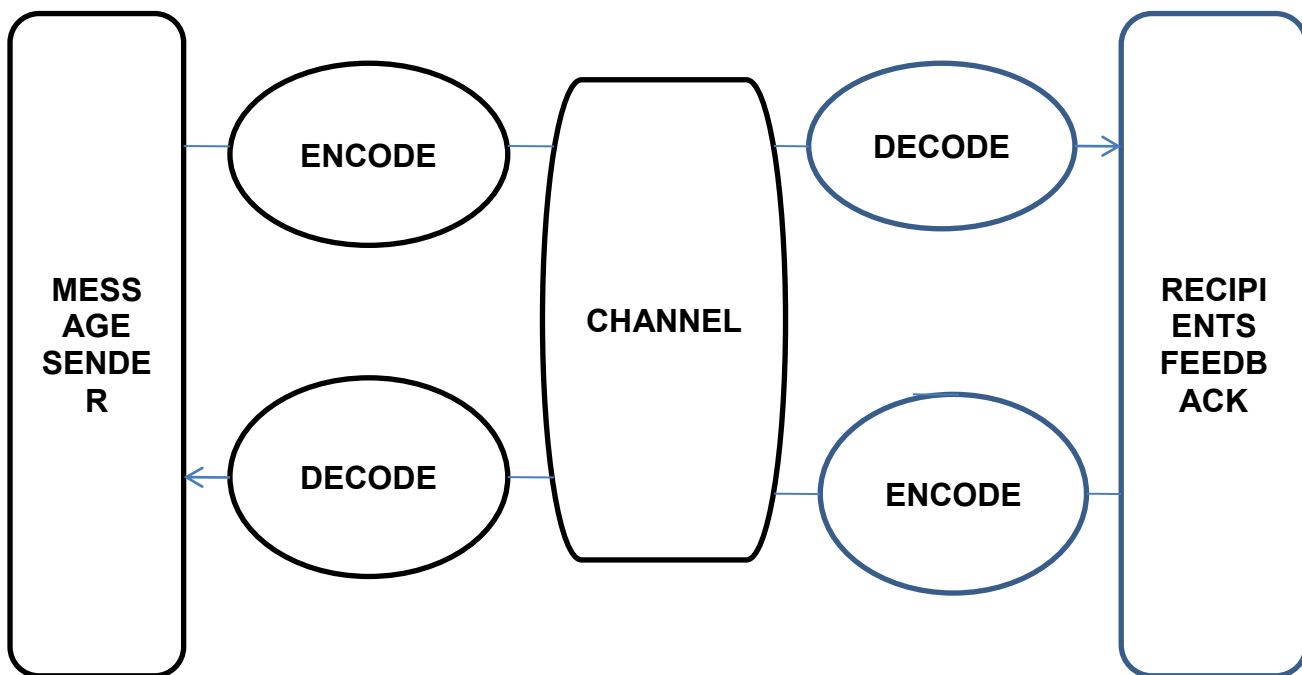
Organizations can take measures to prevent the most negative impact of job insecurity from occurring by, by providing accurate information and enhancing communication, supplying retraining for alternative employment, and training their employees in how to cope with the stress created by job insecurity (Hartley et al., 1991; Heaney et al., 1994; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997). Add Feedback: Appropriate communications provide employees with feedback and reinforcement during the change which enables them to make better decisions and prepares them for the advantages and disadvantages of change (Peterson & Hicks, 1996). Communication is also proved to be an effective tool for motivating employees involved in change (Luecke, 2003). Organization communication scholars have shown that the adequacy of information provided by the organization has also contributes to an employees' job satisfaction which encourages the staff. Carlisle and Murphy (1996) suggests motivating others to communicate effectively and address employees' queries. Motivation theories explore the numerous approaches to meet individuals' needs, including expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), need theory (Maslow, 1954), reinforcement theory (Skinner, 1971) and the broadly used goal theory (Karoly, 1993). Employee Commitment: Communication

studies find commitment is linked to employee voice and argumentativeness, which concepts involve freedom to speak up about concerns and ability to argue the issues surrounding these concerns (Gorden & Infante, 1991; Gorden et al., 1988; Infante & Gorden, 1991). The effectiveness and commitment of employees depends largely on their knowledge and their understanding of the strategic issues of the company (Tucker et al., 1996). Communication needs to be well managed so that at any time during the change process confusion is avoided through clear, accurate and honest messages, by using a variety of media with high coverage and impact (Abraham et al., 1999). Pascale (1984) assures that people committed to a vision is more important than a well thought out strategy as they successfully accelerates the change process (Larwood et al., 1995).

2. COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The communication process consists of three main divisions; sender transmits a message via a channel to the receiver. As per below figure

Figure I: Communication Process



- The sender first develops an idea, which would be the intended message.
- This message is transmitted to the receiver.
- The receiver has to interpret the message to understand its meaning.

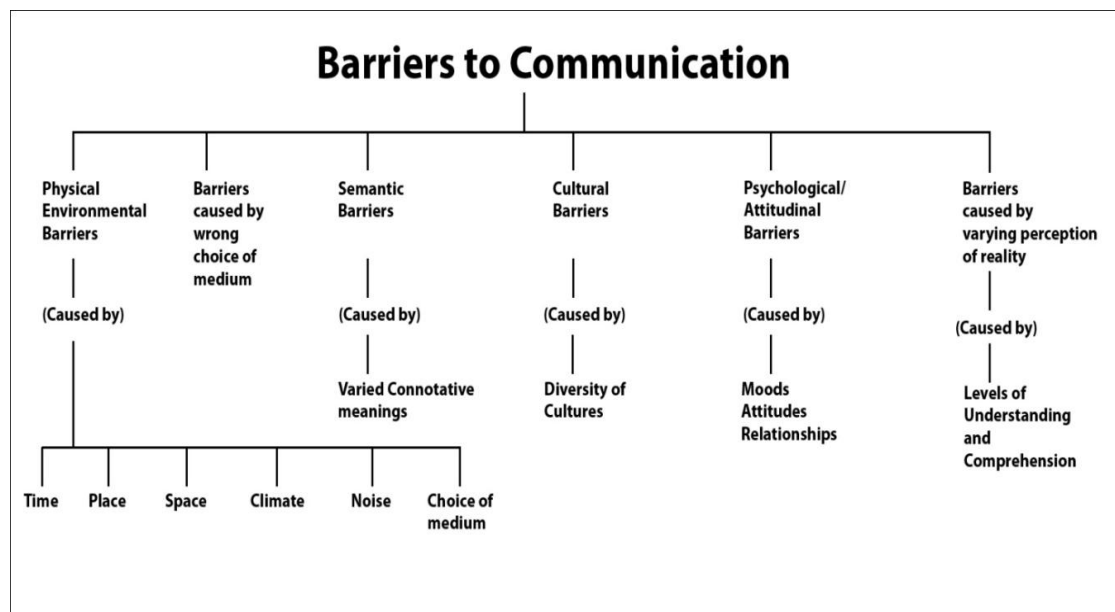
Encoding refers to developing a message and decoding refers to interpreting or understanding the message. You will also notice the feedback factor in which the sender and receiver both involve. Feedback is crucial for any communication process as it ensures the successful flow of intended information from the sender to receiver. Feedback allows immediate managers or supervisors to analyze how well subordinates understand the information provided and to know the performance of work. When it comes to the interpretation, the context of the message should be used for deriving the meaning. Furthermore, for this communication process model, we will also utilize encoding and decoding. Understanding the

communication process alone will not guarantee the success of managers or an organization. Managers need to be aware of the methods used in the communication process.

3. COMMON BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Problems with any one of the components of the communication model can become a Barrier to communication. These barriers suggest opportunities for improving communication

Figure II: Barriers to Communication



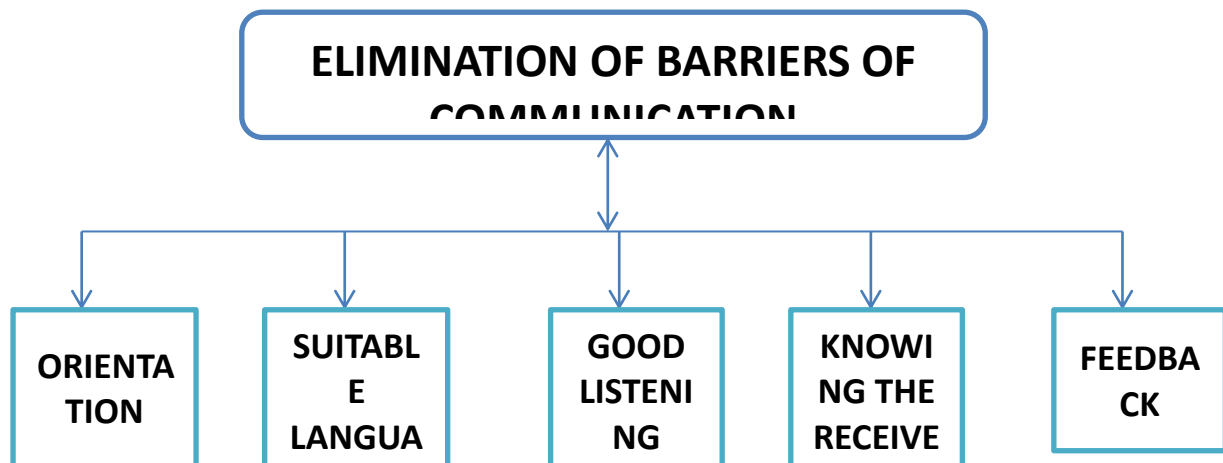
The communication barriers arise due to multiple factors which include physical, psychological, social, physiological and demographical factors.

- The physical barriers of communication occurs due to disparities off time, place, space and proximity, climate, noise and choice of medium and many such factors effects communication at the very first phase of communication process.
- The effectiveness of communication would also get affected due to the wrong choice of medium by the sender and it disrupts the entire communication process.
- Sometimes the connotation also effects the communication. The connotation of a message varies depending on the individual perceptual abilities
- The diversity of cultures is being added to the bucket of communication barriers as the organizations operate in different parts of the world. These diversities should be understood and must be taken care off while designing the organizational communication process by the top management.
- The individual differences and attitudinal changes also create a mess in communication process. This can be dealt with only when the organizations design a process which is human-centric rather than process-centric.
- The individual comprehending and understanding abilities also affects the message of communication and its intentions. All the demographical and psychological factors would take their count in this stage and distorts the process as a whole.

4. WAYS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS OF COMMUNICATION

Barriers to communication mean obstacles to the process of communication. Communication barriers are the problems that arise at every stage of the communication process and have the potential to create misunderstanding and confusion.

FIGURE III: Ways to overcome Organizational Barriers



A communication problem may soon become a crisis for effective working of an organization. More specifically, communication influences the effectiveness of the hiring and training of employees, motivation of employees, providing daily instructions, performance evaluations and the handling of discipline problems. Communication also affects the willingness of employees to provide useful suggestions. Employees feeling a part of the business require effective communication. Organization can arrange orientation program for the newly appointed employees. This helps them to know the organizational policy, culture, hierarchy of authority etc. and guides the employees about the organization working system reducing misunderstanding and communication gap among employees. Language that describes what we would want to express and communicate to others, May at times, serve as a barrier to communication. Simple and easy words should be used to understand, ambiguous words and jargons should be avoided. Proper communication language should be used to avoid linguistic problems. The sender should take care of the fact that the message should be framed in clear language. The contents of the message should be brief and excessive use of technical words should be avoided. Listening is also a very important part of the communication process. Good listening habits lead to better understanding and good relationships with each other. Listening is recognition that the receiver has responsibility in the communication process. The subject matter of the message should be helpful to the receiver. The need and interest of the receiver should specially be kept in mind. Communication is more effective in such a situation. It is the essence of communication that both the sender and the receiver should be good listeners. Both should listen to the each other's point of view with attention, patience and positive attitude. A sender can receive much relevant information by being a good listener. One of the important guidelines to overcome communication barriers is to know the audience or receiver of the message. The sender of the communication should prepare the structure of the message not according to his own level or ability but should keep in mind the level, understanding or the environment of the receiver. If the sender puts himself in the receiver's position, he will be able to understand how the message is likely to be decoded. If the sender and the receiver know themselves well, it will reduce other communication barrier. Feedback is a crucial element in

communication process that completes the communication. Feedback helps both the sender and receiver to reconcile their message and share their opinion for better understanding. Feedback helps to reduce misunderstandings. The information is transferred more accurately when the receiver is given the opportunity to ask for clarifications and answers to any questions about the message.

5. THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANIZATION

Communication is the heart of every organization. Everything we do in the workplace results from communication. Therefore good reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are essential if tasks are going to be completed and goals achieved. Good communication skills are a success key to work. Without effective communication, a message can turn into error, misunderstanding, frustration, or misinterpreted or poorly delivered. Communication is successful only when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information. In today's highly informational and technological environment it has become increasingly important to have good communication skills. Working at improving communication skills requires knowledge and work. This increased awareness of the potential for improving communication is the first step to better communication. Appropriate communications provide employees with feedback and reinforcement during the change which enables them to make better decisions and prepares them for the advantages and disadvantages of change. The communication model and discussion of barriers to communication provide the necessary knowledge. When the sender and receiver have a good relationship, they are much more likely to accomplish their communication goals. Accept the reality of miscommunication. The best communicators fail to have perfect communication. They accept miscommunication and work to minimize its negative impacts

CONCLUSION

The literature has identified the role played by effective communication in the business organization. Understanding the communication process and then working at improvement gives smooth flow of information in organizations. Knowing the common barriers to communication is the first step to minimize their impact. The employees are the key sources to bring about change in organizations. To encourage employees to overcome the barriers, organizations must address the issues related with them. Companies all across the world must be able to communicate effectively in order to maintain continuous growth.

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