

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research paper is to acquire an understanding of the meaning of communication. In order to up-grade one's communication skills, it is necessary to understand the meaning of communication. Communication is regarded as one of the indispensable, which the individuals need to be aware from the stage of early childhood. From the initial stage, the individuals acquire an understanding of meaning and significance of communication. They understand that putting into operation the communication processes in an effective manner will enable the individuals to achieve personal and professional goals and enrich their lives. Therefore, it is vital to understand the meaning of communication. It is necessary for the individuals to hone their communication throughout their lives. When they are communicating in a verbal manner, i.e. face to face or phone or in a written manner, through letter, notices, messages, emails, etc. they need to ensure that communication processes take place in an efficient manner. In order to promote the communication processes in an efficacious manner, it is necessary for the individuals to augment their knowledge in terms of measures and approaches, needed to promote the communication processes in an efficacious manner. The main areas that have been taken into account in this research paper include, factors affecting communication, the seven C's of effective communication, and communicating individually and conducting meetings.

Keywords: Communication, Concepts, Effectiveness, Individuals, Organizations, Receivers, Senders

The term communication is derived from the word "common", which means to share, exchange, transmit, talk, gesture, write, put in use and relate (Unit:1, n.d.). Communication establishes the relationships between individuals and encourages the functions of planning, organizing, directing, controlling, co-ordinating and leading. Every message has a purpose or an objective. When the senders are sending messages to individuals or groups of individuals, they have an objective. For instance, in educational institutions as well as in employment settings, when the instructors, supervisors, managers, employers and so forth are imparting information to the students or employees, they have an objective to achieve. Their main objective is to ensure that they are able to acquire an understanding of the concepts, so they can put into operation, their tasks and activities in a well-organized manner and generate the desired outcomes. The messages within educational institutions and organizational contexts have an objective to motivate, inform, teach, persuade, and inspire. Effective communication focuses on the well-defined objectives that support the goals and objectives of the organization.

The individuals, who are in leadership positions are vested with the job responsibilities to ensure that factual information is imparted, so the students in educational institutions at all levels and employees in various types of organizations are able to carry out their job duties in a well-organized manner. To ensure efficient achievement of goals and objectives, information is exchanged. Upward communication is, when information is passed from the employees to the supervisors and employers.

Downward communication is the information passed from employers or supervisors to the employees and horizontal communication is the communication that takes place between colleagues and adjacent departments. Communication links together all the different activities involved in the educational institutions and organizations. Furthermore, the members need to be knowledgeable and competent in terms of their job duties and ensure through effective communication, they create an amiable and pleasant working environment and form good terms and relationships with other individuals.

It is vital for the individuals to pay attention and work efficiently towards the development of communication on a continuous basis. In most cases, the individuals are born with the physical ability to talk, but it is essential for them to focus upon the development of communication skills. All individuals cannot communicate well, unless they make efforts to hone this skill. The individuals, belonging to rural communities migrate to urban communities to look for better livelihoods opportunities. They either get enrolled in educational institutions or training centres to acquire education or get engaged in employment opportunities. In order to enrich their lives, they are aware that they need to up-grade their communication skills. For this purpose, they get enrolled in educational institutions or training centres to pursue a program in terms of effective communication. When they work diligently and conscientiously, they are able to up-grade their communication skills. Therefore, it is indispensable for individuals to hone their communication skills.

FACTORS AFFECTING COMMUNICATION

Communication is a two-way process. But there are number of factors, which may give rise to impediments within the course of promoting effective communication. When understanding the factors affecting communication, one is able to understand that these factors affect the overall interpretation and understanding of what was communicated. Multiple problems can take place within the course of implementation of the communication process. The impediments and problems are primarily related to the elements, i.e. sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback and context. It is vital to understand the factors affecting communication. When one understands these factors, they can make an attempt to convey the message with minimum misinterpretation and perplexity (Topic 1. Introduction to Communication, n.d.). The factors affecting communication have been stated as follows: (Topic 1. Introduction to Communication, n.d.).

Status and Role – The sender and the receiver of the message may be of equal status within the hierarchy or they may be superiors and subordinates. When the superiors are imparting knowledge or conveying a message to their subordinates, it is vital for them to listen carefully and implement it. Whereas, the superiors may in some cases, procrastinate the tasks and activities, when they are asked to perform them or when they are required to perform them for their subordinates and for promoting effective functioning of the organizations. Therefore, the differences in the status and roles are regarded as factors that may have an effect on communication.

Cultural Differences – The individuals are different from each other in terms of factors such as, caste, creed, race, religion, ethnicity, cultures, personality traits and socio-economic backgrounds. In spite of these differences, they need to work effectively towards the achievement of common goals and objectives and work in collaboration and integration with each other. The cultural differences exist both within as well as outside the organization. In the implementation of the functioning of the

organization, i.e. inter-departmental dealings and communication with individuals, outside the organizations such as, clients may have an effect upon the communication processes. In order to promote effective communication, it is vital for the individuals to accept each other in terms of cultures as well as other factors.

Communication Channels – In order to carry out the communication processes in a well-organized manner, it is necessary to make selection of effective communication channels. When making selection of the communication channels, it needs to be ensured that they are in accordance to the goals and objectives of communication. In addition, it needs to be ensured that communication channels are suitable to the receivers. The channels of communication need to be effective and worthwhile in making the processes of communication meaningful. When the channels are appropriate, the receivers will be able to acquire an efficient understanding in terms of information and concepts, which are conveyed. On the other hand, when the communication channels are not suitable, they may cause perplexity and misinterpretation.

Length of Communication – In some cases, the message or the information that the senders are imparting is lengthy, whereas, in other cases, it is short. When the message is short, it can be delivered in a manageable manner. The senders do not have to experience major obstacles in reporting information. On the other hand, when the information is lengthy, then the communication that takes place in conveying it is also lengthy. The individuals usually experience problems in imparting an adequate understanding of the concepts and other information to the receivers. Therefore, the length of the message also affects the communication process. One needs to ensure that it serves the purpose and is suitable to the receivers.

Use of Languages – When the individuals are different in terms of nationalities, they speak different languages. But when they are working together, it is vital for them to communicate with each other through a common language, which is easily understandable to all. When the individuals are not making use of words correctly or the sentence structure is weak, then too these may have unfavourable effects upon the communication processes. Therefore, in order to make the communication processes meaningful and beneficial towards the functioning of the organization, it is essential to make use of common language, which is understandable by all individuals.

Disabilities – When one is evaluating the effectiveness of the communication processes, it is essential to take into account the factors, which prove to be barriers within the course of effective communication. One of the major barriers is disabilities. There are various disabilities, which are experienced by individuals, these include, visual impairments, hearing impairments, speech disabilities, dyslexia and so forth. When the individuals experience these disabilities, they experience problems within the course of promoting effective communication. In order to overcome these disabilities, it is essential for the individuals to make use of hearing aids, magnifying glasses, symbols, and so forth to alleviate the problems caused by disabilities.

Known or Unknown Receivers – The known as well as unknown receivers are the ones, who play an important role in determining the effectiveness of the communication processes. The known receivers are able to acquire an efficient understanding of the messages, despite of having sufficient information. Whereas, unknown receivers may require more information and time to decode the

message. Hence, when the receivers are known, it would be more convenient for the senders to impart them information. On the other hand, when the receivers are unknown, the senders would have to put into operation, the communication processes in a manner that information can be understood by the unknown individuals satisfactorily.

Individual Perceptions and Attitudes – The communication gets affected to a major extent by individual perceptions and attitudes. The perceptions and attitudes of the individuals are different from each other. The elderly individuals, middle aged individuals, young individuals and children have different perceptions and attitudes. The main reasons being, the individuals are different from each other in terms of natures, cultures, competencies, abilities personality traits, occupations, categories, backgrounds, and goals and objectives. On the basis of these differences, the communications that take place are also different. Therefore, it can be stated that individual perceptions and attitudes have an effect upon communications.

Atmosphere and Clarity of Messages – The surroundings and the atmosphere can in some cases be regarded as impediments within the course of effective communication. When communication takes place, it needs to be ensured that the atmosphere is pleasant and amiable. Within the atmosphere, there are provision of infrastructure and facilities that would facilitate effective communication and promote clarity of message. For instance, when instructors are imparting knowledge in terms of concepts, they make use of technologies. It is comprehensively understood that through the usage of technologies, one is able to carry out his or her job duties in a well-organized manner. Therefore, atmosphere and clarity of messages are regarded as important factors that affect communication.

Lack of Feedback – When communication takes place, the sender sends the message to the receiver. On receiving the message, the receiver responds and on listening to the responses of the receivers, the sender provides feedback. When the receivers obtain feedback, they are able to identify the inconsistencies and bring about improvements. The feedback provided is positive as well as negative. Positive feedback is encouraging and motivating, whereas, negative feedback is disheartening. When the individuals receive positive feedback, they stimulate their mind-sets towards their work, whereas, negative feedback enables the individuals to work diligently and bring about improvements, particularly when they are dedicated towards the achievement of professional goals. When there is lack of feedback, then one of the major problems that takes place is, the receivers are unable to acquire an understanding in terms of their performance. Therefore, lack of feedback is regarded as one of the important factors that affect communication.

THE SEVEN C'S OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Promoting effectiveness within the communication processes is one of the indispensable goals of all individuals. They need to augment their understanding on a regular basis to bring about enrichment in the communication processes. In order to achieve this purpose, they need to take into account the seven C's of effective communication. The seven C's of effective communication are completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy, and correctness. These have been stated as follows: (Khowajaomari, n.d.).

COMPLETENESS

Completeness signifies imparting information in terms of all concepts and aspects that are necessary for the individuals to be aware of. When the instructors, supervisors, managers, heads, directors, colleagues, and fellow students are communicating with each other, they need to ensure that information that they are imparting is complete. The completeness of the information generate the desired outcomes without the expanse of the additional messages. With the acquisition of complete information, one can perform their job duties well of promoting well-being and goodwill. Furthermore, complete information also contributes in alleviating problems and challenges that may arise within the course of implementation of job duties. In order to ensure that the information is complete, there are various factors that need to be taken into account. These include, providing all the necessary information in terms of who? What? Where? When? Why and how? Provide answers to all the questions asked, look for additional questions, give accurate answers and make provision of extra information, particularly in case of complicated concepts, so the individuals acquire information in terms of various concepts. Therefore, the significance of completeness is understood by the individuals, when they are to acquire information in the implementation of various tasks and activities.

CONCISENESS

Another important factor that needs to be taken into account in promoting effective communication is conciseness. When one is communicating with others professionally within educational institutions as well as within organizations, it is vital to ensure that information that is communicated is meaningful and worthwhile. One needs to avoid making use of terms, and phrases, which are not relevant. In promoting conciseness, the important measures are, eliminate wordy expressions, include only relevant material, avoid unnecessary repetition, omit unnecessary expression, omit wordy conventional statement with the one, which is more precise, omit the terms, which and that, eliminate the unnecessary prepositional phrases, limit the use of passive voice and avoid long introduction and unnecessary information. This factor is taken into consideration by the individuals in the case of verbal as well as written communication. In verbal communication, when the individuals are speaking formally, they need to implement conciseness. Whereas, when they are engaged in an informal conversation with others, they may not implement conciseness. In written communication, when one is communicating with others through writing, the above stated factors need to be taken into consideration in putting into operation, conciseness. Therefore, conciseness is regarded as an important factor in promoting effective communication.

CONSIDERATION

Consideration is referred to preparing every message by taking into account the receivers. When the instructors, trainers, supervisors, managers, directors, and employers are making provision of knowledge and information to the individuals, including students or employees, they need to take into consideration various aspects. There are various factors, which need to be taken into account regarding the receivers of information, these include, their age groups, categories, backgrounds, needs and requirements. When imparting instruction, the teaching-learning methods and instructional

strategies that need to be put into operation are in accordance to the needs and requirements of the learners. They should be understandable to the learners in a manageable manner, so they are able to carry out their job duties in a well-organized manner and achieve personal and professional goals. The learners are different from each other in terms of personality traits, natures, learning abilities, categories and backgrounds. In some cases, the learners experience setbacks in their performances and need to bring about improvements. Therefore, it is vital on the part of the instructors, supervisors and employers to communicate with them in a considerable manner and make provision of help and assistance. Therefore, it can be stated that consideration is also regarded as an important factor in promoting effective communication.

CONCRETENESS

Concreteness depicts specificity, definiteness, solidity and vividness. When the individuals are to communicate with each other in a concrete manner, they need to provide to the point and accurate answers to the questions. Direct and specific replies specify concreteness. To compose a concrete and convincing message, the individuals need to take into account certain factors. These include, understanding the questions, put forward by the receivers, and providing accurate and precise information. Concrete communication implies being particular and clear rather than perplexing and general. Concreteness contributes in reinforcing the confidence of the individuals, the senders and the receivers. The concrete message has various points, which need to be taken into account. These include, supporting the message with specific facts and figures, making use of words that are clear, understandable and augment the reputation and concrete messages are not misinterpreted (Seven C's of Effective Communication, 2020). Concreteness in the communication process is important and pertinent not only in the case of formal communication in educational institutions and employment settings, but also in the case of informal communication among individuals within homes, neighbourhood, public places and so forth. One of the important benefits of this factor is it alleviates perplexity and augments understanding. Therefore, it can be stated, concreteness is regarded as one of the important factors in promoting effective communication.

CLARITY

Clarity puts emphasis on the specific messages or goals at a particular point of time, rather than making an attempt to achieve too much at once. When one is working towards the achievement of a goal or an objective, it is vital for the individuals to focus upon one task or one goal at a particular point of time. Whereas, when one is paying attention towards other tasks and activities, then one may get overwhelmed due to work duties and may not be able to concentrate well on other tasks and activities. Hence, it is vital for the individuals to develop clarity in terms of one goal or objective at a time. It is comprehensively understood that to achieve ones goals and objectives, it is necessary to develop effective communication. Clarity should be depicted in the communication processes. The clarity in communication is highlighted in various factors. These are, it makes understanding easier and more manageable, complete clarity of thoughts and ideas augments the meaning and significance of the message and clarity in message is depicted by making use of exact, appropriate and concrete words. When these aspects are put into operation, the individuals are able to promote clarity in the communication processes (Seven C's of Effective Communication, 2020).

COURTESY

Courtesy in message highlights that message should show the sender's expression as well as should respect the receiver. In other words, when communication takes place between the senders and the receivers, they need to communicate with each other and exchange ideas and perspectives in a courteous manner. The senders of the message and information should be polite, judicious, reflective and enthusiastic. On the other hand, the receivers need to maintain eye contact with the senders, express their responses well and should not get engaged in other activities, which may distract the senders, such as, reading, writing or making use of phones, I pads and other technologies. In promoting courtesy in the communication processes, there are various factors, which need to be taken into account. These are, senders need to acknowledge the viewpoints, perspectives and feelings of the receivers, courteous message is positive, constructive and focuses upon the audience, it makes use of terms showing respect for the receiver of the message and it is not at all biased (Seven C's of Effective Communication, 2020). When one implements courtesy, one is not only able to make the communication processes effective, but also form amiable and pleasant terms and relationships with each other.

CORRECTNESS

Correctness in communication ensures that there are not any grammatical errors in the communication processes. This feature is regarded as more important in the case of written communication. When the individuals are communicating with each other through emails, messages, letters, notices, and so forth, they need to ensure that information is written accurately, precisely, words are correct, and there are not any spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. Correctness in the case of written communication is regarded as indispensable in depicting professionalism, diligence, and conscientiousness. On the other hand, when the individuals are communicating with each other in a verbal manner, correctness is depicted in providing accurate and precise information. Correctness in the communication process has certain features, these are, message is exact, appropriate and well-timed; correctness in the communication process leads to an increase in the confidence level of the individuals; correctness in the information provided by the senders arouses interest and curiosity among the receivers to listen and put into practice the information in a well-organized manner; it checks for precision and accurateness of facts and figures used in the messages and leads to making use of appropriate and correct language in the communication processes (Seven C's of Effective Communication, 2020).

COMMUNICATING INDIVIDUALLY AND CONDUCTING MEETINGS

Individual communication has undergone changes, which are technological and social (Serbanescu, n.d.). In other words, individuals are communicating with each other face to face and when they are at a distance, they make use of various forms of technologies in communicating. Through the usage of various forms of technologies, i.e. phones, I pads, lap-tops, and computers, the individuals are bringing about progressions in the communication processes. It is of utmost significance for the individuals to bring about improvements in the communication processes on a regular basis. The individuals, belonging to all categories and backgrounds, need to up-grade their

knowledge and competencies, particularly in terms of usage of technologies. The technologies are made use of to a major extent by the individuals to communicate with each other in a formal as well as in an informal manner. In order to hone their technical skills, the individuals are getting enrolled in educational institutions and training centres as well. They are pursuing long-term as well as short-term courses regarding usage of technologies and communication skills.

It is comprehensively understood that when individuals are communicating individually or are conducting meetings, they need to take into account the seven Cs of communication, in order to make the communication processes effective. The organization of meetings in most cases have an aim or an objective. When there are organization of meetings in educational institutions as well as in various forms of organizations, then the individuals, who lead the meetings are the ones, who initiate them. They make provision of information that is necessary in terms of which meetings are organized. Furthermore, they impart knowledge to others in terms of concepts and other related factors. In meetings, the other individuals are also provided with the opportunities to express their viewpoints and perspectives. Within meetings, communication also takes place among individuals on an individual basis, particularly when they have questions. In order to make the meetings effectual and worthwhile, it is necessary for the individuals to provide rights to all the individuals to communicate and express their viewpoints.

Research has indicated that in some cases, conflicting situations and disagreements may take place among individuals, when they are communicating individually or are conducting meetings. But it is vital for the individuals to ensure that they put into operation, peaceful conflict resolution methods. For instance, when an individual has stated something, which is not agreed to by other listeners or listener, then they need to provide explanation in a polite and decent manner. The disagreements need to be stated in a polite and decent manner, so they do not assume a major form. Hence, when the listeners are highlighting valid causes in terms of their disagreements and the speakers understand them appropriately, then conflicting situations can get alleviated. On the other hand, when the individuals are communicating with each other on an individual basis, then too, it is vital to ensure that there are not occurrence of any types of conflicting situations and disagreements. Therefore, it can be stated that conflicting situations and disagreements need to get curbed, when communicating individually or conducting meetings.

CONCLUSION

Communication is regarded as the key aspect in leading to efficient implementation of tasks and activities and in enriching ones lives. It is essential for the individuals to formulate measures and put into operation the methods and approaches that are necessary in up-grading ones communication skills. The individuals are not only required to hone their communication skills within the course of pursuance of educational programs and carrying out of job duties, but also in communicating with individuals within as well as outside the homes. In formal as well as informal communication processes, it is vital for the individuals to make use of polite language and inculcate the traits of morality and ethics. The factors affecting communication are, status and role, cultural differences, communication channels, length of communication, use of languages, disabilities, known or unknown receivers, individual perceptions and attitudes, atmosphere and clarity of messages and lack of

feedback. The seven C's of effective communication are completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy, and correctness. Therefore, it can be stated, whether the individuals are communicating with each other on a one-to-one basis or conducting meetings, they need to put into operation the seven C's of effective communication.

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