

MASTERING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: A GATE-WAY TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

The ability to communicate effectively is necessary to carry out the thoughts and visions of an organization to the people. The importance of speech and words whether through a paper or a voice is a communication medium to convey directions and provide synchronization. Without communication, there is no way to express thoughts, ideas and feelings. Effective communication is an essential component of organizational success whether it is at the interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organizational, or external levels.

Key Words: Communication, speech, words, voice, thought, ideas, feelings.

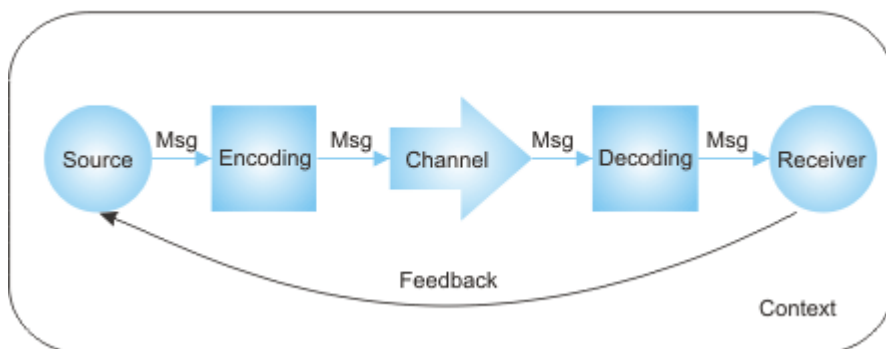
1. Introduction

People in organizations typically spend over 75% of their time in an interpersonal situation; thus it is no surprise to find that at the root of a large number of organizational problems is poor communications. In a recent survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, communication skills were cited as the single more important decisive factor in choosing managers. The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Business School, points out that communication skills, including written and oral presentations, as well as an ability to work with others, are the main factor contributing to job success. One of the major facts for increasing interpersonal conflicts is poor communication. A recent study of 1200 CEOs of major Corporates reported that communication problems are the primary reason that many of the most capable business people failed or floundered.

2. The Communication Process

Although all of us have been communicating with others since our infancy, the process of transmitting information from an individual (or group) to another is a very complex process with many sources of potential error.

The Communications Process



In any communication, at least some of the "meaning" is lost in simple transmission of a message from the sender to the receiver. In many situations a lot of the true message is lost and the message that is heard is often far different than the one intended. This is most obvious in cross-cultural situations where language is an issue. But it is also common among people of the same culture.

Communication is so difficult because at each step in the process there is major potential for error. By the time a message gets from a sender to a receiver, there are four basic places where transmission errors can take place and at each place, there are a multitude of potential sources of error. Thus it is no surprise that social psychologists estimate that there is usually a 40-60% loss of meaning in the transmission of messages from sender to receiver.

3. The 7 C's of Effective Communication

7Cs of effective Communication, application to both written as well as oral communication.

Completeness - The communication must be complete and it should convey all facts required by the audience. Complete Communication leaves no questions in the mind of receiver.

Conciseness - Conciseness means wordiness, *i.e.*, communicating what you want to convey in least possible words.

Consideration - Effective communication must take the audience into consideration, *i.e.*, the audience's view points, background, mind-set, education level, etc. Ensure that the self-respect of the audience is maintained and their emotions are not at harm. Emphasize on "you" approach.

Clarity - Clarity implies emphasizing on a specific message or goal at a time, rather than trying to achieve too much at once. It makes understanding easier.

Concreteness - Concrete communication implies being particular and clear rather than fuzzy and general. Concreteness strengthens the confidence. Concrete message is supported with specific facts and figures. Concrete messages cannot be misinterpreted.

Courtesy - Courtesy implies taking into consideration both viewpoints as well as feelings of the receiver of the message.

Correctness - Correctness in communication implies that there are no grammatical errors in communication. In Correct communication message is exact, correct and well-timed. It checks for the precision and accurateness of facts and figures used in the message.

4. Communication Style

Every time we speak, we choose and use one of four basic communication styles: assertive, aggressive, passive and passive-aggressive.

(i) Assertive Communication

The most effective and healthiest form of communication is the assertive style. It's how we naturally express ourselves when our self-esteem is intact, giving us the confidence to communicate without games and manipulation.

When we are being assertive, we work hard to create mutually satisfying solutions. We communicate our needs clearly and forthrightly. We care about the relationship and strive for a win/win situation. We know our limits and refuse to be pushed beyond them just because someone else wants or needs something from us. Surprisingly, assertive is the style most people use least.

Assertive communicators will:

- state needs and wants clearly, appropriately, and respectfully
- express feelings clearly, appropriately, and respectfully
- use "I" statements
- speak in a calm and clear tone of voice
- have a relaxed body posture
- feel connected to others
- feel competent and in control
- stand up for their rights

(ii) Aggressive Communication

Aggressive communication always involves manipulation. We may attempt to make people do what we want by inducing guilt (hurt) or by using intimidation and control tactics (anger). Covert or overt, we simply want our needs met - and right now! Although there are a few areas where aggressive behavior is called for (*i.e.*, sports or war), it will never work in a relationship. Ironically, the more aggressive sports rely heavily on team members and rational coaching strategies. Even war might be avoided if we could learn to be more assertive and negotiate to solve our problems.

Aggressive communicators will often:

- try to dominate others
- use humiliation to control others
- criticize, blame, or attack others
- be very impulsive
- speak in a loud, demanding, and overbearing voice
- act threateningly and rudely
- interrupt frequently
- use "you" statements

(iii) Passive Communication

Passive communication is based on compliance and hopes to avoid confrontation at all costs. In this mode we don't talk much, question even less, and actually do very little. We just don't want to rock the boat. Passives have learned that it is safer not to react and better to disappear than to stand up and be noticed.

Passive communicators will often:

- fail to assert for themselves
- allow others to deliberately or inadvertently infringe on their rights
- fail to express their feelings, needs, or opinions
- tend to speak softly or apologetically
- exhibit poor eye contact and slumped body posture

(iv) Passive-aggressive Communication

A combination of styles, passive-aggressive avoids direct confrontation (passive), but attempts to get even through manipulation (aggressive). If you've ever thought about making that certain someone who needs to be "taught a thing or two" suffer (even just a teeny bit), you've stepped pretty close to (if not on into) the devious and sneaky world of the passive-aggressive. This style of communication often leads to office politics and rumour-mongering.

Passive-Aggressive communicators will often:

- mutter to themselves rather than confront the person or issue
- have difficulty acknowledging their anger
- use facial expressions that don't match how they feel - i.e., smiling when angry
- use sarcasm
- deny there is a problem
- appear cooperative while purposely doing things to annoy and disrupt
- use subtle sabotage to get even

5. Conclusion:

The ability and the importance of communication become much more crucial when you are on a mission or need to fulfill a goal. Without a means to communicate, your organization will become isolated. The ability to effectively communicate is very important when it is usually underestimated and overlooked. Communication is a necessity as we use it to network, spread ideas, and promote. Communicate effectively through well known mediums and convey it simply and precisely. The importance of communication is crucial to the success of your organization because you need to reach out in order to fulfill your mission.

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