

Discussion



Running Head: DISCUSSION Discussion Institution:

Discussion.

Virtual Communication.

Virtual Communication, such as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), Instant Messaging, Desktop Sharing and Video and Teleconferencing, has its' advantages in saving time and expenses and facilitating collaboration, but also encounters a host of difficulties. Cultural differences often result in misunderstandings when Virtual Communication is used to link team members from different countries. It is difficult to build an atmosphere of trust among co-workers without body language and other non-verbal clues. Some individuals may lack the computer savvy required. Personality characteristics, such as shyness, or a reluctance to be frank with people not known on a personal level, also come into play. These barriers can be overcome by gathering regular feedback and arranging meetings in which the team members make physical contact and have an idea of whom they are working with. Technological training is essential for every member to be comfortable with the software used. When Virtual Communication is reinforced by written and spoken communication, the margin for error decreases.

Communication Barriers

Communication Barriers are usually centered on different perceptions of work expectations and are often aggravated when the supervisor resorts to indirect channels such as e-mails, where the chances are high that the meaning of the message gets distorted. The employee may not be comfortable with the computer technology used. Even a telephone line with noise distortion can pose a barrier to communication. The employee, who

differs culturally from the supervisor in terms of education, economic background, religious beliefs and other personal traits, may misinterpret the supervisors' communication, particularly when a language barrier exists and the employee is not fluent in the language or the jargon of the work place. Emotional overtones also tend to confuse the receiver of the message. These barriers can be overcome by the supervisor having a clear idea of his expectations from the employee, communicating on a face to face basis, using gestures and other non-verbal clues to reinforce the message, using a noise free, relaxed environment, reducing the links in the channel of communication, gathering employee feedback and regularly monitoring performance.

Exchanging Gifts

Corporate ethics can be subjected to various interpretations, particularly in the context of cultural differences. The Japanese business culture, in which expensive gifts are considered a symbol of the esteem in which the business is held, is opposed to our perception of gifts as bribes and symbols of corruption. In this context, when working in Japan, it would be best to formulate the Company's Code of Ethics and publish it in the form of a booklet, in which it is clearly stated that receiving and giving gifts is definitely not acceptable. If this booklet is given to all employees and also to all business partners, as a matter of routine, clear guidelines regarding gifts can be established. The booklet could also contain information about the Company's goals and objectives, structure and other details- this would make it less offensive to Japanese Business partners and reduce any chance of them feeling that they are being lectured on business ethics, or being criticized for their business culture. Another relevant point here is that all

employees, particularly Japanese, must be given training in the ethics of the Company.

Unethical Action

Such a situation is difficult to handle as even a hint of unethical action on ones part, is sufficient to put a blot on ones perceived integrity in the Company. This calls for a stringent response, which unequivocally demonstrates ones innocence. Let us assume that, in my capacity as Head of a Department, I have awarded a contract to a firm whose owner happens to be an old acquaintance of mine. I am now accused of acting unethically and indulging in favoritism. Of course, I can protest my innocence till I am blue in the face and argue that all procedure has been followed to the letter before the contract was awarded and that my acquaintance was the one with the best credentials for that particular job. But this will not be sufficient to clear my name. The best course of action would be to firmly ask for the selection process to be repeated by my Company, under another person's direction, and distance myself from the process. I will then be vindicated when the contract is shown to have been awarded to the best contender, who also, by chance, happened to be my acquaintance.