

# Organisational communication



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What is organisational communication?

“ The key to success and productivity within an organisation is effective internal communication through the presence of informal and formal communication channels . Organisational communication can be defined as the process of sending, receiving and interpreting messages between units within a functioning organisation. In order for an organisation to reach their objectives, it is vital to build a supportive workforce through the use of communication between management and employees.

According to Francis (1989) organisational communication is developed to achieve two goals, to inform employees about their duties/about the projects and issues of the organisation and to create a positive workplace within the organisation . Effective communication can strengthen relationships with key external stakeholders and ultimately build a climate of support making it easier to fulfil corporate missions. Organisational communication as a field of practice is underpinned by several theoretical perspectives.

There are various theories and perspectives regarding organisation communication, however, the most established and recognised theories are the Scientific Management, Human Behaviour/ Relations, Systems perspective and Cultural perspective. Each perspective and the theorist’s views on how an organisation and their internal publics should interact and communicate have conflicting ideas and implications. Due to these factors and the sheer size of each perspective, only the Human Relations perspective and the theories of Follett, Maslow, Mayo and McGregor will be examined in this report.

Overview of HRP The Human Behaviour perspective on organisation communication was established in 1930 and developed until 1965, providing one of the most significant contributions to organisational communication, both at the time of development and in today's modern society. The goals of the Human Relations approach involve protecting person values, reducing tensions between groups, solving issues of interpersonal relations and establishing methods to prevent and resolve future conflicts.

The Human Relations approach contrast a psychological perspective, rarely touching on features of technology, administration or environment.

Alternatively, the perspective shifts emphasis to concentrate on the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of individuals within the organisation, how to satisfy them and their motivations. An employee satisfied within their organisation's environment and interaction with their colleagues and supervisors are have a higher work ethic and produce beneficial results.

Therefore, by addressing employee satisfaction, managers and leaders are able to ensure more adequate results for their organisations. Employee satisfaction relies heavily on the degree of mangers effectively communicating with their employees, as without communication, managers may remain unaware of issues in the workplace that may discourage or neglect employees. In order for organisations to create successful communication between employees and management it is vital they have both formal and informal communication methods (management book).

The human relations movement focuses on the importance of utilising all communication channels, in particular informal methods. Types of informal

communication such as emails, the grapevine and phone calls will help managers understand what is and isn't working for their employees, and the employees to recognise what is required of them. The shift from a structural and controlled approach allows managers to focus on the key elements of the organisation, the employees, by creating a two-way communication channel which will ultimately stimulate employee work ethics.

Argyris (1964) suggest that presently structured organisations hinder employee's need of " psychological success". He also argues that each individual strives for " self-actualisation" and that organisations that lack communication and recognition with their employees could highly possibly interfere with employees reaching this goal, this is supported by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (management book).

Maslow's hierarchy also indicates that employees have the ability to put all their energy into their organisation for which they work when they feel secure in their work environment, when this is achieved they are then able to perform to their highest ability and care for their colleagues and the environment with full potential and motivation (management book).

By directing the attention previously used on production numbers and profit towards the workers, managers are able to lead, motivate and connect with employees, resulting in employee satisfaction, higher performance and an enjoyable culture for employees to work in (Robbins, DeCenzo, Coulter, Woods, 2011). The revolutionary perspective of Human Behaviour has significantly impacted the operation of contemporary organisations.

The growth of human relations research and training has allowed organisational management to significantly improve the interaction between managers and employees which ultimately stimulated the performance of the organisation by achieving employee satisfaction. Through examining theorist such as Mary Follett, Elton May and Douglas McGregor and their developed and renowned theories, a deeper understanding of the technicalities of the human relations perspective and its relevance in the workplace can be gained.

Mary Follett – Principles of Coordination: Management consultant, Mary Follett, enhanced the area of organisational communication and specifically the human relations movement. Follett come to the conclusion that an organisation can be viewed as both an individual and group behaviour (Robbins, DeCenzo, Coulter, Woods, 2001). The individual actions of management and group efforts by employees under management display organisational values and will determine the corporation's human relations success.

Follett emphasises the importance of two-way and equal relationships between superiors and their employees, represented as a circular process where each member in the relationship continues to give and receive from each other (Graham, 1995). She believed that through four specific principles of coordination that group member would become unified in the tasks to achieve common goals and simultaneously achieve the functions of management planning, organising, leading and controlling (Management Study Guide, 2012).

Follett's principles of coordination four main principles according to Armstrong (1998): Direct contact: In order to avoid misunderstands and conflict between managers and subordinates, managers must ensure to have direct personal contact with their employees about the organisations activities. For effective and efficient communication, the first approach of coordination must be achieved through methods such as direct communication conferences, committees and other face to face operations.

Researchers suggest that if Follett lived in today's modern society, she would have adapted technology and other social ways that are available today.

Early Stage: This communication and coordination must start in the early stages of any planning, resulting in the best implantation, plans and a higher chance for success. For example, if the head of the production department, while forming his policy, meets and discusses with the other members of the organisation it may impact to any degree, it is far more likely that successful coordination will happen which would be beneficial for the company in the long run.

Continuity: Coordination must be a continuous process, not a one-time activity. It should be able to perpetuate itself. It must begin when the organization starts, and continue throughout its existence. Then the circle or spiral is not broken in the transition from planning to activity and from activity to further planning. You must keep up with the facts, keeping up with the facts changes the facts. In other words, the process of adjustment, change and transformation, changes the things to be adjusted to and coordinated.

This is progressive growth. Reciprocal Relations: Follett believes that all decisions and actions of all people within the departments of the organisation are inter-related and that any activity by one person or department will affect other persons and departments. Therefore, managers must find out the effect of any decision on the persons and departments in the organisation before taking making any decision, whether major or minor.

Follett's principles of coordination strive to avoid issues from occurring in the workplace by guiding managers to communicate with their employees at the early stages of any major or minor projects or changes that may implicate employees and to consistently update them via formal and informal communication which will rule out any chance of miscommunication and to give them a sense of involvement which will lead to employee motivation and satisfaction in the workplace.

Coordination improves human relations by reconciling individual and organizational objectives. It reduces conflicts among people because it promotes understanding. By avoiding overlapping efforts and duplication of work, coordination provides integration and balancing of individual efforts, contributing to harmonious team work. It makes possible a total result which is greater than the sum of individual achievements. It creates synergy, enabling optimum use of resources.

Coordination fosters loyalty and commitment among employees. This enhances the effectiveness and stability of the organization. “ Coordination fosters loyalty and commitment among employees Coordination helps to ensure unity of action by bringing different departments and sections

together. It enables the executives to see the business as a whole instead of narrow sectional silos. Individual interests are subordinated to the common interest.