

# Human resources – communication leadership

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



A company or any other type of organization consists of people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Human resources refer to the management of these individuals to assist in attainment of the organizational goals.

Leadership in human resources management deals with enrolment, training, and supervision of employees' performance. These facets and processes in leadership require effective communication. Communication is defined as the passage of information from one individual to another. It is a process that requires a sender to convey an idea or information to a receiver. The leader must possess good communication skills to pass his intended message to his employees (Barrett, 2006). This paper will focus on leadership communication within an organization. The study will make use of the book called Leadership Communication by Deborah Barrett as the primary source. However, I will make use of other secondary sources such as journals and credible sources from the Internet.

Most of the time, problems do arise in a firm due to lack of effective communication, which lead to confusion among the involved parties. Even when the management has a very good strategy, it can easily fail if there is no effective communication. Communication process in a company is very crucial because it allows synchronization of available resources, training, appraisals, and monitoring (Barrett, 2006). Effective communication helps in integrating resources, and everyone's efforts in the company, toward achieving a common goal. For instance, the late Steve Jobs gives a good example, which other leaders can emulate. He could communicate his vision to everyone in his company. When employees at Apple Inc. understood the

idea of Steve Jobs, they could bring his vision into reality, hence the success at the company (Barrett, 2011).

### Communication Process

Initially, the mind of person generates information, intending to send a message. The message is sent in form of words or symbols. On reaching the other side of the communication process, the receiver decodes this message into a format that he can comprehend. There are two, very important aspects during transmission of information, that is, the content, and the context. Content refers to the tangible words or symbols for a particular message, whereas the context is the manner in which information is delivered to a recipient (Barrett, 2006). Context is concerned with nonverbal features in speech such as pitch, facial expressions, emotions, gestures and, body language. For effective communication, a leader should understand the most suitable context for communication.

The figure above illustrates a communication triangle comprising of a sender, a receiver and, the message.

### Feedback

The significance of feedback is to modify messages so that the information sent by one person is understood by another person. This is achieved when a person can rephrase the original message of the sender. Paraphrasing or asking questions helps to clarify a point that could otherwise be wrongly understood (Barrett, 2006). Employees should ask questions or paraphrase

the information passed to them by their managers to ensure better understanding of the intended message.

### Non-verbal communication

A person can deliver a message more impactfully, through use of nonverbal features in communication. For instance, use of eye contact helps to control the process of communicating. Eye contact generates confidence, interest and, warmth in the person sending the message. Also use of facial expressions such as smiling helps to convey happiness and friendliness. People are usually comfortable working around people who are sociable (Stuart, no date). Additionally, gestures are important while communicating because they attract the attention of the listeners. This helps to make the communication process more interesting. Furthermore, a good communicator knows how to orient his or her body while communicating. Body postures such as, standing upright and leaning forward conveys interest, and approachability (Barrett, 2006). A person should note the tone, rhythm, loudness, pitch as well as inflection in his or her voice while speaking. A person can avoid boredom by varying these aspects of speech accordingly. Finally, a good communicator should be careful not to invade personal space. A good space should be kept that does not cause discomfort in the other person.

### Human Behavior

Cultural underpinnings usually determine the way people communicate in a workplace. Mostly, cultural factors influence non-verbal features of

communication, which vary from one culture to another (Stuart, no date). Currently, organizations have employees with diverse cultural backgrounds, which imply that it is important for management to understand the variations that occur in human behaviors. Sometimes, it is possible to misinterpret a person for the manner in which he or she communicates. This is because a sender may give high intonation or more attention to a certain element of speech, which is not highly regarded by the receiver (Stuart, no date). The vice versa is also true. The best thing to avoid miscommunication in a multicultural environment is to understand clearly human behavior within the workplace.

#### Relationship between Business and Communication

Leaders are individuals who guide, direct, motivate, and inspire others. They are individuals who exert much influence to other people in an organization and command their attention whenever they need to communicate something. They persuade others to take their steps and join in pursuing the laid down goals and objective. Through their intelligence and expertise, leaders lead the organization to performance and getting results. They might not be well recognized like presidents of a country, but they are still influential. It is also possible to have other employees who are assigned the task of guiding the newly employed, young and, inexperienced employees. Alternatively, communication in leadership can be witnessed through managers who guide and direct successful teams to undertake a given project, or motivate their staff to achieve company goals (Barret, 2006).

Leadership communication is a purposeful and controlled transfer of meaning through which leaders can influence a person, a group, an organization, or an entire community. Leadership communication involves the use of effective communication skills and resources. Leaders are able to overcome interferences, create and help in delivering messages that direct, guide, motivate and give an inspiration to others to take an action. Leadership communication involves layered and expanding skills necessary in writing and speaking in more complex and organizational situations. As the leadership role becomes more expansive, leaders are required to enhance their communication skills to fit in more complex organizational situations (Barret, 2006).

Good communication skills are important tools that managers must consistently possess. Managers spend most of their day communicating. Previous studies have shown that managers spend 70 to 90% of their every day time in communication (Barret, 2006). With the inclusion of e-mails, text messages, and cell phones, perhaps the results would yield even higher. This shows how important, perfect communications skills are to managers, who are trying to advance their leadership careers. This is an indication that, gaining mastery in leadership communication should be a priority for managers who would like their organizations or the wider business sector to term them as successful leaders (Barret, 2006).

It is through effective communication that leaders can lead others. Good communication skills create trust and understanding in the followers, which make them, follow their leaders. Failure to have proper communication is a

sign of poor or no accomplishment. Communication skills help to measure the effectiveness of leaders.

Effective communication can be a good bridge for managers and other people to move into higher leadership positions. A research was carried out at Harvard school of business to establish what it takes to be successful in businesses. It turned out that individuals who are able to prosper in businesses are the ones who can communicate effectively, make good decisions, and manage other people (Bowman, Jones, Peterson, Gronouski, & Mahoney, 1964). It turns out that by communicating effectively, leaders improve the way things are done by their juniors (Barret, 2006).

#### Leadership Communication Framework

The communication framework consists of three parts namely: core messaging, managerial, and corporate messaging. It all starts from the core, and it expands to the managerial communication and finally the broader corporate communication (Barret & Davidson, 2006). Effective communication depends on the core skills. Leaders at any organization must master all the core skills, which include; strategy, writing and speaking. The other skills essential to them are those that are needed to lead groups. Such skills include; intelligence, cultural literacy, listening, managing the teams and meetings, coaching and mentoring. When the leaders move to the higher levels of leadership, they are required to develop their skills, to attain proficiency in corporate communication. Such communication processes are, for example, employee relations, change communication, media relations, and image and reputation management (Barret, 2006).

## Core communication

It mainly involves the strategy or plan used in communication. It requires managers to take a strategic move to be perfect in leadership communication. Leaders need to know and understand their audience as well as develop a strategy that they will use to communicate to the audience. The e-mails, letters and documents that the managers write should be effective, and simple. The language they use should be clear, correct and concise. Their oral presentations should show confidence and persuasive power. Success in business depends in mastering the core capabilities (Barret, 2006).

## Managerial Communication

They are the capabilities that involve providing management to others, from direct contact to other daily interactions with the members of the organization. It includes the emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and understanding of cross-cultural differences for effective interaction with groups and organizations. In the rhetorical situation, listening is the most important thing because it involves getting to know what others in the organization have to say. Managerial communication skills are very essential for leaders, when conducting meetings, and managing teams (Barret, 2006).

## Corporate communication.

Corporate communication involves the information exchange needed to lead a more complex organization and in addressing a wider community. The best communication strategy is required to communicate to internal and external



stakeholders. Communication strategy is needed in this process of passing information; however, the strategy becomes more complicated because of the large size and diversity of the audiences. As leaders improve on their communication, they become advocates for change and developers of vision and goals of the organization (Barret, 2006).

### Barriers to Communication

Effective communication plays an important role in the relationship of employers and the employees in organizations. Although it does not guarantee success in the business, its absence is an assurance of problems. A communication problem gives birth to crises and may linger for many years. Communication creates influence in the hiring and recruitment of employees, their motivation, giving daily instructions, evaluating of performance, and handling of issues related to discipline. Sometimes, employees are hesitant in expressing themselves, contributing to the goals, expressing their concerns, and disappointments. This hesitance and failure to communicate is caused by some of the barriers explained below. Understanding of these barriers provides a pathway to using the strategies that help in eliminating them Barret, 2006).

#### Poor listening skills.

Listening is difficult to many people. A typical speaker should use 125 words per minute. A typical listener receives 400-600 words in every minute. This means that 75% of listening time remains unused. The free time often distracts the listener. The solution to this is to be an active rather than

passive listener. One main listening skill is preparing oneself to active listening. When in a process of listening, the person should tune out other thoughts and memories of people to avoid distraction. As the person speaks, one should search for meaning in what the speaker is saying. One should have a mental outline or summary of key ideas. Poor listening also emerges when one interrupts the speaker. One should withhold judgment and evaluation until the speaker has exhausted passing his message. A listener's premature frown, shaking of the head, or bored look can suggest that there is no need of elaboration or no need of communicating on the ideas that the speaker excellently possess.

The most important indicators of active listening skill is found in provision of feedback, asking questions, nodding in agreement, looking the person straight in the eye, and leaning forward. One should be an animated listener who focuses on what the other person is saying. Active listening is a good way of dealing with an angry person. Active listening encourages the person to invoke his feeling and speak out. One should repeat the words that the person says and even get encouraged to ask questions. Angry people cannot listen until they have relaxed. Telling the angry person to cool down is creation of an opposite effect. Getting into an argument with an angry person simply means that the two people are not listening to each other (Bolton, 1979).

#### Physical distractions

They are physical things that distract communication. Example of such things includes a telephone, a desk, closing or opening a door, and other

noises. They are very common in firms and businesses. When a phone rings, the person receives the call despite the fact that an important conversation was in progress. When people talk directly to each other without a physical barrier, it helps to create a free space for communication. Uncomfortable meeting places in the firm, which is too cold or too hot, creates communication problems. Meeting rooms with uncomfortable chairs cause people to cut discussions so that they can stand and stretch themselves. Another common physical distraction to communication is noise. It is hard to concentrate on a conversation if there are difficulties in hearing (Bolton, 1979).

#### Muddled messages

Effective communications always have clear messages. Wrong use of words and phrases cause muddled messages. Inappropriate use of grammar causes muddled messages. They are barriers to communication because; the receiver is left without clarity of message. Other factors that cause muddled messages are confusion of thoughts. After all, the message might be just a vague thought. Feedback from the receiver is a good assurance to the sender that the message was clear and not muddled. The sender should ensure there is clarification of muddled messages. The sender assumes that the receiver will do something to correct the message, and this creates communication problems (Bolton, 1979).

#### Lack of feedback

Use of feedback helps to reflect understanding of the message in communication. It reflects on the message that the sender has sent. Feedback is obtained when the listener sends message back to the speaker, according to how he has perceived it. Without feedback, communication is incomplete since it is a one way phenomenon. Feedback happens in numerous ways, example, asking a person to repeat what have been said. This is a very healthy way of getting feedback. Feedback may be as subtle as a stare, puzzled look, a nod, or failure to ask a question even after issuing complicated information. Both the sender and the receiver should work to make the conversation a truly two-way process. Feedback should bring about assistance in communication rather than be hurting. Instant feedback is effective and should deal with specifics rather than generalities. Feedback should be approached as a problem in perception rather than a problem that aims at discovering a fact (Bolton, 1979).

### Stereotyping

This causes people to typify a person, a group, an occasion or something on oversimplified conceptions, beliefs, and opinions. For instance, the stereotype for basketball players is tallness. Green equipments are better than red ones, people raised in dairy farms labeled as interested in animals, among others. It acts as a substitute for thinking, analysis, and open-mindedness to new situations. It is a barrier to communication if it makes people act as if they are aware of the message from the sender even before it is sent. Both parties should look continuously for ways of addressing issues

based on stereotyping. Such issues include; generation of thoughts, conclusions, and actions (Bolton, 1979).

Other limitations include sender controlled barriers such as inappropriate context, wrong medium, poor timing, and poor usage of style, inappropriate appeal, as well as questionable ethics. There are also other obstructions referred to as receiver perceived barriers such as unclear purpose of message, illogical message or structure, offensive note, effective or cognitive dissonance, cultural misperceptions, and negative ethos (Barret 2006).

In conclusion, improvement of leadership communication skill for managers is a matter of desperate importance. They should possess the skills and have the capabilities required in corporate and managerial levels of leadership. When leaders gain masterly of these skills, they have a high assurance of their promotion to executive levels and even beyond.