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## **Introduction**

Communication is complex. This is because it involves words, body language, tone of the voice, the volume, the topic which is being discussed at that moment and the history of communication of the people involved.

Effective communication thus occurs when the receiver of a message understands it and demonstrates this understanding through sending feedback to the sender of the message. For this reason, we must be good in our communication and interpersonal skills, (Prentice Hall India, 2004).

Talking of interpersonal skills, these are the skills of life that are used on daily basis while communicating and interacting with other people. This may be at an individual level or in a group. These skills are important for any career and Management, as a career, is no exception. Therefore as a manager, one has to weave these skills of communication so that he/she may have good interpersonal relations with people at the workplace. These skills will help him/her to do away with differences by engaging in criticisms that are constructive, involve teams in communication, be able to control

conflicts, engage in successful negotiations and also be professional when interviewing interns. Therefore this shows that for every manager, communication and interpersonal skills are essential for a successful campaign for one's career.

## **Communication and Interpersonal Skills**

- Verbal communication. This is what the people say and how it is said.
- Non-verbal communication. This is communication that is independent of words. It involves cues like body language, facial expression and gestures.
- Listening skills. This is the way that messages; both verbal and non-verbal are interpreted when sent by other people.
- Negotiation. This is the way people work together so that they get an outcome that they all can agree upon.
- Problem solving. This involves how people work together in identifying, defining and solving problems.
- Decision making. Exploration and analysis of ideas and options so that worthy decisions are made.

When we are about to attend an important function, we always want to be at our best in terms of what we wear and the way we speak before people. All this is part of communication. Even when we are with people in the workplace or with friends, we want to be at the same level and be part of a discussion. As for the managers, communication is as important. When there is tension at the workplace, people tend to be less productive. Tension may arise between employees and this can be traced to incompetent or poor methods of communication. For example, the manager may get upset with

an employee who does not show up for an important meeting. The employee thinks the meeting is on a Thursday while in the real sense it was the previous day. Such miscommunications can lead to serious implications; for example, there may result in tensions between the people in the future when they are communicating. This tension can also be infectious whereby it affects the people who had nothing to do with the origin of the tension, (Davis, 2008).

This means that if good interpersonal skills are in place there will be a good climate for communication and the people who are involved will feel appreciated and valued. A good manager will make sure that this climate, conducive for working, is not spoilt by any factors, both internal and external. If this great climate is to be maintained, interpersonal relationships that are strong need to be cultivated. The manager is the person poised at the top in this hierarchy of interpersonal relationships. This means that whatever he/she will be doing in terms of fostering good interpersonal relationships will be emulated by the people under him/her. The show of respect to other people is the most important aspect here, even when there is a disagreement or conflict between people.

A number of employees may be asked about a manager that they view as the best that they ever worked for. For example, what is about this manager that makes him/her be identified as the best? What are some of the qualities that make him/her be known as the best; that the other managers don't have? If the manager is the best, then the response of the employees should have sounded like;-

- The manager ensured that the people were well informed.

- The manager knew how to praise and when to.
- He/she showed appreciation for the opinions and ideas of other people.
- He/she seemed easy to talk to.
- He/she seemed trustworthy.
- He/she was a good listener.

All the above responses echo one managerial skill; the manager's ability in communicating well with other people. This means that for every manager, it is important to acquire communication and interpersonal skills. However, these managers always find it difficult to master these basic skills. This is because they stumble upon obstacles that bar them from having effective communication with people at the workplace, (Day, 1999).

## **Barriers to Effective Communication**

- Distractions from Outside. As a manager, there are many things that strive to get your attention; interruptions from phone calls, crises and visitors who pop in unexpectedly. All these distractions can steal the attention which you as manager should be paying to other people of preference.
- Preoccupations. There are some issues that will require you as a manager to be fully involved, thus sidelining other people at the expense of these issues. This preoccupation can be easily seen through the way you respond while engaging in conversations; maybe you are not attentive.
- Difference in Status. There may be difficulties in having good communication is the fact that a manager and an employee belong to different statuses. The employee may feel uneasy communication to his/her employer.

- Semantics. The choice of words may completely ruin a conversation. As a manager, one should be very sensitive with his/her choice of words and language so that the dialogue is kept open while in communication with someone.
- Nonverbal cues. The posture of the body and the facial expression portray the true feelings that we feel. If someone is looking outside the window while conversing with them, that means that they are either not interested in the topic or the topic is boring. As a manager therefore, one should be keen to engage people in relevant topics so that they are attentive and participate fully in the discussion, (Collins, 2008).
- Poor listening. This may be attributed to a manager who talks without stopping and the environment (if it's too crowded or too hot, et al). It is important for the manager to be active in listening because if he was conversing with an employee, the employee will feel like the manager puts at heart the interests of the people. This will also motivate the employees for the way that the managers ' hears' them.

It is important to note that communication depends on the style of behavior of a person. There are various types of styles that may be exhibited by managers.

- The closed style. Managers who engage in this style always have poor interpersonal skills. It is hard for them to give information to others as it is hard to seek feedback. This style is uncomfortable and it makes the people around the manager feel uneasy too and it is for this reason that they are hard to collaborate with. These managers find it hard dealing with employees and also in problem solving. The advantage here is that these

managers are best when left to themselves but on the other hand, they are unsocial, do not respond to the needs of others and are uncommunicative, (Mitchell, 2013).

- The blind style. These managers are good in disclosing information but are poor in seeking feedback. They want perfection from employees and errors are hardly tolerated. These managers however, are organized, they are risk takers and have firm opinions but the fact that they are poor listeners and always demand a lot and impatient denies them the standing ovation in communication circles.

- Hidden style. They disclose less of information but are good in seeking feedback. They do not share their opinions but they are social. They are sweet talkers because trying to get feedback is what they do best and thus are liked by most people but looking at it from the other side, the fact that they do not like disclosing information makes other people suspicious and this leads to disloyalty, (Hayes, 2002).

- Open style. These are the managers with the interpersonal skills. They seek feedback and disclose information but carefully and in a sensible manner. They have a warm personality, empathize with others and are a source of motivation to employees. They are collaborative in nature and this enables employees to work in groups and solve problems. This makes employees to like them and be trusted and depended on.

## **Conclusion**

Managers and other organizational leaders are at task to garner communication skills so that their success in the company is reflected in the

way they handle the people in it; from customers, employees to other stakeholders. It starts by knowing and respecting the people under them, knowing why they are communicating and also knowing what to say. This will portray the in control kind of leader while at the same time being interactive. In addition to that, paying attention and having an open mind will enhance a collaborative atmosphere. When a manager is specific and takes enough time, he/she makes it possible for people to get the point correctly and thus avoiding misunderstandings, (Chan, 2002). However, communication is not always a walk in the park. There are several obstacles that stand in the way; for example, preoccupations, and distractions from outside and difference in status. If managers manage these barriers and get them out of the way, they will enjoy the smooth running of an organization.

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