

Human relations and communication in the workplace management essay



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Human relations, a term used to represent people in communities and seeks to promote ways in which people learn to get along and safeguard equal opportunities for all. In context of human relations, there are different ways followed by various activities that helps communities to become more harmonious, respectful and cohesive. The key factors that drive the concept of human relations are staff training, sharing information, mediation, community education, cultural literacy and conflict management (Wakabayashi R. 1998). One of the important aspects of human relations is communication and its related trends at workplace.

Communication

By communication, it means a process wherein people share meaning, ideas or/and thoughts. Communication is an exchange of opinions, thoughts or information by mode of speech, writing or symbols. It is one of the most important work ethics that is used within the workplace. Communication comes naturally on a daily basis which is used by everyone at all times. At workplace, communication works in many ways. There is communication between employees to get their jobs done, communication between supervisor and the staff to run the tasks proficiently. Everyone communicates with each other, with customers and with consumers and without which no work could be accomplished. Every company stands on good communication between employees and patrons (Montgomery A. 2008). It has been agreed that the key to successful work is good communication. Communication is a natural element but effective communication is something that requires certain amount of knowledge which allows a more meaningful and genuine way of conveying thoughts and

information thereby avoiding any conflict (Lance T.). Effective communication in the workplace is open, candid and plays a backbone role. In order to get things work effectively, effective communication is very important. Along with this, there should be a good working environment and compatibility among co-workers (Pederson A. 2009). Effective communication is a system essential in all organizations. It is significant that communication should be properly encoded and decoded so as to make sure it is understood by the audience.

There are positive as well as negative aspects associated with communication in the workplace. Effective communication in the workplace is a two-way street which means that the communication skills are not just the ability to talk and write effectively but also rely heavily on listening and negotiation. This can be done by providing training to employees to practise their active listening skills and problem-solving attitude and develop the means to influence outcomes. Organisation providing professional training can help employees to develop effective communication in the workplace by teaching the importance of effective communication, different communication styles, non-verbal communication skills, such as body language, written communication skills, to tailor communication for an intended audience, how to manage workplace conflicts or issues, negotiation and influential skills etc. By providing such training the communication in the workplace is improvised and open up new channels resulting in an increase in efficiency of the team as well as the organization. There are many benefits of training in improving communication skills in the workplace, stated as the follows -

Employees are more successful in their roles by developing better rapport with co-workers.

Motivating employees and improving their morale will make them more likely to remain loyal to business.

Improving communication between individuals and teams within the organisation will streamline business processes and activities.

Through customer service customer retention will be improved.

Employees will learn to handle difficult situations and resolve conflicts.

Communication process

Firstly, the message is encoded and a transmission channel is selected by the sender. Perception communication barriers includes -

Information overload communication barriers

Transmission channels - oral, nonverbal and written

Channel selection barriers

Once the sender transmits the message another channel barrier comes into action

Noise communication barriers

The message is then decoded by the receiver and decides if feedback is needed. When giving or receiving instructions, feedback is important as it is

clear to both the sender and the receiver that the message as intended is fully understood. The barriers to this step are -

Trust and credibility communication barriers

Not listening barrier

Emotional barriers

Finally, a response or message may be transmitted with barriers like -

Filtering communication barriers

Gender style barrier to communication

Communication process takes into account the following factors that plays key role in transmitting the message or response successfully -

Attitudes of both the sender and receiver

Environment in which the communication is taking place

Self-esteem of both the sender and receiver

Listening effectively what the sender is saying

An important component of spoken communication is that the facial expression contribute 55% of the message and the way a communicator speak contributes 38% of the message which includes the tone, volume and rate of speech and only 7% of the message is conveyed by the actual words spoken (Reid B. 2004).

Workplace communication

At workplace, communication is an important aspect that aims to co-ordinate work activities, aids in decision-making, knowledge management and fulfilling needs. Communication can be impersonal or interpersonal.

Impersonal communication refers to a process that works one way transferring the information as instructions, data etc. and has limited feedback. The modes of impersonal communication are letters, e-mail, voice mail, electronic bulletin boards. Impersonal communication is a non-verbal communication that is becoming more convenient and easy way of approaching the audience. On the other hand, interpersonal communication is meant to exchange information between people. For an effective interpersonal communication, feedback is essential. The mode of such type of communication includes meetings, interviews, phone calls, discussions, sharing information etc. Interpersonal communication is classified into 3 styles as described by Christopher L. Heffner –

Aggressive interpersonal communication – arises when people stands for their rights but violate the rights of others.

Passive interpersonal communication – arises when people minimize their own rights by putting the rights of others before their own. They are overly soft and do not consider their feelings important.

Assertive interpersonal communication – people create a balance between standing for their rights while maintaining respect for the right of others. Such people have relaxed posture and varied rate of speech. They are active

listeners and action-oriented as a result of which they are confident and feel motivated.

Successful interpersonal communication is a result of an important factor i. e. clarity. Sometimes people find it difficult to understand what the other person is communicating. This seems obvious but it is quite surprising that there are many people who think that using excessive language would make them appear more intelligent and important. It is an important element to make sure that the other person in conversation either in person or by phone understands the speech clearly. If the person does not understand, the conversation is wasted as a result of the employee may feel disorganized and unprepared. This point is even more important when it comes to written communication as it has been seen that many good business people are very poor writers. Similarly, in verbal communication, people think that by using a lot of different words make them appear more intelligent but in real world, such a situation leads to an opposite effect. People with poor writing skills present a negative impression which in turn can be highly detrimental in today's workplace. Another important component for successful interpersonal workplace communication is to be direct. This also applies to both aspects of communication - written and verbal. It is important to be direct and safe when talking to a co-worker. This is even more important in writing. It is vital that the purpose of the communication should be addressed as early in the first paragraph as possible. This is more important in case of email since many people makes use of preview pane to gauge the nature of an email, and may be too busy to read those and ignore whether they are important or pertinent. The subject should be clearly stated in the

first few lines so that the email is more likely to be read, and more importantly, taken seriously. Whereas in written communication it is important to be as concise as possible. Today, people in business are too busy to go through the paragraphs and to get to the important points in an email. Communication does not simply mean the ability to talk and write effectively, rather it also rely heavily on listening and negotiation. By training the employees it improves their listening and problem-solving skills and develops the means to influence outcomes.

Another aspect of workplace communication is inter-cultural or cross-cultural communication which if not understood well could lead to conflicts at workplace. These cultural conflicts are avoided if key actions are taken by implementing and promoting a cultural communication awareness program. The term “ intercultural communication” is defined as the wide range of issues relating communication that takes place within an organization composed of individuals from different social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds (Magee K. 2009). As a result of which there are unique experiences and values to the workplace from different individuals from different backgrounds, many of which can be traced in terms of the culture in which they grew up and now operate to follow.” If these differences are overlooked, it gives rise to a negative environment in the workplace. Many researches have been done by employees and business owners in this regard showing that language is the most significant factor/component in effective intercultural communication and has a great deal of ethnocentrism which is centered in it. As described earlier, if the language is not clear and direct it could lead to conflicts between co-workers and the workplace

environment will be negative leading to an inefficient work. Other factors that pose a barrier in inter-cultural communication are social convention, non-verbal communication, etiquette and politeness.

However, communication can often be misunderstood, because at workplace people often communicate about different things with body language than the words they use (Pederson A. 2009). This happens when an employee in a simple manner is talking to someone while working on computer and not looking away from the computer screen, or just convey the message that needs to be done and does not take time to ensure the point came across. It is common in the workplace that people are unaware of these things. So, in order to avoid such a situation feedback from others is necessary by asking them if their point was clear. It is important to remember that communication always go hand in hand and is a two way process.

Communication drives the work environment so it is very much essential to give the other person an opportunity to ask questions back in order to make the process easy and comfortable.

Workplace literacy

By workplace literacy, it means use of a wide range of communication skills that require people to describe, explain, locate, organise and use information. It also involves other communication components like gestures, hand signals and jargon used in the workplace and the volume and tone of voices that are exchanged between workers/employees. It also takes into account the numeracy skills used for calculation and estimation of quantities, measurement and expressing ideas in diagrams and graphs are also involved.

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As mentioned earlier, communication in a workplace occurs at all levels and in a variety of contexts so proper understanding of workplace is necessary. Communication is a type of employability skills found in a training Package which includes a set of facets that signifies the aspects of those skills used in everyday communication at workplace. The nature and application of these facets varies and depends on the type of job/work. The skill of communication that contributes to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers points out facets like listening and understanding, direct speech, negotiating responsively, reading independently, empathising, effective use of numeracy, understanding the needs of internal and external customers, persuading effectively, establishing and using networks, being assertive and sharing information.

When people work together to get things done it demonstrates a workplace communication. But, often there are particular situations where unspoken rules are developed about what to.

The following table illustrates some workplace situations and their appropriate application.

Workplace literacy

Application

Reading, by means of different types of information

Reading and perceptive instructions at work using standard operating procedures, letters and notices, electronic data and emails

Writing and information footage

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Completing forms, report sheets, tender documentation, work plans and specifications and notes

Listening

Acceptance of verbal work instructions from supervisors, training sessions, answering phone calls

Giving diverse forms of verbal information

Discussing problems with others, offering solutions and feedback, reporting issues or incidents to the supervisor

Performing a range of numeracy tasks

Estimating a quantity of supplies to be ordered, calculating quantities for mixing of chemicals and materials, measuring distances or materials lengths

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be well said that communication is the driving force of a good and positive work environment. Within the workplace, communication is valuable to every person so as to conduct himself in an efficient manner. It would be impossible to expect effectiveness in work without communication. Right communication and the skills make not only the professional life easier to conduct but the private life as well. Communication is a key to solve the problems in the workplace and with proper understanding it leads to good opportunities at work that motivates the employees to be successful in their work. This very well shows that even a little communication can be proved vital to someone but this can also have a negative picture wherein the

employee can spoil and destroy his or her reputation at work that leads to serious consequences. Communication has positive as well as negative aspects. Negative communication or miscommunication is perceived by one's own judgement. A lapse in judgement could be detrimental to one's life. To avoid or prevent the negative outcomes of poor communication, one should understand the significance of communication skills and related aspects. Also, the problems and issues that arise in the work with any sort of complaint should be discussed with higher authority in the work place. Discussion with a supervisor allows a better chance for sufficient work elucidating all the assignments. The dilemma will never be solved if the workers do not speak up and all productivity will decline. Troubles in communication harm not only the individual with the problem but also the whole company and lead to loss in company's clientele and reputation. Therefore, in the end it is concluded that " 100%-communication is the life blood." (Darling L. et al 2003). This statement has been well agreed by many peer researchers, industry representatives, accreditation agencies, and faculty around the world. This statement not only matters to the daily activities the employees carry out in the workplace, but also to those customers and clients with whom the employees interact. As continue to talk about the importance of communication in the workplace, there is a clear opportunity for educators in the disciplines and communication scholars to lend an ear and to collaborate on the development of sound instruction, scholarship, and curricula that has the potential for making strong contributions for the ones communication matters in important ways.