

Group communication essay

Sociology, Communication



I was a member of a group that was charged with the tasks of overseeing the design and development of a website for our social club's new venture; car rental service. The group was made up of 12 members who shared a common understanding of the problem and were familiar with the various aspects of the probable solutions. We are therefore categorized as a small group, since small groups comprise of 3 to 25 people. This was a task-oriented group that had been set up to review various proposals and hire a competent web designer for our website.

Group norms are necessary for a formal group to function effectively. We set up the following rules and regulations to govern our proceedings: the leader would direct proceedings. The secretary would write minutes, written records of decisions made and handle all intragroup correspondence. Every member of the group was to be treated equally and was encouraged to contribute. During discussions one person would speak at a time and would direct the chair.

We had a centralized communication structure. Our leader would coordinate discussions and flow of communication within the group. This structure made it easier for us to establish the group and for the leader to manage it. It also hastened the decision making process. However, the disadvantage with this structure was that our club head, who assumed the role of group leader, was the least experienced in the matter at hand.

We all assumed different roles and responsibilities within the group. The highest ranking member, the club head, assumed the role of the leader based on his status within our social club. Some of the members were more task-oriented and stuck to the problem, analysed the various facts and

proposals. Two of the members were the infamous detractors in this group. They would derail discussions and reject all suggested ideas. They caused intragroup conflicts which affected conformity to the group's norms. The final lot would resolve conflicts within the group and ensure that all participants are involved in the group discussions. I was one of the task-oriented members.

Initially, we the group was set-up to be a democratic one. Majority vote would be the method used to make decisions. Ideas and suggestions were presented by our leader and members. The proposal with more than half of the votes was chosen. During the course of the group discussions, the leader turned into an authoritarian-democratic leader. He would make decisions and try and convince the rest of the members to side with him.

My experience in this group taught me the importance of effective communication skills within a group. Firstly, communication in a group is more complex than with an individual. Groups are difficult to control. The main group easily gets bored and splits into smaller groups constantly chat and sharing private jokes. The speaker should establish eye contact to make a connection with the listeners. The pace of the discussion should make the listeners feel comfortable. Questions should be asked by both the sender and listeners to ensure that there is a shared understanding.

Nonverbal communication is very important in group communication. We unintentionally reveal our fears, likes, dislikes and unconscious motives through our facial expressions, gestures and posture. Our listeners are able to learn a lot about us from our body language.

Patience and tolerance are vital characteristics in the group. One has to wait

their turn to contribute to the discussion and be tolerant of different views and ideologies presented for the discussion to be successful. The outcomes and conflicts should be resolved and the leader should be able to motivate the group to follow-up on the agreements the group reached.