

Workplace communication

Technology, Information Technology



I. Summary The Shuttle Disasters that caused the destruction of both Space Shuttle Challenger and Columbia illustrates the disastrous result of miscommunication. The article has also a subliminal message that even the smartest people such as those in NASA are also having issues on how to communicate properly. Above all, the article stressed how critical it is to communicate clearly for the intended message to effectively reach to the intended party.

In the case of the Challenger disaster, the engineers already knew that the O-rings used on the solid rocket boosters had shown a potential for failure. They have communicated their reservation about the O-ring's potential for failure but as the disaster would tell, they were not able to send their message across effectively. The launch still commenced leading to the explosion of the Shuttle just seconds after the launch.

It became clear that the Challenger Disaster was a communication issue as reported by the findings of Roger Commission, the body that was formed by President Ronald Reagan to investigate the explosion. The result of the investigation showed that the people in the telephone conference from Marshal Space Flight Center had different understanding of the message that the engineers were trying to convey which is why the Shuttle was still launched despite of the engineer's reservation.

The Columbia Shuttle flight 107 disaster may have a different circumstance from the Shuttle Challenger but it still ended up in disaster just like its predecessor. The common culprit is again miscommunication. Again, the engineers had expressed their reservation about the foam prior to the Columbia launch. But they were not able to communicate its message to the

proper authorities effectively so the launch was still commenced ending in the same tragedy.

Both the tragic stories of Space Shuttle Challenger and Columbia taught me the importance of not only communicating my message clearly and completely, but I should also consider if my messages are reaching the intended audience at a right time and opportunity.

II. Description of a similar communication experience in workplace

This story may be funny but sometimes working with senior citizens in the office can have humorous implications. I took a summer job before and this is where my experience happened. Our boss can already be considered as a senior citizen but he is still brisk at work. One time, I was asked to write a report for a monthly meeting which I happily obliged. I gathered all my data at the office and told my boss that I will have it done by the weekend and will send it to him for review before the monthly meeting in the coming Monday. So I finished the report on Saturday and immediately emailed it to my boss so that he will have a day before the meeting to review and prepare. I spent my Sunday relaxing having fun. Come Monday, he was furious and threatened to fire me because I did not do my job and made false promises. I told him, I finished it by Saturday and sent it to him. He furiously asked, you didn't send me anything! Where is it? I told him through email. He has his email address in the department's directory so I sent it there. I found out later that he does not know how to use a computer and it was an email address assigned to him by the company.

What is the moral of the story? Do not assume, always ask and verify.