Barriers to communication and solutions for barriers

Effective communication is a topic that is often discussed in any organization or company, and it is considered to be one of the key tools for the moral/cohesion of the company. To be successful in any business environment great communication is critical for the growth and continuity of the organization. Despite this, there are various workplaces and office settings that are overwhelmed with poor communication skills and ultimately misunderstandings. The reasons behind this can range from personality traits up to the overall corporate structure of the company. Trying to maintain a good avenue of approach for communication can be a very difficult process even for the most experienced manager, but with the correct techniques it can contribute significantly to the organization's personal satisfaction and the overall success of the business.

Barriers to Communication

Business people from various work environments will unanimously agree that effective communication is essential for any company to be successful. One of the major barriers to communication is considered to be the office itself, because the layout is setup in a way that alienates and keeps most of the employees separated from one another. Even though high level business layouts have underwent a dramatic change over the last several years, many companies including the military continue to house the main workforce in one location and managers in another location generally away from the rest of the employees. Granted that a particular level of privacy is needed while at work, but going to the extreme can lead to communication inefficiencies, alienation, and it can even create a hostile work environment.

When there is poor communication within the organization, it tends to cause a lot of trouble or conflict in the work environment such as low morale and cohesion, interpersonal conflicts, less production, money management and legal issues. Often, these issues can arise due to inconsistent flow of communication and the overall business relationship between the leaders and the staff they supervise. The other problems with communication are viewed as being prevalent to the entire company itself, which is caused by a lack of adequate infrastructure, computer systems and most importantly, the breakdown of communication by the organizational leaders to the employees to enable a consistent flow of information throughout all levels.

For the most part, barriers to communication are something that is solvable, but the correct approach is needed to make an accurate assessment of the sources of these barriers within the company. During the course of the assessment, a person may find out that many of the supervisors within the organization could benefit from doing some refresher training over effective communication skills. There is a true saying that has been floating around in the business world when it states, " people do not leave their jobs, because they actually leave their bosses."

Noise

Noise in barriers to communication is any persistent or spontaneous disturbance that interferes with the clarity, quality and flow of information in the workplace. In other words, it can be any type of disturbance that obscures the intended message between the personnel that sends and receives the message. For this reason, this is why managers come to the

conclusion that if a problem with communication is completely inexplicable it is result of " noise." Many people are under the assumption that managers naturally possess this type of skill, but in actuality, it requires a lot of practice and experience to truly hone in on great communication skills. The key to effective communication in the workplace revolves around the senders and receivers overall capabilities.

A manager must always consider the source when trying to overcome the noise barrier obstacle to effective communication; however, this is usually not an easy task to accomplish. Noise in the business setting may present itself in various forms such as pictures on the walls, other employee's conversations in the background, and even the paperwork that is on a person's desk can cause a distraction. The main approach for this category would be to identify the source and take the necessary steps needed to resolve this dilemma. Overall, there is not an obvious solution to noise in the workplace, but the awareness of the problem through the person who sends and receives the messages can help improve the flow of information within the company.

One-Way and Two-Way Communication

The communication process is clearly meant to be a two-way street which provides constant feedback between both the sender and receiver while engaged in conversation.

This process allows both participants-superior and subordinate-to engage in an open forum to express their points, facts, feelings, grievances and opinions to one another. With this being said, effective communication is

viewed as a " continuous process," which provides a way to properly exchange ideas and point of views; however, this should not only apply to employees, but managers alike. The two-way communication process can be very advantageous for both managers and employees within the workplace. One-way communication is utilized when information needs to be put out fast, but it often has the tendency to be misinterpreted by the person receiving the information. Every employee deserves the opportunity to be heard in any type of office setting.

Perception

The perception process is a procedure that is used to interpret and gather information about the world around everyone. People's perceptions explain what is to be seen as true from an individual's point of view. These perceptions enhance or reinforce a person's socialization and also are a basis for how people interact with those who are different or similar to themselves. People all over the world are overwhelmed with tons of information that has to be processed into their perceptions. Their minds receive this new information and make it into the individual's perception. In no way does two people view the world exactly the same and that is what makes people so unique beings. Each individual's perceptions are unique and the ideas they gather will be unique, even if the two individuals witnessed the same exact event. These mental images will also vary from person to person. Senders in the communication process will often choose the information that is most important to them at the present moment, and their attention to things that are more relevant. When a person has bits and pieces of information, or the

raw information is insufficient, the human brain will automatically generate the missing pieces based on the individual's past experiences.

Filtering

Another barrier to communication is filtering, which is seen as screening out information that needs to be passed on before the person actually receives the message. In any business, these filters between the sender and receiver can come in the form of various roles such as clerks, office assistant, voicemails, and secretaries. These individuals may take those messages that were passed on by the sender and translate those thoughts before passing the information on to the receiver. A way to overcome the filtering barrier within the workplace would be to open up more channels of communication, eliminate the intermediaries, and try to breakdown the facts of the messages to its bare essentials.

Non-Verbal

Body language and/or non-verbal communication is a barrier that is quite critical to the overall communication process. Throughout a normal conversation, people tend to send and receive endless amounts of wordless signals or gestures. The way people in any type of setting give off these non-verbal behaviors-a person's stance, eye contact, sitting postures, facial gestures, the way the individual speaks-sends out signals to the receiver. These non-verbal signals can be interpreted into thing such as desires for connection with people, produce a sense of trust and interest, or on the other side of the table it can generate conflict, confusion, distrust and lack of interest in the business environment.

When dealing with issues of non-verbal communication, it honestly takes more than just words to create a strong and fulfilling relationship amongst employees or coworkers. Non-Verbal communication will have a tremendous impact on the quality of the overall business affiliation. Unfortunately, in many organizations, people tend to send negative or confusing signals without even meaning to do so; and when this happens, the bond/trust that was establish will be tarnished. There are various types of non-verbal communication signals that people often tend to overlook such as facial expressions, gestures, body posture and movement, eye contact, voice, touch and space. Also, these non-verbal communication barriers can occur for many reasons, and the reasons can range from cultural differences to basic deception, and problems with functioning mentally. Non-Verbal communication is a fast paced process that goes back-and forth. For any business to be successful they must be able to understand and be aware of the non-verbal cues. Before a company can see improvements with their non-verbal communication skill, they must do a thorough analysis to find out the things they are doing right and also the things they are doing wrong before any progress can be made.

Mixed Messages

Sending mixed messages in the workplace will often send off the wrong vibe, which could hurt the person that is receiving the message, or worse, it could even get the person sending these messages in trouble. These mixed messages occur in the work environment often, because managers and employees will say one thing, but mean another. Mixed messages in the workplace can cause the employees of an organization to become hopeless

and to also lose confidence in the company. People within the company will usually witness these mixed messages in their immediate leaders or upper management by saying one thing and doing something completely different. Everyone must also take into consideration that mixed messages are not all verbal messages; it can also involve the words people say not matching their body language. It is always best for managers or employees to deliver the most accurate message as possible, so people within the organization will have a positive outlook on the company, and avoid having them losing faith.

In conclusion, barriers to communication are a problem that exists in many organizations across the globe, but with the right approach, these barriers can be completely resolved or at least kept to a minimum. The difficulties of communication between the employees and managers will happen during very trying times. Being able to resolve these barriers at the workplace will make a difference in the lives of the entire organization. A skilled manager will have the technical know-how to help resolve any barrier to communication issues in the workplace that are necessary for the moral of the company.