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Introduction

All organizations operating in the world have a communication system regardless of their size, location, ownership and other factors differentiating them. Communication is therefore an important tool in the organization.

This is because of the fact that organizations are essentially made up of people who have to communicate to each other so as to ensure smooth running of the operations and fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives (Boyaci, 2007, p. 13). Due to this, communication is among the top management principles of any organization.

Through communication all the other systems of the organization can be well monitored and run. It is true to say that communication is the backbone of any organization since without communication the top management will not be able to delegate duties, the workers will not be in a position to know what they are obliged to do in time, changes in the organization will not be known and also the organization will not be able to know what their competitors are doing. An organization that has an effective way of communicating to both its internal and external environment is usually highly performing and successful compared to those organizations with poor communication networks. This paper looks at ways of effective communication putting into consideration factors that influence effective communication in an organization (Hargie, 2000, p. 98).

Communication in organizations

Communication is essentially the process by which information is transferred from the source to the desired actual recipient(s) through a medium. The <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-them-communication-is-therefore-an-important/>

medium is the route by which the message is transmitted. Once the receiver of the information gets the message they are bound to give a feedback or act to the message given. There are various forms of communication within an organization and each organization will use the form of communication that suits them best.

Whichever form of communication used is not an issue so long as the information gets to the right recipient and at the correct time (Kondrat, 2009, p. 1). The main forms of communication found in an organization include: Formal communication Informal communication Formal communication is also sometimes known as the written communication and it entails passing of information from the authorities to the subordinates and vice versa through defined channels of communication. The major examples of formal communication within an organization include the internal memorandums, Resignation and promotion letters just to mention but a few. This form of communication is highly dependable since there is proof is communication and also due to the fact that the information only reaches the desired recipients only (Kondrat. 2009, p. 1).

On the other hand informal communication entails passing of information from one point to the next but with no defined channels of communication. The most common example is the verbal communication where one can give information randomly among the people in the organization. This type of communication is not the best as there are very high chances of leakage of information hence reaching people who were not the desired recipients of the information (Hargie, 2000, p. 98).

The flow of communication in organizations

Communication in organizations flows in three major directions namely:

Upward communication Downward communication Lateral / Horizontal

communication Upward communication entails passing of communication

from the junior workers to the top management. It mostly involves

complaints by the subordinates on matters like pay rise or poor working

conditions. The upward communication is very important to managers that

use it to gauge their performance and improve where necessary. Downward

communication involves sending of information from the top management to

the subordinates.

They use it to pass information on matters like the company's policies and

procedures. It also helps to give feedback to the subordinates on matters

they have complained of. Lastly, lateral/ horizontal communication entails

passage of information between people of the same cadre in the

organization. It commonly occurs between departments of an organization

for example the finance and human resource departments.

Factors influencing communication in organizations

The factors that affect communication in an organization are grouped into

various categories. These include: Environmental factors External factors

Internal factors Other factors

Environmental factors

The organization's environment is made up of a number of factors of which

some of them affect the communication systems in an organization. These

factors include personal factors of an individual, those that bring visual

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problems by hindering the message and last but not least the auditory factors. Visual factors will comprise of the distance, lightening, weather conditions, the visibility and the angle of viewing.

A clear example is when there is not enough lighting in a room, the people inside will not be able to communicate effectively. Auditory factors will involve factors such as noise, echoing or the distance between the sender and receiver. A good example is people working in factories that produce a lot of noise during their operations (Boyaci, 2007, p. 5). The last factor in the environmental factors category is the individual factors such as inadequate ventilation or inadequate preparation of the whole process.

External factors

Research shows that communication is greatly affected by factors that are outside the organization. Despite these factors happening in the external environment their impact is very highly felt.

Some of these factors include:

The political stability of the nation

Depending on the type of governance in the country where the organization is situated, the political stand has some impact on the communication system of the organization. For example in countries where there is political instability, communication is not proper as people live in fear and doubt almost everything they are told. Effective communication therefore is available in nations that are politically stable.

Availability of Technology

The level of technology within the organization is another factor affecting the communication system in the organization. In that, organizations that have a higher level of technology have better efficiency of communications in terms of speed and accuracy (Hargie, 2000. P. 67). You cannot compare an organization that uses hand delivered mails to pass information from one office to the other with another organization that uses the internet in the form of electronic mails to pass information from one office to the next.

However, the higher the level of technology the higher the risk of mishandling the technology, as it is possible to hack the information saved in computers and therefore knows the secrets of the organization. It is because of this reason that some organizations prefer the primitive methods of communicating.

Economy of the country

The economy of the country where the organization is operating also indirectly affects the organizational communication networks. In country where the economy is good, people will be ready to listen and follow the right channels of communication while on the other hand in countries where the economy is poor people are bound to riot hence ineffective communication (Octopus, 2008, p. 1).

Competition level

The level of competition is also an external factor that affects communication within an organization.

In an environment where competition is less the workers and management become reluctant and less aggressive in their obligations hence making them not take into account whatever information is passed to them. While in circumstances where the organization is operating in highly competitive environment both the top management and subordinates will be very alert on whatever information passed hence making communication very effective.

Internal factors

Apart from the external factors of the organization, there are also matters within the organization's perimeter wall which affect communication. These include;

Conflict

In cases where the superiors are not in good terms with the subordinates then communication becomes a problem (Townsend, 2009, p. 1)... The workers will not be ready to listen to whatever is being said since they have conflicted in other grounds.

When this happens it is always advisable that peace is made as early as possible so as not to affect the operations of the organization (Breakwell, 2000, p 7).

Poor Timing

Good timing of the message to be communicated is always very important. In cases where the message reaches the recipients earlier or later than desired it may not be well perceived.

For example if the top management issues a notice whose deadline is very near, the workers may not welcome it as they may not have adequate time to achieve it because of their duties.

Attitude

The attitude or behavior of either the giver or receiver of the information may affect communication. If the receiver of the message is not willing to receive the message then communication will not take place. In the same way the sender of the message may not be willing to send the message, for example if the workers are not ready to voice out their side of the story then the management may not be able to know their problems hence ineffective communication(David, 1999, p. 34).

Leadership style

The style of leadership being used in the organization is also an influencing factor to communication. An organization that uses authoritative or dictatorship style of leadership may have poor communication as it will only be a one way scenario.

The superiors will be the ones dictating what to be done unlike in situations where there is free sharing of ideas.

Other factors

There are other factors that do not fall in the aforementioned categories but have an effect on communication in the organization as well. These factors though they may seem to be minor, they have great impacts if not well checked. They include the following:

Credibility of the source

Most people in an organization will tend to look at the source from which the information is coming from before listening and putting into consideration the message. If the sender of the information is trustworthy then the communication will be effective as it will be well received.

Channel of communication

The mode of communication is also another important factor when it comes to sending information. For example messages that are sent through formal communication are taken more seriously compared to those that are sent using informal communication.

It is therefore necessary to select the appropriate channels when sending information in an organization.

Relationship of sender and receiver

It is evident that the relational status of an individual to the other can also affect communication. In most cases, the information from the top management to the subordinates is usually paid more attention as compared to information from the juniors. The superiors tend to ignore the juniors because of their position in the organization. This as a factor affecting communication is very important and should be well managed if at all the organization is to succeed.

Organizational status of the sender of information

For communication to be efficient, the sender of the information should be well organized and prepare well before passing the information. The

receivers of any information prefer well organized messages that are up-to-date compared to mix up information.

Managing Communication for effectiveness

There are various ways in which communication within an organization may be managed such that it is effective and achieves the goals it was meant to achieve.

Some of these techniques include:

Employee suggestion schemes

The involvement of workers in the organizational issues is a very critical way of solving organizational problems. The workers though subordinate may have very great and innovative ideas that may be of great benefit to the organization once given the opportunity King, 2010. p. 1). Given the chance the workers have different ways of passing their ideas to the management of the organization. Most organizations have come up with a way of encouraging their workers to voice out their issues by giving them incentives.

These incentives can be in the form of bonuses or gifts and awards. This can lead to innovations being voiced out hence improving the organizational status (Usun, 2004, p. 5). The only disadvantage of this method is at times the suggestions given to the top management may be difficult for the organization to carry out or change. If this happens the organization is seen to have failed in their responsibility.

Grievance systems

This method entails creation of ways through which the workers of an organization are able to disclose issues without the fear of chances or revenge or dismissal from their employment. The management should put in place systems where they can listen to the problems and complaints of the employees privately. They should always be ready to listen to the problems of the employees.

By this the workers feel loved and part of the organization hence working extra hard.

Open-door policies

The implementation of open door policies entails the creation of open forums where the members of an organization are free to voice out their issues and be listened to (Breakwell, 200, p. 12). Through the creation of such forums it omits the stages involved in passing information to the top management. By this the subordinates feel motivated to raise issues since they are comfortable and the process has been cut short to suit them. The advantage is that the management sets a happy mood in the organization where no one feels intimidated.

However, the problem is that some workers may take advantage of this and bring up issues that consume most of the time of the managers and yet might not be that weighty.

Employee surveys

In order to exactly find out what the problem is in an organization, one has to conduct a survey to analyze the whole issue. This method there gives a very prompt response thus giving room for improvement.

Because the workers have the benefit of namelessness, workers are able to respond honestly without fear of revenge or dismissal by the superiors or fellow workers (David, 1999, p. 54). Once the survey is conducted it is necessary that the top management of the organization gives a feedback. By giving a feedback, the workers are motivated as they get to feel that their efforts of voicing out their onions was put into consideration and has born fruits

Conclusion

As discussed above, communication is thus very essential in the organization and should be properly managed if at all the organization is to be successful. The main objective of communication is to make sure that the information is correctly delivered and feedback given. By understanding the possible factors that may affect communication in an organization, it is possible to take measures to counteract them hence making communication effective.

Since in most cases in an organization the senders of the messages are the top management they should therefore make sure that the information they send will be well received by the employees. They should get appropriate channels of communication and also good timing of the message. For example calling a parade just before the employees have had their lunch will be a waste of time as no one will be ready to listen to you. In such a case the

management ought to be clever enough such that they give incentives just before communicating to their subordinates as a way of encouraging them to listen.

It is for the same reason that the sitting allowance is given for meetings.

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