COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MYTHS AND FACTS OR COMMUNICATION PITFALLS AND BENEFITS

POPA Brîndușa Maria
CONSTANTINESCU Maria
DUMITRACHE Vlad Ionuț

Ministry of Defense Romania

Abstract:

Communication is a prevalent activity of the organizational life,which takes place intentionally or unintentionally, formally of informally and supports all the other organizational processes. Time and research showed that communication clearly has an impact upon organizational life and efficiency. Scholars tried to systematize it and to identify guidelines for effective communication, transforming it from an inherent human activity into science thus, communication became one of the drivers of organizational efficiency and productivity. However, as any other mechanism, it can function perfectly and induce progress or it can have syncopes which, consequently, will slow and hinder the activity. Communication cannot compensate for lack of resources, technology or knowledge still, it can connect and enhance what already exists. It will enhance employee engagement and consequently, employee performance and retention. It facilitates the understanding of the purpose and the organizational processes, making the individuals more attached to the organizational culture and mission.

Key words: communication, myths, facts, results, organization

1.Introduction

Communication is a prevalent activity of the organizational life which takes place intentionally or unintentionally, formally of informally and supports all the other organizational processes. Organizational communication made its timid debut at the beginning of the 20th century with William Phillips Sandford and Willard Hayes Yeager who are the first speech scholars to publish, in 1929, a public speaking book aimed at business professionals titled *Business and Professional Speaking* [1]. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, an Austrian-American sociologist, published the first review of the discipline of communication in 1941 [2]. In the second half of the 20th century organizational communication started to inspire more interest and in 1964 W. Charles Redding and George A. Sanborn published *Business and Industrial Communication: A Source Book* [3], a compilation of previously published articles on a wide range of organizational communication topics, book which is considered the beginning of the field of organizational communication. Towards the end of the 20th century and especially after the 2000s, this domain became more and more attractive for scholars, new theories were developed and connections were made with other domains with a move from the microlevel to macrolevel issues. Communication became more than workplace discussions, it became an instrument to improve organizational climate and work performance.

2. Communication – driver of organizational life

Time and research showed that communication clearly has an impact upon organizational life and efficiency. Scholars tried to systematize it and to identify guidelines for effective communication, transforming it from an inherent human activity into science. Communication became one of the drivers of organizational efficiency and productivity. According to a report from 2015 by CMSWire [4], 97% of employees agree that communication directly affects their performance and productivity. For some, such information will not be considered groundbreaking news however, it must not be ignored during the managerial process if managers want to develop tools to help them keep or put the gears in movement. Communication cannot compensate for lack of resources, technology or knowledge still, it can connect and enhance what already exists. It will enhance employee engagement and consequently, employee performance and retention. It facilitates the understanding of the purpose and the organizational processes, making the individuals more attached to the organizational culture and mission.

Theoretically everything appears to be clear and yet, problems arise because people consider that the simple act of speaking equals communicating in other words, that *the great enemy of communication is the illusion of it* [5]. The simple action of uttering words in a calm, logical manner in the presence of other people does not automatically mean that a message has been transmitted and has successfully reached its purpose. Also, many speakers consider that the communication process means a simple delivery of information and do not check for confirmation and for such reasons we need feedback to confirm the conveyance of meaning and to avoid challenging consequences like misunderstandings, misalignments, conflicts etc. thus, missing out on effective communication.

Assumptions are one of the biggest dangers when we look for efficient human interaction. We should not react based on assumptions, we should look for facts and clear information as much as possible. Whenever such things are not available, we can resort to assumptions, but we must keep them at a minimum. Assumptions are another form of personal interpretation, seeing things not as they are, but as we imagine them and they are most likely subjective.

3. The process of communication

The simplest way to represent the process of communication is a linear form (Fig. 1). Unfortunately, it is not an accurate or complete representation of what is called effective communication. Schematically, we should draw this process in the shape of a loop (Fig. 2) not as a straight line (Fig. 1) in order to highlight that communication is not a unidirectional process in which the speaker emits words, transmits information, it is bidirectional because the listener should be an active participant through feedback. We do not refer here to the transactional type of communication where the transmitter is at the same time receiver and vice versa, we refer to the simple act of confirming that the information has been understood according to the sender's intention.

SENDER $\rightarrow$ Channel $\Rightarrow$ MESSAGE $\rightarrow$ Channel $\Rightarrow$ RECEIVER
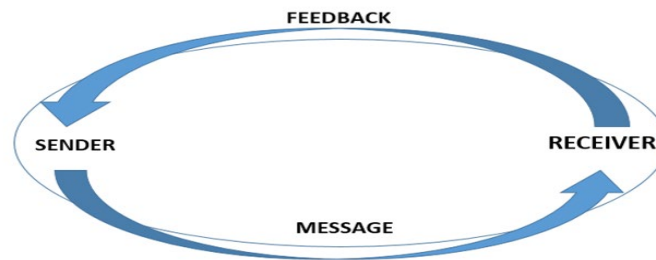
Fig. 1 Communication proces

Fig. 2 Communication loop

Managers who are able to master communication obtain better results with their staff by making them feel part of a community and their opinions taken into consideration. Honest communication fosters transparency and builds trust. Manipulation or misleading through communication technics could bring results only on the short term because it is only a matter of time before those involved in communication realize dishonesty.

Sometimes, interlocutors avoid asking for or giving feedback because they fear creating uncomfortable situations. However, feeling good is not what we should aim at through communication. Evaluating effective communication only in terms of pleasant and compliant conversation fails its purpose even if along the process there will appear opposite points of view. Communication should be accurate, comprehensive and capable of sharing meaning in spite of any existing biased feelings. However, we should keep in mind that there is no 100% successful communication, divergent opinions remain in spite of the clarity of the message. The idea that open clear communication solves everything is just a myth. For some, this statement might sound contradictory, but the truth is that proper communication cannot cancel differences of opinions, mentality, beliefs still, it can clarify misunderstandings and help solve or avoid ambiguous situations.

Most of the times, one of the causes of defective communication is the insufficient amount of information that is transmitted, which impedes the receiver from forming a complete image of what is communicated. Most of the times communicators withheld pieces of information in order to maintain the upper hand or, but this is a rare case, some people try not to shower their interlocutors with superfluous information and omit information unintentionally. They can be called undercommunicators. On the other hand, we have the overcommunicators who provide too much information causing the fatigue of the interlocutor, in other words, info-dumping. The concept that *more is better* does not function in all situations and it can result in confusion, poor decision making and supersaturation.

Efficient communication does not represent quantity, it implies quality, clarity, accuracy and a limited number of channels for consistent content distribution.

Aside from being an instrument of information, it is also an instrument of sensibilization. Even when we talk about business, we cannot ignore the emotional aspects of communication. We can engage people in activities, motivate them, make them feel appreciated or, we can obtain exactly the opposite if we use the wrong words. Effective communication helps build good morale, positive organizational climate and form harmonious working relations.

4. Conclusion

Communication is the scaffolding that helps set up an efficient organizational climate. It will not solve every problem, it does not guarantee organizational success, but its absence will, for sure, lead to ambiguous organizational relations. An open and constructive communication style can be considered a hygiene factor, something that is of basic importance and should not be presented as an element of modern management.

Communication is of utmost importance for the exchange of information and for all the transactional processes within and among the subsystems forming an organization, as well as for the interaction among the individuals that use the multidirectional channels of organizational communication. Feedback processes help organizations adjust to the challenges or maintain the correct direction, understand interactions and retain control. Decision-making processes and shared responsibilities become easier to accomplish through this mechanism.

Organizational leaders who understand the impact of communication first develop strategies to achieve objectives and afterwards, through well-tailored and relevant messages they transmit them to members of the organization with the aim of having a better control upon the way organizational objectives will be achieved.

Learning and training people how to communicate, especially those in middle and upper management positions, should be considered an organizational requirement. Organizational communication does not mean the simple act of uttering words, it is an activity that implies analyzing the environment, hearing, listening to and understanding the continuous flow of information, being able to separate what is necessary from what is superfluous, being able to structure communication in such a way that it is useful, comprehensive and tailored.

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