

Making Communication Effective

Communication is the lifeblood of an organization, and without it the organization cannot exist. Therefore, managers must ensure that the communication system is effective. For ensuring that, managers must identify the essentials of an effective communication system and take steps for making the system effective

ESSENTIALS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The effectiveness of a system is measured in terms of its objective achievement. Therefore, the effective communication system is one which achieves its objectives. However, determining the objectives of communication may not be precise because of involvement of many intervening variables. The ultimate objective of communication is to bring desired behaviour in those for whom it is meant. However, the desirable behaviour or otherwise is a function of so many variables which extend beyond communication. Therefore, we have to take into account the immediate objective of the communication which is in the form of ensuring that clear and adequate information flows at right place and right time. Thus, various elements of an effective communication system are clarity, adequacy, timing, and integrity:

1. **Clarity.** The communication process, in order to serve its purpose. must ensure clarity of communication, thereby facilitating exchange of ideas and avoiding unnecessary seeking and tendering of clarifications. A communication possesses clarity when it is expressed in a language and transmitted in a way that will be comprehended by the receiver. The basic objective of communication is to bring two minds together and this can be possible only when what the sender means is understood by the receiver in the same way

2. **Adequacy.** There are, broadly speaking, two aspects of adequacy, utz (0) in terms of coverage, that is, types of messages flowing in various directions: and () in terms of quantity of various types of messages. The problem of determining adequacy in regard to coverage is not very difficult. Through communication audit, the adequacy of coverage can be measured.

In the communication audit, a frequent approach is to measure the information need of various groups of managers and employees and compares it with what has been made available to them. Normatively speaking the process of communication must ensure that all those messages that are needed by the various individuals in the organization in connection with the effective discharge of their official duties must flow up to them and further that this flow, in respect of different types of messages, must be adequate.

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3. **Timing.** The utility of any message to the receiver is markedly affected by its timeliness. The process of communication should, therefore, not only ensure that the message reaches the receiver but also that it reaches him when he requires. It is quite possible that a person may require some time to compile an information having diversified and complex contents which he has to collect from several points in the organization. A suitable time span should be allowed for the purpose considering urgency and time requirement for collection of the information.

4. **Integrity.** The principle of integrity of communication suggests that the purpose of communication is to support understanding by the individuals in their achieving and maintaining the cooperation needed to meet organizational goals. Effective communication is not an end in itself, rather it is means to get some ends. Though the immediate objective of any communication is to get behavioural response from the receiver of the communication, its ultimate objective goes beyond that. The ultimate objective of communication may be to get change in behavioural response from the receiver. This may suggest that communication to be effective should be persuasive and convincing so that receiver acts accordingly.

Besides, communication can be evaluated in terms of its ultimate objective where it can be measured in terms of behavioural response. Such response may be reflected in the form attitude and morale, employee relations, and other factors. The analysis of these factors, in general, will provide total picture of effectiveness of communication. Though the higher degree of these factors may be due to a variety of variables, communication plays an important part in this respect. Thus, analysis may lead to conclude about the effectiveness of communication as a whole.

In the perspective of the above discussion, we may conclude that the communication system is effective if:

1. adequate communication flows to different points in the organization
2. the message received is very close to the message sent
3. the non-verbal message is congruent with the verbal message
4. the message elicits the desired response, and
5. the communication results into building trusting relationship between the source and the target

STEPS FOR MAKING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE

When the communication is evaluated in the light of the criteria discussed above and inadequacy is found management must take appropriate actions to make communication effective. While actions may be specific in the light of the inadequacy, here, some general guidelines have been provided for effective communication:

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1. **Clarity in Idea.** The communicator should be quite clear about what he wants to communicate. Communication is a process starting with ideation which includes generation of ideas meant for communication. This is the subject matter of communication and may include opinions, attitudes, feelings, views, suggestions, orders, etc.
2. **Purpose of Communication.** Every communication has some purpose, the basic purpose of any communication being to get behavioral response from the receiver of the communication. However, the ultimate objective may be extended further, for example, getting an order accepted by the subordinate. The communication should be directed towards this objective by the efforts of communicator
3. **Empathy in Communication.** The way for effective communication is to be sensitive towards receiver's needs, feelings, and perceptions. This is what psychologists call empathy. In communication, implying putting one's legs in other's shoes, or projecting oneself into the viewpoint of the other person. When the sender of the message looks at the problems from receiver's point of view, much of the misunderstanding is avoided
4. **Two-way Communication.** Communication is a two-way traffic and this fact must be realized. Two-way communication brings two minds together which is the basic core of any communication. It involves a continuous dialogue between sender and receiver of the message. Upward communication can become a reality in the organization and effective if this fact is recognized
5. **Appropriate Language.** The subject matter of communication is transmitted by encoding it into some symbols. Such symbols may be in the form of words, either spoken or written gestures, and others. If the words are used, the language used for communication should be such which is understandable by the receiver. Technical terminology and multisyllabic words may be impressive looking, but they can also be troublesome to the listener. One way of making the communication simple is to use repetitive language with which the receiver is quite familiar
6. **Supporting Words with Action.** Often, it is said that action speaks louder than words. While communicating the sender may use the actions to emphasise a point. This enhances the understanding

as well as emphasizes the important point in communication. Further, the sender of the message must also follow in action what he says to others. This will ensure the seriousness in communication.

7. Credibility in Communication. One criterion for effective managerial communication is that it has credibility or believability. The subordinates obey the order of the superior because he has demonstrated through his competence that he is worthy of trust. He must also maintain his trust and credibility. Thus, any communication which is based on this trust and credibility will be followed by the subordinates.

8. Good Listening. A communicator must be a good listener too. By this process, he is not only giving chance to others to speak but he gathers useful information for further communication. By concentrating on the speaker's explicit and implicit meaning the manager can obtain a much better understanding of what is being sold. Managers suffer from some common habits of bad listening, though much of their communication time is spent to listening. **Newstrom and Davis** have suggested **ten points** which may be observed in listening.

These are:

stop talking, put the talker at ease, show the talker that you want to listen to remove distractions, emphasize with the talker, be patient, hold your temper, go easy on arguments and criticism, ask questions, stop talking. They have emphasized stop talking because without stopping talking one cannot listen to.