

Paper –Principles and Practice of Management

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Topic- DIRECTION OF COMMUNICATION FLOW

Communication, as defined earlier, requires two parties, the sender and the receiver, their just position vis-a-vis each other determining in the organisational context the particular dimension of the communication flow. Thus, the communication flow within the organisation may be inter-scalar when two parties are at the different hierarchical levels or intra-scalar when they are at the same hierarchical level-this is also known as horizontal communication. The inter-scalar communication may again be classified as downward when the message flows from the higher to lower level, or upward when it is the other way round.

Downward Communication

Downward communication within the organisation flows from a superior either in the same line of command or in a different one. It stands out as a great force for controlling, influencing and initiating activities of organisational members. Communication in this category includes (1) orders and instructions about job, (2) directions about understanding of job and its relationships with other jobs. (3) organisational policies and procedures, (4) feedback of subordinates' performance. (5) reprimands, criticisms, etc.. and (6) questions inviting upward communication.

In the organisation, people at lower levels have a high degree of fear and respect towards such communication which leads to a high degree of acceptance of such communication.

Coordination, distortion, and resistance are three important problems that characterise the downward communication process.

Upward Communication

Upward communication flows from a subordinate position to a superior position. It includes information about: (1) subordinate's work performance, (2) problems relating to work. (3) performance appraisal of their subordinates, (4) feedback of understanding of orders, instructions, etc., (5) clarifications of order, etc.. (6) opinion, attitude, feeling, etc.. (7) procedures, methods, practices followed in doing the work. (8) criticisms, (9) new ideas and suggestions, and (10) personal and family problems. Upward communication is more susceptible to various obstructions and bottlenecks discussed later on, because of its special nature. Managers, often at times, fail to realise that upward communication cannot be taken for granted, as is the case with downward communication. This is so because, unlike downward communication, upward communication is devoid of any support of managerial authority. On the contrary, it has to flow in a direction directly opposite to the flow of official