

Business communication

Introduction to communication

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important component of success in our personal and professional lives.

It is the key to building favorable relationships. It is a part of 'soft skills' as opposed to the domain or technical knowledge, which is part of 'hard skills.' A formal study of business communication is important since the average business executive today spends a good part of his time on the job communicating in some form or the other.

Telecommuting is a work arrangement in which employees work from a remote location usually their homes and communicate with their company using electronic means. It is flourishing both in Australia and other countries. Telecommuting may significantly decrease interpersonal communication requirements and is therefore affecting effective communication.

Meyers, N., & Hearn, G. of the Queensland University of Technology conducted a survey on about 39 telecommuters working for 12 different Australian organizations. The participants were working in the following different categories:

- Administrators
- Computer system designers
- Journalists
- Legislative drafters
- Management consultants
- Project workers
- Public relations consultants/executives
- Sales-marketing personnel
- Solicitors

About 46% of the participants of the survey were female telecommuters.

Meetings were considered an important formal office communication. Meetings were conducted based on the following three situations:

- Complexity of task and required feedback
- Management predictions for contacting their telecommuters
- Need for currency of information

The satisfaction levels of telecommuters varied across the three situations. For example, the sales-marketing telecommuters met with their superiors weekly, to share what they were doing and set goals for the week.

About 18% of the participants found meetings either difficult to attend or a disturbance to their work-at home schedule.

SUMMARY

Let us recapitulate the important concepts discussed

- Although there is no single and correct definition of communication, most communication theorists and writers on the subject agree that communication has the following characteristics:
 - It is a non-stop process like breathing since we communicate all the time in some form or another.
 - Communication is not only through the spoken and written word. A large part of it is also, non-verbal.
 - Communication usually involves a two-way exchange of information, where the receiver provides some feedback in some form or the other.
 - Communication may be said to be accurate when the intended message is understood in the same way by the receiver.
- Irrespective of the number of people involved, communication always includes the following key elements:
 - A sender who transmits a message
 - A receiver who decodes or attaches meaning to a message
 - A channel or medium through which the message is sent
 - Feedback given by the receiver to the sender
 - Noise that can disrupt communication at any time
 - The context in which the communication takes place
- Communication is not always successful and it can go wrong if any of the key elements go
- There are a number of barriers or obstacles to smooth communication. These may be categorized as follows:
 - External or physical barriers
 - Individual barriers
 - Organizational barriers
 - Linguistic or cultural barriers
 - Semantic barriers
 - Channel barriers
 - Non-verbal barriers
- The various types of communication are:
 - Interpersonal communication - Interpersonal communication usually involves direct face-to-face contact between the sender and the receiver. This could be Technical Business, Business/Corporate communication or General communication.
 - Intrapersonal communication - Intrapersonal communication is self-communication.
 - Group communication - Group communication usually takes place between three or more individuals.