

# Bolstering Communication Regimes within and across Business Organizations : Techniques and Tactics to perpetuate a healthy workplace environment

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## Abstract

*The key to success, be it relationship or business, communication, specifically clear lines of communication, plays an important role. Getting communication right, is not only a challenge but a great struggle for most business organizations precisely due to the lack of effective interaction skills amongst those higher up in hierarchical positions. Good business communication skill which paves the road to success, growth and profiteering is still a discipline that needs greater focus and training in most business houses. There is hardly one definition of Business Communication which fits all organizational levels and can be uniformly adopted across hierarchies. For business communication to thrive and survive what we need is to identify and define our intellectual and historical roots and then firmly establish these roots through training programmes and soft skills development sessions across organizations. When professionals struggle to communicate with each other and with others in the system, when managers flounder in passing off instructions precisely and clearly, the entire framework of communication crumbles and is the first signal spelling doom for an organization. The present paper is an attempt to study the communication regimes that can instill a whiff of fresh air in a dying organization and rejuvenate renewed energy amongst the work force, motivating them to perform and transform the vision, the mission of the organization to reality. Tactics and techniques of good business communication skills as a tool to increase value and efficiency of a business will be discussed. Focus will be on avoiding common communication mistakes and learning to identify the different types of 'noises' that tend to dilute the perfect communication between the sender and the receiver. Efforts will be made to establish the perfect chain of communication through extensive review of significantly scholarly works on business communication. The aim would be to foster a good workplace environment through development of communication skills that are elusive, effective and precise.*

*Keywords: Business, communication, effective, skills, organization, relationship, intra and interpersonal, progression.*

*Classification-JEL : D80, G30*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where the value of the word-written or spoken is crucially important. If on one hand, poor communication can lead to bitterness and resentment, on the other, good

communication can solicit co-operation and goodwill. Coupled with the importance of words in communication is 'para language' – our gestures and movements that are an equally vital component of effective communication skills and

have the power to make or mar your career. A well structure and phrased letter or email can buoy up an otherwise dull and mundane written communication and prevent it from reaching the oblivion of files or landing in dustbins.

“Communication is something so simple and difficult that we can never put it in simple words.” said T.S. Matthews. Impressive as it may sound, this does not take us further in our understanding of the term communication. So to move ahead towards a more plausible definition I quote W.H .Newman and C.F. Summer Jr. “Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more person”.

To add to this, business communication is what may be called cultivated communication which needs to be planned in a strategic manner because it involves transmittance of information between individuals within or outside the organization with a set objectives or goals between the communicator and the communicatee. Often it has been observed in the corporate world that a lot of otherwise deserving and well performing employees suffer a setback and are unable to do justice to their talents due to poor communication skills. The aim of this paper is to alert such employees to avoid pitfalls of misunderstanding arising out of improper communication and to highlight the communication regimes that cover the vast canvas of oral and written communications in a business organization ranging from writing emails , to messages, to preparing reports and attending meetings or facing interviews. The crux lies in remembering that communication is the glue that binds a society and the employees in an organization. The ability to communicate enables people to form and maintain relationships. And the quality of such relationship depends on the caliber of communication between the parties. (Brennan, 1974).

Communication is at the heart of business. It includes non verbal communication (facial expression, body language, gestures) ,visual communication (pictures, painting, photography,

films) and electronic communication (emails, conference calls, virtual trainings). So, communication is a vital part of personal life and is also important in business, education and any other situations where people encounter each other. (Encarta 1998). What we need to remember is that even through technology has changed the way we communicate ,yet , it is how we communicate, which gives us an edge over others in today's competitive corporate world. A yawn, a shrug of shoulders and even a stiff handshake are enough to communicate your sense of boredom, confusion, irritation or high handed attitude even though no words have been exchanged. Hence the need of the hour, if you want to make a dent in your workplace is to develop an ability to speak, write and most importantly to listen effectively and impressively so as to convey positive vibes to the person communicating with you.

## 2. IS POOR COMMUNICATION YOUR WEAK SPOT ... YOUR ACHILLES HEEL? IDENTIFY IT! ACCEPT IT! OVERCOME IT!

Let me tell you the story of an extra ordinary man immortalized by Homer. Achilles was an ancient Greek hero who lived over three thousand years ago. He was renowned for his valour and was a terror for the enemies. He was Achilles the invincible, the unwoundable. But as fate would have it, one day a poisonous arrow struck his heel and he fell dead. The story goes to state that when his mother Thetis sought to safeguard him from arrows and spears by dipping him in the holy river Styx, she held on to him clutching his heel, thereby leaving it vulnerable. Hence the Achilles heel- the one vulnerable spot that takes a toll on all your other skills and specializations – the inability to co-ordinate, communicate and lead and move your teammates. To overcome this shortcoming the first step is to recognize or identify rather than defy by saying “I don't need to learn how to communicate ... I am the boss”. The first roadblock is crossed the day you accept your 'Achilles heel' infact, half the battle is won. Now let's move on to

handling and strategizing ways of healing the heels.

### 3. UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION REGIMES : BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE COMMUNICATOR AND COMMUNICATEE

To understand the communication regimes it is essential to first understand the cycle of communication and the components involved. Let's begin with the sender i.e. the person who sends or transmits something. In a business context it is of vital importance that the sender or communicator, demonstrates credibility. The communicator needs to display command over the subject, familiarity with the audience and the context in which the message is being delivered. Failure to understand who you are communicating to will result in delivery messages that are misunderstood. (Fowler, 2005).

The next important component is the message – which may be a written or oral communication which has to be carefully crafted because the tone and wording speaks volumes of the hierarchies involved. The validity of the argument, the organization of the message, the clarity or ambiguity defines your individual style of communicating. Messages also have intellectual and emotional components, with intellect allowing us the ability to reason and emotion allowing us to present motivational appeals, ultimately changing minds and actions (Fowler, 2005). The third component, channel, refers to the means or course of communication (e.g. via face to face meetings, video conferencing, emailing ). Next is the communicatee or the receiver to whom the message is delivered. Herein lies the core of the communication because the response the receiver elicits and the feedback generated is symbolic of how successful the cycle of communication has been. So we conclude that a piece of communication in an organization is no less than a battle where every move has to be planned strategically keeping in mind the context, medium, and the anticipated reaction of the

communicatee so that you are not in for a shock or surprise. If you fail to strategize or plan well your communication, no matter how resourceful you are, you are bound to lose the battle with your team because the desired outcome will not be elicited. To be a leader or a manager with a difference what you need is to hone your communication skills. If you do so successfully no matter at what level you are, you will be like the puny David ready to cause the fall of the mighty giant Goliath.

### 4. THE QUAGMIRE OF COMMUNICATION : HOW TO HOLD THE GROUND AND STRIDE WITH CONVICTION AND CONFIDENCE:

Communication may seem to be as effortless a task as breathing, eating and walking. Miscommunication a road block usually occurs if there is a change in the information communicated as intended by the sender – it may be at the level of the transmitter receiver or the medium of communication. In technical parlance we refer to this as noise or anything that obstructs the free flow of communication. In order to avoid the signed or message getting lost in the 'noise'. We need to understand that noise may be more than just the physical sounds, disturbances or distractions that may hamper stellar communication. The 'noise' may be semantic i.e. the language and the encoding of the message may be such, that the crux or essence is lost in the 'tharoorian' codign. Semantic noise may also be caused due to multiple meanings, different connotations, or incomplete / incorrect expressions aside from semantic noise, there may be psychological noise that can blur communication variation in perception, values, attitudes, prejudices and wrong assumptions often hampers interpretation of a message. This is over and above the physical noise related to sound based disturbances mechanical failures of sound systems etc. Adding fuel to fire are the organizational barriers which may crop up intentionally or unintentionally in the forming filtration of information, having a restrictive work environment and most importantly conflict

of goals. Cultural barriers it exhibits itself in by prejudiced treatment meted out to employees in the name of race religion and

if we talk of place the best case study can be of the blacks and whites in America Blacks are usually looked down upon as uncivilized, uncultured, poor and fit to be subdued and the whites are looked upon as cruel, arrogant, usurpers, bestowed with superiority complex and fit to be resisted and booked up. any business deal between them, this, will be played by suspicion and distrust a fit case for racial prejudice to give an example of how religion hampers communication what better example than a Indo-Pak cricket match where religions are polarised and the match communications everything what it is not supposed to and very little of what is supported too.

Overcome these barriers, again the first step is to identify them and be conscious of their existence & this by no means guarantees that you will be able to overcome them but you can at least break them down with time and technology Beginning with the semantic and linguistic barriers, the 7 C's technique i.e. correctness, completeness, conciseness, courtesy, considerate clarity, and comprehensiveness if adopted in writing and speaking both, can go a long way in overcoming major linguistic barriers encountered in communicate overcoming semantic barriers related to multiple meaning and conventions of meaning is a herculean task because most of the hard work has to be fixed directed towards fixing the framework in which the meaning will be interpreted. this may limit the play of meaning but does not stop the play to fix socio-psychological again we need to fix the framework of perception within the parameters of which the receiver perceives the reality, values, opinions and attitudes. it is of utmost importance to be mind fail and conscious of one position and the need to have a perception that is objective and free of wrong assumptions and prejudice.

Technology, planning and resources put together can eliminate physical and mechanical

barriers. In for this the only are where complete victory can be attained. It is in our hands to sanitize the environment facilitate communication free of unwanted noise and technological glitches. Lazily, to overcome barriers related to culture ie race, religion and nationality what we need is to develop a sense of awareness, create sensitivity, foster a liberal spirit and encourage an environment of tolerance towards all races, religions and nationalities. Thus, familiarizing yourself with common communication mistakes and barriers barring to deal with them will pave the way for your grooming into a perfect leader and manager.

5. STOP THE HIDE AND SEEK GAME : TIPS TO SAY WHAT YOU SAY AND MEAN WHAT YOU MEAN

a) Know The Common Language of Communication: If you speak and communicate in Hindi with a colleague or subordinate from the south, he/she may not be able to reconstruct your message because the language is alien to him/her. This may cause problems within the same language but different dialects too. Another major roadblock is jargon i.e. use of a set of words that are meaningful only to a few members of a group. It includes technical words used by scientists, technocrats bureaucrats -that are opaque to others.

Jargon may also manifest itself in the form of acronyms, euphemisms and short forms which may be reconstructed differently by different people. Therefore it is very important to understand the common language so that verbal symbols, which are slippery and likely to be misinterpreted as they have no fixed meanings.

Emotions are like liquor .... Self Control is a must: Strong emotions like love, hate, jealousy and anger can blind us to reality and lead us to attach grossly inappropriate values to the symbols displayed by people around us. When strong emotions are at work, there arises breeding ground for misunderstanding. In written communication it gets manifested in the use of words and tone used, while, in a face to face

interaction, an emotional outburst can cause irreparable damage to relationships. Negative emotions can lead to horrendous consequences that may make it impossible for us to get back to where we were prior to the outburst. Worry and fear of being reprimanded by the boss/manager may prevent an employee from giving his/her best. Equally hazardous is positive emotion - excess of anything is bad they say: over excitement and extra enthusiasm and motivation too at times be detrimental to performance. The aim should be to strike a balance and hold strong emotions in control. The approach should be rationale and objective - free from the clouding of inner vision.

b) Don't Jump the Gun: Resist Stereotyping:- The need to avoid jumping to conclusions apply to both the communicator and receiver because an error in judgment on either side may lead to wrong conclusions and distortion of information. Stereotyping, or putting people into types and categories and assuming they portray and possess certain features and traits may appear to simplify the bewildering complexity of life. But in reality stereotyping does quite the opposite. It denies a person a chance to be treated fairly sans prejudice. The stereotyping may be done on the basis of gender, race, religion, caste, region or profession. The list of categorization is endless and what follows are further water tight compartmentalizations through sub categories. On the basis of which we put people into categories we start expecting them to elicit behaviour which is predictable of that category. This denies the person his individuality and uniqueness because we tend to prejudge them in the framework we have build around them-the politician as manipulative, the priest as holy and the money lender as heartless and cruel. A English Speaking gentleman dressed in a suit may come across as trustworthy and educated but a man in chappals' near your car with unkempt hair will by his demenour not be able to win your trust. The stereotyping of mothers-in-law, Godman, prostitutes, prevent us from exercising power of judgment and result in distorted perception due

to preconceived notions and stereotyping. So, we need to practice restraint and not jump to conclusions if we want to be a good communicator.

c) ' You' before ' I ' : Overcoming the Self Centered Approach:- Self Centeredness can play a big game spoiler in an organizational setup. A good communicator will always make it a point not to be myopic in his/her view and be ready to look beyond his/her nose. Every person shows interest in another's issue to find what it contains that would be of interest or benefit to him/her. So, forgo your ego centric approach and keep others interest over your own. If you are so intoxicated with self that you forget to protect and promote the interests of others you will not only fail but fail miserably as a communicator.

Self centeredness can blur our vision or even make us blind to see the value people attach to the same issue. We may cease to perceive the interests of others in an enlightened interest of the self'. We need to be mindful of the fact that communication calls for a lot of hard work and good communication calls for very hard work, so, take nothing for granted else the entire communication cycle will go topsy-turvy. Communication requires high level of preparation and concentration on parts of both the sender and receiver So, plan and strategize your communication keeping self interest at bay.

## 6. SUMMING UP

In a business organization communication stretches across ranks and positions, classes and masses- because we interact with a range of people from bosses to customers, to co workers, to subordinates. We spend as much time in listening as in speaking, reading or writing- so the sooner we raise our awareness of the roadblocks of communication the better prepared we will be, to prevent communication disasters. Planning and strategizing are imperative to good communication because after all communication is not a leap in the dark and we should make all efforts not to miss the mark !

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