

COMMUNICATION SKILLS– CONNECTING THE WORLD

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Abstract

In common parlance, communication means interaction. There are so many ways to interact with each other because No Man Is an Island i.e. to say communication in its purest form shows social interdependence of human beings for one thing or another. This may be in the shape of writing a topic for someone's school going kid...or helping someone telephonically to understand an educational problem...or making someone aware of the system that he has recently joined and is cribbing openly...or offering a seat in a bus to an elderly/lady passenger while travelling... or training an elderly person in neighborhood how to use computer/a mobile phone... Thus, communication connects us with our surroundings.

Communication helps a lot in Team work as the definition of TEAM goes this way – Together Everyone Achieves More...One man cannot bring about a revolution and when a task is converted into a group task, people work wonders and yes it is another way of getting connected to each other. Taking example of a teacher as a class mentor- it can be shared here, while making phone calls to the parents of your students to tell about their performance you get connected to them, as, and then on they will be seeking your guidance in almost every affair of their ward...To talk about business houses, an effective salesman in a showroom can handle the customers better than others and every time the regular customers will be looking for his assistance in choosing and buying the things...a doctor, who is quite good at interacting with the patients, may relieve the latter from his/her disease to a great extent just due to his sweet and soothing tongue...Hence, the focus of my paper is on How communication helps us connect to other people.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a word of Latino origin; it means sharing of information or intelligence. The most common medium of communication is language. While speaking we often resort to physical gestures. We wave our hands, shrug our shoulders, smile and nod to reinforce what we say. An important factor in the communication process is the existence of cooperation of sender and the receiver. If you speak to a person who is totally lost in his thoughts or use a language he does not understand, no communication will take place. Communication, in fact, is a social function and each community develops a common medium for the purpose. The medium may consist of a language or code – a set of symbols which stand for certain ideas, feelings, notions, things, etc.

The effectiveness of a message conveyed in this way depends on the receiver's ability to understand the sender's background, nationality etc. in other words, we have to go beyond what we perceive. In the words of Freud Luthans "Communication is the understanding, not of visible, but of the invisible and hidden. These hidden and symbolic elements embedded in the culture give meaning to the visible communication process." This point brings us to the importance of culture in communication. It is becoming more and more important in modern times as international business is fast gaining importance. With unprecedented advancements in the methods of communication and transportation the world has become smaller. People of different countries and diverse cultural backgrounds are meeting and coming in contact for various purposes by means of verbal and non-verbal, oral and written communication.

DETAILS OF THE PAPER:

There are numerous ways to get connected today, to name some, we have Video-conferencing, e-mails, sms, social networks like - what's app. Viber, line, we chat, facebook, twitter etc. The business organisations can now easily explore new markets and new resources of money and material across the globe. The growth of multinational companies is a pointer in this direction. Operating in heterogeneous social environment they have emerged as influential epitomes of international business work culture. So, the question arises as to how best to make our communication appropriate to the needs/expectations of person/organization rooted in a different culture.

There are certain aspects of communication that are of crucial importance in this context: As you are aware, communication is to some extent culture-specific. The system of symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, and patterns of behaviour, differ from culture to culture. These differences are manifested in the notions of status, attitude towards time, decision-making habits, use of space and body language and social behaviour. Recognition of these differences, mainly engendered by national variables such as education, religion, economic condition, political system etc. and an awareness of relationship among language, culture and behaviour are far more important, in respect to the communication with the members of a different culture. To avoid cross cultural conflicts you need to be more open-minded, tolerant and courteous and keenly perceptive of the non-verbal symbols and clues because these may be different or even at variance with your socio-cultural norms and patterns.

Communication is an integrating agent through which individuals, groups; cultures come to know one another, understand and appreciate other's way of life and develop tolerance towards one another. At the formal organization level, integrative functions are provided in part by bureaucratization, industrialization etc. when a social system exceeds the integrative limits of

faceto face encounters, the necessary integrative mechanisms become embedded in that social system in the form of literature, folklore, art, beliefs, mythology, etiquette etc.

Communication is a social activity. In society we share our thoughts, feelings, emotions, reactions, propositions, and facts and figures with individuals as well as groups at all levels, higher, lower or equal. Communication is, in fact, the most important of all our activities as it has helped us to organize ourselves as a civilized society. In a civilized society there are well-defined roles for all and done. The only way to play these roles is through communication. All communication is based on, and is guided by role-relationships. Only when we understand and appreciate these role-relationships, can we successfully communicate.

In the words of John Adair “Communication is essentially the ability of one person to make contact with another and to make himself or herself understood; or, if you prefer a slightly more formal version, communication is the process by which meanings are exchanged between people through the use of a common set of symbols” The most essential for good communication is that you learn to be a good leader of your group. It begs another question. How can one be a good leader? To this point Shakespeare has made his famous remark: “Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them”. The last category of people is born with golden spoons in their mouths, so are not relevant here. Good leaders start as excellent and disciplined followers. They empathize with their friends as well as foes. That is to say that a good leader not only communicates but also inspires people around him. He never shirks unpleasant work or responsibilities. He is sincere and compassionate to the core of his heart. These are precious values which we must always try to imbibe in our character and personality.

We do not communicate in vacuum. The communication process takes place at several levels: individual to individual; to small groups; in seminars; conferences and crowds. At the first level of leadership, there is the task of competent briefing to the group of individuals on objectives and plans. At a higher level the leader briefs the organization. Particularly, when there is a bad news to give, the task of briefing is formidable. The speaker, at all levels, must use his clear and simple language and keep his ego under his sleeve. Nothing destroys human relations more than arrogant and tantrum style. The proper use of wit and humor always creates the right atmosphere, promotes teamwork, and encourages each individual person.

Communication at work place

The work group is a primary source for social interaction. The communication that takes place within the group is of vital importance in the sense that it gives them the best opportunity to share their frustration as well as feelings of satisfaction. Communication in this way provides them a release for their feelings, and that is the fulfillment of an important social need. In business houses during the recruitment of new employees for the company, the employers prefer people who have the “right” behavioural characteristics like good social skills to get on with variety of people and situations, having proper emotional quotient (E.Q.), and demonstrable ability to learn and to be good all round citizens. These are called “softer” or generic skills, which cannot entirely be taught in a class-room. Rather one must be aware of them and keep them cultivating throughout his/her life.

A good part of these “softer” skills is indeed learnable. All those who undergo systematic training in this area find a sea-change in their professional effectiveness as well as personal confidence after such training. Inability to communicate effectively and efficiently can do irreparable harm to our professional as well as personal life. Great works of literature explore

the name and nature of inter-subjective or personalized communications. Among other matters, the Ramayan is considered with the problem of father's inability to communicate with his son. In psychology, this is called the problem of Oedipus complex.

Literary Examples

Tagore's poetic drama, *Chandalika* explores the relation of mother and daughter owing to miscommunications which is called the issue of Electra complex. Kalidas, in his *Abhigyan Shakuntlam*, has beautifully explored the waxing and waning life-long conjugal course of husband and wife because of the breakdown of communication, which in psychoanalysis is called *Ideopathic Obsessive-compulsive-Disorder*. The study of literature helps us in grasping the problems of subjective and inter-subjective communication, and enables us in managing and ordering our personal life- the most challenging problem of human life. On the other hand, social skills enable us to succeed in our life professionally. With the help of these skills, we do networks in our day-to-day affairs, cross-culturally as well as globally. Appropriate use of communication skills by all concerned in an organisation determines the failure or success of individuals there in as well as the fate of the organization. Therefore, it is of great importance that we must communicate with the audience in mind. A good communicator communicates at the level of his audience. For example, if one is communicating with a fellow engineer, using technical jargons and acronyms may be all right, but not appropriate for management, clients and customers.

In general, people are interested in the whole picture of an organization in order to reach a business decision or to get their work done. They have neither time nor patience for going into the miniature of technical details. As has been discussed earlier as well that communication is a social activity and every organization is above all a social entity. The members of the group or organization are human beings who have so much to share, gather, or pass on. Newman and Summer point out that the content of communication is not just fact and figures, or objective ideas but also feelings, attitudes and interpretations. An adequate understanding of this aspect of communication is of immense help to the management. In this connection it is worth-while to take note of the term 'Emotional Intelligence' that is also the title of Daniel Goleman's book on management. Emotional intelligence according to Goleman, "is to do with how well we manage our own inner lives and get along with people". (Here I am reminded of a great legend Jagatjit Singh's *Gazal* - "Tum itna jomuskurarahe ho...")

Conclusion

To conclude I can say that getting connected using communication skills is profoundly concerned with self-awareness, the ability to manage one's own and other people's emotions, self-motivation and empathy. These characteristics or qualities enable one to climb higher in the corporate ranks than colleagues having superior IQs. Everyone agrees that a good strategic planner/Manager needs analytical skills, but the star performers among them have the ability to understand and empathize, persuade and build alliances, and are astute in reading organizational policies.

While working at Harvard, Goleman examined students from hundreds of companies, mostly multinationals, and arrived at certain important conclusions. He found that the really intelligent people are emotionally intelligent people because they can lead, adapt to change, give feedback on performance, empathize, motivate themselves and others, and have integrity. Stephen Covey, one of the greatest management gurus today, says the same thing in a somewhat different

manner. He uses the term “Emotional BankAccount” as a metaphor to describe the amount of trust that has been built up in a relationship. “It’s the feeling of safeness you have with another human being.”

Dag Hammarskjold, past Secretary General of the United Nations, once said, “it is nobler to give yourself completely to one individual than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses.” Taking his cue from Hammarskjold, Stephen Covey says, “Creating the unity necessary to run an effective business or a family or a marriage requires great personal strength and courage. No amount of technical administrative skill in laboring for the masses can make up for lack of nobility of personal character in developing relationships. It is at a very essential, one-to-one level, that we live the primary laws of love and life.”

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