

## **THE LANGUAGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS, COMMUNICATION INSIDE ORGANIZATIONS**

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Abstract: The communication process inside companies and enterprises becomes a more and more relevant issue when it comes to effectiveness of management and to the management of human resources within organizations. The interpersonal efficient communication has lately and finally begun to be acknowledged in our integrating country as well, as a thing on which the good functioning of the entire institution may depend. What channels, filters and elements are involved in the process, and what measures of improvement can be entailed, are matters to be discussed and analyzed within this study.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

On distinguishing between impersonal and interpersonal communication, a next necessary and valuable step is the comprehension of the process of communication, through its constitutive elements as well as the filters affecting it.

Once known the formal and informal channels of communication inside organizations, people involved in the process (both employees and employers) may and should develop listening skill and other ways of improving (inter)personal communication, in order to acquire the capacity of unifying group behaviour and thus helping build the so necessary teamwork.

The global economy and its ongoing globalization and the advanced, and advancing, technology are obviously to be understood as factors influencing communication.

### **2. BASIC CLASSIFICATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

As first distinction, we may note that between impersonal and interpersonal, the difference being made clear from their very names.

In what the impersonal communication is concerned, the key words would be transmission and transfer and the usage shall confine to giving basic information such as: company policies, instructions, facts. A disadvantage is constituted by the bare opportunity to ask for clarifications while, as for the pros, there are undoubted advantages regarding the speed and the broad scope. Most common forms of this type are: forms, memos, letters, electronic mail, fax, printouts, voice mail etc.

In interpersonal communication the key words are: share, exchange, interact, interchange and feedback. The latter is of greatest importance in communication as it represents the response necessary to make sure the message was understood. The forms employed are obviously interactive: dialogues, interviews, meetings, discussions, phone conversations etc. These will provide a possibility of checking conveyance of the message, which is an utmost advantage but they will much in the same way account for the disadvantage of being really time-consuming.

### 3. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN ORGANIZATIONS

As a major distinction, in what the channels of communication established within companies or enterprises are concerned, we can note that there are formal and informal ways of transferring information.

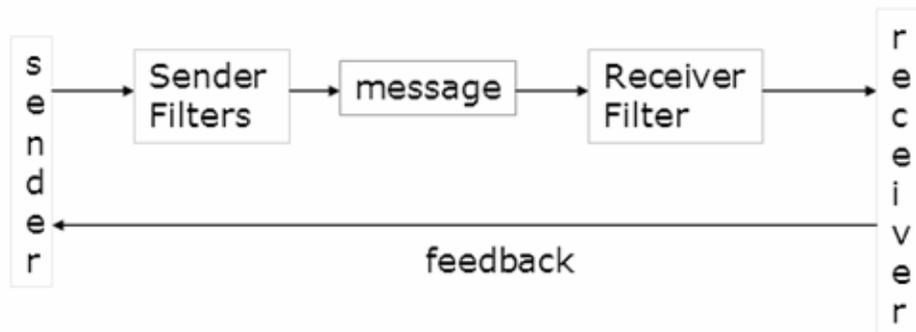
It can be stated that the formal, official, transmission occurs both vertically and horizontally, that is to say, hierarchically – from boss to employees and upward – and, respectively, on level, or among 'peers'. Often travelling more rapid and to a larger extend and scope, there is the informal emission – more particularly the gossip – usually with negative effects as this communication may be suffering distortions or be totally inaccurate, untrue rumours.

As a trick or a means of repairing damaged relationships, some may resort to a certain modality of becoming somewhat 'closer', by revealing some private information, thoughts, feelings, expectations, with a view to develop trust, confidence, deepen relationship. Discovering common interests shall produce benefits of better cooperation, reduced stress, and increased accuracy. However, this 'method' should neither be over estimated – it cannot solve the important divergences – nor excessively used – it may be felt as overwhelming and annoying after a certain point.

### 4. DISTURBANCES IN THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

There are innumerable barriers that might impede communication, amongst which we can list [Iovănuț, p.13-15] from the concrete - physical or semantic problems - to the more abstract ones, as: differences in perception, feelings, personality, lack of interest or of knowledge, stereotypes, rushed conclusions, hidden agenda, imaginative symbols, assumptions, inferences or subjective suppositions, fear, positive or negative involvement or personal attraction.

In brief then, we should pay attention to the filters that influence communication: semantics, emotions, attitudes, role expectation, gender bias, nonverbal messages; as the message has twice to pass through such distortions on its way from the producer (sender) to its recipient (receiver), as seen in figure 1 below, representing a complete cycle of the communicational process:



*Figure 1*

In what semantics (i.e. the meaning of the words) is regarded, we can note that interpretation may differ from person to person in case of some less 'precise' words. Such

words can be the one with ambiguous meanings, e.g.: job satisfaction, downsizing, as opposed to the ones rendering a clear meaning, e.g.: computer, typewriter, company.

Understanding is also influenced by the background, the experience, the culture of each individual. For common people or for newcomers into an organization, an already established and shared vocabulary, specific to the others within the respective company, may sound unfamiliar and marginalizing, as an incomprehensible jargon, e.g.: 'sigma quality' (good), 'enterprise environment' (office). Much in the same way, people not in the particular field of expertise or activity, might, at certain points, meet confusing, meaningless words (e.g. RAM, font, megabyte - for those not accustomed with the language of IT).

Inside any organization, there are numerous circumstances when lack of communication may cause from the most unwished and dangerous misunderstandings (that may have disastrous results in keeping the working relationships) to the funniest ones like in the following example:

- the executive's message sent to his direct subordinate says:

"Send factory and office headcount broken down by sex";

- manager's reply comes as follows (showing lack of comprehension of the task, due to the misunderstanding occurred in communication, in interpreting the words addressed to him):

"249 in factory, 30 in office, 3 on sick leave, none broken down by sex – the problem is alcohol".

Multinational companies have to cope with countless such difficulties as even very good speakers of the language (English as a rule) are very likely to make such mistakes, due to the fact that the first meaning they attribute to words depend of each person's background and habits of using a certain sense more than another one (in case of polysemantic words), let alone the cultural differences that seal their entire approach to the implied communication.

As well as semantics, the emotions influence the perception and the decoding of the message communicated, shifting people's attention from the content of the message to their feelings about it and thus guiding judgment and reactions. Attitudes, too, alter the way of 'hearing', of interpreting the message. Among the disadvantages we can first note that preconceived ideas (in matters as religion, eating habits etc.) make it hard for somebody to even listen to opposed opinions, let alone holding a conversation in formal and 'adult' terms as business affairs or interpersonal relating inside organisations require. Negative attitudes (such as dislike of voice, face, accent, gesture, dressing, way of delivery etc.) create resistance to concentrating and perceiving messages, thus breaking communication. Still, the overly positive attitude (biased in favour) can lead to hearing only good parts and over evaluating. There is nevertheless an advantage in that being impressed makes one more receptive, this facilitating communications.

Factories, companies, agencies, associations, enterprises and others might face a peculiar problem that will influence communication if not seen to and if not consciously strived to be avoided: the expectations regarding own and the others' actions and words, as a consequence of a certain function or role the particular person has. There are situations when the authority is a threatening one and the managers expecting employees to accept things without questioning decisions or making suggestions, which clearly closes all channels of any attempt of communication. Through this power given by the position, managers, bosses might deliberately, or, on the contrary, unwillingly depart from their employees. This will lead to defective communication: out of fear of asking - or simply from lack of any interest to please or obey - the grumpy employer anything even when tasks are not quite clear; with negative effects on the general functioning of that particular organization. At the same time, we can

note the occurrence of a sort of disobeying (in case of a too big or badly understood friendship with the direct or a remote superiorly ranked individual within the hierarchy of that organization) or of belittling and minimizing the importance of any attempt of communication (when dealing with a usually boring or predictable boss):

e.g.: “It’s just the boss again, saying his old things” (here, the impression of already known impedes getting the new message)

“It’s just our old Johnny” (a former peer, now promoted, might not be taken seriously)

Nowadays, men and women work side by side; women enter workplace in greater number than ever and we have to make allowance for the constitutive differences particular to each gender. Generally, women listen more, tend to give more feedback (e.g.: Yes, hmm, oh, aha), and might sometimes be sensed as intrusive, or even leading, by the unprepared man. Men expect quiet listeners (as themselves) and such supportive replies coming from their women interlocutors can be felt as intrusions. Moreover, women expect response, so the silent men can be believed as being not interested. If they are not en guard regarding this difference in holding conversations, men and women inside an organization can experience difficulties in communication. There are also differences in topics or focus, which can lead to the impossibility of reaching an agreement in a communication between genders, in certain circumstances. Roughly speaking, men are more interesting in money, sports, business, while women care for people, feeling and relationship. E.g.: talking about a coming redundancy or a layoff, men will support cost-cutting, women tend to support people’s feelings. What is important is for them to become aware of the differences in their natural tendency and try to come to some sorts of settlement, the result then being one satisfying for everybody, as it will be a deliberated one, with concessions and adjustments applied.

A very special attention should be paid to the nonverbal message that the body of the speaker (and that of the listener, too) transmits as the oral communication is produced, because this is something rather hard to control and still very important in rendering a credible message. Gesture should concord with words; e.g.: the manager saying he is interested in your problem but looking at his watch, playing with objects on the desk, balancing his leg to and fro etc. cannot be believed to really care about what you are telling him. Mistrust and resentments are often produced due to such discrepancies.

## **5. CURRENT TRENDS IN COMMUNICATION**

Global economy leaves its marks on the development of communication inside organizations. With the expansion of global marketplace, companies must train employees to be able to communicate despite language and cultural differences. Speaking a common language – a goal not easily to be reached, itself – does not prove enough. A bigger challenge appears, that of understanding the background of each individual in order to depict accurately the meaning implied in their communications.

The implementation of high technology in all the fields of the human activity has distinct consequences in the way people communicate nowadays, numerous and outstanding changes appearing, for the good and for good, we may say. The Internet, for instance, widens communication opportunities. Among the advantages of e-mails we may note: time efficiency (instant messages, prompt replies), minimal costs, improved accuracy, enhanced customer service (at the same time in various locations) and the fact that some filters (disturbances) are eliminated. Still, the technical revolution requires its tribute, too. In what the same e-mail is

regarded, there are concerns for the individual's right to privacy, for example, and for the lost human touch that it brings about.

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