

INNOVATION, CHANGE & INCLUSIVITY NOTES

Topics;

- a. Communication tools for management
- b. Customer Service Optimization
- c. Innovation, change & inclusivity

A. COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR MANAGEMENT

1. Introduction

For the objectives of the organization to be achieved, communication must be effective. Communication is a vital management component to any organization. Whether the purpose is to update employees on new policies, to prepare for a weather disaster, to ensure safety throughout the organization or to listen to the attitudes of employees, effective communication is an integral issue in effective management. Robbins and Judge (2008:351) assert that an idea, no matter how great, is useless until it is transmitted and understood by others. To be successful, organizations should have comprehensive policies and strategies for communicating with their constituencies, employees and stakeholders as well as with the community at large.

According to Thomas and Schmidt (1976), research indicates that poor communication is probably the most frequently cited source of interpersonal conflict. Effective communication at all levels of the organization are likely important in helping to reduce or overcome the level of stress in organization.

2. Communication channels in an organization

There are basically two systems of communication in an organization and channels being used are formal and informal communications;

- i. Formal Communication; this refers to communication within the organization also known as internal communication whose purpose is to transfer information to initiate some action. The internal communication takes different forms via;
 - ✓ Vertical- in this communication type, information flows both upward and downward from management level in form of directives, instructions, decisions, policies and explanations to people who will implement them through meetings, conferences, employees' handbook boards, memos etc. and from the employees or subordinates to the management in form of ideas, suggestions, criticism, requests and explanation through opinion polls, suggestion box, social gathering, joint consultation and grapevine. Both upward and downward flow of information or communication helps create a balance between management and policy implementations.
 - ✓ Horizontal- this links people of the same level together and such a message is passed on are not in commanding or superiority basis which can be in form of ideas and experiences shared among people from different departments but of similar levels. This type reduces personality clash and confusion, bringing staff of similar levels

together, enhancing effective co-ordination which thus fosters unity and understanding.

- ✓ Diagonal – In this situation, there may be no obvious line of authority. I.e. a middle manager may require a service to be performed. He may be dealing with a colleague higher than him in another department or a colleague under him who may have no obligation to him. Therefore it relies heavily on reservoirs of cooperation and goodwill.
- ✓ Semi-vertical- This type of communication involves trade unions who operate the two-step system of communication flow; information goes from management to the union and down to the workers by passing all other levels of authority within the organization.
- ii. Informal Communication; every organization has an informal system of communication. This system carries unofficial communication about what matters within the organization or pertaining to do it. It is the unofficial channel in processing official information which by-passes all official channels of authority. The main channels are;
 - ✓ Rumor- Refers to unofficial and unconfirmed information sent through interpersonal channels through clear-cut evidence to buttress the message carried where nobody can point out where the information originated. Where rumor is abound, it is a sign that human relations within the organization have for some reasons degenerated.
 - ✓ Grapevine- This are the social interactions of people without a conscious, deliberated or joint purpose. The grapevine has an origin which is well founded but the persons who gives out information or is circulating is not easily found.

3. Methods of communication

- i. Written Communication
They are used in an organization to pass information and ideas to others. It involves pen to paper and takes various forms like;
 - ✓ Memorandum
 - ✓ Reports
 - ✓ Minutes
 - ✓ Notices
 - ✓ Magazines
- ii. Oral communication
This information is passed with the mouth to communicate ideas, reasons and conclusion. The oral communication can facilitate speed inter-change with immediate feedback.
- iii. Non-verbal communication

This includes communication in different ways through movement, reaction on your face or even through dressing. The non-verbal communication can either support one or be against him.

4. The impact of effective communication

Effective communication may contribute to organizational success in many ways. It:

- ii. Builds employee morale, satisfaction and engagement.
- iii. Helps employees understand terms and conditions of their employment and drives their commitment and loyalty.
- iv. Educates employees on the merits of remaining union-free (if that is the organization's goal).
- v. Gives employees a voice—an increasingly meaningful component of improving employees' satisfaction with their employer.
- vi. Helps to lessen the chances for misunderstandings and potentially reduces grievances and lawsuits.
- vii. Improves processes and procedures and ultimately creates greater efficiencies and reduces costs.
- viii. Reduction of conflict: in any human grouping, conflict is inevitable which sometimes it can be a source of progress while in other occasions it may lead to destruction of the organization. Effective communication reduces conflict to a manageable level.

5. The effect of organizational structure on communication

Structure is the management of the components and sub-systems within a system.

Organizational structure refers to the properties of an organization and not those of its members e.g. hierarchy. Although its existence may affect the individual's behavior, the organization maximizes its effectiveness in achieving its goals by requiring its members to work with certain individuals and not with others the way which the organization's formal structure dictates. The purpose of the structure is to provide a system of communication. Different structures result in varying degrees of effectiveness in communication and has effect on performance. In hierarchical and bureaucratic organization the structure imposes formal relationship that tends to be regarded as important in regulating communications.

6. Barriers to effective communication

We are not as effective in our communication abilities as we think we are and lack of that effectiveness is at least the contributing factor to many of the problems. These barriers and breakdown lead to smooth communication not being achieved in the organization and some of the causes are;

- i. Lack of planning to communicate; there is the need to plan and organize the message properly before passing or communication the message across.
- ii. Poor listening & Premature evaluation; Listening demands full attention and self-discipline and also means avoiding premature evaluation of what the other has to say. Listening empathy can reduce some of the daily frustration in the organizations' life and result in better communication of message in an organization.
- iii. Wrong channel; effective communication could be greatly hampered if the means chosen to pass the message is poor.

- iv. Noise; interference from any activity in the environment which constitutes noise may influence the message, ie. If the message is long and requires the concentration of the receiver.
- v. Semantic distortion; this may come out as accidental or deliberate. ie. Where a professional uses jargons before layman without proper and concise clear explanation and practical illustrations of what he/she is saying.
- vi. Inadequate training; effective communication demands sufficient training. Management trainee should be made to go through courses in basic communication skills.
- vii. Intermediaries; if there are too many intermediaries between the sender and the receiver, it will give room for distortion, disruption, omission and addition. The longer the chain of communication therefore, the greater the possibility of having a defective communication.

7. Conclusion

Communication is a vital instrument in achieving organizational goals and objectives since the main purpose of establishing an organization is to make profit (private organization) or offer service (public organization). The standards of an organization's corporate image and efficiency are directly related to the standard of communication. Therefore, communication leads to organizational effectiveness, efficiency and high level of productivity.

8. References

- Akinyemi, Y, O (1988), Communication as a Management Tool, *The Guardian Financial Weekly*, February Vol. 7
- James S. Ode I. and Soola O. (1990), *Introduction to Business Communication for Business Organization*, Ibadan, Spectrum Books Limited
- Benard, C. (1938), *The Function of the Executives Management in the Competitive Edge*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York

B. CUSTOMER SERVICE OPTIMIZATION

1. Introduction

Customer service is an effective instrument to increase number of customers, sales, profit, shareholders' wealth, and market value through partner relationships and customer loyalty. Customer service plays an important role in firms. Many firms are aware of growing customer requirements and adopt sets of standards to evaluate their service for customer's satisfaction (Kisperska-Moron, 2005). Korpela et al. (1998) explained that companies should establish a customer service strategy and focus on designing an efficient logistics system to better serve customer's requirements and sustain competitive advantage.

Customer service is usually the 'job' of particular teams – the monitoring, coaching, and sustaining of it is left to the managers and team leaders and of less of the top leaders of the company probably never deal with external customers or do so on rare occasions. This is probably one of the reasons that most companies still do not have a customer-focused

culture. Without the involvement of leadership in customer service, making it part of the overall culture would be near impossible.

The role of leadership in customer service should be one of ensuring that it is an on-going and relentless activity that gets ingrained completely in the culture of the organization.

Leaders therefore have a role in;

- i. Eliminating any barriers to help fix some of the more daunting challenges the customer service teams face.
- ii. Ensuring everyone in the company understands service excellence to enhance consistent standards of the service.
- iii. Having leadership involvement in customer service is that employees have someone to emulate and there is heightened sense of belonging and ownership making it easier to care genuinely for the customer.
- iv. Ensuring that a service culture is embedded firmly into organization and everyone engaged there.
- v. Helping the teams address any tough issues and secondly to emphasize and reiterate the importance of positive customer experiences.
- vi. Inspiring trust and dependability in both external and internal customers.
- vii. Treating the company's employees well and being there when they need their leaders, would encourage the employees to pass on this positivity to the external customers, thereby raising the trust quotient and reputation of the company.
- viii. Helping their employees to respond and act logically even in the face of crisis and demanding customers This can be achieved by having a reputation of listening patiently and making fair decisions.
- ix. Mingling with the front-line staff and be part of the service to get a first-hand experience of the kind of service the company provides and how the customers view it.

2. Conclusion

Leaders should be open to accept new changes and be prepared to improve themselves and lead in a way so that the employees in the service industry dealing directly with customers feel involved and happy since in the end it affects the customer satisfaction level.

It is important that leaders and top management take into account how the employees can change their attitudes towards work and customers just by a change in the environment.

For an organization to add value in this era, they need to assess where they are when it comes to employee engagement. Failure to respond to the need of inclusion, innovation and change can and will be the source of downfall for even the most successful organization.

Organizations should invest in their people, in training and developing them, as the employees are the ones who could help them grow (Durrance & Nelson, 1987) which thus improves employee retention.

3. References

Chuang, A., Judge, T.A. & Liaw, Y.J. (2012). Transformational leadership and customer service: A moderated mediation model of negative affectivity and emotion regulation. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 21 (1), 28-56.

<https://corp.yonyx.com/>

C. INNOVATION, CHANGE & INCLUSIVITY

1. Innovation drives enterprise development, and companies are relying more and more on their employees' innovative contributions to maintain and improve their competitiveness. Employee innovation is the cornerstone of the organization, and the motivation for employee innovative behavior largely depends on the leadership style of the leader. "New generation employees" have gradually become the new enterprise workforce. Therefore there's need to expand the traditional meaning of the term "new generation employees" to fit today's realistic workplace situations which describes those workers who complete their jobs with new-age concepts, techniques, and social rules in mind. The effects of certain leadership styles may have different consequences for different generations in the workplace.

2. Inclusive work environments may be considered most suitable because in such workplaces environment voices were heard and respected, diverse ideas and perspectives were valued, and employees were encouraged to make their useful contribution to organization. The role of leader is highly significant to build and nourish a specific environment at workplace.

- ✓ Inclusive leaders delegate power to employees (Nishii & Mayer, 2009) where employees enjoy great autonomy to decide their work activities on their own.
- ✓ Inclusive leaders value the inclusion of employees at work setting (Salib, 2014), and employees having value of being included experienced greater empowerment (Randel et al., 2017).
- ✓ The inclusive leader cultivates a supportive external setting, where employees feel internal motivation in the form of psychological empowerment.

3. Change management is a structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams and organizations from a current state to a desired future state, to fulfill or implement a vision and strategy.

The main aim is empowering employees to accept and embrace changes in their current environment.

A change effort or initiative must start with a vision that will clarify the direction for the change. It can be prompted by external ie. Political, economic, social or technological or internal factors ie. Policy, systems or structure and the vision will assist in motivating those that are impacted to take action in the right direction.

Leaders have a critical role to play in managing change,

- ii. Communication breakdown
Leaders should communicate key information to employees on an on-going and consistent basis.
- iii. Employee resistance
Leaders should leverage their relationship with their teams to address employee concerns on a personal level, ask for their feedback and respond to their concerns honestly and openly.
- iv. Staff turnover
Leaders should coach, mentor and enrich their teams by involving them in the initiative.

4. Communication Strategy

Effective communication during a change effort will serve to provide employees with timely and accurate information, which can positively influence whether the organization can maintain employee productivity and morale and overcome resistance to change. The following are the key steps to ensure there is effective communication;

- i. Building a strategy
- ii. Involving key stakeholders in communications efforts
- iii. Determining message content
- iv. Identifying most effective communication channels
- v. Ensuring follow-up

5. Addressing change resistance

- i. Employees feel they will suffer from the change; instead use communication strategy that solicits employee input
- ii. Organization does not communicate expectations clearly; Do not send mixed signals regarding the change which will increase employee distrust
- iii. Employees perceive more work with fewer opportunities; communicate clear vision of the change and provide timely education
- iv. Change requires altering a long-standing habit; identify employee concerns and unresolved implementation issues
- v. Relationships harbor unresolved resentments; provide employees with a timeline and a defined approach and outcome
- vi. Employees lack feeling of job security; communicate effectively on how employees will benefit from change
- vii. Organization lacks adequate reward process and sufficient resources; develop procedures to address employees who will be negatively affected by the change

6. Conclusion

- i. Only communicate what has been authorized. This will ensure consistency across the organization.
- ii. Communicate the business rationale for the change and the events leading up to it. Clarify the vision and specific change plans.
- iii. Explain the benefits of the change to the broader department or faculty and the individuals on your team.
- iv. Update your team regularly on the progress of the change.
- v. Acknowledge the negatives of the change.
- vi. Provide as much detail as possible to minimize rumors.
- vii. Acknowledge when you do not have the answers. Do not guess.
- viii. Emphasize that change will happen.

7. References

Kaouther KORBI (2015), The Journal of Organizational Management Studies, DOI:
10.5171/2015.638847