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Effective Communication for Professional Excellence

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Abstract

Good communication is necessary for effective leadership and management as well as business success. This paper is designed to enable professionals to understand the theory and practice of communication with a focus on interpersonal and writing skills. This research paper is based on Communication Intent thematic, which proposes that effective communication is neither about clever manipulation of others nor about charisma. It demonstrates that the effective communication is a function of maturity and attentiveness. The process is aimed at developing skills that can be applied consistently for excellence in communication. The purpose of this paper is to enhance the communication skills of professionals by making them have an in-depth understanding of the process of communication, identify barriers to effective communication, understand the relationship between maturity and effective communication, understand the role of intention and attention to overcome barriers in communication, enhance their personal mastery and competencies and learn effective business writing through practical writing tips.

Introduction

Every serious study of managers at work comes to the same conclusion; what managers do more than anything else is communication—with suppliers, customers, colleagues and above all with their own staff. Improve communication and performance will ultimately improve. Effective communication is fast becoming an area of core competence for all business managers and team leaders. In organizations, effective communication transforms a group into a team. It reduces effort, fatigue and struggle. Work is accomplished more accurately and efficiently, as conflict and stress give way to co-operation and satisfaction. It is true that the managers derive authority and status from results — from productivity and profits. But in achieving results they rely heavily on their communication ability. In persuading and motivating people to produce the kind of results that are needed, their only tool is the written and spoken word.

Components of and considerations for communication:

What is effective, professional communication? To be effective is to produce the desired result. Thus, in terms of communication, effective means that the message intended to be sent by one person is indeed the same message received by another person. To be professional is to behave appropriately (with courtesy and respect) and competently (using proper methods and vocabulary). Communication can be professional, yet ineffective. One can speak courteously, but his ideas can be unclear. The first consideration is which type of communication he will utilize to convey a message. Some additional factors to think about are the level of formality and detail, the importance, the time frame, and the necessity of a response. If it is an important question that requires an immediate answer, then a telephone call might be more effective than an e-mail. If a notification of an event has to be sent, the variety of the individuals to be invited will determine the details: date, time, and place; or, perhaps, directions. The next consideration is a set of details: date, time, place; or, perhaps, directions.

Author:

Planning and preparing is part of the communication process. Whether authoring a presentation or a paper, the speaker should consider his needs as an author, such as his work habits and style. His instinctive style may be personal, informal, humorous, and open. But some communications require detachment, objectivity, and formality. Knowing one's style and being able to edit and adjust to a particular situation is essential to effective communication.

Audience:

The level of formality and intimacy are also determined by the recipients of communication: the audience. Vocabulary is one of the considerations relative to the audience. Tone is the attitude one conveys to his audience and is another consideration.

Purpose:

The communicator should also consider his objectives in any given communication. Does the speaker want to persuade, or amuse, or inform? The motive will frame the vocabulary, language, and tone

you use to communicate. Purpose, then is integrated with author and audience in that the communicator must assess the appropriate motive.

Topic:

The topic is the specific area of a particular subject that has to be chosen to communicate to the audience. To be effective, the communicator should clearly reveal his topic to his audience early in the communication process— either in the opening of a presentation or first paragraph of a paper.

Written Communication:

There are several types of written communication discussed in this section: electronic mail, memoranda, letters, reports and papers. Professionalism and effectiveness in written communication depends on choosing the best type by which to express a subject, and then following basic guidelines for conveying message to the recipient.

Electronic Correspondence:

Electronic mail, or e-mail, is appropriate for short, rapid communications. It is not effective for conveying large amounts of information or complex information. Below are some general considerations for professional e-mail correspondence and etiquette.

- Consider the audience and occasion, and avoid informality and jargon
- Use a courteous tone in your message; avoid provoking misunderstanding by being too abrupt
- Indicate the subject of the message
- Greet the addressee appropriately
- Organize your thoughts and communicate them clearly and concisely
- Keep e-mail messages brief and to the point
- Use proper English, grammar, and spelling; proofread before sending
- Sign your name to the message
- Read messages you receive carefully before responding
- If you need time to compose a reply, send a brief message acknowledging receipt.

Memoranda:

A memorandum, or memo, is used to communicate specific information, usually within a department, or organization. It is more formal than an e-mail, and can be used to transmit more information.

Format a memo with To, From, Date, and Subject

- Use proper English, grammar, and spelling
- Use a courteous, professional tone
- Be clear and concise
- Clearly state if a reply or other action is required or requested
- Print the memo on letterhead or a word-processing memo template

Letters:

Letters are the means of formal, professional communication with others outside an organization. Below are general guidelines for drafting a letter

- Format a letter with the complete address of the recipient
- Print the letter on letterhead, or compose a header with the sender's complete address and contact information
- Use a formal greeting, such as "Dear" or "To Whom It May Concern"
- Organize the information, and be clear and concise
- Include a formal closing, such as "Sincerely" and sign and print your name

Reports:

One of the most frequent forms of written communication that you will use to complete assignments in your courses is the report.

Basic Components of a Report:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methods and Materials
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Bibliography

Oral communication:

Oral communications include simple telephone calls, interviews for class projects or research studies, and informal and formal presentations. Having a clear idea of what you want to say or ask is essential to effective oral communications.

Conclusion:

Effective business and professional communication is central to your success when entering the workplace for the first time, developing your skills at a job you already have, excelling in career, or managing challenges that may come the way. The KEYS process is central to the development as a professional. KEYS is an acronym for Know yourself, Evaluate the professional context, then communication interaction occurs, and Step back and reflect.

K—Know yourself means to actively assess our skills as communicators and then develop strategies to utilize our strengths and develop our weaknesses. Truly competent communicators are concerned with identifying their weaknesses in order to work on improving them.

E—Evaluate the professional context: entails proactively addressing the needs of our audience and understanding the constraints of the communication situation, as well as developing our skills for communicating with a variety of audiences across situations.

Y—Your communication interaction: requires us to monitor our own verbal and nonverbal cues in addition to the cues of the audience within each communication interaction.

S—Step back and reflect: encourages us to examine the effectiveness of verbal and nonverbal messages we convey to others and the overall success of various communication interactions and then take what we've learned and start the process again, developing the ability to continually adapt and improve. The organizing feature of this text is the KEYS process, a process designed to develop critical thinking skills and make professionals more reflexive communicators with the ability to adapt and continually improve.

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