

When people talk -listen completely.

*“ communication work for those, who work at it”
~John Powell*

Work place communication concerns between Managers, Supervisors, Employees and Unions. They exchange information to employees which they want to have. When we talk on this topic the following questions comes to our mind: Why good work place requires communication? Who is responsible for communication? What kind of information are necessary? What are the principal methods for effective work place communication?

The work place communication should ensure the involvement of Unions, Managers and Supervisors. They should establish suitable arrangements for both communication and feedback in co-operation with each other. There must be an Employees involvement statement which should include arrangements for providing details in systematic manner to the employees for the matters concerning them. It may also have information for achieving a common awareness on the part of all employees regarding financial and economical factors affecting the performance of the Organization.

Good Communication is not only important but essential also:

- Work place communication is a two-way process which requires flow of information up as well as down. The communicator should try to ensure that message is understood. He must listen to and take account of any reaction to the communication.
- The work place communication mainly covers the information of all kinds having a direct bearing on day-to-day operation of the Organization. The channels it passes and the means of passing it.
- Communication at work place should never be an end in itself, but if used properly it can play an important role in ensuring the efficiency and success of the Organization. The managers have the responsibility to communicate with their subordinates. Good communication can help managers to be better managers, enable employees to work effectively to create greater trust with the management and its employees.
- Employees need to be informed of their duties, obligations and rights to communicate with Managers & Supervisors. Many employees want more information than the basic instructions needed to carry out their work such as :

What is happening and why? The way their jobs can contribute to future prospects of the Organization

- Employees are also Communicators. They need to pass job related information to their subordinates as part of their daily work on the basis of their own experience. They wish to contribute in the areas of working environment of their job and the policies which may affect them. Managers & Supervisors should know and encourage the expressions of employees' views in order to make better and more understandable decisions. They have to exchange information with colleagues as a part of their work. This necessitates lateral or inter-departmental as well as vertical line communication. Failure to recognize this need may result inconsistency of approach and application.
- The work place communication can help the employees to perform better and become more committed to the Organization's success. It can also help to create greater trust between Managers, Supervisors, Unions and employees.

Who is responsible for Effective Communication?

- Work Place Communication involves everyone in the Organization but to be effective it needs to be organized in systematic manner like any other activity. Successful work place communication needs a positive lead from the Top Management. It is necessary that Senior managers are made responsible to ensure that :
 - The policy is put into practice.
 - The practice is properly maintained.
 - The policies and practices are regularly reviewed.
 - The chain of communication is clearly understood by all those who are involved.
- The principal link in any communication system is Line Managers & Supervisors because ineffective communication by them causes poor performance. First Line Supervisors play a key role in any communication system. Direct communication is sometimes desirable but, when short cuts are adopted the Line Managers & supervisors must be kept well informed equally.
- Union Officials also have communication responsibilities as well as information needs since one of their main tasks is to ensure that their views and opinions are properly conveyed to the Management.

What should be communicated?

- The Management needs to communicate information to the employees regarding their pay conditions of employment and also wide range of job-related information including Operating & Technical instructions, Health & Safety information, General

Information about the organization such as background, objectives and also about who is who? Where they are? And what they do?

- Sometimes employees are interested to know as to what is happening in the Organization? Therefore, management should inform all employees about important events such as objectives & policies, past & present performance, progress, future plans and prospects of the Organization .
- The information such as financial performance, Manpower changes, technological developments, state of the market and investment plans may be covered in the upward and downward communication process. This information should be provided as a part of regular programme. The employees tend to distrust the Managers who communicate only when there is bad news because job security is the major concern of all employees.
- The work place communication must be clear, concise and easily understood, It should be presented objectively in regular and systematic manner so as to avoid rejection. Communication must be relevant and timely. As far as possible, it should be open to questions being asked and answered.
- Variety of methods, will be needed both spoken and written, direct and indirect to have an effective and efficient Communication. The mix of methods may be adopted on need basis. It starts from face to face.

Team briefing is important because when the leader of the group provides up-to-date information the group members can ask questions. However in team briefing we need to observe that :

- It should be held at regular interval and not just in crisis.
- It should be brief lasting 20-30 minutes only.
- Led by the immediate first Line Managers of the work group.
- Face to face and not reduced to a series of circulars and memos.
- Key focus area must be covered.

Now the care should be taken to consider the following:

- Progress : How are we doing?
- Employees : Who is coming and going?
- Policy : Any change affecting the team.
- Points : For further action.
- Monitor : success or failure.

Let us see how team briefing Works:

The briefer collects information relating to progress, people, policy and points for action in preparation for the meeting. It is ensured that he has the clearance of

his Manager. The Managers meet with their Teams and any question which cannot be answered immediately are noted and answered later on. In addition to operational information the briefer should explain the items passed down from top management. This process continues down the line ensuring that there is a local brief and the management points have been included. After the meeting, briefer should find the feed back to respond for unanswered questions. Absentees should be briefed on their return. Interdepartmental Meetings are conducted with the aim to reduce scope for inconsistent decision making. Large Scale Meetings should also be held involving the whole workforce with presentation by Chief Executive. Frequency should be once in six months or year.

In addition to above Conferences and Seminars should be organized to study a particular problem with emphasis on questioning and group discussion at least once in a year.

Now comes the Written Methods:

- The Introduction of Employee Handbook brings together employment and job related information which does not change very often.
- Performance Report keep employees informed about activities of the Organization with main emphasis on their contribution and achievements.
- House Journal and News Letters provide information about the Organization on regular basis to the employees. It contains large elements of social and personal information.
- Bulletin is useful for giving information on wider basis about specific items of general interest i.e. Safety, Production and targets etc.
- Notices are aimed to bring the attention of audience, matter of general information and specific interest. Care needs to be taken over location, use of notice boards and keeping them up-to-date.
- Individual Letters to Employees lay emphasis on the subject matters and ensure that the information has been received and understood by the targeted group.

Communication policy of the organization and practices need regular monitoring and review. Therefore, it is important to ensure that :

- Communicators know their roles.
- Appropriate information is made available.
- Information reaches to all who needs or wants.
- It is accepted and understood.

Sometimes monitoring exposes weaknesses therefore, it is essential that remedial action is taken. Monitoring is largely dependent on feedback from the employees through formal and informal channels. Effectiveness of work place communication can also be assessed by:-

- The extent of employees co-operation.
- The quality of decision making by managers.
- The level of involvement by Senior Management
- The Industrial Relations climate.

Lastly it can be said that good and effective work place communication is the key to success for which the following basic requirements are essential :-

- Lead from top management.
 - Involvement of all Managers supervisors and Unions.
 - Awareness needs and wants of the employees.
 - Systematic, regular and effective communication.
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