

# Communication: A Necessity for Effective Management of Modern Organization

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## Abstract

Communication has become a very central and critical tool for organization's day-to-day activity. Without effective communication, organization is considered death. Communication also has a tremendous implication on the management processes such as planning, organizing, directing and controlling. The activities of efficiency, accountability and transparency are better managed if there is effective communication. It has become an essential tool for smooth organizational management. The major process of organizational communication was discussed with a clear guide that the message sender should use only the language and vocabulary which is understood by the receiver. This means that persons involved in communication should avoid technical jargons and difficult words. As to the primary function of communication; it was stated that communication is used in businesses organization to disseminate specific or general information to management, staff and clients. In fact, communication in an organization as noticed in the paper is being faced with multiple barriers. Ambiguity was discussed as the major source of communication barrier. That is, when the message sent is not clear, it is then difficult for the person receiving it to make any meaning out of the message sent. The study concludes and recommends among other things that efforts should be made by organizations for ensuring effective and efficient communication system.

## 1.1 Introduction

In the present day organizational life, the manager's typical day included such activities as doing desk work, attending scheduled and unscheduled meetings, placing and receiving telephone calls, reading correspondence, answering correspondence and receiving visitors. Almost all these activities involve communication. In short, managers usually spend more than half of their time on some form of communication. Communication has tremendous implication on other management processes such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Such activity that consumes over fifty percent of the manager's time and that has implication on the principal functions of managers needed to be handled more efficiently and effectively (Ayodele and Idowu, 2009). The activities of efficiency, accountability and transparency are better managed if there is effective communication. Communication has become an essential tool for smooth organizational management. In fact, the basic fundamental activity of any given organization is affected through communication. There is no any meaningful organization without communication network. Communication is therefore, a very important factor for every administrator, as it is the process through which goals; plans, decisions and directives are conveyed to workers. If communication is not used, workers will not have any sense of direction. If we want employees to do something different than they have been doing in the past, this must be conveyed. Similarly, if we decide to recognize a given division to improve its performance nothing can happen until the decision is communicated (Robbins, in: UJo, 2001). Also Herbert (1957) observed that without communication there can be no organization; for there is no possibility of the group influencing the behaviour of the individual.

## 2.1 Towards a Definition of Communication, Management and Organization

**Communication:** As a concept has several definitions and meaning. However, we shall consider very few definitions of communication. Millet (1958) defines communication as shared understanding of a shared purpose. Herman and Zelda looked at communication as the underlying medium to bring the route between human behaviour and management. Communication therefore is the process of transmitting information and understanding between two or more people. As such it always involves at least two parties (Bedeian, 1986). For communication to be effective and meaningful, it must be useful to the sender and the receiver. Since it is only through transmitting meaning from one person to another that information and ideas can be conveyed, the administrator who is a poor communicator is certain to have his or her effectiveness curtailed. The speaker who is not heard or the writer who is not read does not communicate... for communication to be successful, the meaning must not only be imparted, but also understood (Robbins, 1985).

## Organization

Gulick (1937) looked at organization as the formal structure of authority through which work sub-divisions are arranged, defined and coordinated for the defined objective. While White (1984) stated that organization is the arrangement of personnel for facilitating the accomplishment of some agreed purpose through allocation of functions and responsibilities. Organization therefore is a formal structure of an entity created with specific guidelines and established principles where people work to achieve certain objectives.

While Pfiffner (1985) stated that “organization consists of the relationship of individual to individual and group to groups which are so related as to bring about an orderly division of labor”.

It is therefore, the relating of efforts and capacities of individuals and groups engaged up on a common task in such a way as they secure the desired objective with the least friction and the most satisfaction to those for whom the task is done and those engaged in the enterprise (Vishnoo and Bhushan, 2000)

## Management

Management is a term used to describe the way and manner in which organizational activities are being carried out in an office.

### 2.2 Aims and objectives of management

The aims and objectives of management are:

- i. **To be efficient in the running of the organization.** This implies making the best use of people, money, the physical plants, technology and the ability to do things right. In addition, efficiency is an input concept managers who minimize the cost of the resources needed to achieve a given goals are acting efficiently.
- ii. **To be effective in running the organization.** This means setting the right goals and realizing the set goals. In other words, effectiveness means doing the right things
- iii. To create a surplus for the organization’s owners and stakeholders
- iv. To continue in existence, that is, to survive
- v. To maintain steady growth and development
- vi. To meet the needs of the organization’s stakeholders

The above are the main objectives of management. What is expected of the management to be doing for the organization. Ayodele and Idowu still went further to enumerate the responsibilities of management in the following:

- i. Management is responsible for searching the business environment for opportunities and exploit/tap these opportunities
- ii. Management is responsible for allocating organizational resources (technical, financial and human) appropriately
- iii. Management is responsible fro disseminating vital information to various units within the organization and to external stakeholders
- iv. Management is responsible also for effective handling of organizational disturbances at the right time
- v. Management is responsible for carrying out all managerial functions. (Ayodele and Idowu, 2009).

### 2.3 Types of communication

Organization communication has three aspects; viz, internal communication, external communication and inter-personal communication.

- Internal communication is concerned with the relationship of the organization with its employees. It can be upward, downward, and across
- Upward communication is concerned with the employees’ relationship with the management
- Downward communication is concerned with the management’s relationship with the employees. The former consists of performance reports and work problems .While the latter consists of orders and directions.
- Across communication is concerned with relationships between co-equal authorities in an organization. Thus, unlike the upward and downward communications which are vertical in nature, the across communication is horizontal in nature
- External communication deals with the relationship of the organization with the public. Hence, it is known as ‘public relation’
- Interpersonal communication is concerned with the relationship among employees

## Media Communication

Media communication is of three types namely: audio, visual and audio-visual. Audio media is conferences interviews, and so on. Visual media comprises circulars, reports, pictorial forms and others. Audio-visual media is television, sound-motion pictures, and so on. The conference method of communication has attained popularity in public administration. This method avoids delay, reduces red-tape and minimizes correspondence. According to Millet in: Laxmikanth, (2001), the conference method achieves the following:

- i. Enables to gain awareness of a problem
- ii. Helps in problem solving
- iii. Enables to gain acceptance and implementation of decisions
- iv. Promotes a sense of unity among the officials working in the organization
- v. Encourages an exchange of information among administrative personnel, and
- vi. Helps in appraising personnel (Laximkanth, 2001).

## 2.4 Communication Process

Communication has several processes, however Bedeian have identified seven process of communication which are discussed below:

**Ideation:** This is the first step in the communication process. An idea is conceived or opinion formed to convey or receive information from another person

**Encoding:** In the second step, the information is conveyed into a set of symbols which the receiver will understand.

**Transmission:** This is the step in which the information is transmitted to the receiver. This can be done in writing, orally or other means.

**Receiving:** In the fourth step the information or message gets to the receiver

**Decoding:** This is the other way round of step two. In step five, the receiver interprets the meaning of the message.

**Understanding:** The sixth step is when the receiver understands the decoded message

**Feedback:** The final step in the communication process is when the receiver gives a feedback on the message received. Feedback mechanism veritics the degree to which a message has been received (Bedeian, 1986).

## 3.1 Guide to Effective Communication

For communication to be effective, it must be supported by defined guidelines as presented by Ekhaton in the following:

- a) **Important communication should be put into writing.** This is necessary particularly:
  - Where the message is a complex one
  - When the message is meant for many people in different departments
  - When the information is to be acted upon over a long period of time
  - When the message receiver needs evidence of approval to carry out the activity that he is instructed to perform
  - And when the information needs to be kept for reference in future
- b) The message sender should use only the language and vocabulary which is understood by the receiver. This means that persons involved in communication should avoid technical jargons and difficult words
- c) **Clarity of message is essential.** Avoid long winding sentences. The presentation should be logical. Avoid ambiguity or any hidden assumptions.
- d) Parties involved in communication should feel free to seek for clarifications as the case would be
- e) When instructions are communicated, background information which includes source, the aim, the rationale, the deadline, etc should be stated as well. (Ekhaton, 2006).

## 3.2 Functions of Communication

Communication is put in place to achieve certain functions. These functions are listed below”

**Informative:** Communication is used in business organization to disseminate specific or general information to management, staff and clients

**Persuasive:** It is used to influence or convince people to accept a belief, or undertake a course of action

**Entertainment:** There is ample evidence of light – heartedness, entertainment and humour in both spoken and written communication in the modern business environment. Riddles and jokes, dinner talks and jokes, birthday and wedding toasts, cartoons and musical renditions fall in this category

**Goodwill:** Communication can take place in order to build goodwill. These are acts of communication done to engender friendly regards and feelings towards the sender of that particular communication. For example, greetings, congratulatory and commemorative messages.

**Conflict resolution:** Communication engenders peaceful co-existence between parties who may be diametrically opposed to each other. During dialogues or round table conferences, opposing parties are able to air their views through discussions, negotiations and ultimately arrive at a compromise (Ayodele and Idowu, 2009).

### 3.3 Tools of Organizational Communication

Uduma (2008) presented the tools of communication as follows:

**Manuals:** The function of a manual is to communicate those organizational practices which are inclined to have relative application. In the absence of manuals, permanent policies will not reside in the minds of organizational members, and will have no great influence on practices. Examples of manuals are the general order, the civil service manual, financial instruction and academic regulation of educational institutions.

**Memoranda and letters:** In most formal organizations like ministries, banks, academic institutions, and parastatals, communication is subjected to formal control by the use of memoranda and letters or written communication. It is always required that all written communication follows the line of authority. For instance, some manuals in large organizations often specify who may write officially to whom and on what occasion who should see memoranda on a particular subject and who should give out information on specific subjects.

**Records and reports:** One of the essential features of a formal communication system in almost every organization is the system of records and reports. The reports and records specify for the persons who wrote them, on what occasion one is expected to make the report, that is, daily, weekly, monthly, annually or as situations develop and how. Examples of organizations that engage in reports are all the ministers located in the states with written periodic reports to their parents – federal ministries.

**Paper flow:** This channel of communication is typical of organizations handling financial matters such as insurance companies, accounting departments, and lending agencies (commercial banks). In these types of cases the work of the organization mostly centre's on the processing of a piece of paper. For instance, in a life assurance company, applications are received, examined, accepted or rejected, and of course policies issued and policy holders' bills form as part of premiums. Premiums are also processed and benefits paid without any physical individual concerned. In essence, the five represents the individual policy as the focus of the organization's action and work.

**Oral instruction or spoken words:** Oral instructions or spoken words based on face-to-face communication are a common means of information in an organization. Usually, this is not institutionalized but operates constantly between supervisors and their immediate subordinates. It takes the form of order and commands, instructions and messages. In most organizations, members of the superior rank are usually in accessible to the lower people and in such a situation, oral instructions are not frequent (Uduma, 2008).

### 3.4 Patterns of Organizational Communication

According to Ayodele and Idowu (2009); argued that organizational communication patterns operate in the following ways:

- i. **Downward communication** – means sending a message from a high position in the organization to an individual or group lower in the hierarchy. This frequently occurs between managers and subordinates when the manager provides direction, feedback, and critical information to help subordinates perform at expected levels
- ii. **Upward communication** – means sending a message from a position lower in the hierarchy to a receiver higher in the hierarchy. This allows managers to know how individuals, teams and units of the company are performing. When performance deviates from expected standards, managers can make corrective adjustments. One of the most important components of upward communication is feedback to managers about employee feelings about company; process organizations are likely to have barriers that filter information from subordinates before it is received by managers. Employees are well aware of the tendency to punish the bearer of bad news.
- iii. **Horizontal communication** – is the communication between a sender and a receiver at a similar level in the organization. This includes communications between team members, between different teams, and between employees in different units, interactive electronic communication technologies such as e-mail greatly facilitate horizontal communication by making it possible to establish learning communications and virtual teams of employees who work together even when separated geographic ally. Other examples of horizontal communication are peer performance; cross-functional new product development team meetings, suggestion committee meetings, etc. managers and team members should

have the ability to give feedback to subordinates or peers. Feedback may be communicated wither horizontally i.e. from peer to peer or vertically from supervisor to subordinates.

Besides, all employees need feedback to improve their skills. Positive feedback let them know they are progressing toward their goals and can be used to strengthen behaviours that are already learned. Negative feedback tells employees which behaviours should be modified to improve performance (Ayodele and Idowu, 2009).

#### 4.1 Barriers to Effective Communication

There are many factors responsible for barriers to effective communication in an Organisation. The factors are as follows:

**Human limitations:** Human limitation act as a hindrance to effective communication. Instead of listening in a rational objective manner to what is being said people occasionally be come emotionally involved. We often impose judgment in place of rational factor appraisal. People inject their value system into what they hear or read, and too often instead of decoding objectively they lose rationality – either because they do not agree with what is being said or if they have mentally stereotyped the sender, by perceiving the messages to be other than the way it was intended

**Ambiguity:** Another barrier to effective communication is the ambiguity of the message that is being sent. When a message is not clear, it then becomes difficult for the person receiving it to make any meaning out of the message sent.

**Wrong timing:** Another barrier to effective communication is wrong timing. When a message is sent at a very wrong time, it in most cases does not make meaning to the receiver of the message. This communication is most effective when the messages are imported at the appropriate time (Uduma, 2008).

#### 4.2 Means and Methods of Administrative Communication

Ujo (2011) enumerated the means and method of communication in organization in the following:

**Memoranda (memo):** A memoranda is written information addressed to employees, employer or even self. It usually contains information which is useful to the organization. This information could be on policy matters or issues of general interest to the organization. Good memoranda should be brief, clear and polite.

**Forms:** The second means of communication is a form. A form is a kind of communication which requires the respondent to provide certain information. The two essential features of a form are clarity and completeness

**Reports:** Reports are written account of events. Some reports entail filling forms; while other entail writing out in detail. In any case the rule is that report should not be too long

**Correspondence:** One form of communication is correspondence. Correspondence can be photocopied and sent to as many people as possible.

**Manuals:** Manuals or handbooks also perform communication functions in the sense that they provide information. A manual should contain all the required information about the organization

**Staff meeting:** Staff meetings serve as a good forum for communication. Decisions of staff meetings are usually conveyed in minutes which are communicated to all employees (Ujo, 2001)

#### 4.3 The Necessity to Communication

Communication is an important principle of organization and is essential for realizing it objectives. This is so because it is the blood stream of an administrative organization; in this regard, communication serves as the lubricant, fostering the smooth operation of the management process.

Communication is also necessary in the following ways:

**Information:** This entails the collection, storage, processing and dissemination of news, data, pictures, facts and messages, opinions and comments required in order to understand and react knowledgeably to personal, environmental, national and international conditions as well as to be in a position to take appropriate decisions.

**Socialization:** This is the provision of a common forum of knowledge which enables people to operate as effective members of the society in which they live and which fosters social cohesion and awareness thereby permitting active involvement in public life.

**Motivation:** This is the promotion of the immediate and ultimate aims of each society, and the stimulation of personal choices and aspirations; the fostering of individual or communication activities geared to the pursuit of agreed aims

**Debate and discussion:** The provision and exchange of facts needed to facilitate agreement or to clarify differing view points on public issues; the supply of relevant evidence needed to foster greater popular interest and involvement in all local, national and international matters of common concern.

**Education:** The transmission of knowledge so as to foster intellectual development, the formation of character and the acquisition of skills and capacities at all stages of life.

**Cultural promotion:** The dissemination of cultural and artistic products for the purpose of preserving the heritage of the past; the development of culture by widening the individual's horizons, awakening his imagination and stimulating his aesthetic needs and creativity.

**Entertainment:** The diffusion through signs, drama, dance, art, literature, music, comedy, sports, game, etc, for personal and collective recreation and enjoyment.

**Integration:** The provision to all persons, groups and nations of access to the variety of messages which they need in order to know and understand each other and to appreciate others' living conditions, viewpoints and aspirations.

The role of communication in an organization is necessary or rather variegated that an organization cannot achieve its goals and objectives without placing communication in its rightful place (Uduma, 2008).

### 5.1 Conclusion and Recommendation

Organization communication in every institution has become an important factor that no organization can do without it. Communication being a cooperative system, having three elements, viz, common purpose, willingness to contribute, and communication. Thus, it becomes as a vital dynamic of the organizational behaviour and believed that it is a major shaping force in the organization. We also noticed in our earlier presentation that absence of a suitable technique of communication would eliminate the possibility of adopting some purposes as a basis of organization. Communication techniques shape the form and the internal economy of an organization.

We have also agreed in our study that communication serves as a process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of the organization to another. It is therefore very obvious that without communication, there can be no organization, for there is no possibility then of the group influencing the behaviour of the individual.

We therefore conclude that without effective communication in an organization, the organization stands the risk of malfunctioning and total collapse. One major recommendation that was adopted in this paper is that all organizations should try and embrace the culture of enhancing and encouraging free flow of communication without any barrier attached to it.

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