

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE

COURSE MANUAL

FOR

ASSOCIATE PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

(aPMP™)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE

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MODULE TWO

COMMUNICATION IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

LESSON ONE

Change Management Process

Introduction

Philosophically thinking, change is the only constant in the world. Same as for anything else, this is true for business organizations as well.

Every now and then, business organizations change the way they operate and the services/products they offer. There are new initiatives in organizations and the old ineffective practices are forced to leave.

In addition to that, technology is constantly changing and the business organizations need to par with that as well.

There are many approaches about how to change. Of course, we may all agree that the change is required for an organization, but can we all be in agreement of how the change should take place? Usually not! Therefore, deriving a change management process should be a collective effort and should result from intensive brainstorming and refining of the ideas.

In this training, we will have a look at the change management process suggested by John Kotter. Since this process has shown results for many Fortune 500 companies, Kotter's approach should be considered with respect.

Eight-Step Change Management Process

Let's go through the steps of Kotter's change management approach.

Step 1: Urgency Creation

A change is only successful if the whole company really wants it. If you are planning to make a change, then you need to make others want it. You can create urgency around what you want to change and create hype.

This will make your idea well received when you start your initiative. Use statistics and visual presentations to convey why the change should take place and how the company and employees can be at advantage.

Step 2: Build a Team

If your convincing is strong, you will win a lot of people in favour of change. You can now build a team to carry out the change from the people, who support you. Since changing is your idea, make sure you lead the team.

Organize your team structure and assign responsibilities to the team members. Make them feel that they are important within the team.

Step 3: Create a Vision

When a change takes place, having a vision is a must. The vision makes everything clear to everyone. When you have a clear vision, your team members know why they are working on the change initiative and rest of the staff know why your team is doing the change.

Step 4: Communication of Vision

Deriving the vision is not just enough for you to implement the change. You need to communicate your vision across the company.

This communication should take place frequently and at important forums. Get the influential people in the company to endorse your effort. Use every chance to communicate your vision; this could be a board meeting or just talking over the lunch.

Step 5: Removing Obstacles

No change takes place without obstacles. Once you communicate your vision, you will only be able to get the support of a fraction of the staff. Always, there are people, who resist the change.

Sometimes, there are processes and procedures that resist the change too! Always watch out for obstacles and remove them as soon as they appear. This will increase the morale of your team as well the rest of the staff.

Step 6: Go for Quick Wins

Quick wins are the best way to keep the momentum going. By quick wins, your team will have a great satisfaction and the company will immediately see the advantages of your change initiative.

Every now and then, produce a quick win for different stakeholders, who get affected by the change process. But always remember to keep the eye on the long-term goals as well.

Step 7: Let the Change Mature

Many change initiatives fail due to early declaration of victory. If you haven't implemented the change 100% by the time you declare the victory, people will be dissatisfied when they see the gaps.

Therefore, complete the change process 100% and let it be there for some time. Let it have its own time to get integrated to the people's lives and organizational processes before you say it 'over.'

Step 8: Integrate the Change

Use mechanisms to integrate the change into people's daily life and corporate culture. Have a continuous monitoring mechanism in place in order to monitor whether every aspect of the change taking place in the organization. When you see noncompliance, act immediately.

Conclusion

In the constantly changing corporate world, the one who welcomes the changes stays ahead of the competition.

If you are not much comfortable with changes happening around you, reserve some of your time to read 'Who Moved My Cheese?' by Dr. Spencer Johnson.

This will tell you the whole story about why the change is required and how you can make use of the change to excel in what you do.



LESSON TWO

Communication Blockers

Introduction

If you are unable to communicate what you think and what you want, you will not be much successful in getting your work done in a corporate environment.

Therefore, it is necessary for you to get to know what the communication barriers are, so you can avoid them if you intentionally or unintentionally practice them at the moment.

Common Communication Blockers

Have a close look at the following communication blockers that can be commonly found in corporate environments:

Accusing

Accusing and blaming are the most destructive forms of communication. When accusing, the other person feels that you assume he/she is guilty, even without hearing their side of the story.

Never accuse or blame unless it is highly required to address certain exceptional issues. In a corporate environment, accusing and blaming should not take place at all.

Judging

Judging is one of the blockers that prevent the information flow in communication. As an example, if one person is suspecting that you judge him/her, he/she will not open up to you and tell you all what they want to tell you.

Instead, they will tell you what they think as 'safe' to tell you. Make sure that you do not judge people when you communicate with them. Judging makes others feel that one person is on a higher level than the rest.

Insulting

Insulting takes you nowhere in communication. Do you like to be insulted by someone else? Therefore, you should not insult another person regardless of how tempered you are or how wrong you think others are.

There are many ways of managing your temper other than insulting others. Insulting does not provide you any information you require.

Diagnosis

If you are to diagnose something said by another person, think twice before actually doing it. If you diagnose something, you should be having more expertise than the person, who originally related to the communication.

When you try to diagnose something without a proper background to do so, others understand as if you are trying to show your expertise over the other person.

This is a communication blocker and the other person may be reluctant to provide you all the information he/she has.

Sarcasms

In order to have effective communication, you need to show respect to others. If you show no respect, you get no information. This is exactly what sarcasm does.

If you become sarcastic towards a person, that person will surely hold back a lot of valuable information that is important to you. Showing your sense of humour is one thing and sarcasm is another!

Globalizing

Do not use words such as "always" or "never." These make the parties involved in the discussions uncomfortable as well as it gives the notion of negativity.

Try to avoid such globalizing words and try to focus on the issue in hand.

Threats or Orders

Understanding what other person says is the key for a successful outcome from communication. Overpowering rather than understanding the other person has many negative consequences when it comes to communication.

With threats and orders, there is only one-way communication and nothing collaborative will take place. Therefore, it is necessary for you to avoid threats or orders when communicating.

Interrupting

Interrupting is a good thing when you want to get something just said, clarified. But most of the times, people interrupt another person to express their own views and to oppose what has been said.

When such interruptions take place, the person, who talks may feel that you are no longer interested in what they are saying.

Therefore, interrupt when it is really necessary and only to get things clarified.

Changing the Subject

If the other person is keen on talking about something, changing the subject by you might result in some issues in communication.

Changing subject in the middle of some discussion can be understood as your lack of interest on the subject as well as your unwillingness to pay attention. This may result in unproductive and ineffective communication outcomes.

Calling for Reassurance

Sometimes, we tend to do this. When one person is telling you something, you try to get the reassurance for what has been said from others.

This behaviour makes the first person uncomfortable and it is an indication that you do not believe or trust what the person says.

If you need a reassurance of what has been said, do it in a more private manner after the discussion or conversation is over.

Conclusion

Communication barriers are the ones you should always avoid. If you are a manager of a business organization, you should know each and every communication barrier and remove them from corporate culture.

Encourage others to avoid communication barriers by educating them. With communication barriers, neither the management nor employees will be able to achieve what they want.

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LESSON THREE

Communication Channels

Introduction

In an organization, information flows forward, backwards and sideways. This information flow is referred to as communication. Communication channels refer to the way this information flows within the organization and with other organizations.

In this web known as communication, a manager becomes a link. Decisions and directions flow upwards or downwards or sideways depending on the position of the manager in the communication web.

For example, reports from lower level manager will flow upwards. A good manager has to inspire, steer and organize his employees efficiently, and for all this, the tools in his possession are spoken and written words.

For the flow of information and for a manager to handle his employees, it is important for an effectual communication channel to be in place.

The Working of a Communication Channel

Through a medium of communication, be it face-to-face conversations or an inter-department memo, information is transmitted from a manager to a subordinate or vice versa.

An important element of the communication process is the feedback mechanism between the management and employees.

In this mechanism, employees inform managers that they have understood the task at hand while managers provide employees with comments and directions on employee's work.

Importance of a Communication Channel

A breakdown in the communication channel leads to an inefficient flow of information. Employees are unaware of what the company expects of them. They are uninformed of what is going on in the company.

This will cause them to become suspicious of motives and any changes in the company. Also without effective communication, employees become department minded rather than company minded, and this affects their decision making and productivity in the workplace.

Eventually, this harms the overall organizational objectives as well. Hence, in order for an organization to be run effectively, a good manager should be able to communicate to his/her employees what is expected of them, make sure they are

fully aware of company policies and any upcoming changes.

Therefore, an effective communication channel should be implemented by managers to optimize worker productivity to ensure the smooth running of the organization.

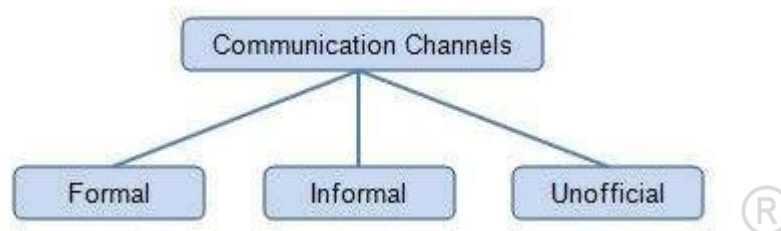
Types of Communication Channels

The number of communication channels available to a manager has increased over the last 20 odd years. Video conferencing, mobile technology, electronic bulletin boards and fax machines are some of the new possibilities.

As organizations grow in size, managers cannot rely on face-to-face communication alone to get their message across.

A challenge the managers face today is to determine what type of communication channel should they opt for in order to carry out effective communication.

In order to make a manager's task easier, the types of communication channels are grouped into three main groups: formal, informal and unofficial.



Formal Communication Channels

- A formal communication channel transmits information such as the goals, policies and procedures of an organization. Messages in this type of communication channel follow a chain of command. This means information flows from a manager to his subordinates and they in turn pass on the information to the next level of staff.
- An example of a formal communication channel is a company's newsletter, which gives employees as well as the clients a clear idea of a company's goals and vision. It also includes the transfer of information with regard to memoranda, reports, directions, and scheduled meetings in the chain of command.
- A business plan, customer satisfaction survey, annual reports, employer's manual, review meetings are all formal communication channels.

Informal Communication Channels

- Within a formal working environment, there always exists an informal communication network. The strict hierarchical web of communication cannot function efficiently on its own and hence there exists a communication channel outside of this web. While this type of communication channel may disrupt the chain

of command, a good manager needs to find the fine balance between the formal and informal communication channel.

- An example of an informal communication channel is lunchtime at the organization's cafeteria/canteen. Here, in a relaxed atmosphere, discussions among employees are encouraged. Also managers walking around, adopting a hands-on approach to handling employee queries is an example of an informal communication channel.
- Quality circles, team work, different training programs are outside of the chain of command and so, fall under the category of informal communication channels.

Unofficial Communication Channels

- Good managers will recognize the fact that sometimes communication that takes place within an organization is interpersonal. While minutes of a meeting may be a topic of discussion among employees, sports, politics and TV shows also share the floor.
- The unofficial communication channel in an organization is the organization's 'grapevine.' It is through the grapevine that rumors circulate. Also those engaging in 'grapevine' discussions often form groups, which translate into friendships outside of the organization. While the grapevine may have positive implications, more often than not information circulating in the grapevine is exaggerated and may cause unnecessary alarm to employees. A good manager should be privy to information circulating in this unofficial communication channel and should take positive measures to prevent the flow of false information.
- An example of an unofficial communication channel is social gatherings among employees.

Conclusion

In any organization, three types of communication channels exist: formal, informal and unofficial.

While the ideal communication web is a formal structure in which informal communication can take place, unofficial communication channels also exist in an organization. Through these various channels, it is important for a manager to get his/her ideas across and then listen, absorb, glean and further communicate to employees.

LESSON FOUR

Communication Methods

Introduction

We all know the importance of communication in our daily lives. Nothing can take place without some method of communication being used to express ourselves for whatever purpose.

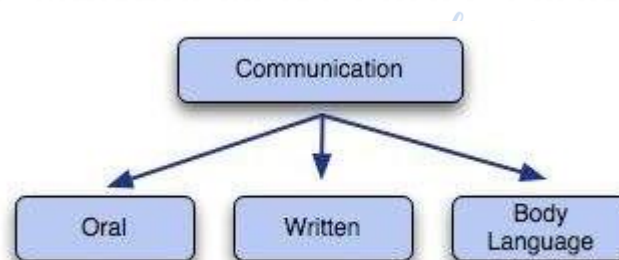
Communication is even more valuable in a business environment as there are several parties involved. Various stakeholders, whether they are customers, employees or the media, are always sending important information to each other at all times.

We are therefore constantly using some form of communication or another to send a message across. Without these different methods of communication available today, it would take eons for us to carry out business as efficiently as it is done today and with the same speed.

Let's try and understand what these methods of communication are.

Types of Communication

Numerous new instruments have emerged over the years to help people communicate effectively.



Oral Communication

Oral communication could be said to be the most used form of communication. Whether it is to present some important data to your colleagues or lead a boardroom meeting, these skills are vital.

We are constantly using words verbally to inform our subordinates of a decision, provide information, and so on. This is done either by phone or face-to-face.

The person on the receiving end would also need to exercise much caution to ensure that he/she clearly understands what is being said.

This shows therefore that you would need to cultivate both your listening and

speaking skills, as you would have to carry out both roles in the workplace, with different people.

Written Communication

Writing is used when you have to provide detailed information such as figures and facts, even while giving a presentation.

It is also generally used to send documents and other important material to stakeholders which could then be stored for later use as it can be referred to easily as it is recorded. Other important documents such as contracts, memos and minutes of meetings are also in written form for this purpose.

It can be seen in recent years, however, that verbal communication has been replaced to a great extent by a faster form of written communication and that is email.

You could also use video conferencing and multiple way phone calls with several individuals simultaneously. Apart from a few glitches that could occur, these methods of communication have helped organizations come a long way.

Body Language

Although the most common methods of communication are carried out orally or in writing, when it comes to management techniques, the power of non-verbal communication must never be underestimated.

Your smile, your gestures and several other body movements send out a message to the people around you. You need to be mindful of this while dealing with your employees and customers.

Always remember to maintain eye contact. This would show that you are serious and confident about what is being said.

Why Do We Need Different Communication Methods?

You may ask why it is important that we use different methods of communication in one organization.

The answer is very simple. The reason for this is the pivotal role that communication plays in the effective functioning of a business.

Imagine an organization today without e-mail facilities. How would a customer then be able to send an important proposal quickly and directly to the employer in-charge? Similarly, an organization may have to stall their work if certain managers are not in the country and are thereby unable to give a presentation to the board.

But, of course, this can be done today with the help of video conferencing.

Therefore, it is crucial that different methods of communication are employed.

Choosing the Right Method

It is important that the most cost-effective methods of communication are chosen for any organization. Simply choosing a method of communication due to it being a famous instrument is not going to help.

You would need to understand the needs of your organization in particular. There are certain questions that you would need to ask:

- ▣ What is our target audience?
- ▣ How much are we willing to spend on such an instrument?
- ▣ Will it increase employee productivity in the long run?
- ▣ What kind of information do we send out most often?

You may have more questions to ask based on the type of work you carry out and the message that you need to send across. Remember that there is no 'right' method of communication. You would need different methods for different purposes and tasks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to always remember the importance of communication in an organization.

The methods of communication you choose could in a sense make or break the management structure of your organization and could also affect your relationship with customers, if not chosen carefully.

It is vital therefore that you spend some time choosing the right methods to aid you in your management tasks.

LESSON FIVE

Communication Models

Introduction

For decades, man has known the importance of communication. Today, with various means by which one can communicate, it has become much easier to communicate a message to the other party, than it was several decades ago.

Every organization, no matter what their expertise and where they are situated, and what scale they operate, realize and value the importance of good communication.

This communication for organizations takes place both within the organization as well as with other outside stakeholders outside.

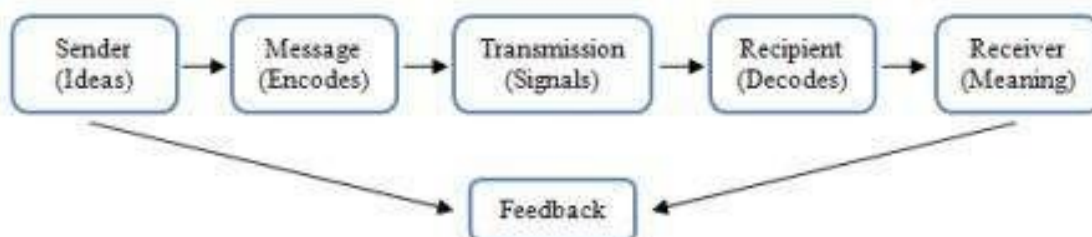
Therefore, it is vital for any business organization to understand the communication models out there, so they can use them for enhancing effective communication in the organization.

Understanding Communication

Communication today is mainly of three types

- Written communication, in the form of emails, letters, reports, memos and various other documents.
- Oral communication. This is either face-to-face or over the phone/video conferencing, etc.
- A third type of communication, also commonly used but often underestimated is non-verbal communication, which is by using gestures or even simply body movements that are made. These too could send various signals to the other party and is an equally important method of communication.

The basic flow of communication can be seen in the diagram below. In this flow, the sender sends a message to the receiver and then they share the feedback on the communication process.



The methods of communication too need to be carefully considered before you

decide on which method to use for your purposes. Not all communication methods work for all transactions.

Once the methods of communication have been understood, the next step would be to consider various communication models. Due to the importance of communication, different types of models have been introduced by experts over the years.

The models help the business organizations and other institutions to understand how communication works, how messages are transmitted, how it is received by the other party, and how the message is eventually interpreted and understood.

Different Communication Models

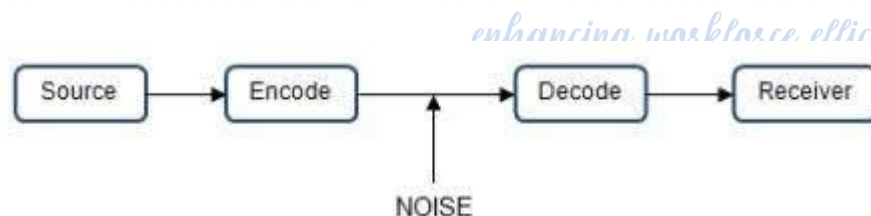
Let's have a look at some of the famous and frequently used communication models used nowadays.

Shannon's Model

One of the earliest models of communication that introduced was Claude Shannon's model. This was introduced in 1948.

This laid the foundation for the different communication models that we have today, and has greatly helped and enhanced the communication process in various fields. This model can be considered as the granddaddy of many later communication models.

Following is a simple illustration of this model.



The diagram above clearly illustrates how communication takes place, and also helps one to determine what could go wrong.

In Shannon's model, the information source typically refers to a person, who then sends a message with the use of a transmitter.

This transmitter could be any instrument today, from phones to computers and other devices. The signals that are sent and received can vary depending on the method of communication.

The box at the bottom called NOISE refers to any signals that may interfere with the message being carried. This again would depend on the method of communication.

The receiver is the instrument or the person on the other side that receives the. This model is the simplest models to understand the workings of the communication process.

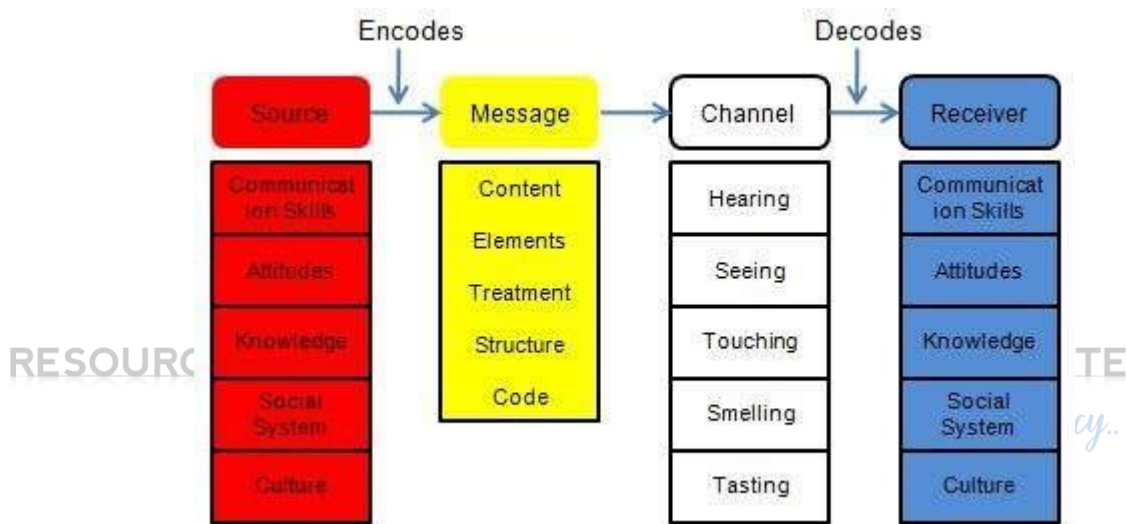
Berlo's Model

Another famous communication model is Berlo's model. In this model, he stresses on the relationship between the person sending the message and the receiver.

According to this model, for the message to be properly encoded and decoded, the communication skills of both the source and the receiver should be at best. The communication will be at its best only if the two points are skilled.

Berlo's model has four main components and each component has its own sub components describing the assisting factors for each.

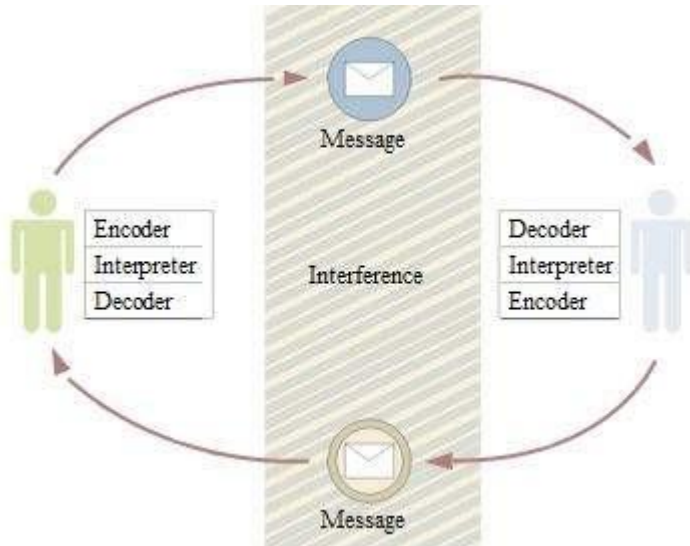
Following is the illustration of this model.



Schramm's Model

Schramm on the other hand, emphasized in 1954 that both the sender and the receiver take turns playing the role of the encoder and the decoder when it comes to communication.

The following diagram illustrates the model proposed by Schramm.



These models have been followed by various other models such as the 'Helical' model, Aristotle's models and several other models.

You should always keep in mind that each of these models has both their advantages and disadvantages. While some communication models try to break down the whole process in order to make it easier to understand, they are not always as simple as they seem.

There are several complexities involved in communications models. This is one thing that needs to be carefully understood in the process of understanding how these models work.

Conclusion

You need to keep in mind that these complexities that accompany the communication models may only make understanding the communication much harder.

It is best that both parties, the source (sender) and the receiver, are clear about what they would like to discuss. This is also known as the context of the message.

This would make it much easier to decode what the other party is saying without too much trouble. The process of communication, if kept simple and to the point, should not usually have too many issues, and the message will be easily understood by both parties.

LESSON SIX

Communications Management

Introduction

Often you would come across organizations that stress the importance of good communication management. It's empirical for an organization to have a proper communication management.

Once this is achieved, the organization is one step closer to achieving its overall business objectives. Communication management refers to a systematic plan, which implements and monitors the channels and content of communication.

To become a good manager, one must have a contingency approach at hand when it comes to communicating with employees.

An effective communication management is considered to be a lifeline for many projects that an organization undertakes as well as any department of the organization.

The Five W's of Communication Management

The five W's in communication are crucial and need to be addressed for a project or organizational function to be successful by means of an effective communication management.

Following are the five W's of communications management:

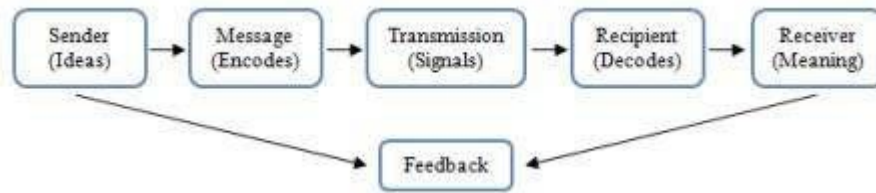
- ▣ What information is essential for the project?
- ▣ Who requires information and what type of information is needed?
- ▣ What is the duration of time required for the information?
- ▣ What type or format of information is required?
- ▣ Who are the person/s who will be responsible for transmitting the collated information?

The five W's in communication management are only the guidelines. Therefore, you do need to take other considerations into account, such as cost and access to information.

The Communication Process

The main objective of communication management is to ensure smooth flow of information from either between two people or a group.

Let us examine the communication process with the use of a diagram.



The communication process consists of three main divisions; sender transmits a message via a channel to the receiver. As per the above diagram, the **sender** first develops an idea, which then can be processed as a **message**.

This message is **transmitted** to the receiver. The **receiver** has to interpret the message to understand its meaning.

When it comes to the interpretation, the context of the message should be used for deriving the meaning. Furthermore, for this communication process model, you will also utilize encoding and decoding.

Encoding refers to developing a message and decoding refers to interpreting or understanding the message. You will also notice the feedback factor, which the sender and receiver both involve.

Feedback is crucial for any communication process to be successful. Feedback allows immediate managers or supervisors to analyze how well subordinates understand the information provided and to know the performance of work.

Methods of Communication

Understanding the communication process alone will not guarantee success for managers or an organization. Managers need to be aware of the methods used in the communication process.

The standard methods of communication that are widely used by managers and organizations across the world are either written or oral methods.

Apart from these two mechanisms, non-verbal communication is another prominent method used to assess communication within the organization.

Non-verbal communication refers to the use of body language as a method of communication. This method will include gestures, actions, physical appearance as well as facial appearance and attitude.

Although most of these methods are still in use for a larger part of the organization, the usage of e-mail and other electronic mediums as a method of communication has lessened the need for face-to-face communication.

This sometimes leads to situations where both parties involved do not trust or feel comfortable with each other and also the messages can be easily misinterpreted.

Oral Communication Skills

A large proportion of oral communication is directly involved in communications management. For example, if a manager does not converse or make it clear to a sales team, this may lead to differences in objectives and achievements.

There are two aspects of oral communication, active listening and constructive feedback.

Active Listening

This is where the person, who receives the message pays attention to the information, interprets and remembers.

As you would be aware, listening helps you to pay attention and following are some points, which illustrate active listening.

- ▣ Making eye contact with the relevant party
- ▣ Making sure to clarify questions if it's not clear
- ▣ Avoiding using gestures, which are distracting or uncomfortable

Constructive Feedback

This is where managers fail most of the time. Feedback needs to be constructive and then it will help the employees to shape up their performance instead of mere criticism.

Conclusion

Communication management is vital for any organization irrespective of its size. It contributes to achieving the company's overall objectives as well as creates a positive and friendly environment.

An effective communication process within the organization will lead to an increase in profits, high employee satisfaction and brand recognition.