



Review Paper

A Review of Communication as a Vital Tool for Effective Management in Organization

Ibrahim Baba and Musa Adamu Mahdi

Department of Public Administration, Mai Idris Aloom Polytechnic Geidam, Yobe State, Nigeria
babale194@gmail.com

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Abstract

Among the paraphernalia required for effective management of organization, communication is inclusive. This is because understanding is needed in order to facilitates the successful operation of organization. This work examined the meaning of communication from management perspective, communication processes and channels. It also examined the vitality of communication as a tool which enhanced the effective management of organization. The study used secondary method. It found that communication plays an important role in the effective management of organization. It recommended that management of organization should pay much attention to the use of communication in dealing with employees in order to achieve organization's goals and objectives.

Keywords: Communication, effective, management, organization and tool.

Introduction

The essence of communication is understanding therefore, communication that does not foster understanding in its tail end is not effective. The effectiveness of communication is greatly determined by the channel through which it is passed. The organization is complex due to various channels of passing information to employees. The capability of exchanging ideas, feelings and messages among workers and between them and management is made simple through effective communication. The use of verbal and sign methods of communication has proved effective in organization management over the years. But then, organization's punishment and reward methods offer yet, additional pattern of sending messages across to employees especially on attitudes toward job performances.

It is obvious that communication either formal or informal is directed at shaping workers behavior in line with organization goals¹. Therefore, communication pattern not properly understood by workers will affect their level of job performance. And such effect is bound to translate in low productivity and poor-quality output on the part of organization. Organization management aims increase quality output. This increase is also expected will easily be achieved if communication channels are effective.

Effective management encapsulates among others, the ability to direct and coordinate workers performances in line with organization goals and objectives. Directive and coordination of performances are well handled through communication. Messages flow from superiors down to subordinates and from subordinates up to superiors.

The downward and upward movement or flow of messages are thus required for the functionality of organization². Free flow of messages within organization promotes group relationship which is an essential ingredient for effective management. Poor or improper communication often results in misunderstanding between management and workers. Clashes in schedules of duty are also encouraged by poor communication pattern. Revolts against management in some cases are caused by lack of understanding between management and workers. Misunderstanding itself in all cases is fueled by improper communication. Therefore, friendly working condition is a product of proper and effective communication.

Management in organization is made up of few senior and superior personnel who due to their low number cannot go around the various units in order to communicate directly with workers. Channels of communication exist to handle this issue. It gives management ways of communicating with the various units in organization so as to make job go on successfully. Communication usually passed to workers is not necessarily verbal. It can be in the form of sign or writing³.

Decision making, issuance of authority and directives are major management task. And the ability to command compliance and obedient are made easy through communication. Workers should not be blame for not doing their job well if communication is not well flowing in organization. It only in situation where communication flows uninterruptedly that workers should be blamed for not doing their work accordingly. Interrupted pattern of communication does not allow message to flow smoothly from sender to receiver.

Management's ability to educate workers of their responsibilities and how well they should be done can only be possible amidst free flow of messages through the proper channel from management to workers. This implies that a functional channel of communication is needed for management to be effective in organization.

Communication: Concept, Processes and Channels

Communication is an on-going process in organization management. It is a continuous sequence of action throughout the life of organization. It beginning and end cannot be ascertained. Workers engaged in communication with each other's and with management with the hope that the outcome may leads to trust, understanding, mutual pleasure, psychological well-being and overall productivity of organization. Communication deals with sharing of ideas and feelings in organization. As a multi-dimensional term, communication in organization management is the ability to convey in the simplest form, information or idea which the recipient can easily understand and, an ability on the part of the recipient to reciprocate in such a way that he can easily be understood⁴. This concept perceived communication as an understanding between the sender and the receiver. Management in most cases serve as the sender of messages but in few other, workers do not only serve as receivers. They also serve as senders especially in situation where their feelings are channeled upward to the management for consideration.

Ideas and symbols play a major part in communication. The act of passing across, a message from the sender to the receiver involves encoding-decoding process. This is one of the reasons why communication can only be said to be effective if the recipient interprets the message in the manner that is intended by the sender⁵. It must however be noted that, even if the interpretation is similar, it does not follow that the receiver necessarily agrees with the substance of the message received. This is because the essence of communication is understanding but not only to agree hence, messages received can also be disagreed with. But in the case of management in organization, messages sent down for superior to subordinate are not only to be understood but also be complied with as they are strictly management decisions and directives. Disagreeing with them or refusal to comply and work in line with them can earn a worker negative reward or punishment which can be the form of warning, query, suspension, demotion or even sack depending on the gravity of directive floated by the worker.

Communication is the transfer of ideas from sender to the receiver. Communication is an indispensable management tool. Any means that individual uses to transfer message, idea, feeling, emotion or attitude to others is communication. There are speechless messages that are not transmitted by facial expressions, by the use of the eyes, body movement, and gesticulation of the hands, shaking the head in approval or disapproval, smiling or frowning.

These are sometimes accurate ways of expressing oneself than the conventional oral or written manner⁶. Although, the use of oral or written symbols for communication in organization is an active process. But it does not imply that other methods of communication do not exist in organization management.

The significance of communication in organization management cannot be undermined. Poor communication could give rise to misunderstanding of directives issued from the top management level to workers. The inability of a leader to express himself clearly and succinctly could lead to poor management⁷. And poor management easily result in the death or closure of organization due to failure to achieve objectives and targets. Leader's expression skill is useful to effective management of organization. Leaders communication skills and talents must be sound in the cause of supervision in order to improve productivity and general effectiveness of management in the organization⁸. Communication in organization management can occur through different channels⁹. Leaders must not only be aware of those channels but be prepare to recognize their usage in the management of their organization affairs¹⁰. These channels are the downward and upward flow of communication from superiors to subordinates and to superiors from subordinates¹¹. Although, communication is not always vertical in movement that is from top to below or from below to top. In some cases, it is horizontal in flow especially in situation where messages flow between workers of the level of management.

In organization management, communication as an act requires first, a common language, next a common skill in using it; next a common idea and assumption, common association and common confidence¹². These requirements are in line with the believe that communication create arousal to management circulars or directives issued to workers from the top management level. And thus, response to management directives is received at the top level as a feedback. In fact, the test of a successful communication is what happened at the receiving end¹³. This however shows that communication in organization management is an outcome of a process. Feedback reaching the management at the top is a source of data from which future cause of action is expected to be drawn by organization. Management rely on feedback reaching it to decide on the next necessary line of action needed to be adopted in order to move organization on the track of goal achievement. And, to make feedback received more reliable, management must adopt a suitable channel of communication in passing across messages to the workers.

Communication Process

There are certain steps through which an idea goes from its concept to the time it reaches the receiver and a feedback is received. These steps are called the communication process⁶. These steps are put together to show the process which communication flow from sender to receiver as Figure-1 rightly shows below.

Ideation→Encoding→Transmission→Receiving→Decoding→
Feedback→Action

Figure-1: Communication Process Chain

Ideation or idea originate in the mind of the sender. This becomes the intended content of the message that the sender wants to transmit to the receiver. The encoding is the stage of selecting appropriate words, expressions or symbols designed to send the message. At this stage also, the appropriate media is thought about; written, oral, memoranda or conference is selected. The transmission stage is when the encoded message leaves the sender. Receiving which is the fourth step is one of the most important steps in the process. If it is misunderstood, there is no communication whatsoever. The fifth step is decoding. What is being decoded is what was encoded in step two. If the message is not properly decoded due to perception, wrong choice of word that are not drawn from a common frame of reference, or semantics, misunderstanding is bound to occur. The sixth step is the action which is indicative that the message was properly transmitted or not. The reaction gives the sender a feedback as to whether the intended meaning was grasped or not⁷. It is however the feedback that determines the next management action to adopt in reaction to messages sent from the top to the workers. It feedback implies that messages have been properly complied with, positive reward is given by management. And if it shows otherwise, negative reward is given followed by a resend of the message again with stiffer measure to ensure compliance. The various steps in the communication process operate in channels.

Channels of Communication

It is management that provides the channel through which communication flows¹⁴. In organization, it is the function of the management to select the channels best suited for the transmission of intended information⁶. Channels of communication are the downward and upward communication process⁹. Both in the downward and upward communication, the management is involved for they, create the favorable climate for the free flow of ideas and information among workers in the organization.

Downward Channel of Communication

The downward channel of communication described the situation where formal communication follows the established chain of command. Communication in this channel, flows from top executive to subordinates and to operative workers¹⁵. The major channels used in downward channel of communication includes: i. The chain of command, ii. Posters and bulletin boards, iii. Company periodicals, iv. Letters and pay inserts, v. Employee handbooks and pamphlets, vi. Information racks, vii. Loudspeakers and intercom systems, viii. The organization grapevine, ix. Annual reports, x. E-mail, xi. Fax, xii. Teleconferencing, xiii. Computer conferencing⁶.

The labor union is also one of the effective channels used in downward communication¹⁵. Labor union is essential in information dissemination among workers in organization. Labor union interact with management and gives outcome of such meeting to its members (workers).

Upward Channel of Communication

Upward communication deals with communication from subordinates to the superiors. This channel of communication is expected to be kept open by encouraging subordinates to use them in channeling their messages to the management. Some of the channels for upward communication involve: i. Chain of command, ii. The grievance procedure, iii. Counselling, iv. Morale questioning, v. An open-door policy, vi. Exit interview, vii. The organization grapevine, viii. Labor union, ix. Informers⁶.

It is however obvious to note that, Ombudsman offers yet, another good channel for upward communication in management¹⁵.

Upward communication is very necessary in order to promote good human relations. It is through this means that management monitors the feeling of employees and takes appropriate action to correcting what would otherwise lead to costly labor management dispute. Employees who believe management maintains an open-door policy tend to have the feeling of belonging and of being appreciated. Where this is not the case, employees believe that they are mere numbers, a cost production and a square peg in a round hole. They often seek for the opportunity to give vent to their pent-up emotion by frequent complaints thus promoting labor-management conflicts⁶.

In organization also, there is communication among workers on the same level, which is often referred to as lateral communication. This communication is important if work processes are to be facilitated. In some instances, there is more interaction between workers at the same level in organization than there is between them and their immediate boss, especially in a decentralized organization¹⁶. Whichever channel adopted in passing across messages in organization, the fact that communication is very vital for the enhancement of effective management in organization can never be doubted.

Vitality of Communication for Effective Management in Organization

Communication is indeed a vital tool for effective management in organization. One of the prerequisites for effective management in organization is the ability to delegates responsibility among workers since all the jobs cannot be performed by the superiors or management officers alone. Communication to a reasonable extent, make the delegation of responsibility relatively easier in organization.

This premise on the fact that workers to whom responsibilities are to be delegated must have to understand what they are given to do so as to understand how to do it well. This understanding among workers is well facilitated by communication.

Organization cannot function on its own without workers. Also, employees cannot perform their jobs without having the required skills and knowledge needed for the performance of such jobs. These required skills and knowledge are transmitted to workers through communication. Workers productivity is an outcome of job performances. And organization quality output is also determined by workers productivity. These put together also determined the effectiveness of management in organization. Hence, high productivity amount to high output and low productivity result in low output. Communication skill determines the degree of accomplishment of job in organization. Therefore, it is a vital tool for effective management in organization.

Workers motivation determines the level of effectiveness of management in organization. Job performance, productivity and output correlates with level of incentive or satisfaction given to workers. Communication, provides the means for motivating workers to perform organization's work willingly and enthusiastically. Success recorded in execution of organization work determines the effectivity of its management. Communication if properly made leads to success in the execution of organization's work. Poor assimilation or understanding is a product of bad communication and in such condition, effective management cannot be achieved. The achievement of effective management necessary for goal realization in organization is based on good communication process and channel. Organization that aims effective management must adopt at all cost, good communication process and channel in dealing with its workers.

Furthermore, in addition to the successful implementation of organization's plan coordinated towards goal achievement, effective management entails among others, superior's ability to direct subordinates activities and actions in line with goal achievement. The ability to direct workers to perform their jobs toward organization goal achievement is greatly determined by communication. Management function of directing requires effective communication skill. The ability to adhere strictly to rules of division of labor in job performance fosters not only specialization but also, provides avenue for effective management because needs for adjustments are quickly spotted and made. Communication made adherence to division of labor easier among workers thus, avoiding clashes and duplication of responsibilities among them. Awareness of expected outcome by workers necessary to avoid clash is best leaned through communication.

In productive organization where commodities and services produced are consumed outside organization, effective management is also determined from the level of interaction

between management, customers and consumers. This interaction educates management on customers/consumers feelings and reactions to products or services rendered by organization as well as steps taken by management to solve customers'/consumer's needs. This relationship is well promoted by communication signifying that communication promotes corporate excellence leading to effective management.

Conclusion

It is pertinent to affirmed at this juncture that communication is a vital tool for effective management in organization. Communication determines relationship in the management of organization. Good working environment is necessary for job to be well done. Communication provides good working climate and condition translating in goal achievement. Recognition for job well done is better delivered to workers through communication. Appropriate channel and process of sending message to workers leads to job satisfaction among workers. Identifying the needs and ways of delivering satisfaction to workers is a product of communication. Issuance of management directives and how to compel obedience among workers is made easier with communication. Superiors dished out directives on required actions from workers and the feedback of how well these actions have been done is aided by communication. Although, in some cases, some workers may not be leaned in the western perspective and as such unable to comprehend and obey directives issued in foreign language. But still, communication tackles this phenomenon. Signs, symbols, pamphlets and other translation methods have been promoted by communication to make understanding and compliance possible in the management of organization. Leadership is a very important instrument of effective management. Style of leadership in organization is based on situation and workers attitudes to job. Communication make it easier for leaders to understand the best style of leadership to adopt in managing organization at a particular time. Thus, communication is a vital tool for effective management in organization.

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