
REFLECTIONS ON MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract:

Modern management has given an extremely important place to managerial communication. It considers communication as a vital component of the managerial system of all organizations. A successful manager is the one that can communicate with the persons that he or she is leading, and the performance of an organization can be conditioned by the manner in which managers communicate. The identification of employees with the organizational goals, their channeling of efforts for the common objectives, the ability of the manager to assess the results of his or her decisions can be accomplished only by using the resources of managerial communication. A laconic, delayed or confused managerial communication, in general a faulty one, leads to a drop in the quality of the decisions and the degree of motivation of employees. We express our belief that an organizations operates at most at the level at which the communication between managers and employees functions. This is why we believe that an undisputed priority of managers must be an efficient managerial communication, which becomes the force of the organization that helps it face the challenges it comes across.

Keywords: managerial communication, sender, receiver, messages, subordinates

1. The concept of managerial communication and its importance

The increasing importance of communication is determined by its extent, characteristics and effects on the performances of the organization. The way in which we communicate with the people around us in the professional activity has an influence on the results we obtain. The quality of managerial communication influences the manner in which the human resource is being used and, in particular, its labor productivity. Moreover, the performing of all the functions of a manager requires certain

communication activities through which these functions can be successfully accomplished. (Lupu, L., Lupu, M. *Impactul comunicării manageriale asupra creșterii productivității muncii în cadrul unei organizații*, <http://www.managementmarketing.ro/pdf/articole/18.pdf>)

The communication processes in which managers are involved can be considered as major links between the leader and the subordinates. Studies in organizations from developed countries show that the amount of communication activity for a successful manager is very large, as it takes up somewhere between 55 and 95% of his or her time. Therefore, following the example of an American company (Hinrichs, J.R, 1964), the weight of the communication activity in the working time of the manager is very large and varies according to the hierarchic position of the manager within the organization. Low-level managers occupy their working time with communication activities to an extent of almost 74%, while for the mid-level managers the percentage is 81%, and for the top level managers, the amount of communication activities reaches 87%.

Managerial communication is a factor of competitiveness and a strategic advantage of the organization. In his paper "Profesiunea de manager" (The Profession of Management), the author (Petrescu I., 1997) shows that the managerial activity represents a complex and continuous communication and participation process which enables the manager, the managerial team, the chiefs of departments, workshops, functional divisions, and the entire personnel of a company to meet, accept, discuss, exchange information, present and support their points of view and states of mind and learn to listen to and respect one another.

In the opinion of certain specialists (Burlacu, N., Graur, E., 2006), managerial communication is a component of managerial and organizational culture, and its specific purpose relies in increasing the performances of the organizations. The abovementioned specialists perceive managerial communication as a universal science, a sine qua-non requirement of the efficient operation of the organization and emphasize the imperative prerequisite and opportunity of relationship between manager and subordinates as dynamic factor of the managerial processes and of the economic-social efficiency.

Managerial communication, in the opinion of other authors (Câdea R., Câdea, D. 1996) must become not only a science, but also a subject that aims at providing the manager with the skills of efficient and effective communication, necessary for the successful performance of the role of leader, entrepreneur and administrator of the human resources of the company.

Ion Petrescu and Domokos Erno (1996) approach managerial communication as a link between the top management of the company and the members of the teams that are subordinate. The aforementioned authors point to the fact that, by performing this function, managerial communication must explain and justify to the members of the teams the policies, opinions and decisions of the managers, but, at the same time, must perform the function of reaction, which means to inform the top management on

the answer to their approaches. In order for the two parties to have a good collaboration, one party must understand the other.

In this complex and continuous process of communication, managers and subordinates alike discover themselves and interact, calm one other down or stimulate one another, agree and disagree, reject or accept one another in the major but also the current issues of the organization. (Cândea R., Cândea, D. 1998)

The purpose of managerial communication in all companies is to reach a correct, efficient and effective transfer of information, both horizontally and vertically, in order to fulfill in optimum conditions the external and internal requirements and to act in accordance to the managerial and organizational goals. (Niculae, T., Gherghiță I., Gherghiță D. , 2006)

Managerial communication consists not only of sending messages, but it also means changing mentalities and a psychological adaptation to the organizational objectives. The change in mentalities, thus, becomes an important aim of managerial communication. This is also since it is well known that world renowned specialists in management consider change as the dominant, essential characteristic of the 21st century. As the Greek philosopher Heraklitus has shown, even since the Antiquity "There is no permanent reality except the reality of change". However, the rhythm of change has intensified in the past years without precedent, and the pressures of the external environment trigger quick and unusual changes in all areas of activity.

Therefore, the purposes of managerial communication exist in interdependence with the general objectives of the organization: information, command, training, influence and convincing, guidance and counseling, integration and maintaining. The manager helps the useful information for these purposes to circulate, coordinates the intermediate sources of communication and ensures that the useful information reaches in the right time the right person. Moreover, the manager uses information to better explain the organizational goals to the employees, to create adhesion and the satisfaction of reaching the goals.

A healthy managerial communication must fulfill the following fundamental needs of all employees (Tureac, C.: *The management of communication*, <http://www.euroeconomicadanubius.ro/arhiva/euroeconomica%2019/6.TUREAC.pdf>):

- the need to know, which refers to the professional knowledge required to correctly fulfill the tasks that have been assigned;
- the need to understand – employees must be not only good performers, they also need to understand why a certain task is required;
- the need to express oneself – refers to the desire of all employees to transmit their opinions, suggestions but also problems to the superior.

2. The elements of the process of managerial communication

The essential structural elements of the process of communication are also valid for managerial communication. Managerial communication implies two partners,

which can be senders or receivers and equally desire, through communication, to facilitate the fulfillment of certain goals:

- ✓ the manager;
- ✓ the subordinate or the collaborator.

It is necessary to mention that the manager, through the position he or she holds, has a considerable influence over the interlocutor and, as a sender of message, the manager must be aware of this fact. Some employees perceive the manager as the main representative of authority, a wise person that guides, protects, supports and counsels. Obviously, the manager enjoys the respect, appreciation and consideration that the employees usually show.

Generally, when the leadership style of the manager is considered as authoritative, communication is affected, and can be faulty. In classical organizations, the democratic style of the manager generates a very good or good communication with the subordinates, and the permissive style (*laissez-faire*) in general leads to a very good communication.

The development of the ability of the manager to identify and control the feeling generated by his or her messages represent one of the best manners of influencing the motivation and actions of the subordinates.

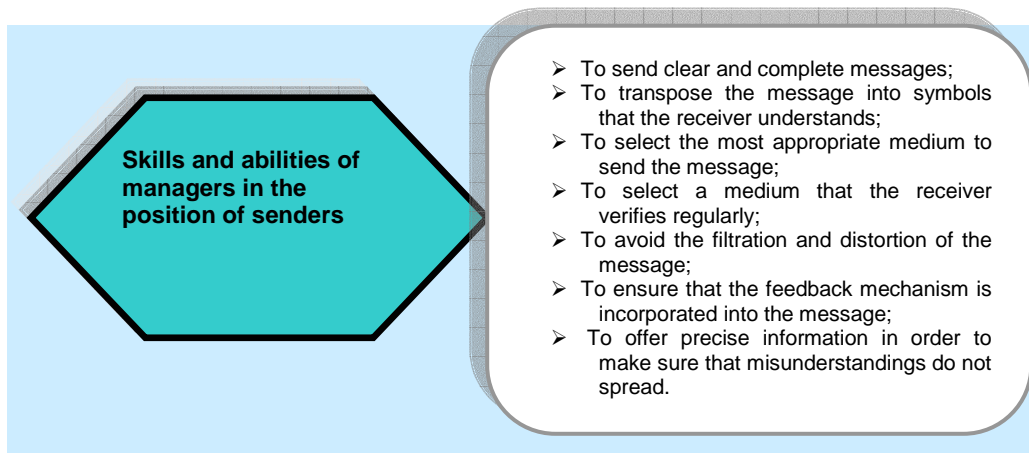
Regarding the relationship sender-receiver within the communication among managers, the difficulty of transmitting messages and information usually occurs in the case of mid-level managers. An explanation for this may be the fact that the mid-level managers are not in a comfortable position. From the point of view of the top managers, they belong to the subordinates, and from the point of view of the executives, the mid-level management holds the power of command. Therefore, they must be able to transmit upwards or downwards the important information, because their task is to give advice to some and lead the others. At this hierarchical level, the need to inform and communicate is extremely important.

Undoubtedly, the manager must undertake and follow, in time, certain projects and involve the partners in the projects, which means they must know how to communicate correctly.

3. Skills and abilities of managers in the position of senders

Organizational effectiveness and efficiency depend to a considerable extent on the ability of managers to send messages within and outside the organization. Certain skills and abilities that help improve the efficiency of the process of communication have been identified (Jones, G.R. & George, J. M. , 2008). Managers, as senders, should hold the skills and abilities presented in the following table:

Fig 1: Skills and abilities of managers in the position of senders



It is therefore obvious that (Constantinescu, D., Gîrboveanu, S., Dumitraşcu, E., 2011) being a manager that communicates perfectly means having communication skills. However, it is equally important that having communication skills cannot be done without a continuous learning. Learning must become a “fixed idea” for those that want to communicate efficiently. Obviously, we will feel a “metamorphosis” taking place following the learning process, one which we must accept as continuous and permanent. In this context, we must remember that we are born crying, not speaking. We learn to speak by imitating the others and, this is why, the learning process must never end, because the communication skills are rather acquired than inborn.

4. The style of managerial communication

The style of managerial communication can be defined (Cândea, R., Cândea, D., 1996), as the manner in which a manager communicates in a certain context. Like the content and form of the message, the style of managerial communication must serve the purpose and objectives of communication, of the sender, the situation and context of communication, and also the channel of communication used.

Each individual has a certain style of communication, formed as a consequence of education, habits, beliefs and personal purposes. They do not always ensure efficient and effective communication (Lupu, L., Lupu, M. *Impactul comunicării manageriale asupra creşterii productivităţii muncii în cadrul unei organizaţii*, <http://www.managementmarketing.ro/pdf/articole/18.pdf>)

We believe that the communication style of the manager has a strong impact not only on the efficiency of the communication act, but also of the climate of communication in general.

Specialists (Cândea, R., Cândea, D., 1996), believe that it is necessary that managers pursue a change in the subordinates but also a personal change of attitude towards the “science of communication” through becoming aware of the positive and negative effects of the own style of communication and through a greater attention

towards the necessity to develop good communication skills. A competent manager must not communicate randomly and as they wish, but according to communication strategies and styles that underpin the implementation of the organizational strategy. The communication styles used by managers generate the communication climate specific to the organization, and its performance and productivity depend on this climate.

The specialized literature and practice present a large number of types of communication, grouped according to certain criteria (Pânișoară, I., 2003)

We have considered in this paper the arrangement of the styles of communication into four categories: “blaming”, “informing-directing”, “convincing” and “problem-solving” (Cândea, R., Cândea, D. 1996): the style called “blaming” focuses on criticizing, accusing, finding the mistakes and identifying the guilty person. The manager adopts an attitude of judge, of assessor. The manager is the one that talks and does not accept answers or points of view from the receiver (subordinate). By using this style, the manager will obtain the desired effect, which means that the subordinate either will change the behavior for a short while, or will accept or will admit the accusations; the style called “informing-directing” is aimed at explaining, instructing, making decisions. The manager thinks on the message beforehand, and the subordinate must perform. The message is clear, concise and aimed at the task that the subordinate must accomplish; the style called “convincing” is aimed at obtaining an agreement, accepting a plan, performing an action, implementing a change. The manager dominates communication because he or she knows the situation and the solution. In order to convince the subordinate, the manager listens actively and provides feedback. If the arguments used in the message transmitted are rational, the manager can succeed in convincing the subordinate; the style called “problem solving”, focuses on solving the problems that occur. The manager appeals to the principles of supportive communication and none of the interlocutors dominates the communication. Communication is descriptive, based on facts, and each interlocutor expresses their opinions, even if they are opposing.

5. New technologies in managerial communication

It is obvious that new technologies of communication have a decisive influence on the manner of managerial communication.

If, some years ago, the leaders of companies started their daily activities by greeting the secretary and assembling the team of subordinates in order to gain information on the urgent matters or on the less important activities of the organization, nowadays, mid-level managers have no secretaries and face-to-face meetings are more and more rare. We see that communication in organizations takes place more through electronic mail than through face-to-face interaction.

It is obvious that computer communication and face to face communication have great differences.

The communication “human being – computer” reduces the opportunity to communicate “from person to person”, and the latter is a decisive factor in establishing and developing the personal identity of the subordinates. Computer communication eliminates the global context in which the interaction sender-receiver takes place, a contact which includes all forms of non-verbal communication (para-language, mimics, body language, gestures, look, posture etc.). This is because apart from the verbal communication, all participants to the communication process use a series of different codes, non-verbal ones, which are aimed at accompanying and modifying the meaning, of placing it in context and facilitating the understanding of the intentions of the sender.

Therefore, (Tureac,C., *The management of communication*, http://www.euroeconomica_danubius.ro/arhiva/euroeconomica%2019/6.TUREAC.pdf), words alone do not accomplish communication, as the verbal message is being transmitted together with the non verbal message. Actions speak louder than words, and the higher proportion in communication is taken by the non-verbal message, which is also the most credible one (it is possible to deduce the nervousness of a person hidden under fine humor, the struggle of an employee to prove himself or herself, even if it is hidden under the mask of apparent disregard etc.)

Although the advantages of using the Internet, fax machines, mobile phones in managerial communication are undisputable, as they speed up communication, it is important to emphasize the fact that by using them, an extremely important attribute is cancelled: that attribute is personalization.

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