Effective Communication at the Work Place : A Competitive Advantage

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Abstract

Communication is the process of sharing information, ideas, opinions, and plans between two or more people to reach an understanding. The important parts of communication are the information, ideas, opinions or plan that one must fully understand by the other party to prevent problems from occurring when the communications are not fully understood. This paper explores the employees' perception about the level of communication made by managers. Moreover, it examines the ways in which employees' usually receive most of their information.

INTRODUCTION

The greatest continuing area of weakness in management practice is the human dimension. There intends to be little understanding of the relationships between pharma managers and employees. When any problem arises, everyone acknowledges that the cause often is a communication problem. Communication refers to communications and interactions among employees or members of an organization. Real communication occurs when one listens to another person's viewpoint with empathic understanding (Rogers, 1991). Communication is responsible for holding society together. The ability to communicate enables people to form and maintain relationships. The quality of such relationships depends on the caliber of communication between the parties (Brennan, 1974). Communication is the central process through which employees share information,

create relationships, make meaning and construct organizational culture and values. The communication process is a combination of people, messages, meaning, practices and purpose and it is the foundation of modern organizations. Communication includes verbal, nonverbal, visual and electronic communication. The most common form of daily communication is interpersonal- that is, face-to-face communication (Encarta, 2005). The open communication between management and employees can engage employees and improve performance. The six established communicating principles are build communication and an integrated system connected to the business strategy; provide clarity, information and inspiration to connect head, hands, hearts and mind; use communication as a leadership alignment took; establish strategic communication competencies for leaders, managers and supervisors; analyze information flow to provide neutral, objective perspectives on critical issues; and move faster than the speed of change (Bayerlein and Gailey, 2005)

In every society, humans have developed spoken and written language as a means of sharing messages and meanings. Internal communication is more important today than in previous years, the business and market conditions are more complex. Guirdham (2005) suggested the use of elaborated codes, which typically involve use of a densely verbal style containing considerable explanation and elaboration, at the same time avoiding making assumptions. The development of a strategic internal communication strategy and its implementation provides number of benefits to organizations, such as keeping employees motivated and engaged (Clemons, 2003). The emergent communication strategy is the communication construct to achieve the desired results (King, 2010). Employees generally have their own sources and information system, separate from the management channels. These usually carry the news ahead of communications from management. This system transmits information indiscriminately. Good communication saves the company time and money, because the employees would not have to repeat the tasks. Good communication in the workplace will allow the supervisors to have better management of their time (Patrick, 2009).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is carried out with the following objectives :

1. To analyze the representatives perception about the level of communication made by managers.
2. To examine the ways in which representatives usually receive most of

their information.

3. To examine whether or not there is an internal communication gap between representatives and managers working in pharmaceutical organization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research methodology was used for the research to determine if there was a communication gap within the organization. The study is based on primary and secondary data. The major part of the data is primary in nature. The primary data has been collected through well-structured questionnaires, which were circulated to various representatives. The sample of study includes employees of a pharmaceutical organization. A total of 53 surveys were completed. Thus, sample size of the study includes 53 employees (representatives) working in a pharmaceutical organization. The employees included in study belong to Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir states of India. The reason of choosing the area is because the above area is headed by same General Manager of organization, as the company has distributed complete India into four parts, each headed by different General Manager. The representatives are supposed to report to Area Sales Manager. The reporting of area sales manager is to Regional Manager. The area selected for the purpose of study is taken care by two Regional Mangers. The entire group remains under observation of General Manager. The total sales and marketing group includes 55 representatives, 9 Area Sales Managers, 2 Regional Manager, 1 General Manager. The representatives involved included both males and females. The participants were informed that their answers will remain confidential, with the exception of the final results from all the participants.

The survey consisted of multiple choices single answer questions. The participants were asked single answer questions to discover whether or not there was an internal communication gap between employees and managers within the organisation, to analyze the employees' perception about the level of communication made by managers, to examine the ways in which employees usually receive most of their information. The secondary data was collected from marketing journals, books, published articles, reports and survey of government and non-government agencies, annual reports of companies and the Internet. Apart from this, the information was also taken from the various news items, which appeared in The Economic Times, The Pharma Pulse Express and published brochures that have been

brought out from time to time by different companies about their activities. In this study after collection of needed data, it was first tabulated and then analyzed using percentage method.

DATA ANALYSIS

The survey was performed enrolling 55 employees who had been employed within organization. A total of 53 surveys was completed and returned to the researcher. The employees responded to questions regarding the communication within their organization. The employees that responded to the survey were impressively diverse, employment ranges from few months to eleven years.

The result suggests that 49% of the employees were of opinion that communication within organization keeps them informed, 38% indicated the they receive only a limited amount of information, while 11% reported that managers doesn't tell them much at all about what is going on. Furthermore, the majority of the employees about 49% highlighted they usually believe on information provided to them by managers. While 30% respondents indicated that they sometimes believe on information provided to them by managers.

When asked how would you rate your managers' communication skills, 28% indicated excellent and 41% marked that their managers communicated very good and 19% indicated good.

As far as the ways in which employees usually receive most of their information is concerned, the majority (36%) of the employees indicated that they received most of their information through the word of mouth by colleagues, 47% marked their managers and 11% marked company meetings.

As far as satisfaction of respondents with the communication within organization is concerned, 43% respondents were neutral, while 38% were satisfied and 8% were highly satisfied. Moreover, 40% respondents were confident that some time the management considers their ideas and concerns, while 28% respondents considers that management almost never considers their ideas or concerns.

The 42% respondents indicated that whenever there was change within the organization, their managers inform them most of the time. A 9% response was given to the managers informing them all the time and 30% choose almost never informs me.

Regarding communication styles, 55% of respondents indicated that the face to face communication is most suitable for providing any information within the organization, while 45% believed that the information flow should be in written

format.

The overall result of the survey indicates the complete opposite of the rumors that were overheard. There does not appear to be a lack of communication overall.

Table 1.1

Which best describes your perception of communications within this organization?

Items response	Frequency	%
Keeps us fully informed	02	04
Keeps us fairly well informed	10	19
Keeps us adequately informed	14	26
Gives us only a limited amount of information	20	38
Doesn't tell us much at all about what is going on	06	11
Answer was unclear	01	02

N=53

Table 1.2

How do you comment about the information you receive through managers in the organization?

Items response	Frequency	%
Always believe it	08	15
Usually believe it	26	49
Sometimes believe it	16	30
Don't believe it	03	06

N=53

Table 1.3

How would you rate your manager's communication skills?

Items response	Frequency	%
Excellent	15	28
Very good	22	41
Good	10	19
Fair	04	08
Poor	02	04

N=53

Table 1.4

Which of the following sources within organization are responsible for providing information to you?

Items response	Frequency	%
Colleagues (word of mouth)	19	36
Company Newsletter	03	06
Managers	25	47
Group meetings	06	11
Company emails	00	00

N=53

Table 1.5

What is your satisfaction level to communications within this organization?

Items response	Frequency	%
Highly satisfied	04	08
Satisfied	20	38
Neutral	23	43
Dissatisfied	00	00
Highly dissatisfied	06	11

N=53

Table 1.6

To what extent, according to you, management considers your ideas and concerns?

Items response	Frequency	%
All the time	00	00
Some time	21	40
Undecided	07	13
Almost never	15	28
Never	10	19

N=53

Table 1.7

Which of the following, according to you, is the most appropriate regarding providing information by manager to you in case of change within the organization?

Items response	Frequency	%
Always inform me	05	09
Inform me most of the time	22	42
Almost never informs me	16	30
Never informs me	10	19
Unable to identify answer	00	00

N=53

Table 1.8

Which of the following communication style is most suitable for providing information within the organization?

Items response	Frequency	%
Face to face communication	29	55
Telephonic communication	00	00
Written communication	24	45
Non verbal communication	00	00

N=53

RESULTS

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study addressed the importance of internal communication and provided background information on the different ways and the different styles of communication. Needless to say, face-to-face communication always remains number one style of communicating within organizations. The lack of communication within an organization not only results in errors and missed deadlines, but also becomes the root of many other serious workplace issues, such as low employee morale and poor job performance. The researchers found that the outcome of the survey was the complete opposite to what was overheard in general conversations. Based upon the answers given in the survey, more people thought that the communication was satisfactory within the organization. Majority of the participants also felt that their manager's communication skills were good. Although they agreed that the managers communicated effectively, more employees admitted to hearing most of their

information through the word of mouth by colleagues. The participants were consistent in saying that they wanted more information about the designed marketing strategies, policy changes and procedures well in advance. Some of the respondents complained about a lack of communication when they feel as though their voice is not being heard. They also get dissatisfied in case of receiving information through their colleagues instead of their managers.

Communication is very important in every aspect of our lives. In order for any relationship to work properly, we have to learn to communicate effectively with each other. Thus, the entrepreneurs, partnerships or corporate offices to succeed, there must be effective internal communication within the organization to express ideas and concerns. Moreover, the effective internal communication provides advantages to the organizations over their competitors.

In view of the above results, to improve the internal communication within the organization, the following suggestions are proposed :-

1. The employees consistently rate effective communication between management and staff in their top expectations. Moreover, the employees also expect to be trusted and respected. The managers must communicate effectively to play a significant role in improving overall employee satisfaction by giving staff a sense of value, respect and trust.

2. The pharma managers could improve their organization's performance by involving their representatives in decision making process and becoming more receptive to listening to the subordinates. This improves overall employee satisfaction and productivity.

3. The managers must find out that their employees are interpreting them correctly. One way of doing this is to ask questions that will show the understanding level of those with whom managers are speaking. If managers are addressing a group meeting, they must allow time at the end of the meeting for questions.

4. The representatives must not be kept in the dark about important developments in the organization. Rather they must be provided any information about a change within the organization. One of the most sensitive areas in management involves how much company information should be shared with employees.

5. The pharma managers must share information with their subordinates during joint working hours and monthly meetings.

6. It is suggested that the face to face communication must be followed by written communication to avoid any kind of misunderstanding

between managers and representatives.

7. Managers must invest the necessary time to ensure that project goals and instructions are free of ambiguity and foster an environment that encourages the open exchange of ideas.

By the execution of the above proposed suggestions the pharmaceutical managers and organizations can reposition and redefine their internal communication strategies to motivate, build trust and create shared identity among their sales force. A further step in this line of research is to continue efforts to validate the internal communication gaps between managers and employees working in pharmaceutical organization. Efforts should also be made to determine the variability of employees perception according to their age and number of years in service.

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