

Skills of Communication

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The first in the series of articles on Communication was the Forms of Communication in which the author has given a description of the various forms in which communication takes place. The second was about the Mechanism of Communication in which she dealt with the mechanism of communication, the constituent elements involved in the process and the variety of physical, psychological, organisational factors that impede effective communication. Now the final of the series is about the Skills of Communication in which she elucidates the factors involved in successful communication and essentials of effective communication. With this article we come to the end of the series of articles on Communication written by Miss Daisy M. Hamesh Das.

Ed.

Finding ways to advance the science of communication demands not only a variety of talents and diversity of sources of new ideas, it certainly requires a flexibility of working methods as well. The cost of miscommunication is incalculable, not only in terms of time and money, but in misunderstanding, inefficiency and hostility. Great deal can be saved by way of efforts and energy by improving communication. Successful communication is not an easy task. Apart from using common, simple and easily understood language, it is necessary to have general knowledge of human behaviour in different environment.

Successful Communication : Communication is successful if the listener understands what the communicator wants to convey and how he should respond. This will depend on : (i) If the communicator is clear in his message and thoughts and knows how to convey it. (ii) Communicator's knowledge of the listener. (iii) A good personal reputation of the communicator which helps in creating a congenial atmosphere for communication and dialogue to take place (iv) The Communicator ensures that the receiver is fully aware of the context of the message.

Essentials of effective communication : For an individual to communicate an idea effectively, he must literally send the image that is in his own mind to the screen which is the listener's mind. For any communication to take place three things are essential, the sender who must select the best wave length, the transmitter which must be tuned for sending the messages, and the receiver must be tuned for reception. The essentials also include :

1. Clarification of the idea. The beginning of all communication is an idea. Therefore, it is important to formulate a clear idea before it is transmitted. The sender having thorough knowledge of his subject must analyse and organise his material in such a way so to know its completeness, main points and necessary details which need to be fitted into the structure.

2. Expression of ideas. In order to get across all ideas must be expressed in clear and simple language. The expression of ideas must be according to the needs of the message and the capacity of the receiver. How many ideas can be communicated at one time depends on the capacity of the receiver and also on the type of ideas to be conveyed.
3. Emotional impact : The communicator should be able to impress people with such powerful words and descriptive expressions which help to move people emotionally with inspiration.
4. Motivation : The communication must be accepted and acted upon with no reservations. A communication which is linked with the needs of the receiver is better accepted and understood. The content of communication must be so that the receiver finds it useful and valuable, and uses it to solve some of his problems. On the whole the communication should be beneficial to the listener.
5. Confidence : Communication grows better in a climate of trust and confidence. The communicator needs to develop confidence in the participants. This can only be achieved if the communicators' actions are supportive to his communication.
6. Good listening : Listening is communication. Purpose of communication is not only to be understood, but to understand others. Insistence on hearing some of the problems before reaching decision or judgement is creative listening. This helps in discovering what people want to say. It also helps in encouraging the receivers to solve their problems. in observing them and helping them in their thinking.

In an effort to communicate effectively it is worth remembering that, (i) Getting agreement between two individuals does not always mean good communication. (ii) Real understanding and effective actions increase rapidly with clear communication. (iii) Communication

is more effective in an acute phase, it often breaks down completely during a post-acute phase. (iv) Hostility mars all communications and mere rejection screens out the message. Attitudes and emotions have varied effects. A very sound reply may be prepared by the recipient in a most defensive attitude. (v) open mindedness can create apprehension and mis-understanding, as many a times people always say what they mean and say what they do not mean. (vi) Support and conviction do not always make communication easy. (vii) No matter what method of communication is used, all methods have one mechanism. (viii) The monopoly of communication is never safe in human hands. An alternative to force the major control to explain and justify the purpose of communication. (ix) Limitation of movements hinders the free flow of information. (x) The variety of the human race makes possible the development of richer means of communication.

Conclusion : One cannot communicate effectively unless one knows the fundamental principles of effective communication. One should know as to what hinders communication and what makes it more effective. Background knowledge and understanding of human behaviour develops inter-personal relationship. Psycho-social and physical factors influence health. One should have necessary information on the skills of communication, i.e., how to communicate, what to communicate, where and at what levels to get involved in communication. In order to understand this dynamic process one needs to know the importance of allied skills such as how to listen, when to listen and what to listen, what to say, how to say and when to say. As physiological communication is a vital factor in our body, so is interpersonal communication a vital process to maintain human relationship. Evidence of good communication is that it allows for testing by experience and the opinions of others. It constitutes :

1. Achievement of adequate knowledge and understanding of the particular subject for communication.
2. Development of ability to relate communication at the recipients level of understanding.
3. Clear expressions with accurate, honest spoken words and a sincere tone in voice, gesture and facial expressions. All should convey the real spirit and the content of the message.
4. Establishment of social climate. A person must feel and appear as being accepted as a worth while person in the eyes of others.
5. Firm determination to improve skills of communication.
6. Follow up the communication includes taking of all necessary steps to know if the intended message has been received, its extent of distortion and accuracy of interpretation.
7. Organization of the message for presentation with such clarification, expression and accuracy that

facilitates complete understanding and reciprocity.

8. Organizational structure conducive to effective communication so as to produce effective decision making to improve better formal communication, to increase morals of staff and promote job satisfaction.
9. Sufficient time at the communicator's disposal to determine if the message has been correctly conveyed and interpreted.
10. A uniform language which emphasizes the purpose of the message.

Every organization and institution have definite responsibility of ensuring that every person working for them is perfect in communicating skills which enables him to be truly professional in their services. To improve worker's skills in communication, he must give sufficient time and opportunities to develop intellectually and professionally. He should be encouraged to acquire full knowledge in selected aspects of social and biological sciences. Effective communication is an art on which depends the entire human interaction and also a skill on which depends the ability to communicate with an object and a purpose. It is befitting that efforts be made to develop this skill. In this electronic age many mechanical tools for communication have been developed. But what good are they if there are no technicians to use them. With complexity of equipments variety of talents, flexibility of working methods, diversity in resources, necessity of new ideas and priority of the knowledge of principles of communication ; mechanics of communication need to be further developed and cultivated to meet the human need of communicating.

(Concluded)

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