

**Note:** This handout will be included in the **FIRST MAJOR EXAM.**

## **1. IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

Ineffective communication is a major, yet avoidable, obstacle to *business productivity*. With sufficient effort, it can be turned around for the better. Management must face the challenge of formulating strategies to encourage personnel to communicate effectively. On the other hand, managers themselves have to set the example. They need to realize that successful communication is no one-way process.

### **1.1 Communication is as much a matter of human relationships as it is about transmitting facts.**

*Reciprocity* is the essence of communication, i.e. it's a two-way process involved either in oral or written communication. Managers are human beings involved with other human beings. They are more than givers of information or instructions. To communicate successfully, managers and supervisors have to understand the other person, and have to make an effort to get the other person to understand them.

## **2. FOUR STEPS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

### **2.1 Attention**

Winning the attention of the person with whom we wish to communicate is an obvious first step. In order to achieve this goal, we must first try to eliminate "noise". This includes everything that distracts, be it noise in the literal sense, physical or emotional discomfort, personal problems, negative attitudes, or distracting mannerisms or dress.

Respect for the other person is an important prerequisite for attention getting. The human greeting, or inquiry about the other person's health or personal circumstances, is an effective catalyst in this process. To be sure, if such introductions are false or stereotyped they might serve little purpose.

### **2.2 Understanding**

Achieving apprehension is a critical part of the communication process, but it is a very subtle one. Managers sometimes defend their inability to communicate by asking, "Do you understand?" This is usually an unfair question, and even the somewhat improved "What do you understand?" is often perceived as a threat.

On the other hand, if there is the right relationship between the transmitter and the receiver of a message, indirect ways of establishing the degree of understanding will present themselves.

### **2.3 Assimilation**

Often, a person has understood a message perfectly, but he or she has not accepted it. Alternatively, it is accepted in a half-hearted manner, without any conviction. Communication is still incomplete if he has not assimilated the information into his own being.

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The initiator has achieved an ideal result if the recipient has assimilated the message to the extent that he becomes one with the sender. Assimilation of a concept presented by management, or by another worker, goes a long way towards ensuring active participation, and harmonious cooperation, in the workplace.

### 2.4 Action

This is the final step in the communication process. It is that ingredient which propels abstract or theoretical knowledge into the world of reality. So often a good idea in business meets with acceptance or agreement, but is not translated into action. If assimilation has indeed taken place, action on the part of the receiver should follow inevitably. This two-way nature of communication applies here as well. The originator of the message must play his part, too, with much support and encouragement.

### WHAT HAVE I LEARNT TODAY?

### REFLECTION TASK

1. Refer to Chapter 1 of Textbook p. 24 under "Spotlight 3".
2. Go through the four case scenarios as these are examples of analysis questions.
3. Be familiar with the 3Ps model, i.e. Problem, Process & Product.

THINK . KNOW . ACT

