

The aim of every business is to satisfy her customers and customer satisfaction cannot be achieved without effective Business communication which is also essential for business growth. Undermining business communication will result in bad business relationship and ultimate business failure.

Business Communication

An Essay

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Introduction:

Business communication is essential for business growth and survival. It is not just about the communication but about effective business communication which would enhance the achievement of business objective by creating an effective business relationship between employees and ultimately the customers. The aim of any business is to satisfy her customers and a key component to achieving this is by communicating clearly and unambiguously for clarity and understanding. As humans, even animals alike also communicate in one way or the other, our heart desires and needs can only be passed across to others through communication. A company's product or service can only be made attractive to the customers through business communication. Employee's relationship, norms and values of an organization can only be implemented through communication as such the importance of business communication need not be over emphasized.

In any business, there are various forms of communication ranging from email, signages, letters, digital display to verbal communication. A good business communication also translates to good customer satisfaction which not only benefits the business but also the customer. When communication in an organization is not good or cordial, there is the tendency that employees in customer-facing roles won't have the information they need. Secondly, customers will sense the low employee morale resulting in a negative experience for the customer. Businesses fail due to poor communication. Imagine a front desk officer who is rude to customers, this employee by role is the first contact person to external world and when the attitude is bad, it reflects bad organizational behaviour and the importance attached to her customers.

Considering business communication strategies, for an organization to build a better culture and workplace peace, strategic communication becomes paramount.

Businesses that communicate clearly, effectively, and transparently have better work climate and environment with better employee motivation and work satisfaction. When organizations neglect or pay less attention to business communication, things certainly fall apart, workplace culture wouldn't be enhanced, there will be low engagement level and motivation, as well as high employee turnover with attendant low customer and employee satisfaction – the end thereof is total failure of the business. Therefore any business that wishes to be a high performing organization and result oriented enterprise must embrace business communication as a tool for sustainable performance.

The Concept of Business Communication:

Communication started from the time of creation of man, it stemmed from the need for man to communicate and exchange information with his surrounding and contemporaries. Business communication on the other hand emanated from the need for businesses to relate favorably with her customers and employees. As a concept, business communication means more than just a message or communication. Business communication means the mutual understanding of the subject of discussion in a formal setting and therefore is most imperative to get the communication right. Everything in the workplace is dependent on good communication across teams and individuals, from the planning stages of any activity right through to the reporting of its success. There is also the customer side to it whereby communication can make or mar the relationship resulting in customer dis-satisfaction and consequent loss in market share.

The need to communicate within the ambience of organizational norms and legal framework reinforced the need for business communication. This has been an attempt to avoid customers dissatisfaction which may lead to litigations and embarrassment to a company thus undermining the corporate existence of such business. There is regular flow of data, information, and communication from suppliers to service providers, from organizations to employees and customers, from government and non-governmental agencies to company departments and so on. In all, feedback and agreement is required on daily communication today and the number of individuals involved in the chain of communication can be stunning these days. As far as business communication is concerned, different level and formats or approach exist. A business has to determine where, when, how, what and who should do the communication in today's business world. The aim is to ensure that there is no breach of norms and legal requirements especially as it relates to corporate citizenry. It is therefore necessary and expedient that a business communicates effectively within a business environment to ensure not only efficient use of business time, ensuring that the subject of the communication is properly delivered but also to avoid misunderstandings and the mistakes associated with miscommunication.

From the foregoing and in managing our business communication, it is imperative that we adapt a style that sets in freedom of purpose among the sender and the recipient depending on who you are communicating with, and what the aims of the communication are. Differing from personal communication, business communication must come with an objective and end goal. Therefore, regulation is required in business

communication to avoid acting or communicating ultra vires and to ensure that the main goal of the communication is achieved. Business communication in a workplace follows certain rules and procedure put in place by the company to establish good business relationship and practice. In those day before the advent of digital communication, business communication was limited to telephone conversations and paperwork, but today, there are series of channels of communication ranging from email, video conferencing and instant messaging to verbal means.

Definition of Communication:

The word communication emanated from the Latin word *communicare*, which means to share, or to make common. Communication is defined as the process of sending or receiving information through a means understandable by the parties involved in the communication. Communication is a two-way process and the relationship that involves interaction between participants with the following elements duly complied with a sender, a message, a medium, a receiver, channel and feedback.

In communication, the process is a key factor that determines what is being communicated and how it would be perceived. The process used when communicating to one individual (face-to-face) cannot be the same when communicating with a group of individuals or when communicating virtually. This is because there must be a consideration for everyone's characteristics and perceived level of the individual in the scheme of things. This is even more expedient in when the communication is business focused. A lot of factors must be considered when having business communication especially with regards to ethics and norms of business and employment processes.

Next to process is understanding of the message being communicated. To understand is to perceive, to interpret, and to relate our perception and interpretation to what we already know. The level and speed of analyzing and understanding the message also varies and is directly linked to the form of communication. Understanding the words and the concepts or objects they refer to is an important part of the communication process. So, as a component of communication, understanding plays a key role in the process otherwise the parties in this process will not come to a common ground on the subject matter. It is also pertinent to put into consideration the meaning of the message being conveyed for instance the word “note” can mean a mark or token by which a thing may be known, it can also mean a sign made to call attention, it can also be a brief remark, also it can mean a small piece of writing intended to assist the memory etc. So, meaning of the message is key to understanding and the process of communication.

The importance of Business Communication:

The importance of business communication in an organization can be seen in the below points:

- a) **Communication increases productivity:** Communication enhances the understanding of business objectives and goals. Effective communication details the tasks and roles of members of the team and clearly defines what the aims are. Teaming also requires good communication to thrive. It is essential to foster good employer and employee relationships and by so doing, the requirement from both employer and employee is understood, thus with clear communication of objectives, productivity is maximized.

- b) **Increases the number of customers:** The aim of every business is to attract more customers by assuring customers satisfaction and by doing so, market share is increased. Organizations sell their products by communicating the benefits of their products and services to customers. This could come in different forms viz advertising, direct marketing to potential customers, sales promotion, visuals and audio visuals etc. Through effective Business communication, number of customers is increased which positively impacts market share of the organization.
- c) **Enhances business partnerships:** In business, there are several partners who support the business in one form or the other. These partners range from vendors or suppliers to clients and regulatory bodies. Business Communication also improves partnerships in business. An organization may attract more partners, business associates and customers through the effective communication of their corporate objectives and values. The core values and corporate objectives of an organization play a major role in determining the values the organization can deliver thus giving the business a competitive advantage. Corporate communication enhances organizational results because it pulls together entities of like minds and harnesses the benefit of numbers in delivering the desired results.
- d) **Facilitates innovations in business:** Every learning organization has innovation as a key factor in the growth of the business. Business communication enhances innovations in Business as it encourages employees to suggest new

ideas and ways of doing things to deliver superior performance. New product development is innovation would require effective communication to launch and sell the idea to new customers.

- e) **Information exchange:** For exchange of information between employee and employers, organization and customers, business and associates, vendors or partners, business communication enhances the exchange of information amongst the various stakeholders listed above. The nature of information exchange in business is distinct from the exchange between individuals because that of the business follows a designated pattern to ensure that corporate values are not undermined.

- f) **Support Setting up of plans and policies:** Every corporate organization sets yearly plans and objectives to be achieved for that year as a measure of success. Objectives will remain in the domain of conception if not communicated. Policies of the business would only be made clear to all stakeholders through effective business communication for it to be understood and implemented by all.

- g) **Enables implementation of plans and policies:** Through effective business communication, policies and procedures are cascaded to employees so that everyone will be on the same page as regards goals achievement and deliveries. With business communication, plans and actions are communicated to both internal and external stakeholders to ensure that business objectives and customers interest are fully represented to move the organization forward.

- h) **Encourages high performance from employees:** Effective business communication plays a key role in increasing encouraging world class performance from employees. Through effective business communication, employees come to terms with the need of the business thereby contributing their best to the growth of the organization. It is only through communication that employee's knowledge would improve, problem definition will be clear to all, and solutions proffered to problems.
- i) **Enables goals achievement:** When organizational goals are defined, it must be communicated in clear language for employees to understand, the what, the why, the when, the where and how the goals would be achieved and by so doing, enthusiasm is energized to go for it because the understanding exists. Nothing great can ever be achieved without enthusiasm, clear communication encourages this purpose.
- j) **Helps in solving problems or issues:** Most problems in life emanate from poor communication or lack of communication. Bad communication is a problem on its own. Most of the problems that exist in the world today can only be solved by communicating clearly and precisely. In organizational setting, communication helps to solve industrial problems. Values and behaviors of the organization must be communicated to avoid conflict of interests and process. They form the guiding principles of the organization.

- k) **Improves worker-management industrial relations:** In many organizations, industrial relation issues exist because of lack of effective business communication. There should be cordial relationship between the employer and employees to enable the growth of the business. For a business to thrive, industrial relations should not be downplayed rather, it should be given its rightful place in the organization.
- l) **Reduces chances of conflicts:** Clear communication eliminates conflicts in that there is an understanding of both parties on the subject matter. When issues or subjects are not made clear to the parties or there is lack of understanding of the crux of the matter, it forms the recipe conflict because as humans, it is only through communication we can understand each other, we are not God to that can read the mind of individual for a better understanding of the thoughts and intentions of each person.
- m) **Increases employee satisfaction level:** An understanding of an organization's goals, norms and values is enough motivation for employees, also guaranteeing satisfaction because employees feel the sense of belonging and part of the business. They feel respected for being carried along in the policy implementation in the organization.
- n) **Employee loyalty is improved:** With clear communication on the objectives of the organization and the breakdown of such objectives into key performance indicators (KPI) which are further classified into individual performance scorecard and communicated to the employees as yearly goals that would determine the

performance of every employee based on the percentage achievement of the goals. This goes a long way to help employees understand that performance and loyalty are tied and there is no other means of assessment except through achievement of hard numbers set in the score card, by so doing, employee loyalty is enhanced.

o) Enhances efficiency of managers and leads to effective

leadership: Organizations rely on effective communication to enhance leadership and performance. It assists in ensuring good leadership by ensuring effective planning, directing, organizing, controlling. So long as communication is effective, it would automatically result in effective leadership because leadership is majorly about effective communication, it also the only element that distinguish leaders. From the foregoing, qualitative leadership activities, a proper and smooth system of communication in business has become expedient.

p) Enhances proper functioning of different departments: Business communication assists various departments of a firm to understand their roles and responsibility and avoid departmental clashes and intra-wrangling. The various objectives of individual departments is made clear through effective business communication. when information is shared effectively, the different departments of any business e.g., accounts, finance, purchase, operations, HR, IT, and production, etc. can do their tasks more accurately and timely.

Methods of Communicating in Business:

1. Face-to-Face or in-person Business Communication: This is the most common and the most preferred form of business communication because all the elements are present, it is instant, and the feedback is also immediate. Face-to-face communication is seen in meetings, conferences, trainings, formal gatherings, individual verbal communications, body languages etc. this method is generally fast, and understanding can be checked immediately. Also, non-verbal communication in business is part of in-person communication and comes in form of gestures, commendations, applauds, handshakes and tap at the back. Good listening skills are also an element in better in-person communication. Most of the business communication includes listening skills to understand fast discussions.

2. Communication by email system: Today, e-mail is the most widely used form of business communication in organizations. There are always mail exchanges between employees from different departments, satellite branches and headquarters of any business. Same goes for customers of the company in that e-mail formalizes that communication between these stakeholders and serves as documented evidence of the interaction. It is so fast and can handle multiple communications at the same time, it is therefore considered as one of the preferred methods in business communication. The conversation can involve several people and is favorable for “RACI” (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed) application.

3. Web and video conferencing: Web conferencing which has facility for video coverage uses internet to function and there is opportunity to see that parties to the

discussion physically via videos. The method became so valued due to the advent of Covid-19 Pandemic, as such it has become a widely used option for communication in meetings, conferences, presentations, seminars, and delivering training. You can share your files for those invited to the meeting to see, real-time chatting, recording, etc. You can join such interaction from any part of the world so long as there is internet coverage, and you have the link to the meeting. This method of business communication is effective irrespective of the location of the those involved. Web conferencing is done by using the phone (teleconferencing), laptop/computers and or video equipment (videoconferencing). In the workplace and when it not feasible for employees to attend physically, teleconferencing method of business communication becomes handy. This also saves travel expenses as people who often require extensive traveling for business purposes so they can communicate through teleconference by sitting in their office.

4. Written communication: Written business communication is the next oldest form of communication after verbal means and it is a formal and detailed form of communication than other methods. There are various types of written communication like letters, posters, brochures, leaflets, banners, etc. There are skills associated with writing a formal communication. For instance, a written communication should have the following conciseness, Clarity, tone, active voice, grammar, and punctuation.

5. Other methods: Apart from the afore-mentioned methods, there are other business communication methods like an instant messaging system, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok etc. They are all easy to use but rely heavily on mobile data to function.

Depending on the parties using the communication platform, there could be individualized patterns of language in use and sometimes cultures and age group detects the way the discussion goes, there is therefore no formal means of communicating in these methods.

Functions of Business Communication:

1. Used to communicate employees job functions and roles: To engage new employees, employment letter must be issued stating terms of employment and job description to guide the employee on his roles and responsibilities – this is called contract of employment. It is important that employees have clarity of their roles and responsibilities, this is one of the functions of business communication. For team members to function properly and deliver on their tasks, an understanding of assigned tasks must be clear. The clarity will motivate them into performing well on the assignment and contribute to the development of the organization.

2. Providing adequate feedback: Employees and customers require regular and adequate feedback to understand the level of their contribution to the development of the business. For the employees, they also need regular feedback on their performances in relation to their assigned objectives for the business. Customers on the other hand need feedback on how their issues and orders are being resolved, they also need information on new product development, price changes and reformulations of existing products. Feedback helps employees to understand their current skill set, strengths and also, they can fill any gap in case of any shortage of required skills.

3. Convincing and winning clients: One of the roles of business communication is to ensure that customers and clients are drawn to the company for business continuity.

Business communication is used to convince prospective customers, clients and business partners in order to finish a business deal or transaction. This is a specialized communication and can be in written or oral form. This is where the role of Sales employees come into play, they can reach out to customers and clients on phone, social media chats and other means of communication to woo the customers to the company side. Both credibility and emotions are an important element of this function of communication. This form of communication can make or mar the organization's image.

4. Employee motivation for better decision-making: Business communication enhances employee motivation through clear understanding of objectives and tasks to be carried out. If objectives are made clear, there is confidence which comes with understanding which helps the employee to make decisions that are worthwhile and beneficial to the business. Employee's reward and recognition, bonus and salary increment all come as a form of communication and these in no less manner encourages the employee to work assiduously and tenaciously to achieve his given tasks and goals.

5. Building social bonds: Business communication essentially supports social bonding amongst employees of different culture and background. Some organizations have an open culture or work environment in which employees from all levels can communicate with each other and their superiors freely. Social bonding creates that atmosphere of understanding and adjustments to tolerate and manage individual differences. A bonded team delivers on their tasks and goals than an unbonded team.

Essential Components of Business Communication:

The Source: The source is the origin of the information as far as the receiver is concerned. The person delivering the message must consider the object of the message, the audience, and the environment in which the message is to be delivered. The mode of dressing and the composure of the sender is also important especially in verbal face-to-face communication as this tends to form noise and distraction to the receiver. Also, the sender would also watch the reaction of the audience to determine if the message has been received or not so that he can give further clarification or elucidate further incase the message was not well understood.

The Message: The message is the meaning, or the sensual signals produced by the source for the receiver or audience. The message must be clear to the audience of the receiver, you have communicated if the message is well understood. Depending on the mode of delivery of the message – verbal and written methods cannot have the same approach otherwise, they would be conveying different messages other than the intended. Style of writing, punctuations and clarity are key elements of written communication. To draw the attention of the audience, you may choose to pre-empt them by talking verbally about an interesting issue most of them are aware of and are interested in. By so doing, you would have refocused their attention to you. Depending on the mode of communication, it is important that elements which would support understanding of the message are considered.

Channel: The way and way a message travels between the source and the receiver is the channel. Several channels exist but depending on the objective and the catchment

audience, a suitable channel is chosen for the message to be appropriately delivered and understood. We have verbal, visual, audio visual, written and orals channels. The choice of channel is the prerogative of the sender or source. For instance, television combines an audio signal you hear with a visual signal you see. Together they convey the message to the receiver or audience. Also, when you speak or write, you are using a channel to convey your message. Spoken channels include face-to-face conversations, speeches, telephone conversations and voice mail messages, radio, public address systems, and voice over Internet protocol. Written channels include letters, memorandums, purchase orders, invoices, newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, e-mail, text messages, tweets, etc.

Receiver: The receiver is the person for which the message is intended, he or she receives the message from the source, he analyses and process the message and gives feedback to the source as a confirmation that the message is understood. For the source to have a positive outcome regarding the message he is sending, he must consider the circumstances of the receiver especially if he is distressed for instance or in a bad mood. The environment must also be considered – a noisy environment may be a source of distraction – all these refer to verbal and face-to-face communication. Body language sends faster message because it can quickly be noticed by the eyes. As a receiver, you must listen and pay attention to be able to understand the object of the message. When delivering a speech for instance, the nonverbal responses of your listeners can serve as clues on how to adjust your opening. As the source, you must put

yourself in the shoes of your audience to be able to capture their attention. It is even worse when you are communication to someone who is higher in authority than you.

Feedback: Through feedback, the sender can confirm if he has been understood or not. The feedback comes from the receiver sometimes willingly or in the quest to confirm understanding of the message. In a situation where there is no voluntary feedback, the sender must initiate the request for such feedback to from the receiver. When you respond to the source, intentionally or unintentionally, you are giving feedback. It consists of the messages, gestures or body language sent to the source, it could be verbal or non-verbal, it could be by sign or any other means, but the aim is for the sender and receiver to be on the same page.

Environment: The environment is the spatial outlay where the communication happened. Environment includes materials things found around, if in a room for example, chairs, tables, paintings decorations etc. form part of the environment. So many things can form part of the environment including the mode of dressing of the source and the recipient. If the room is filthy, congested and unkept, these characteristics can affect the effectiveness of communication because they will all appear as noise. The choice of environment for communication should be given adequate consideration to make the most of it.

Context: The context of the communication is what the receiver expects. If you leave your home to a market to buy some goods, the context falls withing market communication just like a student who leaves his house to a school to learn, the context of learning communication here is the classroom environment. You cannot be

discussing music in a hospital, that will not be the right context. The context of the message must be right and varies from individual to individual.

Interference: This appears in the form of noise and can emanate from anywhere.

Interference tends to distort the communication process by diverting the attention of the source or the receiver. It could come from within the individual or from the surrounding. When a person is having some inner thoughts during communication, it can affect his hearing or communication style. Distractions and psychological influences are part of the environment especially, when the receiver is not emotionally stable or going through one challenge and the other, it becomes difficult to get the person's attention.

Psychological noise is what happens when your thoughts occupy your attention while you are hearing, or reading, a message. Noise interferes with normal encoding and decoding of the message carried by the channel between source and receiver.

What I learned from the course:

Business communication is essential in corporate and non-corporate environment of business. It is important that the modes of communication in businesses are clearly understood by stakeholders to avoid throwing the company into a mess and embarrassment that may result in litigations and customers dissatisfaction and eventual loss of market share. No business can function effectively without business communication. From recruitment to induction, from role assignment to job description, from business objective to individual performance scorecard and finally to customers satisfaction and empathy. Communication in business is a skill which must be learnt by everyone in business beginning from an understanding of the business itself to the

understanding of the environment upon which the business operates. Business communication is needed to convince and win clients, motivate employees, communicate goals and objectives, and relate favorably with governmental agencies and statutory bodies. There is actually nothing that happens in life without communication just as business cannot happen without business communication.

How I would apply the knowledge to study better at AIU:

With the learnings from this course, I should be able to communicate effectively with my fellow students and be able to contribute my learnings in any business discourse. It is true that AIU is an academic environment, but it is vicariously a business environment. The attendance of AIU virtual symposiums and other forms of knowledge sharing are all about communication which will enhance my studies and improve knowledge. Sharing my experience with AIU community also tends toward my communication acumen. Communication is a key ingredient of my course of study and cannot be downplayed. My intended thesis proposal, all assignments done so far and other academic lectures and books I have read all points to communication without which I wouldn't have achieved anything by now. It will help me interact with co students, tutors, and course advisors.

Conclusion:

Business communication has featured prominently in the corporate discourse and business engagements of today. It is an essential process of business management and customer relationship. Businesses that want to grow exponentially must dwell more on effective business communication by having a communication policy which every

employee will follow and adopt as a means of interaction and reaching out to colleagues, clients, and customers. For business objectives to be met, customer relationship improved, market share improved, employees motivated to deliver superior performance, and corporate objectives achieved, business communication must be given its pivotal place in the building and periphery of the corporate entity.

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