Importance of Internal Communication within an Organisation

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Introduction

Internal communication in simple words is communicating with all the possible way and channels of communication within the organisation, there may be many departments, office's all over the country or globe, which includes ample of mass working, but the focus of this internal communication system should be that every person eligible for any new updates/upgrades or any other kind of change in the organisation which keeps on happening from time to time basis should be well communicated with all these mentioned above.

Internal communication does not only mean communicating in some of the official ways such as meetings or conferences or updating through news letters or with putting just a white paper with some prints on a notice board where there are chances of it being neglected/oversight. As mentioned, it is not one way communication, hence here it is not only the top level management who communicates with the other but it's the other way where there are constant interactions between all the levels of management with a valid meaning related to the working of the organisation. With all the communication ways such as meetings, memo's, telecommunications, etc body language, pleasantries and gossip also play a very important role.

How significant is internal communication?
Internal communication is significant for building a strong block of the organisational culture. Internal communication system is designed in such a way that it should reach all the possible candidates in the organisation. These days the most priority in the organisation is effective internal communication.

The more effective the internal communication within the organisation the more quick it is to communicate any changes happening in the company. Hence it then becomes easy for all the interactions between all the levels of management. Personal interaction is also an important key in the internal communication system. The best thing about this is again that communication flows in all directions rather then up to down or vice versa.

Change within the organisation.
Change being the only constant in every part of life, has to occur every place and any time in all the sections. Big firms it may be manufacturing based or service industry, all have multiple processes which functions and goes through thousands of transactions and activities every day. Greater the functioning of any organisation the more it tends to change policies and practices of particular process depending on the invention of technology and its implementation in the process from time to time. Development, expansion and diversification of the organisation also have a great impact of change in it. Government laws, change in the method of production, servicing

methods, outside environment etc changes the overall functioning of the company. Change is also necessary for the organisations to grow in future. Old

Hence the organisation in this perspective should make it a point that all the possible changes happening in the company are conveyed to all the candidates working for that particular part where the change has taken place.

Steps involved in change and how communication should be handled at each level

- Clarity is the message to be delivered: - The change is first communicated/known to the top level management or the immediate supervisor who is responsible for that part of work where implementation of the change happened is a necessity and should be conveyed to all related to it. These people who are responsible for sending message across should be clear about the message which is to be transmitted among others.
- Method: - The method chosen for delivering the message should be proper i.e. should be accessible to all the people and by proper channel where all of them can understand its operation. In all it should suit the circumstances.
- It should be kept in mind that when the message is sent by the sender, after receiving it, the receiver should be open to communicate back in case of any doubts or questions to be raised regarding the same matter.
- Communication technology systems or other communication materials are available to use throughout the department/process where the message of change has to be conveyed.
- Complicated way or using hi-fi modern technology for communications may be a problem for some people, hence should be avoided in considering the steps for communication.
- Communication should be in a simplified, concise and precise form so that all the people can understand and actively take part.

Effective internal communication

Effective internal communication is where all the candidates, they may be the managers, employees or the volunteers who actively participates and are focused on the goals of the organisation and all involved has the same object to be established. Effective internal communications builds a strong bridge to efficient working and growing of the organisation. It also helps the working staff to identify the change properly and accomplish goals and missions, thus making a difference in the overall effort and efficiency of the company. Everyday effective communications reduces conflicts and contradicting idea's which and gives emphasis to what is important for the organisation. All the companies may not get all the benefits of the effective internal communication but its still helps the organisation build a strong culture where people involved are working towards a common goal.

Different Communication Supports

There are many types of communication supports that can be used within the organisation. They can be classified into many categories. Communication can be verbal, non-verbal, visual, audio and many others.

CD-ROM/Pen Drives/Hard Drives/Flash Sticks :- Important or confidential communication are communicated by these devices personally. It can be used to transfer graphic's, video, audio, codes, final statements, etc.

Letters/memos/reports: this is based fto convey short meaningful message where some feedback is expected and this category can be classified as a interactive one.

Meetings: Three or more people meeting personally, for growth of organisation and many other perspective.

Manuals: Large volumes of information is reffered by manuals which are paper based documents.

Audio tape/CD: Playback used for the training or any other stuff which uses cassette/CD's.

Video: Playback of video's for explanation of the product or for a training purpose as well where VCR/DVD and other video players are used.

Printed materials: Prints are taken on paper to distribute certain information.

Fax: Copying the paper through telephonic system's from one place to another has been one of the important means of communication all over the world. This is one of the fastest means to send and receive documents.

Intranet: The use of internet and web technology used within an organisation assumptions are made that audio and video cannot be transferred but is majorly used for business transactions and to send and receive files which convey a business meaning.

Radio: Advertising of the organisation can be done through the broadcast of radio voice transmissions.

E-mail: One of the best n modern means of communications to receive and send messages instantly all over the world within less than minute. This way of communication is used to also send documents, audio and videos.

Video conferencing: Meeting of people with video and audio from a long distance for a business purpose.

TV: Television can be used for many purposes of communications. Marketing and Advertising is done on a large scale all over. It is also used for visuals all over the organisation. Video conferencing is also uses TV as a means to see and communicate all over the world.

One-to-ones: Face to face, meeting of two people, interviews, group discussions, debates, etc.

Phone: Conversations between two or more people within the organisation or outside.

Impact of change in the communication process
Any changes in the organisation has to be conveyed to all the people who are responsible for the implementation of the change happening. How to communicate this change is a point where the management has to have a proper plan/strategy. Change in this context can be confidential or general. Proper means of communication should be selected to communicate the change. There can be possibilities where the change cannot be communicated with the present communication means/tools in the organisation. Purchases of new communicative products may b necessary. Different means are supposed to be used communicating at each level of management, it is not

necessary that all the change taking place is to be conveyed to all the employees. Hence it should be filtered and proper channels should be used accordingly.

Example: - Bank of America, where in the voice process there happens a lot of changes within short interval of time. It is based on the counselling/customer service/collection to/from the customers who has mortgage with the band. Different rules/programs/fluctuations in the interest rates/refinancing of loans etc used to take place very often. Communication in this context of change is not that easy for the managers as the schedule fixed for the working employees are logged in on the system and are on calls all the time of their shift. In between that they cannot be communicated with any urgent change. Hence the very next day/after the shift there is a briefing arranged for all the teams working under this process. This may lead to irrelevant/old information being conveyed to the customers as of that date and hence for some time being. Therefore, there is a big impact of change on the communication process which leads to passing of wrong information throughout the chain.

Impact of change in the organisation makes communication a necessity calling a meeting to discuss as how to communicate this change. Hence this change to be communicated also starts with a communication process as meeting in this case.

It starts when one feels uneasy or concerned about the situation of change within the organization or outside the organisation. Then one realises that some action needs to be taken to CHANGE the present situation. Studying the situation in depth and make a plan to convey the CHANGE for betterment . Implementing the plan by suitable action.

Reviewing the situation and continuing the process after communicating it with all the employees responsible and give the training if required for the implementation of this change.'

(Fenil Shah :- Senior Manager ' ATLASCOPCO)

Obstacles or challenges that can be met through the different communication supports used in an internal communication system in a context of change.
Sender :- When the sender is not able to properly understand the change and still communicates. Either the message communicated is not proper or it has not been put down properly.

Medium/channel :- Wrong selection of medium to send the message. Interruption or signal failure or server problems leads to improper internal communication. This regards in delay of message or inaccuracy of message to be communicated.

Oversight :- Notices put up on the board may be overlooked by certain employees which gives a negative impact on the work where that particular change is to be implemented.

Improper regard :- Management takes lightly to communicate this change on time resulting in delay or sometimes does not communicate due to overload of work and hence forgetting to convey the change.

Language :- Language should be easy and in proper context so that everyone understands it.

Audio :- Disturbance/Unclear audio may not convey message clearly which leaves a doubt of the listener.

Fear :- Small employees who did not understand the change message may have the fear to go to the immediate supervisor and clear the doubts may be because of the fear of being insulted or improper relationship.

Poor Listening - Poor listening can sabotage any attempt at communication. We all do it: we hear a little and then "fill in" what we think the rest will be, without really listening to what's actually being said.

Information source :- The source of information is the human mind. It is possible that if this source does not want to communicate the message as it has to be. There are chances he may make some alterations in the change which has to be made within the process.

There are many other stages where loads of obstacles interrupt the communication process when there is a change. The statges may be lined as follows :-

1. Outgoing message
2. Transmitter
3. Outgoing signal
4. Channel
5. Incoming signal
6. Receiver
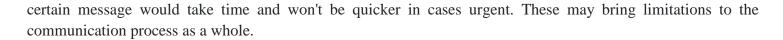7. Incoming message
8. Destination

The challenges that can be met when dealing with an international team
Language :- Language can be a big challenge when dealing with the international team. Even if the language is the same, accent of speaking may have a huge difference which at once may be difficult to understand. Incase of language being different, it is very difficult then to communicate directly but should rather have a common team who deals with the translation of language and then forwards it to the people concerned.

Example :- Bank of America, where in the voice process there is a special Spanish team to deal with the customers who does not know the language English.

Culture :- time and space, personal responsibility and fate, face and face-saving, and nonverbal communication -- are much more complex than it is possible to convey. Each of them influences the course of communications, and can be responsible for conflict or the escalation of conflict when it leads to miscommunication or misinterpretation. A culturally-fluent approach to conflict means working over time to understand these and other ways communication varies across cultures, and applying these understandings in order to enhance relationships across differences.

Time Difference :- Communication may not be possible at all time when dealing with the team abroad. This is because of the time difference between the countries all over the world. Hence communication then becomes a problem for communicating or discussing some urgent business matter. Also in this case, getting a response for a

certain message would take time and won't be quicker in cases urgent. These may bring limitations to the communication process as a whole.

Recommendations

- Communicate consistently, frequently, and through multiple channels, including speaking, writing, video, training, focus groups, bulletin boards, Intranets, and more about the change.
- Communicate all that is known about the changes, as quickly as the information is available. Make clear that your bias is toward instant communication, so some of the details may change at a later date. Tell people that your other choice is to hold all communication until you are positive about the decisions.
- Provide significant amounts of time for people to ask questions, request clarification, and provide input. If you have been part of a scenario in which a leader presented changes, on overhead transparencies, to a large group, and then fled, you know what bad news this is for change integration.
- Clearly communicate the vision, the mission, and the objectives of the change management effort. Help people to understand how these changes will affect them personally. (If you don't help with this process, people will make up their own stories, usually more negative than the truth.)
- Recognize that true communication is a 'conversation.' It is two-way and real discussion must result. It cannot be just a presentation.
- The change leaders or sponsors need to spend time conversing one-on-one or in small groups with the people who are expected to make the changes.
- Communicate the reasons for the changes in such a way that people understand the context, the purpose, and the need. Practitioners have called this: 'building a memorable, conceptual framework,' and 'creating a theoretical framework to underpin the change.'
- Provide answers to questions only if you know the answer. Leaders destroy their credibility when they provide incorrect information or appear to stumble or back-peddle, when providing an answer. It is much better to say you don't know, and that you will try to find out.
- Leaders need to listen. Avoid defensiveness, excuse-making, and answers that are given too quickly. Act with thoughtfulness.
- Make leaders and change sponsors available, daily when possible, to mingle with others in the workplace. .
- Communication should be proactive. If the rumor mill is already in action, the organization has waited too long to communicate.
- Provide opportunities for people to network with each other, both formally and informally, to share ideas about change and change management.
- Publicly review the measurements that are in place to chart progress in the change management and change efforts.
- Publicize rewards and recognition for positive approaches and accomplishments in the changes and change management. Celebrate each small win publicly.

References

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