

Organizational Behaviour
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Lecture - 38
Communication - Part 3

Warm welcome to this lecture series on Organizational Behaviour. We are in the chapter on Communication and this is going to be your last lecture in this chapter.

Outline



- The process of interpersonal communication
- Communication Styles
- Paralinguistic and Non-verbal communication
- The communication climate
- Common information effect
- The hidden profile paradigm
- Managing team meetings



I will quickly summarize, what happened in the previous lecture.

Process and components



- Sender and receiver
- Message: a purpose to be conveyed
- Encoding: converting a message into symbols
- Channel: the medium a message travels along
- Decoding: translating a sender's message
- Noise: any disturbance that interfere with the transmission, receipt, or feedback of a message



We looked at the process and components of communication process, the interpersonal communication process. We looked at each of those components and how to optimally use them, so that effective communication happens between people in work place.

Communication styles



- Driver – direct and task oriented
- Animated – enthusiastic and relationship oriented
- Amiable – supportive and avoids change and confrontation
- Analytical – accurate and detail oriented



We also looked at, the different communication styles people adopt in their interpersonal communication, more specifically in the context of organizations.

We also looked at, the suitability of these styles in different cultures and how culture and the communication context plays a very important role in deciding which of these styles will be useful.

Paralinguistic communication



- Very powerful mode of communication
- Major part of our communication is non-verbal
- Body language, Gestures, Facial expressions
- Vocal Cues, Tone of voice, Inflection, Pauses, Emphasis
- Punctuates verbal messages like exclamation marks, question marks, boldface



We also looked at, a very interesting topic called paralinguistic communication. Verbal communication in terms of vocal cues, tone of voice, inflection things like that and also non verbal communication in terms of body languages, gestures, facial expressions and things like that.

Non-verbal communication



- Proxemics: the study of spatial interrelationships.
- Kinesics: the study of the role of body movements, such as winking, shrugging, etc., in communication.
- Silence: affects timing and turn-taking during discourse
- Symbols: Clothing/Hairstyles/Cosmetics/Artifacts



We also looked at some of the important elements of non verbal communication and how cultural differences can influence the way these components are understood. We also looked at the importance of these elements in work context or in organizational context.

Silence and turn-taking



- Silence is interpreted differently among cultures.
- In western cultures silence is interpreted as “non-comprehension”.
- Most eastern cultures are comfortable with silence between conversation.
- Intrusion while speaking is acceptable in some culture but seen as rudeness in others.



We also looked at a very important element in paralinguistic communication, which is silence and turn taking. And we looked at how, silence and turn taking can be perceived

in different ways in different cultures. And why it is very important to focus more on silence and turn taking, ok.

The communication climate



So, this is where we stopped. Today's lecture we are going to talk about team communication or what kind of communication happens in the larger groups; like teams and organizations. So, one very important element in communication, in organizational context in the larger groups is communication climate.

So, communication climate means, the level of openness which exist in the organization, which gives a certain level of comfort to its members. So, that they talk openly or they communicate openly.

So, why is it important to have a good communication climate or why is it important for the organization to encourage, its employees to talk openly about what they feel about organizational processes, managers and the management? Why is it important? It is very important because, if you look at the earlier concept which we spoke about, which is justice, organizational justice.

Organizational justice perception is very important for organizational effectiveness; because it leads to organizational justice perception of organizational justice leads to commitment from the employee, job satisfaction and so. So, organizational justice and fairness happens, only when you listen to employees or in other words, employees feel that they have an option to voice out their concerns.

They have avenues to communicate, what they perceive about the organization and it is processes and practices. So, if you do not give that space or if you do not allow people to voice out their concerns, communicate their concerns they will feel there is injustice in the organization.

So, once they feel there is injustice, again there will be a negative loop which is, they feel lack of fairness. They may not perform well especially in extra role performance. They may also in long run create or lead to negative work behaviour and they may quit the organization also.

Other way around, we give them space to speak, you give them space or avenues for them to communicate. It leads to positive work behaviour; it leads to altruism, pro social behaviour and things like that. And the employee's attitude towards the organization also becomes positive which has its own positive effects.

So, this is the importance of the space, where employees can openly speak. So, when you say space, it is not necessarily or not just physical mechanisms. For example, when I say space, it can be a mechanism which allows people to talk, which is a physical space. For example, there are grievance handling mechanisms; there are open door policies.

So, these are specific actual mechanisms, but when you say space it also means social or psychological space. Psychological space means employees; you may have as an organization all the mechanisms for employees to voice out their concerns, but what about the sense of security people feel to voice out their concerns. If people are insecure or if the employees are threatened feel or they feel that if I voice out my concern something bad will happen to me, I may lose my job.

So, it is not just you know having mechanisms, it is also making the employee feel they can openly communicate. So, it is not just about grievance handling. Even for you know, creative information sharing you need people to feel, their ideas will be listened to.

So, communication style fundamentally involves employees to feel that they will not be ridiculed if they voice out their opinion. They will not be ridiculed, they will not be you know punished, they will not be made fun of when they openly reveal what they feel.

So, it is about the climate of listening, the climate of being non-judgmental, the climate of being encouraging and supportive. So, all those things make people communicate openly. And as I discussed earlier, as I spoke earlier, it is very important to create this space, because it helps in the organization; it helps the organization in long run.

Common information effect



- Non-overlapping case
- Distributed partial overlap
- Fully shared case



So, we will talk specifically about some of the problems which may hamper open communication in work place, especially in work team context. In the team context what are the kind of problems people may encounter which may stop them from sharing information.

So, there may be lot of negative factors, which are related to conscious behaviours or which are related to behaviours, which are deliberately showed in the work team. I am not going to talk about them because in later chapters we will talk about what are those problems which may happen which are deliberate in nature.

I am going talk about some of the unknown factors or some of the not so deliberate factors, which may affect information sharing or communication in work teams. One important effect or one important problem teams may encounter, in terms of information sharing is common information effect.

So, common information effect means, let us say there is a team discussion or there is a team, which has to decide upon certain outcomes or problem solving methods. So, all the team members come together, they have to discuss about the problem and come to a

solution or at least list down some of the possible solutions in the way to reach them. So, this is the scenario.

So, to arrive at a decision, people have to understand the problem first. So, if you do not understand the problem first, you will not arrive at the decision. Understanding the problem means, sharing all the possible information which is relevant to the problem. This is where common information effect comes. Let us say there are 10 people in the team, with varied background and varied levels of information about that particular problem.

So, when they come together, when they share the information about the problem what happens usually is, people share only the information which is known to all the others; people will share only the common information whereas, effective decisions can be made only when all the information is shared to all the members in the team.

So, there are three possible cases, the first possible case is non-overlapping case. So, every member in that team has a unique information. So, I will have, let us say it is like a jigsaw puzzle. So, each one of us have, their own parts of the puzzle which others do not have, ok. So, that is non-overlapping case. So, everybody comes with their part and they have to assemble it as the team and make the larger picture. So, this is non-overlapping case, everybody has their unique part.

The second case is distributed partial overlap which means, there are many pieces of this information where some pieces is available to many people, ok. So, parts of the puzzle are there with many people or may be all the people, but some part of it is unique in nature. So, partially there is an overlap in the information. Fully shared is everyone has the knowledge or everybody has the information which all the others have. So, all of them have the same level of understanding of the problem.

In non-overlapping different people have different understandings, different information. Distributed partial overlap there is some level of common understanding and there are most of the information is not shared. So, these are three scenarios. So, ideally fully shared case is preferred, because that helps in better group decision making.

So, the problematic scenario is distributed partial overlap, because when people come together when they start sharing information, they assume that everybody has all the

information. Because, there is some common information shared between all of them. So, with that information they will think ok, all of us have all the information.

And this assumption, that all of them have all the information can lead to decision making problems. Because, you take it for granted certain information, certain information is assumed to be true for all of them, but many of them may not even aware of those information and they either they might be confused or they will with whatever information they have they will try to assume certain things about what others have.

So, it leads to lot of confusion, it leads to lot of misunderstanding, it leads to lot of taking things for granted ok, missing out this missing parts of the puzzle. So, how to avoid distributed partial overlap? So, in this distributed partial overlap is more common, then it leads to common information effect.

The hidden profile paradigm



- Part of some information is shared among group members, whereas other pieces of information are unshared.
- Groups rarely discover the hidden profile and discuss proportionally more shared than unshared information.
- Shared information more likely to be exchanged initially.



So, this is called hidden profile paradigm, which means part of some information is shared among group members whereas, other pieces of information are unshared. So, this is similar to distributed partial overlap. So, when there is a group decision making, the first thing people do is when they meet for the first time, they will share only the common information, they will not start with the unique information which they have, ok.

They will start with the information most people will have, because that is what will help them establish a positive conversation or we assume that when we talk about common things among all of us, it will lead to you know more positive environment in the

discussion. Because we come with unique information, many of them will not understand, they will know they will be puzzled and you each one of them coming with unique information, it takes a lot of time for them to unravel the secret.

So, instead you start with common information which is, sounds commonsensically good. You know in common sense it sounds good, but the problem is it leads to a biased way of looking at the overall problem. Because, with whatever information commonly shared you look at it in only that context, you look at the problem only in that particular way.

So, you forget about the missing parts which each one of us have. So, that leads to bias in decision making or wrong decision making can go wrong, because you miss out on the various unique information which you did not unravel. And unraveling it would be talking to others and digging out each one of them should dig out what you know the hidden information from the other person.

So, who should do it? Usually the leader will do it, but many a times leader will also be biased by the common information bias. And like I said, share information is more likely to be exchanged initially and that leads to a certain direction in which discussion flows. So, usually it will lead to a direction, where people would not come back and look at the unshared information and how. So, that can lead to a lot of problems in decision making.

Handling hidden profile paradigm



- Focus on unshared/unique information
- Use the problem solving approach rather than decision making approach.
- Rank order
- Consider alternatives one at a time
- Create awareness
- Suspend initial judgment
- Build trust
- Minimize status difference
- Communicate confidence.



So, how will you resolve this hidden profile paradigm or how will you make people share the unique information which they have or how will you stop the group from becoming biased towards the known knowledge, which everybody shares?

The first important thing the leader can do or the coordinator can do is, start with creating awareness. You know you have to start by saying see, there are some information we all know there are some information, unique information each one of us know, but others may not know. So, let us list down this unique information. So, even before the meeting starts, the team leader can pass a Google shared document, where each one of them put their thought processes the information they have.

So, even before the team meeting something like this where everybody shares whatever they know and before coming to the meeting all of them looking at that document will help. And also the leader consciously shares this knowledge that there can be unique information, which will make people aware that it is not like everybody knows everything about the problem.

So, that is one, create awareness. And then like I said, share a shared document where everybody gives their understanding of the problem and once the document is ready focus on unshared unique information. Instead of jumping to the shared information, the leaders should push the group to discuss about unshared unique information.

And very important thing is instead of looking at the problem as a decision making process, you should look at the process as a problem solving process. So, what is the difference? Decision making process is where we have to come to an answer.

So, the objective is the leaders saying we have to have an answer. So, that is decision making approach. Problem solving approach is see there is a scenario; we have to solve this problem. The difference is decision making there can be only one right decision. Problem solving is there can be multiple ways of solving the problem. In decision making it is about one right thing we all have to do.

Problem solving is about there are multiple ways you can resolve this problem. When you see there are multiple ways, people will be open enough to share their view point. Because, there are multiple ways there is no one right way to solve the problem and also you can have rank order the solutions.

Instead of saying there are 10 solutions or 10 information we should pick one or two. So, picking one or two what happens is, we are not considering others. Instead, rank order; rank order means in terms of feasibility and effectiveness you rank those solutions which are available.

In rank order, you bring in all the options and rank them. In picking the right answer which is decision making approach, you are taking only one or two and discarding all the other option available. So, rank order is usually a best option to come at, best possible solution and when you compare different alternatives, different unshared information pick one and compare it with others.

So, each information is compared with other information, each solution is compared with other solutions. And also suspend initial judgment, which means when people come together do not assume that everybody knows. The leader should say lets discuss about possible solution, instead of saying this is the solution what do you think ok.

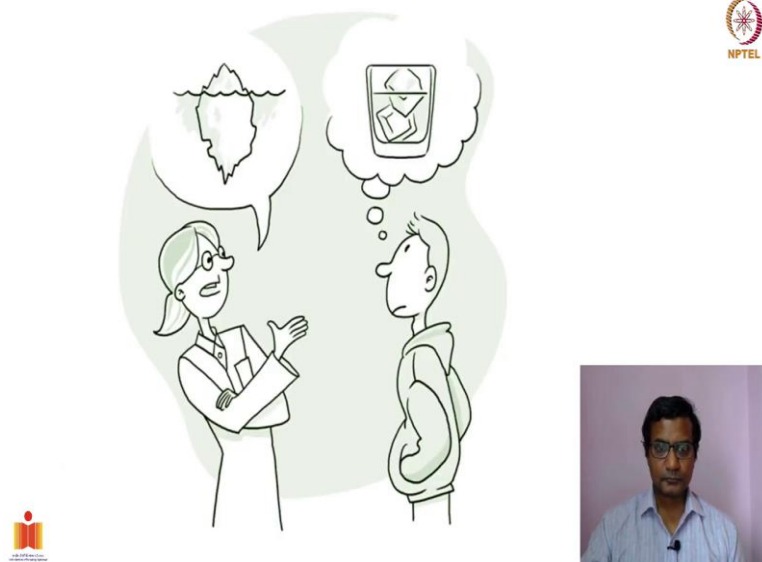
So, initial judgment can be very fatal for group decision making because, many a times initial judgment can be a biased judgment or a wrong judgment. You should also build trust as a leader in the group.

When I say trust; trust in terms of if people open openly talk, others will not ridicule them which is similar to communication climate, where you create an environment, where everybody feels comfortable, to give their suggestions or ideas even if at a superficial level they may sound ridiculous. And also minimize status differences, when the group has people from different, levels in the organization.

So, the people at lower levels of the organization, people at the lower ranks they may feel they should not open their mouth, because there are senior level people. So, if they open their mouth, they may feel like they do not know anything. So, minimize status differences by, as a leader you should ensure that, people feel comfortable in opening their giving their opinion and also communicate confidence.

Communicating confidence means you openly say, I know there are people from different backgrounds, different levels, different ex levels of experience, but each one of us have unique ideas. So, let us talk about all our ideas without being judgmental. So, that is communicating the confidence.

So, if you seen many of these things are responsibilities of the leader in the team, know to create that climate in the team, where everybody openly discusses about what they know and what they feel. So, if that happens hidden profile paradigm will reduce, which in long run help the team make better decisions by considering all the information available, ok.



So, this is similar to hidden profile paradigm. You say something, but the other person understands in different way. For example, from a psychologist point of view tip of the iceberg means something, which is similar to personality chapter we saw. But from a technical persons point of view, tip of the iceberg means you know which is something very different. So, it is very important to resolve this communication gap, ok.

Managing team meetings

- Attendance as a team value
- Punctuality
- Recording, transforming, and distributing meeting information
- Purpose of recording information
- Agenda building for the next meeting



So, this is a last slide, especially in team meetings, many of the team meetings becomes ineffective. You know meetings are usually seen as boring things, no decision is made. So, how to make team meetings more effective? Especially, if you are leader how will you ensure team meetings are productive?

First attendance, you know many a times if there are series of meetings one meeting there will be some people, in other meeting another set of people will be there. So, every time you have to you know explain the what happened in the previous meeting. Again you know there will be discussions on it, you may not resolve the problem.

So, attendance should be made compulsory. Punctuality, especially if there is a large team different people will come at different points in time. They will come and you have to summarize them again, you know they will miss out something. That should not happen.

So, time should be maintained very punctually. And to the extent possible record the meeting, in terms of at least minutes of the meeting and these minutes of the meeting should be shared with everyone. Not necessarily with the people who would not attend, but also people who have attended. When there is a minutes of meeting there is less miscommunication, because during the meeting you may feel that this is what the other person said or this is the decision which is made, but your assumption might be wrong, ok

So, if you have minutes of the meeting everybody has common understanding of what is communicator and what is accepted, what decision is made. And that is why purpose of recording information is very crucial and also when we have series of meetings set agenda for the next meeting.

So, when you stop or when you stop for one meeting and you there is a next meeting which is going to come, set agenda for the next meeting do not start right from scratch in the next meeting.

So, every meeting at the end of the meeting you circulate the minutes of the meeting and say ok, this is what we have decided and this is where we are now at this point in time. In the next meeting we will catch up with this level, you will start at this level; we will not start from the beginning. Otherwise you know every time the meeting becomes starts

fresh and it goes endless. So, these are some of the techniques managers can use to, handle effective or managers can use to create effective team meetings.

So, I will stop here. So, this is the end of the chapter. I hope you enjoyed this chapter on communication, we will meet in the next lecture in a new chapter on inter personal decision making. Till then take care see you in the next.