

Effective Leadership is all About Communicating Effectively: Connecting Leadership and Communication

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Abstract

The leaders and other senior professionals of this business era; put more emphasis on the business nitty-gritties. While hiring a manager good communication skills are considered to be the most imperative skills a manager must have. For an effective manager it is obligatory to ensure persuasion, responsibility, premeditated association, creating and managing value system and to provide support and motivation to his teams. A manager is capable to accomplish all this by effective leading, sound planning, monitoring and communicating. Among these mention factors perfect and precise communication is of utmost importance. It is a manager's communication skills which motivate and inspire teammates to work hard and achieve team targets and organizational goals as well. According to an older study, every day manager spent 70 to 90 percent of their time in communicating with their teams and others at work place. Effective communication act as an advantage of a leader to lead effectively. So, on the basis of the study of previous work done by many authors in the past decade, the author has made an attempt to find how leadership is affected by communication. What all are the key points managers have to keep in mind while communicating with their teams and suggestions to improve communication to make leadership more effective.

Keywords

Effective Communication, Leadership Styles, Trust, Barriers, Principles.

I. Introduction

Effective and accurate communication act as an important factor to grow as an efficient and successful leader or manager. To achieve professional success managers must be effective and convincing communicators. It is important that managers and their teams must learn the how to communicate perfectly as this will not only help teams to complete their projects successfully, but also enable organizations to achieve success and growth (Lee Froschheiser). According to many researchers, leader is one who has an ability to take charge, direct, encourage, or stimulate others. They have an attitude to convince others and to make them follow the goals or the participles defined by them. They are results oriented hence, well trained and expert in controlling difficult to difficult conditions and help to enhance the outputs of teams working with him. A leader could be anyone, as the person who has charge taking attitude is a leader. He could be a prime minister of any nation or an executive working in an organization. These people have cluster of leadership qualities, but are not able to lead if they are not good communicators. Communication enables them to share what they have and what they expect from others. So, it is effective communication, which makes leaders to lead successfully (Frese. et.al. 2003, Deborah J. Barrett, 2006). Good communication skills help to develop better understanding and beliefs among people inspire them to follow the principles and values which their leader wants to inculcate in them. In the absence of good communication skills, a manager fails to achieve the goals set by him and by the organizations and a makes him an

ineffective leader. By interacting more efficiently with his team and colleagues, a manager can increase his potential and will be able to get work done by members of his team. Good leaders are very well aware with the fact that productive communication is not a one way process rather there are two key factors which complete communication process: speaking and listening with understanding. They know that they cannot make this process continues until unless they are heard and understood appropriately by their team members. To make this process smooth an effective manager has well planned objectives in his mind which he has assumed to be achieved after communicating. For achieving the objectives of the communication leader imagines the opinion, emotions and knowledge level of the receiver and prepare action to support communication so as to make others understand the message wants to deliver. He delivers the well planned messages with persuasion and relates them to the aim and objectives to be achieved with the help of communication. Asking for conformation or understanding of the message indirectly is one of the key note qualities of a good leader. While receiving any message, he keeps all his doors open and try to figure out the main idea. Even in case of negative feedback he doesn't lose his heart and take it as an opportunity to learn new things. He always tries to understand the weak points and analyze the usefulness of the communication. In case of mis communication taking corrective measure to rectify the mistake is also important and must be done by the managers or leaders. Hence, to establish oneself as a great and effective leader one must be an effective convincing communicator and needs to learn skillfully the art of extraordinary communication, this would further support manager and his team to attain new levels of quality leadership. Ethos is also acting as an important aspect of effective leadership. It is must for a leader to be sensitive towards moral ideologies. According to a research on leadership, the trust is a factor which any individual wants to have before following anyone enthusiastically in any situation, whether it may be a battleground or meeting room and want to get assured that the leader they are going to follow is truthful and ethical (James Kouzes and Barry Posner, 1993). In developing this trust factor a leader must be able to share his vision with them by interacting with them. Hence, for effective leadership, effective communication serves as a significant ingredient.

II. Communication: A Vital Aspect to a Leader's Fate

The utmost essential key to great leadership is communication (Towler 2003). A Leader is among one of the employees with exceptional skills set and in one situation or another he has potential to step forward to take charge and mentor others who lack experience and skill set, tries to inculcate skills by motivating them and help them in achieving their individual, team and organizational targets. To become a great leader one should be a great communicator. Great leaders are always considered as first-class communicators, they have a clear set of values and they always believe in promoting and inculcating those values in others. It is due to this reason that their teams appreciate them and follow them as a leader. Being great communicator does not mean great talker. There is a big difference between the two, the thrust

of gaining more knowledge separates excellent communicator from a good talker, who lack knowledge and get confused while interacting with others, whereas great communicator speak in confidence and never get confused because of the knowledge they possess. They have ability to connect to passions and ambitions while communicating their ideas with others. They are aware of the thing that if fails to connect with the audience they might not be able pass their idea to them and purpose of communication will not be achieved. The best communicators always have a unique quality of listening peacefully to what others are speaking. This makes them good observer and enables them to read a person or group's mind by analyzing the attitudes, behavior, activities, ideals, anxieties and are able to modify their messages according to the situation. Leaders who communicate effectively to encourage and stimulate their people are considered to be the best leaders or managers. They ensure work, discipline, and a sense of responsibility among team members. They have strong and precise set of working principles and believe to incorporate the same in their teams and because of this they are highly appreciated and followed by their team members (Lee Froschheiser). When a leader inspires his team, group or people around him by communicating his ideologies and aims perfectly make them enough efficient to perform the entire assigned task effortlessly that concept is Leadership communication. It has been observed that all the managers or leaders are mostly busy in communicating with one or another while working and spend 70 to 90 percent of their time in group or team interactions every day (Mintzberg, 1973; Eccles & Nohria, 1991) and there is a significant increase in this percentage with the invention of new communication technologies like mobile phones, e-mail, messaging, social sites, etc. This vast percentage of time spent by managers in communicating highlights the importance strong communication skills for leaders who want to expand their leadership positions. Even many researches have explained the concept that it is effective communication that takes an individual from lower level to the leadership spot. In fact, it has been proved that individual who can communicate exceptionally, capable of taking significant decision and are able to get the work done by others is recommended more frequently for leadership position in an organization (Bowman, Jones, Peterson, Gronouski, & Mahoney, 1964). Good communication skills support in creating an atmosphere for exceptional understandings of what is being communicated and encourage teammates to blindly follow their leader. Thus, to become an expert in leadership communication is indispensable priority for managers who want to attain excellence and remarkable growth in their professional career. A leader should make sure that communication is continuous and also ensure the appropriate use both informal and formal approaches (Bill Back). It is very good to use a combination of formal and informal approaches while communicating. Informal means of communication helps to get exact and more regular evaluations to report concerns more rapidly. Informal interaction during breakfast meetings, roundtable meetings are always proved effective and helpful for discussing and finding solutions of various issues like trust and credibility whereas formal approaches require proper planning and execution.

III. Leadership Communication

Leadership communication is defined as inspiring and encouraging an individual or a group by systematic and meaningful sharing of information by using excellent communication skills. Leadership communication is a complex process which starts from developing strategy for communicating, writing precisely and then

speaking effectively to control difficult situations. Leadership communication has three major aspects: Core, Managerial, and Corporate. With an increase in leader's portfolio there is a need to improvise communication skills to manage large horizon and to become much more effective all possible situations. So, complexity increases with an increase in the level of leadership. The Core Aspects Approach includes writing and speaking; these are the individualized skills and are required to be expanded, to lead and manage bigger groups or teams. Expressive cultural understandings, listening patiently, team management and team meetings, providing training facilities and mentoring are the skills which aid to manage huge groups and are Managerial Aspect Approach of leadership communication. The Corporate Aspects Approach are the skills required at much higher levels of leadership, and there is a need to interact with an external sphere, skills which are most needed: maintain employee relations, communication during change and crises, media associations and image building. For an organization the biggest challenge these days is to win the trust of its employees, business partners and customers. An organization with leaders who are skillful enough to communicate responsively and frequently with perfectly planned and dedicated communication policies, to help to encourage not only employees, but business partner and customers as well to trust on the organization. Now the question comes, why a leader is required to build trust among stakeholders? The answer to this question is; Leaders are the individuals who are followed by many peoples because they trust him. They don't follow the leader they cannot trust on (Diane Bean). Trust is an influential tool that can increase reliability, integrity and gives you an added advantage in case uncertainty. One cannot build trust as trust cannot be built, but gained or earned. For good and efficient leaders it is easy to earn trust because they know the value and importance of building and sustaining trust. Leaders have to put all possible efforts with the help of their teams which encourage business partners to have faith in the organization's leadership. Communications plays significant role in building trust by creating an environment which empowers leaders to lead efficiently motivating employees to work and achieving the ultimate goal (Jodi Macpherson). It becomes very challenging for a leader to stimulate, involve and hold their most brilliant team members if the leader won't trust their messages (Kaufman). If the employees have trust on their leader and are very well aware with what is going around, they will be most gratified and energized. By sharing essential information with employees, leaders can develop a culture of trust and can easily build associations with employees and other business channels that facilitate organizations to grow more rapidly. Trust building activities include communication management, sourcing the right networks, positive conversation about what else to be done and feedback of communication. Trust is essential because it is the trust of the people that has the capability to create a vast form slight and convert major into minor. Hence, it is must for an organizational leader to make sure that the people associated with them contain trust factor.

IV. Leadership Styles Influencing Communication

As we already know that communication has a great impact on effective leadership precisely the same is the case with leadership styles. Different leadership styles also influence communication process. There exists a vice-a-versa relation between the two (Benita Zulch, 2014). Following are the styles of leadership which affects communication:

A. Style According to the Situation

The style of leadership is concerned with the practice and use of diverse leadership styles under unlike situations according to the need of audiences and personal leadership qualities. Under every situation the communication gets affected as some situations demand direct and strict communication and in other situation leader has to opt for indirect ways of communication. This can even make communication an effective process sometimes or may lead to mis-communication.

B. Goal Oriented Leadership Style

Every leader has a vision or goal for him and for his team. This vision or goals are synchronized with organizational aims and objectives. The leaders have to communicate the vision and goals to his team so as to motivate them to achieve them with efficiency. He communicates in a way so that he will be able to make others see what he is expecting from them. Team Involvement, effective listening, clear and timely communication is the main feature of this style. This style of leadership makes communication an effective communication.

C. Directive Leadership Style

In this style of leadership the leader helps his teams to achieve their personal work targets and team targets by telling them the appropriate methods and showing the right directions to achieve those goals. He acts as a director, who support and enables his team to follow the path which leads them to achieve their goals more easily and perfectly by communicating effectively.

D. People Centric or Employee Orientated

According to this there are two types of employees working in a team: active and lazy. The active category includes those employees who are self-motivated and enthusiastic to work hard for accomplishing the tasks given to them. Another one is those who need regular motivation and encouragement to perform their duties. Here the leadership style people centric as leader have to be in regular touch and communication with these employees to get the work done. The leader has to make strategies in accordance to employees to make them attached to their work. Communication is an important part of this leadership style.

E. Leadership Style According to the Intellectual Level

It is believed that a leader must adjust his leadership style by keeping in mind the intellectual level and maturity of the employees. Here maturity does not refer to the sensitivity or age, but it means work stability, tendency to handle complex situations, potential of achieving given target. Effective leaders always try to maintain a good balance by adjusting the leadership method which further has an influence on communication.

F. Behavioral Leadership Style

This style of leadership differentiates among two elementary ways of leadership; one is a work-orientated and the other one is individual orientated. Accomplishment, inspiration, readiness and aptitude to take accountability, learnings and knowledge regulate the blend of this style. This leadership style does not depend on so many ways, but it hinge on the situation, where and why it has to be used. The consequence of this style is that during communication, associations must have sufficient consideration to make interaction a successful one.

G. Action Based Leadership Style

This style recommends that the leader should give emphasis to three main duties; assignment, group and individual. A leader must have to concentrate on the assignment given, the team working on that assignment and individual issues of the team members and should try to meet the deadlines by focusing on each one at different times. Here, the main drive of the team is to get the work done and the leader has to uphold the focus of the team to Achieve objectives. It is essential for a leader to boost and increase the balance between the needs of the tasks, team and individuals by regularly and effectively communicating with them.

V. Barriers to Effective Leadership Communication

Communication simply means to transfer the information or message from one individual to another or to a group. Whereas effective leadership communication means transferring message by keeping in mind the understanding and ability of the receiver and to make sure that the receiver will be able to find the exact meaning of the message or information passed to him. Effective leader while communicating must ensure that there would be no chance of any kind of mis-communication or misunderstandings. But, on the basis of previous studies, practically it is not feasible for a leader to make all the communication effective as many barriers like noise, disturbance, unique understanding levels and different cultural backgrounds make it difficult to make communication effective. While communicating in a group, although all good leaders try to keep in mind the listener's point of view, but still it becomes difficult to make everyone to understand, what exactly a leader wants to deliver. The problem in communication arises from the disturbances or barriers in the transmission, either by the leader or by the receiver. The some of the barriers are as which affects good and effective communication are as follows:

- Lack of planning and purpose before communicating with others restrict a leader to communicate effectively with his team.
- Even if the planning is done by a leader before communicating, but without keeping in mind the nature of audiences will make communication process ineffective.
- Choice of inappropriate tools and techniques by a leader for doing communication with the team will act as a barrier and reduces the level of exact understanding of the communication done.
- Choosing wrong language as a communication medium is also one of the biggest barriers which make leader communication ineffective.
- Lack of trust on each other and disrespect is another factor which makes leader communication ineffective
- Wrong assumption about listener by ignoring their emotions and sensitivities, alter communication into miscommunication.
- Use signals, postures and gestures which do not support the words used during communication.
- Ignoring the feedback aspect while communicating is also a barrier.
- Lack of self-confidence, values, courage, and knowledge also stops communication becoming an effective one
- Lack of major leadership qualities also makes a leader to communicate ineffectively.
- Inability to adapt to changes is also a strong barrier.

These are the some of the barriers which hinder the effective communication process and affect leadership communication abilities of a leader. To get rid of these barriers they need to attain mastery in core skills.

VI. How Communication Improves Leadership Qualities? :Suggestion/Principles of effective leadership communication.

Communication was earlier considered as a soft skill which has no impact on organizations. Even while hiring individual communication skills never was a major criterion for hiring. But the concept has been changed; communication has a very large impact on business. It is assumed that effective communication with the leaders stimulates employees stay engaged and to perform their duties efficiently (Diana Clement, 2008). Good communication involves a pre prepared plan. Leader's communication must match with his actions and should be two-way communication. Sharing of bad news must be done face-to-face in an effective manner so as to reduce its direct impact. The root cause of many problems is the improper and untimely sharing of information or communication. Effective communication management is a principal leadership skill. Here mentioned some communication principles to become an excellent leader:

- A leader must be confident enough, while communicating with others. People must believe the communications made by their leaders. Lack of confidence while communicating, can make team members uncomfortable, and unenthusiastic about their work. Confidence helps a team to work together to achieve desired goals.
- True leaders always have to communicate the rules clearly to his team and should follow those rules himself, which he expects to be followed by others and must communicate indirectly to his team that he is capable enough to do what he expects from them. He must lead his team by setting examples himself.
- A great leader must be energetic and self-motivated while communicating. If the leader is doubtful, negative or disconnected, no one in the team could relate to him. Only highly energetic and self-motivated leaders are considered as effective leaders because they have vast potential to motivate and to raise the morale of their teams.
- Great leaders must be steady and trustworthy while they communicate. There must be a value, grace, and regularity when they interact with their teams, but can also modify according to the listeners. They have to upgrade their personality as a trustworthy communicator to develop trustworthiness among his team and various business channels. A quick change in attitude is not considered as leaders' best quality.
- A good leader must always be easy to approach without any barriers, if the team members are left with doubt about the information shared during the communication process. He should be readily available to his team and to other channels as well. Inaccessibility makes a leader unsuccessful and incompetent.
- A leader to become effective must have a clear thought process. There must be clarity in opting communication techniques, channels and approaches by keeping in mind the intellectual level and understanding of the listeners. He must be very competent to manage multifaceted things and will be able to convert them into simpler form to make his team understand and to perform extremely well.
- Communication by leaders must be clear, brief and also he should value thoughts, ideas and feeling of others. An excellent leadership required to admire all cultures, knowledge, education, moral values, different demographics and communication inclinations.
- It is must for a leader to establish a transparent system of

communication. There should be no space for any grapevine to develop. Until unless very confidential, there will be no secret between the leader and the team.

- A leader should be very much focused and stable while communicating with his team because during difficult situation team depend on leader effective communication for the getting stability and solutions.
- Strong leaders should be comprehensive in communication and must try to overcome differences positively and practically.
- A leader must also emphasis on effective listening rather the completely focusing on effective speaking, because to hear patiently is as significant as to say effectively.
- A great leader must always concentrate on communicating with teams rather than simply sharing information with them because communication has can inspire opinions, approaches, and activities whereas information means just to inform.
- For a leader communicating without fear is most important, he should communicate without keeping in mind the fear of doing blunders or errors. In case, where a leader ends up with some errors, he should admit them openly to gain trust and respect of the team members.
- A leader has to be sure while sending messages to his team because a wrong message may end up in conflict and difference in opinion. The message should be clear, precise and properly written.
- A leader must communicate with an open mind and always welcome suggestions and ideas for improvement in his style and for enhanced learning.
- A leader must swap his ego with understanding as ego hinders learning and decrease the appreciative tendencies which may lead to many problems among team members.
- A leader must be aware of what he is speaking to his teammates. The communicator must select a message without any ambiguity. A Leader must have full knowledge of the subject he is about to discuss to avoid confusions.
- A leader may not have time to communicate with all team members individually, so he must develop an art of interacting with individuals even if they are in groups. He should address the group in such a manner that it seems like he is talking to all individuals solely. Not only the above mentioned principles, but there are some more which shows that leadership communication is about inspiring others to achieve great things
- A leader must be skillful in narrating stories and using anecdotes while communicating this aid to instigate understandings and behaviors of associated groups
- For a good leader it is must repeat the message several times until unless the last member of the group will understand the meaning of it. This repeating of message or information during communication help to increase the productivity as each one become able to understand the idea or concept.
- A leader must be aware with the use of all communication technologies and channels like, face-to-face meetings, video conferences, telephone conferences, emails, etc. to keep in touch with all his teammates and to motivate them time to time.
- An effective leader must always encourage feedback system to improve workplace environment. Feedback will help to overcome shortcomings and to rectify errors if any.

VII. Limitations

The main thoughts presented in this paper have highlighted the general knowledge and understanding of basic leader's communication, but still there exist some limitations such as there is still more literature that should be reviewed and linked to this study. But due to time lack of time and inability to get access to libraries and portals it was difficult to collect all resources. The data collected may not be sufficient to explain the concepts in a broader way. Due to Copyrights issues, delay in taking permission for refereeing some of the bestpapers. Future research needs to collect more data and resources related to leadership communication to write a good conceptual paper and developing a better conceptual model.

VIII. Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, ample studies and researches have been done with the same purpose of identifying that how communication and leadership are interrelated to each other. Why excellent communication skills are required to manage a team at workplace or to manage an organization efficiently? How communication gets affected by the different leadership styles? What all are the qualities which make a leader a perfect communicator? In concluding lines we can state that effective communication and leadership together gives an effective leadership communication. A leader cannot become an effective leader until unless he is an excellent communicator and must use his this ability to let individuals follows him. He must have knowledge and will be able to communicate that knowledge to others at work. Must have the competences to motivate team to achieve which seems to be impossible for others. Communication makes a leader effective who develops better understanding in teams. These understanding bring a sense of trust in employees on the leader and on each other, work together, which further reinforce congenial relations with team members and creates an excellent work atmosphere. While working with such a good, healthy, positive and congenial environment they get motivated and enthusiastic to work much harder. This dedication towards their work makes it easy to achieve their targets quickly and hence their productivity increases. On the basis of this conclusion author has proposed a conceptual model of effective leadership communication in Fig. 1. There is another point of view that different leadership styles also have an impact on communication. As different communication styles have an impact on leadership similarly different leadership also influences communication (Benita Zulch, 2014). With a change, a change in style the impact of communication also alters. In some of the style like where the leader has to handle a tough or critical situation he need to be little hard and leadership style will become authoritative, but must have a control on his communication otherwise it may become a miscommunication or an ineffective one. In another example where has to deal with a group with different work attitude and styles here he needs to be more people centric and should communicate in a way that he will be able to communicate at individual levels even while interacting with a group. At the end, we can say that both communication and leadership are linked deeply and cannot be done on individually. But still there is no as such explanation or clarification to these questions as concepts may vary person to person and every individual has his own perception about the things happening around. On the basis of the above discussion and understanding of the concept, Author has designed a Conceptual Model for effective leadership communication. According to this model Effective communication and leadership together develops

better understanding among team members and the leader or manager. More understanding inculcates the trust factor which is very important to work together. Trust gives congenial relations which further helps to build a good working environment where employees feel motivated and enriched with self-confidence and work in coordination and this coordination yields best of their performance by accomplishing the given targets; individual as well as team targets. Given below the model figure:

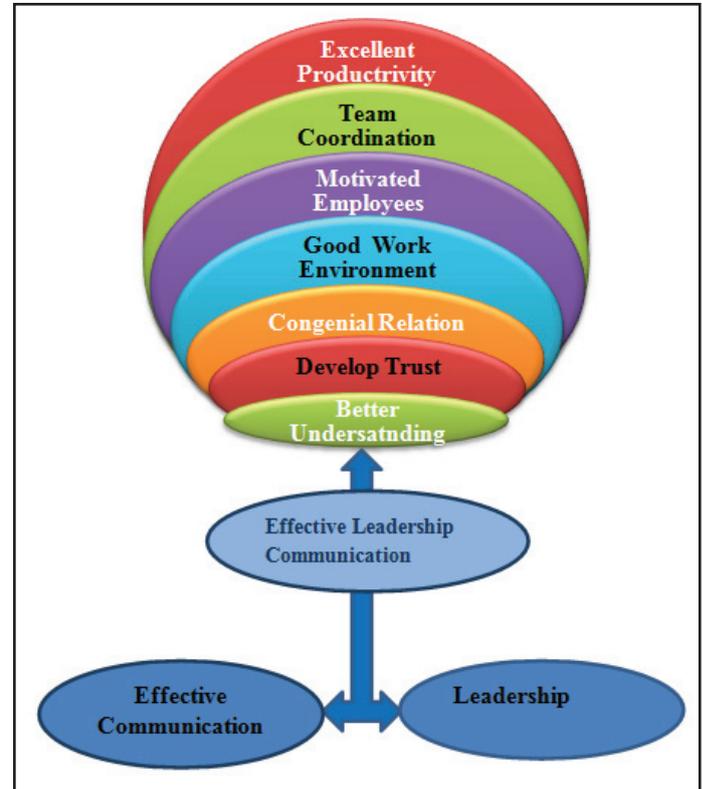


Fig. 1: A Conceptual Model for Effective Leadership Communication

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