

COMMUNICATION: THE LIFELINE OF CORPORATE CULTURE

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Corporate Life is seemingly a life of opulence, opportunities and challenges. It is all about strategies, Planning, Progression and Production. It is truly the expression of human quest for betterment leading to excellence. That demands high degree of competence and commitment on the part of every employee desirous of surviving long enough in the Industry. Mental toughness and Professional acumen are among the prized personal values required for steady growth. Every good company is found focused on developing and promoting such ideals, values and Skills. Particularly, ever since the market experienced a dip, there has been a renewed interest in the orientation, training and learning of Soft Skills.

Soft skills better known as people skills arrest our attention today more than ever before. This comes in the wake of a realization that all business is mainly feeling management. Man is a complex being. Understanding the complexity of human nature is akin to understanding the intricacies of business. Business begins with individual's likes and dislikes. Products are of secondary importance. This is not to suggest that due importance should not be given to the quality of the product. On the contrary, quality of any product has a universal value. It is



this quality that would always linger in the heart & mind of the people. But it is the quality of service that one provides lasts much longer. It is rightly said money has poor memory as we may forget the money we may have spent on buying something but we tend to remember the services rendered to us. It is in this context that soft skills acquire much greater significance. It is because of the people skill that the quality of services touches new heights.

COMMUNICATION SKILL :

Among the various soft skills, communication skill deserves the pride of place. Communication has become the lifeline today. Latest research highlights the role of communication both in personal and professional life. No wonder Charles Schwabs made the following candid statement:

“I shall pay more for man's ability to express himself than for any other quality he might possess.”

It is of utmost importance to understand the term communication in the right perspective. In its etymological sense, the English word communication is derived from the Latin verb *Communicare* which means to participate, to impart, to share.

Communication can therefore be viewed as a process by which meanings are exchanged between two or more persons through a common set of symbols. It needs to be understood only as two way traffic. It is a process of

encoding and decoding. This is a highly complex process given the complex nature of human beings. W. Steven Brown rightly holds:

“Communication does not begin with being understood, but with understanding others.”

This is easier said than done. How can we really understand others? Each of us suffers from many blocks. We have our own beliefs which are unique. Is it that easy to understand others? Then, how does communication work, let alone being effective? In this regard, Peter Drucker, the renowned Management Guru makes an interesting point:

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what is not being said.”

This could be possible only when we understand and appreciate the role of listening in communication. Listening is rightly considered to be the mother of all human behaviors. This is the most powerful tool to facilitate communication. Listening helps us in following ways:

- ☐ In identifying main ideas
- ☐ Comprehending subsidiary points
- ☐ Recognizing implications of information
- ☐ Drawing inferences
- ☐ Interpreting signals of speech like pauses & intonation
- ☐ Evaluating the information & making personal responses
- ☐ Understanding the mood of the speaker through tone
- ☐ Guessing the attitude of the speaker through voice

modulation
Listening is to be done with both eyes and ears. This type of listening could be called active or prayerful listening. Anyone willing to master the art of communication must get into the habit of listening first. What Henry Ford once said about Success seems to be truer about Communication:

“If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own”

This would be possible when we learn to empathize with the speaker. One way to do this is to ask relevant questions while listening. By asking questions and repeating certain points, we will be able to facilitate the exchange/transmission of information much faster. This would also help avoid what is called the communication gap between the speaker and the target group. In this way, there shall be no mismatch between the message being encoded and decoded.

ROLE OF LANGUAGE :

Language is species specific to man. There can be no doubt that language is the most effective medium of communication. With the help of language, we can communicate about past, present & future in the same breath. This is not possible with the help of non verbal communications such as gestures, body language and signals. They are linear in their impact. For instance, red light at the signal

would always mean one and one thing alone.

However, despite the said limitations, non verbal communication plays very crucial role. Gesture that includes facial expressions, hand and body movement can be used to optimize the effect of verbal communication. Good eye contacts and expression of emotions can help in building relationship which is the end of communication. All this would also give the listener additional clues to the meaning.

SMART COMMUNICATION :

Brevity is the soul of smart communication. It is purpose driven. There is clarity with regard to the choice of words and idioms; it is in keeping with the changing needs of the target group or the learners. The language has to be effortless- free from jargons and acronyms. This point finds a beautiful expression in the following oft-quoted lines of Lewis Carroll

“When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said... it means just what I choose it to mean... neither more nor less”

The message is subtle. Smart communication calls for a great deal of efforts. Besides Listening and speaking, there is an urgent need to pay attention to the writing skill as well. Writing forms an integral part of one's communication skills. Sadly, writing as a skill has suffered a beating today thanks to our easy access to online grammar and correction kit. We need to sen-

sitize particularly Gen Y on manifold advantages of mastering the finer aspects of writing which is primarily an art that can be painstakingly learnt by anyone. This idea is beautifully expressed thus:

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance

As those move easiest, who have learnt to dance.

It is however equally important for the communicator to have strong belief in the message. The message must be conveyed with certain amount of passion, enthusiasm & wit. Wit and humor have potential to break many barriers of communication. At times, we need to laugh at our own follies and idiosyncrasies. By choosing to share such personal experiences, we will only prepare the ground for free and frank dialogue to take place. In this context, we would do well to heed the advice of the Holy Koran:

“He deserves paradise who makes his companion laugh.”

SUMMING UP :

From the points discussed above, it becomes evident that corporate life is a life of challenges; communication skills are among the most desirable soft skills. We communicate to live; this is the source of our survival as well as success. But today, we live in a troubled time. Relationships are falling apart. Corporate life as I said at the outset is about opulence. But it is also about stress and fear as the system of lay off is fast becoming a routine in the Industry across the globe. The new trend is disturbing no doubt. There is however a ray of hope as well. The new finding suggests that communication skill holds the key; it has emerged as the most powerful tool of human empowerment. The finding also reveals that one of the stressors in life is either one's poor communication or lack of communication. Against this backdrop, we must realize that mastering the art of communication seems to be the way forward. Effective Communication can prove to be a panacea for many of our personal and professional ills. Let this be our new mantra for success and sustenance in corporate life!

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