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Communication in the Workplace

How often do we hear and even use the phrase “communication is the key”? In many instances, too many times to count. As cliché as this mantra may be, it is a staple truism as it pertains to all aspects of human life. Communication is in fact the foundation of all human interactions whether verbal or non-verbal, face-to-face or virtual. It necessitates individuals’ ability to convey their thoughts and express their feelings. Communication is a pivotal aspect of any workplace. The impromptu (sometimes annoying) staff meetings, digitally generated memos sent via our preferred chat platform or email, or even your daily indulgence in office gossip, yes, communication by large is what sustains the social aspect of the environment.

Communication in the workplace is necessary in establishing and maintaining a positive work environment as it improves human relationships. Effective communication among team members, aids in reducing misunderstandings and creates a healthy and peaceful work environment where workers are more inclined to flourish because open communication allows for efficient and professional completion of tasks. Expert Market (2023) states that 86% of employees cite the lack of effective collaborative and communication skills as the cause of workplace inefficiencies. Improving workplace communication leads to a more conducive work environment which fosters human relationships, ultimately improving worker efficiency.

Additionally, optimal communication cultivates an increase in productivity by maximizing efficiency in the work environment. Good communication among team members ensures that workers have the substance they need to perform well as information is clearly conveyed and ambiguities are quickly rectified. Miscommunications are also easily corrected when there is a positive stream of communication among team members which ultimately reduces inefficiencies on the job. According to Expert Market (2023), 28% of workers identified poor communication as the reason why they were incapable of completing assigned tasks on time as

it relates to instructions which were poorly communicated or simple misunderstanding of assigned duties.

For those blessed with the ‘gift of gab’ it is all smooth sailing for presentations which are recited naturally. For others, who shy away as a result of a lack of the aforementioned charm, there are ways to improve the individual’s communication skills. Firstly, one should train his/herself to pay attention to non-verbal cues. Non-verbal cues refer to ways in which information is transmitted which do not involve the use of language, such as gestures, facial expressions, tone and physical appearances. Non-verbal cues provide individuals with insight into the other’s emotions, interpretations and general feelings as it relates to what is being discussed or what will be discussed. Imagine minutes before a presentation, you spot your co-worker fidgeting or sweating profusely, by offering a few kind words of support before the presentation or a nod of agreement and smile while they are presenting, really goes a long way to engender confidence. Non-verbal cues present you with the opportunity to discern how to continue, redirect, or even re-explain the matter at hand which provides clarity and improved work rapport.

Moreover, another skill which improves your individual communication is that of listening. According to entrepreneur and politician, Malcom Forbes, “the art of conversation lies in listening,” in order to excel at communicating one must first be an ardent listener. By becoming an effective listener, you can internalize what is being said without missing key details. Listening improves work-relationships and efficiency while enhancing one’s understanding and improving one’s communication skills. According to our colloquial parlance “yuh hearing me?” But how often do we hear and not actually listen to what is being said to us? The next time you are participating in a meeting, presentation or even a mere conversation, ask yourself, “Am I listening or simply hearing what is being said?”

Practice makes perfect, there is no better way to im-

prove your communication skills than practicing. Just as renowned pianist Chopin was able to perfectly recite his Funeral March, nothing in life is perfected without a bit of practice. This practice does not refer to rehearsing verbatim in front of a mirror (which often leads you flustered or lost for words in real time), but it refers to participating and practicing these skills in interactive conversations, meetings, discussions. The more you engage your communication skills, the better you become at communicating. Try not to shy away at staff meetings, in fact, provide feedback, when necessary, opt to express your concerns and engage others in conversation when opportunities arise.

From the origins of the Neanderthals, with their unique cave-paintings, to our present day artificially generated conversations, the modes and means of communication are inevitably evolving. One thing remains constant, unchanged as time persists, communication most certainly is the key to the sustenance of all relationships and institutions in our society.

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