

# COMMUNICATION CONCERNS OF THE MANAGER

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## INTRODUCTION

In business, a manager spends maximum time either speaking or writing to his colleagues, his seniors, his juniors, or his clients. A manager's success depends largely on his ability to communicate to his colleagues such objectives as what has to be done, and why it has to be done.

To a large extent, the success of an organization depends upon the atmosphere in which there is a free flow of information – upward, downward and horizontal. At the workplace we primarily think of getting things done. For this instructions and guidelines, supervision and monitoring and periodic reports are usually considered enough.

In a recent survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, communication skills were cited as the single most important decisive factor in choosing managers. The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Business School, points out that communication skills, including written and oral presentations, as well as an ability to work with others, are the main factor contributing to job success.

In spite of the increasing importance placed on communication skills, many managers continue to struggle, unable to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively – whether in verbal or written format. This inability makes it nearly impossible for them to compete effectively in the workplace, and stands in the way of career progression.

Being able to communicate effectively is therefore essential if you want to build a successful career. To do this, you must understand what your message is, what audience you are sending it to, and how it will be perceived. You must also weigh-in the circumstances surrounding your communications, such as situational and cultural context.

### **Why managers need communication skills?**

Communication skills for managers are vital and most managers recognize that communication skills are essential in business. Managers need to be able to communicate, build relationships and work with individuals at all levels and their behavior and interpersonal skills can affect others both positively and negatively; consequently, this is a major element of good management.

Managers need to perform the following inter related role in an organization.

- Interpersonal
- Informational
- Decisional

Let's take a closer look at a manager's interpersonal roles. As a manager, interpersonal roles will be dictated by the type of position the manager hold. Lower level managers will have different interpersonal roles than middle management. The same goes for upper management as well. To review, the interpersonal roles of a manager include acting as a figurehead, acting as a leader, or acting as a liaison.

As a figurehead within the organization managers are responsible for doing work that some may consider flashy or ceremonial in nature. Managers, of course, have dozens of administrative tasks in the public and professional spotlight. He have to represent the company at business functions, take out of town business partners out to dinner, and sometimes even attend the private events of employees.

As a leader managers are responsible for making sure that employees are able to work in a safe and productive environment. The growth of department and employees rests on manager's shoulders and he have to be able to foster growth while at the same time avoiding conflict.

As a liaison manager must be prepared to communicate with others. He not only has to report to upper management but will have to work with peers from other groups within your organization, vendors, and even clients. The liaison is responsible for knowing who to contact to resolve any situation.

It's no secret that being a manager means you need to have extremely strong communication skills. Your ability to communicate effectively while working with people is paramount to your success.

Informational role of a manager is to regulate the flow of information, either electronically or procedurally, within and among offices. For many companies, the rate at which work can be done is limited by the rate at which information can be transmitted to the people who need it, so the information manager fills a critical role:

To rapidly and accurately disseminate information to

people who need it while maintaining security and creating a structure flexible enough to allow for company expansion or contraction. He work closely with all departments of a company and many spend significant time analyzing a company's needs and historical practices before implementing any changes. Managers are also hired for their technical expertise and work as MIS (management information system) specialists to connect physically remote locations through telephone lines, to network existing stand-alone computers, or to coordinate telephone and data systems throughout a building.

The most surprising problem manager at information level face is not a practical one—their educational training and practical experience prepare them for most situations that they will encounter—it is with the level of satisfaction.

Manager's report that their level of satisfaction seems to decrease the longer they are in their career. Some said this is because the challenges aren't that challenging anymore; a few wrote that they expected the profession to lead to other careers and for them, it did not; one mentioned that the defensiveness he encountered on a day-to-day basis was downright offensive. To be a successful manager you have to listen well, think clearly, analyze carefully, know the options available to you—and have a thick skin.

Decisional role tennis player's forehand looks like a single fluid movement, but it's a series of actions. She grips the racket, gets in position, watches her opponent's approaching shot, pivots her shoulders and hips, turns her foot, transfers her weight, keeps her forearm parallel to the ground, holds the racket head at a precise angle, draws back the racket, steps forward, shifts her weight again, swings the racket forward, keeps her arm straight and her wrist firm, contacts the ball and follows through with a long sweeping motion.

Decisions are made the same way. Each one is the last step in a series of actions. However, many decision makers, like tennis players, are unaware of these steps as they occur. And a mistake or miscalculation at any point in the process can send a decision sailing out of bounds.

A good decision manager, like a good tennis coach, can help players understand this process, work through each step and consistently make winning decisions. This is critically important because a company's health is tied directly to the quality of the decisions made each day throughout the organization. That's right. Effective corporate actions result from superior decisions, which in turn rest heavily on solid

decision management practices rather than luck or general business acumen. Despite this, corporate leaders seldom attribute successes and failures to decision making or even consider how their companies make decisions. This is unfortunate, because the actions all managers take—or fail to take—have a profound impact on how the people around them make decisions. These managerial actions and behaviors constitute decision management, a powerful tool for managers at every level.

Even though managers recognize their responsibility to make good decisions, participate in group decisions and influence deliberations that lead to other decisions, they seldom understand the underlying decision-making process or think about their role as decision managers. In this role, they influence and guide the people around them to make effective decisions that enhance the company's prosperity.

Managers typically neglect decision management because they don't appreciate its monumental impact. They also tend to have a superficial understanding of what decision making entails and how the people around them decide—like a tennis coach unable to break down a forehand into its component parts.

Decision management also is hampered by an interesting psychological phenomenon called "bolstering." When we make a decision, we internally enhance the positive aspects of our choice and denigrate the other options to alleviate doubt and discomfort with our decision. For this reason, people typically believe they are excellent decision makers and seldom scrutinize their own decisions. And when they do, they're biased. As a result, it's better to leave decision evaluation to the people who are affected by the action.

All these functions require the manager to handle people and situations with their superb communication skills.