



COM00207 Communication in Organisations

ASSIGNMENT

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A Qualitative Analysis of Organisational Communication Issues in Company

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Executive Summary

Communication is of profound importance in the hospitality industry, however, most of the studies have focused on organisational communication from the perspective of management rather than of employee. This study attempted to explore the communication issues from the perspective of the employee and adopted a qualitative approach to interview with Mr X of Company A. During the interview, Mr X was enquired about various communication issues including intercultural communication, persuasions, negotiations, teamwork and meetings, and trust and conflict issues. It was found that Company A acknowledges the significance of intercultural awareness in this industry and have adopted a multicultural approach to deal with customers and other partners. On the other hand, it was found that Mr X, otherwise Company A, has less to do with persuasion, whereas, it was found that persuasion is an important element in this industry. It was also found that teamwork is constantly used in the company to achieve complex, client-oriented objectives, however, the behaviour of managers during internal meetings is harsh – more like of Theory X as presented by McGregor. It was recommended that managers should understand the models of persuasion and their relevance to the hospitality industry; including the ELM and HLM model. It was also suggested that

managers should behave more like the managers of Theory Y in order to increase employee satisfaction and loyalty.

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1.0 Introduction

Ritter (2003) mentioned that one of the important factor required to understand the value of intangible assets an organisation has is “communication”. Tourish and Hargie (2009) further mentioned that effective communication within organisations is strongly linked to higher levels of service and performance. Ruck and Welch (2012) highlighted that though the importance of internal communication has been recognised by managers, it has been widely seen from the perspective of management rather than the employee. Uusi-Rauva and Nurkka (2010), in the same context, added that very few studies have focused on what the employees consider as important in the process of internal communication. Bearing all of the facts in mind, this study considers the interpersonal communication issues from an employee perspective and evaluate them in a respective organisation, while referring to relevant communication theories. Data is gathered through an interview with Mr X working in Company A; the overview is provided below.

1.1 Overview of the company and the interviewee

Company A is an ultra-luxury conservation-based resort providing services to its customers since a very long time. The company is known for providing maximum privacy and seclusion while making use of natural beauty for the residents to enjoy. Since this report focuses on communication issues from an employee perspective, the interviewee selected is the Sales and Marketing Executive (SME) of the company. The work of Mr X included the organising of sales and to illustrate the various luxurious services provided to the customers in the resort.

2.0 Methodology

A qualitative approach was selected for this study in which an interview was conducted with the Sales & Marketing Executive of Company A. The selection of the interviewee was done after reflecting upon three main questions. First, since this study focuses on communication issues from an employee's perspective, it was decided to select a low-level employee in order to assess the communication needs. Second, the accessibility was assessed and it was found that the SME can be easily accessed after their job timings. Thirdly, the employee was also willing to give relevant information after an email regarding the purpose of this interview was sent. The persuasive communication model of Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953) were referred to in order to persuade the employee. The employee was persuaded through including persuasive ideas/messages in the email being sent for the interview purpose. A face-to-face interview was conducted with the employee and the sequence of questions was "Funnel" in which the interview was started with broad, open-ended questions and then moved to narrow, closed-ended questions because the interviewee was aware of the topic and was feeling free to talk about it (Creswell 2012).

3.0

Findings

When asked for intercultural communication in the organisation, Mr X demonstrated an in-depth understanding of cultural issues and acknowledged that intercultural awareness refers to the appreciation and understanding of cultural awareness. Some comments of Mr X demonstrating an understanding of intercultural communication in Company A are as follows:

It refers to a collection of such attitudes and skills which assist in understanding, interpreting and relating to people having a different culture than yours.

I acknowledge that various cultures exist out there – our manager is of different culture and most of the times the customers are from various cultures – and the main element is to know how to handle them and being open to the learning of various cultures.

When asked for presentation and persuasions, it was found that Mr X do not have anything to do with presentations but require a lot of persuasive skills because of their job responsibilities - persuading clients. It was found that Mr X did not have any in-depth knowledge of persuasion and relied only on non-credible sources to persuade their clients. Mr X commented:

We aren't specifically taught the very models of persuasion, I don't know if any exists yet! We follow our Manager guidelines on persuading the clients and most of the times I fail; I just don't know the reason.

When enquired about negotiations, though Mr X did not specifically know the types of negotiations, Mr X commented:

We are taught to negotiate with the customer on many issues, other than money. For example, some client wants the luxury of "Spa" to be included in a standard package and as a fact it is only available in premium packages. But, we try our best to negotiate with our manager and the client to include a limited service of Spa while charging a bit more money.

Mr X was also enquired about groups and meetings and he acknowledged the use of groups, both formal and informal, in his organisation as a mean to distribute the work accordingly and problem-solving. It was observed that Mr X was not satisfied with the weekly and monthly meeting as according to him they are “de-motivating”. Mr X specifically commented:

Our manager divides us into formal groups for the timely and effective completion of tasks, whereas, we also form some informal groups with those employees who are of the same culture/city/background/ethnicity/interest.

Meetings are not of much interest to me because our manager usually speaks on our negatives and sometimes use harsh wordings because of not achieving the desired sales target.

No trust/conflict issues were highlighted by Mr X, specifically commenting:

We have never experienced such issues with our management, colleagues and even the customers. We trust them, so do they!

4.0

Discussion

The results of the study indicated that intercultural awareness/communication is highly valued among Company A as acknowledged by Mr X and the significant role intercultural communication plays in the hospitality industry was recognised by the participant. According to Arasaratnam (2007), the participant’s understanding of this concept can be the reason behind increased performance and higher levels of motivation. Similarly, the results also confirmed the findings of De Janasz et al. (2014)

that intercultural communication and tourism are closely associated with each other. On the other hand, it was found that Mr X is not aware of persuasion techniques and the importance of it. This might be due to the fact that employees in the hospitality industry are taught limited elements of persuasion (Cialdini and Goldstein 2002) which was also confirmed by Mr X. Cialdini and Goldstein (2002) also mentioned that persuasion is an important element of this industry and the employees should be aware of persuasive techniques.

It was also found that Company A acknowledges the importance of teamwork to enhance performance and to manage tasks adequately. As noted by Richards, Chillas and Marks (2012), the hospitality industry is heavily reliant on co-operation and teamwork so to achieve complex and consumer-related objectives. The results of this study are also in the same line as Mr X suggested that their manager divided them into formal teams for the completion of tasks and to achieve higher performance. Finally, Mr X suggested that their manager demotivate them during meetings by discussing the negatives only and it can be related to the Theory X and Theory Y of McGregor (Hartman 2011). Managers corresponding to Theory X are harsh with their employees as they believe that the employees are idle, lazy and need direction to work. It also posits that the managers of Company A do not use effective communication strategies for meetings conducted with their employees, despite the importance of them in the hospitality industry.

5.0 Conclusions

Conclusively, it can be said that communication plays a vital role in the hospitality industry and after interviewing Mr X of Company A, the study highlighted the importance of studying communication issues from the perspective of an employee. It was concluded that the employees in the hospitality industry are aware of intercultural communication but lacks in persuasion and negotiation skills. It was also concluded that teamwork is also a critical component of this industry for complex, consumer-related objectives.

6.0 Recommendations

Following are some recommendations to Company A:

- ❖ The managers must understand, and then provide to their employees the understanding of persuasion in the light of various renowned models including the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HLM) (Petty and Brinol 2008).
- ❖ Managers should adopt the perspective of Theory Y as it helps in gaining employee's satisfaction and loyalty towards the organisation (Hartman 2011).

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Appendices

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