

Chapter 72

Managerial Communication in the Global Cross- Cultural Context

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ABSTRACT

Managerial Communication today is an integral component of many business related disciplines (strategic management, leadership, strategic marketing, business ethics, etc.). However, within the context of global business management, Managerial Communication follows under the broad umbrella of “Business Communication.” Communication with internal and external stakeholders demands careful consideration regardless of the industry. Having a managerial communication policy in place allows for strategic information dissemination as well as the protection of transmission of confidential data. This chapter discusses the topic of communication in general with emphasis on managerial communication within the cross-cultural context. The result of a qualitative study used in this chapter confirms that efficient communication strategies and effective communications policy implementation can propel a firm to success. Within this framework and that of managerial leadership effectiveness, managerial communication does not refer to media communication or journalism for that matter; instead, it focuses solely on managerial communication within the context of global business management.

INTRODUCTION

In a broad sense, Managerial Communication today is an integral component of many business related disciplines (strategic management, leadership, strategic marketing, international

negotiation, business ethics, etc.). Cross-cultural communication however encompasses every area of communication. This topic is usually integrated in courses under the discipline of Media Communication which does not follow within the scope of this chapter. A global search on the topic of Cross-cultural communication within the

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global business context reveals that the discipline is under researched, hence the need for a chapter in this text. In fact in 2010 the UNESCO (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization) established a program in Multilingual, Transcultural Communication in the Digital Age (UNESCO, 2010). Its scope is to strengthen research in the field in multilingual and transcultural communication, including multilingual computing methods, e-learning, multilingual web content management, and related methods; and to promote the development of a multilingual social web, harnessing semantic web technologies, and strengthening transcultural communication patterns using a wide range of language resources and technologies, multilingual computing methods, multilingual e-learning, and cultural diversity management procedures (UNESCO).

However, within the global business management context, Managerial Communication follows under the broad umbrella of “Business Communication” which is at the core of this chapter. In fact, when researching global competitive advantage a major research question comes to mind: Why are some competitors more successful than others? Further, why do some executives consistently make the right decisions, while others invariably fail? This chapter provides an explanation by asserting that one of the most significant attributes to global managerial success is “effective managerial communication.” In an attempt to exploit the true meaning of managerial communication, we theorize that when humans interact they create relationships. We base our theories and applications using a polycentric approach by thinking of “communication” as being more universal in nature than ethnocentric based. And, because we are different in nature, different people act and react differently. Since we are actively interacting, we adapt and learn the rules of the surroundings which condition the interaction, whether it is at the work place, at school, or on the golf course, or other places. By interacting we acquire each other’s culture and integrate our exchanged be-

havior, knowledge, experience, among others; thus, we become multicultural. Consequently, we adapt to the way we interact and communicate, and according to each given situation. Hence, when adaptation is not possible, we fail.

Indeed, failure due to lack of effective communication with all stakeholders leads to lower productivity, lower profitability and short-term survivorship. Increased managerial communication effectiveness however, enables practitioners at all management levels to realize the benefits of proper communication. In order to achieve effective communication a firm must have well defined communication’s policies and plans in place. Communication policies are designed to enable a member of an organization to understand the finer points of internal communication with employees and external communication with business associates (Stevens, 2005). Through appropriate training and effective policy implementation companies aim to develop communication skills which can be applied to all levels of the organization, but especially at middle to upper management levels.

However, policies and plans can only be developed and implemented with effective and continuous training, by using new and more efficient supporting tools such developing communication’s technologies, and by having effective communication leadership.

To support this objective, certain fundamental elements are necessary. The management must have the ability to manage and deliver what it promises and must possess a high level of Communication Competence including, but not limited to, communication skills, language proficiency, cross-cultural awareness, intelligence, expertise, adaptability, understanding, etc. (Hamlin, 1989, pp. 247-261; Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Earley & Ang, 2003; Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Abbe, Gulick, & Herman, 2007).

Within this framework Managerial Communication can be described as “an integrative theory-practice methodology that enables the management to sensibly apply the knowledge ac-

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