Best practices in Organizational Communication

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Agenda

- Making sense of eight central theses of effective organizational communication practices (as outlined by Young & Post, 1993)

&

- Discussing how these "best practices" apply to the working life of 2020's…

Next steps in this course

- Learning Journal entries: only one paper to read and comment on (but still one more entry in addition to that, as I want you to reflect also on your learning in the final session (the presentation session)

- Our next and final meeting: presentation session on 16th October (Friday). In addition to 10 mins. presentation, a short written report, max. 5 pages, deadline 23.10.

- Video presentation: due date 15th October by midnight (23:55)

Communicative practice of this lecture…

- Going through the eight factors of effective organizational communication one by one, each introduced briefly by the teacher and discussed then in small groups in break out rooms

- As regards each topic: quick group discussion (5 mins.) about
    a. How important or valid you feel this point is?
    b. How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

- After each discussion, back to the main room where sharing a couple of your insights on questions a & b.

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Effectiveness of internal (or employee) communication is based on the following 8 factors

1. The Chief Executive as Communications Champion

2. The Match Between Words and Actions

3. Commitment to Two-Way Communication

4. Emphasis on Face-to-Face Communication

5. Shared Responsibility for Employee Communications

6. The Bad News/Good News Ratio

7. Knowing Customers, Clients, and Audiences

8. The Employee Communication Strategy

The Chief Executive as Communications Champion

- Philosophical commitment to the idea that communicating to employees and – even more importantly – with employees is important

- Non only commitment but skills of communication ("walking the talk", e.g. talking often to and spending time in communicating with organizational members, exchanging ideas actively, listening carefully, responding quickly to sensitive topics, taking the responsibility of delivering key messages themselves)

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

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The Match Between Words and Actions

- Typical problem: official messages (official communication) in contradiction with implicit messages derived from managerial actions
  - E.g. it's common to organizations to officially boast their strategy processes as participative, or call their different processes as transparent > yet this is not in line with how employees feel about these processes

- On an individual level, managerial empty jargon such as 'my door is always open' (but not walking the talk)

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

Commitment to Two-Way Communication

- Dialogue and two-way are still (as they have been for some decades..) fashionable expressions, but upward communication is (too) often reduced to a mere possibility to give feedback etc.

- Emphasis still on downward?

- Listening skills underrated organizational (communication) skills?

- (Dialogue is different than two-way, upward-downward))

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

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Emphasis on Face-to-Face Communication

- F-2-F the richest channel – and most impactful

- Contemporary challenge: physical F-2-F meetings oftentimes difficult to arrange > how well does technology stand in?

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

Shared Responsibility for Employee Communications

- Clear policies of who is responsible for what type of communications, e.g. top management responsible for communicating the big picture, line managers the local issues

- Supervisors' role critical: employees want to hear things from their direct supervisor/line manager, not from their peers or from the grapevine

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

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The Bad News/Good News Ratio

- Importance of sharing both good and bad news

- Important upshot of sharing bad news (service or quality failures, delays, customer complaints, or criticism from outsiders as well):

- Bias against sharing bad news?? Or sharing them in a discouraging way???

- Bad news should be culturally valued and institutionally supported! (E.g. how can you (organization) learn if bad news, different shortcomings etc. are not recognized?)

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

Knowing Customers, Clients, and Audiences

- "Customer-focus" – employee-focus (cf. customer experience – employee experience)

- A thought-out strategy needed in all internal communication activities: who are the internal customers or clients or audiences – and treating them based on this knowledge

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

Strategy for employee communications

- (How many companies even have it – today?)

- Starting from the idea that organizational communication is a critical management process; therefore
    - Communicate not only what is happening, but why and how it is happening.
    - Timeliness is vital. Communicate what you know, when you know it. Do not wait until every detail is resolved.
    - Communicate continuously (even if there's nothing new on some specific issue, "keep the channel open")
    - Link the "big picture" with the "little picture."
    - Don't dictate the way people should feel about the news.

How important or valid you feel this point is?
How well you feel (or know) organizations are doing in this respect?

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