



Communication as a Strategic Imperative: A Study

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Abstract:

The World today is ruled by communication. Effective communication forms the backbone and the success formula of all businesses today. Business activities are no longer defined or separated by geographical boundaries. With this, the realm of business communication too has undergone significant transformation. Today, it is not just about confidence, but also about credibility. Competitiveness and differentiation are as much about the power of ideas as about their effective articulation. This is where communication has excellently evolved beyond the fundamentals of fluent and correct verbal and written communication to become an art of expressing oneself for greater impact, a science of establishing qualitative connections with others. This paper aims to study the role of communication in business as a strategic tool thereby making it an imperative one.

Keywords: *Effective Communication, Strategic Imperative, Impact, Connection*

1. Introduction

Communication is the art of expressing oneself and reaching out to others. When communication is purposefully used by its communicator (herein business organisation) to fulfil its various mission, we can say here communication has been used as a strategic imperative. In today's highly complex business world organisations vie for the attention, admiration, affinity, alignment of all sorts from its stakeholders whether customers, investors or public at large. In doing so, organisations make strategic decisions and use strategic communication to reach their goals/ targets. Therefore, we can say strategic communication is a planned communication which helps an organisation achieve its mission and long term goals. Strategic communication therefore includes communication of an integrated type, with a multidisciplinary perspective by extending ideas and issues grounded in various traditional communication disciplines.

2. The Framework of Strategic Communication

The framework for strategic communication comprises a wide variety of iterative loops, encompassing multiple connections with multiple constituencies on multiple strategic levels. These strategic elements include the markets addressed, the products and services offered in those markets, the underlying research and development that supports those products and services, the operations plan to deliver those products and services, the finances required and the financial practices needed to assure optimal performance and, finally, the organizational infrastructure, culture, and management necessary to attain that optimal performance.

3. How does it work?

Communication to be used as a strategic imperative requires strategic communication in action. One can't execute strategy if he can't communicate about it. It is increasingly important today to clearly communicate their values and purpose. Therefore, strategic communication requires an integrated, multilevel approach. Each communication function fulfills specific objectives, is targeted at specific

constituencies that are critical to meeting those objectives and is delivered through the channels most appropriate to and effective for those constituencies. To achieve full strategic impact, all communications to all constituencies through all channels must be customised to a given objective, yet consistent both with one another and the overall corporate strategy.

4. Why communication is imperative as a strategy?

Effective communication is important for the development of an organisation. It is something which helps the managers to perform the basic functions of management such as planning, organising, motivating and controlling. Communication skills whether written or oral form the basis of any business activity. It is more important now than ever.

Communication is the key that opens the doors between the employers and employees. The successful effective two-way channels of communication helps the management not only to inform, to educate, to advise, to order employees but in turn also allows them to reach up to the management with their suggestions, grievances etc. By developing formal as well as informal channels of communication among the employees at various levels, the organisation can create a sense of coordination and make them feel proud of being the members of the organisation.

Management has become the keyword of the 21st century corporate world. A good manager is the backbone of the hierarchical structure of any organisation. A manager in an organisation plays multiple roles interacting with a variety of people. They are the disseminators when they relay information to other people in and outside the organisation through meetings, speeches, videos, memos and letters. They are the entrepreneurs when promoting change in the organisation's products, processes or culture. They are also negotiators while mediating different factions both in and outside the organisation. They also act as skilful handlers while neutralising hostile forces through meetings, memos, statements to the media. They play interpersonal roles as figureheads when they represent the organisation in internal or external ceremonies by presenting budgets, chairing meetings, appearing in ads and giving speeches. As liaisons, they link the organisation to the external environment of shareholders, dealers etc. Effective managers are able to use a wide variety of media and strategies to communicate.

In this global age, speed is often the key to successful negotiations and so writing effectively under these circumstances can be very demanding. As the writing that goes out projects the image of the organisation, each and every document needs to be carefully and perfectly drafted.

5. External Communication: Reaching out to the larger World

The business of an organisation is not only confined within the boundaries of four walls There are customers, shareholders, dealers, media outside the organisation who form the external public of the organisation. As competition rules the present day market, every customer is treated as king today. Almost all companies today have opened up customer care departments. Communication has an immense reaching power to the outside world. Mass media like TV, Radio and Newspaper are harnessed to their maximum for the purpose of advertising the products and services of the organisation. Sales letters, visits by the salesmen to the customers, posters, hoardings, bill boards, and placards, advertisements on TV and Radio and in the newspaper are the examples of how the organisation reaches its prospective customers. The Public Relations Department with a purpose to broaden the sphere of influence of an organisation by proper publicity, advertising, exhibitions, films, and to improve communication between the people and the organisation, undertakes a number of schemes in which communication has vital role to play. The society outside being the sole patron of the organisation, it needs an ideal image to be displayed in the minds of the people in society. Goodwill in the market is the most desired vitamin necessary for the growth of its business.

With this purpose, the Public Relations Department conducts various activities like arranging conferences, seminars, open houses, participating in the exhibitions, and the trade fairs, patronising sports or socio-cultural activities, opinion-polls and questionnaires etc. It is only the good communication tactics, persuasive skills, an open approach with the public that can help the organisation in coming out of the crisis situations.

Each of these activities mentioned above takes on very complex dimensions when it comes to working with geographically dispersed- and often unseen co-workers, partners and clients. This calls for a new kind of work dynamic, where the real skill is not just communicating effectively, but also avoiding miscommunication. What adds to the demand of effective business communication in modern day enterprises are the challenges stemming from the global and ever more complex nature of businesses.

6. Conclusion

Every business organisation needs to examine its communication system be it internal or external and find out the efficiency of the system so that it can help in strategic communication because effective communication is no longer a choice, but a strategic imperative. Communication channels within and outside the organisation are the important arteries and veins making communication the lifeblood of every organisation.

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