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Title: *Organizational Communication at XYZ Company*

The accompanying research report is submitted to the **University of Wisconsin-Stout**, **Graduate School** in partial

completion of the requirements for the

Graduate Degree/ Major: Master of Science in Technical and Professional Communication

Research Adviser: Andrea Deacon, Ph.D.

Submission Term/Year: Spring, 2012

Number of Pages: 36

Style Manual Used: American Psychological Association, 6th edition

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Abstract

As technology influences the way companies conduct business, it is important for companies to share information within the organization's departments. This study takes a look at the internal communication problem at XYZ company by conducting research from scholarly sources and by interviewing employees that are affected by the poor communication practices within the company. XYZ company is the leading powersports aftermarket parts distributor with office locations in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and distribution warehouses located in California, Texas, New York, Wisconsin, Canada, and Europe. The study also recommends solutions as to how to solve the problem(s) and also explains how a solution could help the organization's day-to-day activities.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my dog, Puppy (a.k.a. Princess, Lucky, and Precious), for keeping

the raccoons out of my garden so I could focus on this research project. Good girl!

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Introduction

This study takes place at a business, XYZ company, based in Wisconsin but also with a location in Minnesota. The purpose of the study is to find a communication solution that can solve the communication problem between XYZ company's two locations. The communication problem has caused employees to feel frustrated, which has lowered morale and it also caused employees to redo their work, which costs the company money.

This study is important because there are more companies in the U.S. that are having similar issues as the ones that are happening at XYZ company. With technology influencing the ways employees communicate, it is important to research what has worked for companies in the past because the solution to XYZ company's communication problem could possibly be the same solution for a different company, or the solution to XYZ company's communication problem could already exist in a different study.

Chapter I: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to summarize research that has already been performed that relates to similar internal organizational communication issues that are happening at XYZ company. This literature review will define organizational communication, explain why organizational communication is essential to a company, take a close look at the often-overlooked area of internal communication, and detail the criteria for successful organizational communication.

Defining Organizational Communication

It is important to identify the definition of organizational communication because there are many different definitions that scholars have used in the past. Sticking to one definition will allow the literature review and the study to focus on one specific area of organizational communication.

Creating effective internal communication within an organization is not as easy as it sounds. Managers need to communicate goals and tasks to employees and the employees need to understand their tasks so they can help achieve the goals of the organization. To understand what it takes to create successful internal communication within an organization, you need to define internal communication.

Internal communication has many different definitions. Some scholars define organizational communication as a basic exchange of information within an organization. For instance, Bovee and Thill define internal communication as "the exchange of information and ideas within an organization" (Norbin, 2011, p.618). Other researchers offer a broader definition that takes into consideration social dynamics of the workplace. This is the case for Argenti who

argues internal communication is "about creating an atmosphere of respect for all employees within an organization" (Norbin, 2011, p. 618). Argenti goes on to say that, "Communication from management should come directly from one manager to the next, and from supervisor to employee, but as companies grow larger and more complex, this often becomes more difficult—hence the need for the internal communication function" (Norbin, 2011, p. 618). Norbin (2011) defines internal communication as "the communication transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities" (p.618). For example, while Bovee and Thill define organizational communication as "exchanging knowledge and opinions in the organization," Argenti defines it as "creating a positive atmosphere for all employees of organization" (Norbin, 2011, p. 618). This definition makes organizational communication a wider dimensional concept. Communication in the organization should be transferred from an executive person to another and from an employee to another. When the organizations become bigger and more complex, organizational communication becomes harder and the necessity of organizational communication quality increases (Ince, 2011). According to Goldhaber, the communication process in a given organization is about creating and exchanging information in a dependent relations network. Price defines organizational communication as "transmitting news about the work from organization to employees and through employees" (Ince, 2011, p.107). Organizational communication is an exchange of messages in the internal and external environments of the organization. Put another way, organizational communication is the structural communication of all the employees of the organization with their internal and external environments (Altınöz, 2008). Woodruffe defines internal communication as treating employees with an immense value through the practices of

programs to attain organizational objectives (Abdullah, 2012). Kathryn (1989) concludes that internal communication is the hand and fist relationship of the organization. No matter how a person defines internal communication, everyone tends to agree that internal communication is an element of organizational communication (Norbin, 2011).

For the purpose of this paper, the following definition of organizational communication will be used: *Organizational communication is a social process that provides contact and information exchange between both departments and units of an organization and an organization's environment for the purpose of operation of organization and accomplishment of the organization's objective* (Ince, 2011, p. 107). This definition works the best for this paper because it is the definition that best matches the work environment at XYZ company. The work environment at XYZ company consists of different departments (i.e. locations) exchanging information for the purpose of operation and accomplishments of the organization's objectives.

Understanding the Importance of Effective Organizational Communication

Since technology has created a world where communication is more necessary than ever for a company's success, companies have started to focus on creating an environment that allows easier communication for employees within an organization. This section explains the different types of organizational communication and why they are important to an organization.

According to Ince (2011), there are three formal types of communication--*top-down communication* that orders, decisions and rules are transmitted in pecking order; *bottom-up communication* that information and results are transmitted to seniors in pecking order; and *horizontal communication* that allows coordination and information sharing among departments. Abdullah (2012) conducted a study and by using a purposive random sampling technique, 144 usable responses were collected from employees of a leading five star hotel. The findings show that communication is a foundational effort of organizational success. Employees are proud of their bottom-up, top-down and horizontal communication that enhances employee relations. The internal communicators roles are considered as an important element in the organization, regardless of the position in an organization chart. Internal communicators build trust on its employees in an organization (Abdullah, 2012).

According to Abdullah (2012), "At one time, internal communication was considered a backwater in the communication world. Its role was often to make employees feel good. In the past, management seldom revealed its plans to employees because they did not have to necessarily know but in today's changing business environment, employee communication function is compelling organizations to take a serious look at communicating with employees. The challenge for an internal communicator is to convince top management that employees need to know the organizational plans, objectives and outcomes. This helps top management

communicate its goals effectively and employees strive for alignment to maximize effective management. In a nutshell, in this new era of globalization, organizations are beginning to realize that employee communication is no longer "nice to do", "it is critical to succeed" (p. 18). What top management often finds most critical is the concept of internal communication is a lower priority task than external communication such as marketing and publicity (Abdullah, 2012). Abdullah (2012) goes on to say, "Internal communication should not hinder the understanding of the overall organizational functions but establish clear communication linkages and internal relations to strengthen the organization" (p. 18). Internal communication, which often includes traditional deliverables such as memos, newsletters are integral to keep the internal public informed. The amount of internal communication that is offered can be determined by resource availability, organizational sizes and management priorities (Abdullah, 2012).

One of the key factors in attaining high level of organizational effectiveness is sound communication (Norbin, 2011). Organizational communication consists of a number of principles—"Communication is a central and not a peripheral component of organizational effectiveness. It is not a frill. It is vital; communication is a pervasive activity in organizations. It is not something that only some people in organizations must do or something that occurs infrequently. Organizational communication is multi-faceted and deceptively simple matter" (Norbin, p. 617, 2011). Internal communication is the flow of communication amongst the people within the boundaries of the organization. According to Norbin (2011), "A line of studies have indicated the relationship between internal communication and organizational efficiency and effectiveness" (p.617). Employees spend a lot of time on communication and many face difficulties when communicating (Norbin, 2011).

The objective of organizational communication is to procure internalizing organization's goal and policy from all employees, to give the idea that employees are considered as important by providing interactivity among employees working in several departments and in this respect to increase job satisfaction, to maintain operation of organization and to attain the objective of organization (Ince, p. 2011).

Internal Communication Techniques

Internal communication has not always been an important aspect within an organization. Knowing the three formal types of internal communication is not enough when trying to create a successful communication environment within and organization. Understanding techniques that have worked at different organizations will help create a successful organizational communication environment.

According to Altınöz (2008), "Efficient communication is the principal device for the adequate implementation of administrative and organizational activities. For this purpose, management needs to specify the kind of communication system to be set up and the kind of communication devices to be used. Communication is vital for any organization" (p. 475). The practices of internal communication in organizations are crucial as it treats employees with an immense value to attain organizational objectives (Abdullah, 2012). Communication processes in organizations are closely related to the subjectivity of those involved, as well as the symbolic process being used. From this observation, the perception of people in the communication process must be considered, for what they think or feel affects considerably how they interact with the organizational environment (Arnold, 2011).

Several structures and policies need to be followed to ensure the effectiveness of internal communication such as employers ensuring that employees receive copies of strategies, plans, missions, and goals to be reached. Besides that, Howard states that, employers need to make face-to-face communications with the internal publics to maintain their effective internal communication (Abdullah, 2012). It is in fact that the backbone of their internal communications programs. Moreover, it could help managers to develop a positive working relationship with their employees, as it offers for an enhanced two-way communication (Abdullah, 2012).

In conventional offices, communication takes place within the hierarchical pyramid called the organizational structure, and is known as formal or informal communication. Formal communication is the type that works in specified structures within the organizational rules and towards the organizational goals. Informal communication, on the other hand, is the unofficial type-taking place among staff as face-to-face or telephone interaction (Altınöz, 2008).

Criteria for Success with Organizational Communication

Understanding the importance of organizational communication and the techniques that make internal communication successful are necessary in order to meet the criteria for a successful internal communication plan.

To meet the criteria for successful organizational communication, it is important to understand that an organization is a unit set up to achieve certain goals and communication helps implement the basic functions of management such as planning, organizing, and control; and thus organizations can fulfill their duties.

The first essential criteria for organizational communication is decision-making by management. Without the necessary information, problems cannot be solved, nor can a decision be reached on any issue (Altınöz, 2008). Organizations cannot possibly carry out their activities without communication. In today's business environment, effective communication becomes a fundamental requirement (Arnold, 2011). Lack of communication that occurs in higher degrees and spread to whole organization may cause misunderstanding of the employees (Ince, 2011). The need for the right information for the running of administrative activities and decision-making is met by communication, which is indispensable for increasing work efficiency and mobilizing organizational resources (Altınöz, 2008).

The second essential criteria for organizational communication is the way the organization is structured for communication. Studies on organizational communication presuppose the existence of flow; that is, the information should flow through the organization in such a way that it reaches all levels, to achieve the goals originally proposed (Arnold, 2011). The coordination of employees is allowed by communication. Cooperation is not possible when employees are unaware of one another's needs and emotions (Altınöz, 2008). Duties and

responsibilities must be segregated fairly to employees in an organization to enhance strong

internal relations (Abdullah, 2012). With efficient communication taking place, individuals feel

more attached to their work (Altınöz, 2008).

Organizational activities cannot be performed unless senior management informs the

employees of the policy and goals of the organization, the goods or services produced the

methods of production, and innovations (Altınöz, 2008). Monge further highlighted that all staffs

should know what and how activities are performed by other employees who participate in the

sequence of related operations. This in fact broadens employees awareness on internal activities

carried out and may help remove barriers of communication (Abdullah, 2012). Lorraine also

stated that large organizations often have weaker internal communication practices than smaller

organizations because job specialization and functional segregation have reduced access to

information about services being provided. In other words, small organizations have a greater

assurance of effective internal communication practices (Abdullah, 2012).

The third essential criteria for organizational communication is how an organization

distributes information internally because organizations need to absorb needed information to

function effectively (Abdullah, 2012). Information is the basic building block of communication

and Geddie suggested that knowledge of information should be disseminated properly in an

internal communication practice. Proper dissemination of information requires individuals and

project teams to understand how to deliver information within the organization (Abdullah, 2012).

When it comes to working in groups, communication is strengthened through an inter-

group central channel. Further, ease of information transmission makes it possible to reach the

information at the source, allowing efficient and correct decisions. Virtual offices can present as

a whole the elements of information, which conventional offices produce in different

environments (Altınöz, 2008). Employees need information as to what needs to be done, how, and why, in order to achieve the goals of the organization (Altınöz, 2008). Kathryn also highlighted that top management expects communicators not only to inform employees and help boost morale but also craft messages that influences employee's behavior (Abdullah, 2012).

The fourth essential criteria for organizational communication is allowing a company and employees the ability to adapt to technology. According to Arnold (2011), "Technology has made an impact in the workplace with fax machines, electronic mail (e-mail), Internet and cell phones that reduce the need for travel and transportation. The choice of e-mail, for example, is so new that all its advantages and disadvantages are not fully known and documented. It is not the medium that will ensure effective communication, but the way communication process it built among stakeholders" (p.3). Communication in virtual as well as conventional offices is essential for obtaining the right information in administrative activities and decision-making (Altınöz, 2008). Virtual communication technologies increase the efficiency of communication especially in virtual teams (Altınöz, 2008).

Conclusion

Information exchange is considered to be the most basic function of communication (Altınöz, 2008). Organizations are social units that congregate for production, formed by individuals who have different views and knowledge to reach a common goal (Ince, 2011). In today's world, communication is an important component of organizational activity. Because the global market has become widespread, most organizations need to meet their needs with a lower resource moral to recruit communication so lower communication does not fail. Organizations should eliminate the barriers on communication and create efficient, participative, and transparent communication medium. Constantly developing new technologies present the need of organizations should have open and correct communication (Ince, 2011).

Effective communication in organizations can simplify successful organization operation. Recent studies about communication show that communication has positive correlation with many organizational outputs like organizational commitment, performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and job satisfaction. In contrast communication failure may cause functionless results like stress, job dissatisfaction, low trust, and decrease in organizational commitment, severance intention, and absence (Ince, 2011). Studies have shown that most employees are satisfied with their job due to regular communication activities in a pleasant atmosphere (Abdullah, 2012).

Chapter II: Methodology

Detailed Methodology:

The methodology of this study will consist of a mix of textual analysis of scholarship and field research in the form of personal interviews. A literature review will be conducted to utilize current research in the field of professional communication to gain a deeper, more nuanced, understanding of potential causes and solutions to the communication challenges at XYZ company. Research will occur in scholarly journals or credible media sources (e.g. newspapers, magazines, etc.) in order to learn what communication problems and solutions have been documented. The reason for studying other communication problems is to learn more about the problem and to see how other companies have solved or tried to solve a similar issue. The literature review will provide a solid foundation for a starting to point that will create a solution to the communication problem at XYZ company. It will also provide evidence of how other companies handled their communication issues so XYZ company will be able to implement a proven solution that has worked for other companies in the past. With technology influencing how people communicate in a professional setting, it is important to research current success stories because it will increase the odds of finding a solution that will benefit the communication problem at XYZ company. If a literature review was not conducted, then the odds of finding a solution to the communication issue at XYZ company would decrease because nobody would know what types of solutions have been reached in the past.

The literature review will also help identify best practices for solving an internal communication issue that is similar to the issue that is happening at XYZ company. Best practices will help narrow down possible solutions so people at XYZ company will be able to get a detailed report of the communication solution, which help them make the best possible decision for how they will solve the communication problem.

After the literature review, interviews will be conducted with employees that are affected by the communication problem at XYZ company. The interviews will take place via face-to-face communication and e-mail communication (See Appendix A for interview questions) The interviews will allow the employees that are affected by the communication issue to provide information about what solutions potentially could and could not work when trying to solve the problem. The interviews will also allow the employees affected by the communication problem to provide input about how the current communication process works and also discuss the severity and consequences of the communication problem. After the interviews have taken place, the data will be used to compare it with the information that was collected during the literature review. Synthesizing the data, literature, and employee's own personal experiences with the communication issue will help find the best solution to the communication problem at XYZ company.

Chapter III: Results

Introduction

In order to figure out the communication issue at XYZ company, a survey was given to four random employees that either work at XYZ company's Wisconsin location or XYZ company's Minnesota location. An e-mail requesting participation in the study was sent to the employees at both locations and the first four people that were willing to participate were selected. Due to time restraints and a limited number of 40 employees that work for XYZ company, between four and six participants was the target number for this study. Out of 40 employees that were e-mailed the participation request form, a total of four responded.

After the four participants gave their consent to participate in the study, they were given a questionnaire to fill out. The questionnaire had some general questions and it also had specific questions for people that were located at XYZ company's Wisconsin location and XYZ company's Minnesota location. After the questionnaires were reviewed, some follow up questions were asked to clarify any confusions with an answer.

Based on a collective analysis of the interview data, I believe there are a number of specific conclusions that can be drawn as to the nature of the organizational communication problem at XYZ company. These conclusions are explained in the upcoming section. Provided below are the questions and the responses that were provided. The responses are direct quotes and unedited.

Questionnaire Results

General questions for all employees:

1.) **Which location do you work at? Minnesota or Wisconsin?**

Participants 1, 2, and 3 are from Minnesota and Participant 4 is from Wisconsin. All four filled

out the questionnaire.

2.) **What is your job title?**

Participant 1: Photo Coordinator, Dept. Lead

Participant 2: Photo Coordinator

Participant 3: Lead Copywriter (Web)

Participant 4: Buyer

3.) **How long have you been with XYZ company?**

Participant 1: 6.5 years

Participant 2: 15 months

Participant 3: 7 Years

Participant 4: 7 years

4.) **Do you think there is a problem between how the two locations of XYZ company's**

communicate product information to each other? (This question was posed as a YES or NO

question)

Participant 1: Yes

Participant 2: Yes

Participant 3: Yes

Participant 4: Yes

5.) *If you think there is a communication problem, could you describe what problems you have experienced?*

Participant 1:There is a lack of knowledge about products and/or projects. I think the main problem in WI is similar to MN. Only a select few individuals are given information regarding specific tasks, and the rest of us are expected to be mind readers. No one is encouraged to communicate.

Participant 2: I don not think WI knows what our deadlines are. They do not understand how long it takes to move an image to the final catalog stage without having to pay rush charges. Very rarely do I ever get images without asking for them first. When I do have an issue, there are usually way too many people involved when it should be between me and the buyer.

Participant 3: There is a total lack of communication between the two locations. The Wisconsin location should much more proactive in providing us with information and what exactly they are looking for. However, they rarely provide the information we need and when they do it is because we had to go to them.

Participant 4: I cannot always supply all of the necessary information because I cannot get it from the vendor before I need to send the information to Minnesota.

Questions for Minnesota employees:

1.) *How would you rate the general sufficiency of the information provided by*

Wisconsin?   Excellent, Good, Average, or Poor

Participant 1: Average

Participant 2: Average

Participant 3: Poor

2.) *How often do you redo your work because the information provided by Wisconsin*

was insufficient? Almost always, Often, Seldom, or Never?

Participant 1: Seldom. I seldom, because half the time I end up redoing my work, based on a lack

of internal communication. It is not just WI.

Participant 2: Seldom

Participant 3: Almost always

3.) *How much time per day do you spend communicating with people in Wisconsin about*

getting more information about a product? 0-2 hours, 2-4 hours, 4-6 hours, 6+ hours?

Participant 1: 2-4 hours. Depends on the vendor and/or catalog.

Participant 2: 0-2 hours.

Participant 3: 2-4 hours

4.) *Do you know the procedure that the Wisconsin employees follow when providing*

information to the Minnesota employees?

Participant 1: No

Participant 2: No

Participant 3: I really am not sure what their process is.

5.) *Describe the process that you follow after you receive information from Wisconsin.*

Participant 1: I try to verify that the images that I receive are accurate, and meet quality

standards. If not, then I have to go back to my WI contacts to try to obtain correct info.

Participant 2: Contact buyers/vendors for new images. Once received, make sure images meet our standards. Rename to our part numbers, size, color correct, convert profiles for database, outline, retouch and send images to Widen. Once uploaded in the database, I go in and assign all metadata info to each image and then add them to the correct entry.

Participant 3: I review the product information I receive then rewrite the copy to meet our style guidelines and standards. When dealing with application fitment information, I review the information and build application charts off of that information.

6.) ***What are the problems that you are experiencing with the current process?***

Participant 1: Many of the contacts in WI do not see any urgency in responding to information requests. Part of the issue, I believe, is lack of drive and motivation. Half of the time, WI contacts will pass along information without even looking it over. It is very difficult to get things done in an accurate, timely manner if no one cares enough to do their job to the best of their abilities.

Participant 2: Meeting our deadlines.

Participant 3: One of my biggest frustrations in this position is how much time I waste having to search out information when the buyers in Wisconsin should be supplying me with this information from the beginning, especially considering they have all of the information. But since they do not provide the pertinent information from the beginning I have to spend time trying to find the correct information and in most cases I am unable to find the correct information and have to contact the buyers anyway.

7.) ***What improvements would you like to see to the current process that would benefit you and your job?***

Participant 1: N/A. See question 8.

Participant 2: The buyers already know what images I need a long time before I know what I need so they should be working on getting the images and sending them to me before calcs are received on our end. Sometimes I only have a day or two to acquire images and then we end up paying a rush charge to the database company to get the images pushed through.

Participant 3: The buyers getting me the information I need right from the beginning.

8.) ***What improvements do you think would benefit the process and the company?***

Participant 1: I think one of the main things that needs to improve is management. There are no good, strong managers. No one will stand up for anyone else, or push for change. With this kind of poor leadership, how can we expect things to improve?!

Participant 2: Same as #7 answer. Also, I think it would be very beneficial to the company to go paperless as much as possible. We should be able to access everything through the network and have the choice if we want to print a calc out or not.

Participant 3: If the buyers were to provide us with the information from the beginning, the company would benefit as a whole by cutting down on the time spent on each vendor file. But most importantly the information would be more accurate and would eliminate a lot of errors and corrections which in turn would save the company time and money.

9.) ***How do you feel when the information supplied by Wisconsin is insufficient?***

Participant 1: Stressed and frustrated.

Participant 2: Frustrated and upset.

Participant 3: It is very frustrating when the information is insufficient. It makes me question what the buyers are doing and how well they know their product lines. They are the direct link to our vendors and they should have the most current information. They should also be looking at

the information they have to see if it will be sufficient or not. If they feel it is not sufficient they should be contacting the vendor for more information. But they hardly ever do this.

Questions for Wisconsin employees:

1.) *Do you believe that the information provided to Minnesota is sufficient? Why or why not?*

Participant 4: Usually it is. The problem that happens is that I do not always get all of the information from the vendor so I have to send a product through without any copy about it.

2.) *Have you ever sent information to Minnesota that you knew was insufficient? If yes, please explain?*

Participant 4: Yes, because sometimes I do not have all of the information from the vendor so I will send a product without the proper amount of information.

3.) *Is there a procedure that you follow when you gather information for products?*

Participant 4: I use a product information sheet that I fill out for each product/vendor.

4.) *Are you experiencing any problems with the current process?*

Participant 4: The product information sheet seems to be a bit too vague when it comes to supplying product information. I think it could be updated to meet our current needs.

5.) *What improvements would you like to see to the current process that would benefit you and your job?*

Participant 4: A new product information form that is more current.

6.) *Do you have enough time to gather the correct information?*

Participant 4: Not always. Sometimes it is the vendors that are holding me up. As long as I have the information, I can do my job.

7.) *Describe the process that you follow when you start gathering information for a new*

product.

Participant 4: I get a form from purchasing that has all of the new products on it. I then work with the vendor to figure out the product descriptions for the new products. I then fill out the product information form and send it to Edge.

8.) ***Do you know the process that the people in Minnesota follow after they receive***

information that you provided?

Participant 4: I do not. All I know is the product ends up in the catalog and advertisements.

9.) ***How do you feel when people from Minnesota ask you for more information about a***

product?

Participant 4: I usually do not mind them asking me because I want the product descriptions to be accurate.

10.) *How much time do you think you spend when you have to communicate with Minnesota*

people about providing more information?

Participant 4: It depends on how much information is needed. Sometimes it is only a few minutes and other times it can take an entire day to get information.

Chapter IV: Discussion

Introduction

The Organizational Communication Study at XYZ company has shown some of the problems with the communication process at XYZ company and it has also shown other organizational communication studies and communication tactics that work in other organizations.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were time and finding enough participants to participate. The time allowed to gather data was three weeks. Participant's schedules and workloads made it challenging to find people to participate in the study. Four out of 40 people chose to voluntarily participate in the study. While the study sample represents just a 10% fraction of all company employees, their answers still shed some light on the communication problems at XYZ company. If more time was available to conduct the study, more people would participate.

Conclusions

After reviewing the data collected for this study, three conclusions can be drawn from the data--The communication problem has negatively affected employee morale, productivity is down because employees are wasting time redoing their work, and employees do not know the company processes and practices when it comes to communicating between the two locations, which is making it more difficult for the employees to communicate with each other.

The first conclusion the data showed was the communication problem has negatively affected employee morale. Due to the communication issue, all of the employees are frustrated when information is not provided and when coworkers do not know what is going on. Ince's (2011) study showed that effective communication within an organization can simplify

successful organization operation. The employees were also frustrated when information was not provided. Ince's (2011) study showed that effective communication can lead to an increase in job performance and job satisfaction for employees.

The second conclusion the data showed was productivity is down because employees are wasting time redoing their work. According to data collected from the employees that participated in the study, they all have spent extra time (which costs money) on projects because co-workers that need to provide information are not providing information or communicated as effectively as possible.

The third conclusion the data showed was the employees do not know the company's processes and practices when it comes to communicating between the two locations, which is making it more difficult for the employees to communicate with each other. XYZ company uses horizontal communication so different departments and locations can communicate, but the company has not shared the communication strategies and processes among those same departments and locations. The lack of sharing communication processes has cost XYZ company time, money, and employee morale. The employees at XYZ company think there is a communication issue and it also showed that each department has their own communication issues. The employees in the photo department do not seem to have as big of a communication issue as the person in the writing department. The buyer has a different communication issue than the other two departments.

XYZ company is not focused enough on internal communication, which was common years ago. Abdullah (2012) pointed out that internal communication was never a topic that management focused on because managers felt that employees did not need to know about communication processes because that was the manager's responsibility. XYZ company seems

to have the same thought process that was common in the business world in the past. Abdullah (2012) pointed out that in today's business environment, it is necessary for companies to look at their communication processes and how employees are communicating.

Recommendations

After reviewing the other communication studies and the data collected for this communication study, XYZ company needs to open their communication channels so employees, departments, and locations can share information and ideas in a timely manner and without constraints. One thing XYZ company needs to understand is that "employees spend a lot of time on communication and many face difficulties when communicating" (Norbin, 2011, p. 617). XYZ company needs to keep this in mind because Abdullah's (2012) study showed us that "Internal communication should not hinder the understanding of the overall organizational functions but establish clear communication linkages and internal relations to strengthen the organization". Abdullah (2012) is saying that companies, such as XYZ company, need to make sure that all employees learn and understand the company's communication processes so they can communicate in a clear and effective manner.

The best way to create successful communication is to make sure the communication process is shared among employees, departments, and locations so every employee that needs to communicate knows how to do it and also knows what information is expected from them. From my own experience, I have seen successful communication processes work. One way to make a new communication process successful is develop a team of employees where each person on the team is from at least one department where the communication issue is happening. For example and according to the data, XYZ company should get a person from the photo department, writing

department, and at least one buyer from the Wisconsin location so they can meet and discuss current processes, practices, what is working, and what is not working.

The meeting should involve everyone discussing the three conclusions of this study (The communication problem has negatively affected employee morale, productivity is down because employees are wasting time redoing their work, and employees do not know the company processes and practices when it comes to communicating between the two locations, which is making it more difficult for the employees to communicate with each other) and what changes need to be made in order to achieve results that would help build morale, keep people on task, and help share the current and new communication processes. Abdullah's (2012) study at the five star hotel showed us that getting everyone in each department of the hotel to communicate effectively was a process that involved managers and employees understanding the expectations of each department so everyone knew how to communicate within the organization. Abdullah (2012) conducted a survey of 144 hotel employees and discovered that if the employees understood how the organization functions, they could communicate more effectively. If XYZ company can collect data from the employees that are involved with the communication between the two locations, then they will receive input that will best meet the needs of everyone.

According to the data, one solution to the problem could be as easy as developing a process that involves the people in Wisconsin filling out a form before they submit a product to the people in Minnesota. The form should have a category for every possible piece of information that the Minnesota employees could need when receiving a product. Then whenever a new product is submitted, the form could be filled out and attached with the product so the Minnesota people have as much information upfront and the first time they are working with the

product. This will eliminate a lot of unnecessary communication between Wisconsin and

Minnesota, which will help boost morale because employees will not get frustrated as often.

     A larger study at XYZ company with more employee feedback would be beneficial

because after reviewing the employee feedback on the questionnaire, the communication issue

could be larger than the scope of this study.

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Appendix A: Research Questions for Employee Interviews

General questions for all employees:

1.)   Which location do you work at? Minnesota or Wisconsin?

2.)   What is your job title?

3.)   How long have you been with XYZ company?

4.)   Do you think there is a problem between how the two locations of XYZ companies

communicate product information to each other?

5.)   If you think there is a communication problem, could you describe what problems you have

experienced?

Questions for Minnesota employees:

1.)   How would you rate the general sufficiency of the information provided by

      Wisconsin?   Excellent, Good, Average, or Poor

2.)   How often do you redo your work because the information provided by Wisconsin

was insufficient? Almost always, Often, Seldom, or Never?

3.)   How much time do you spend communicating with people in Wisconsin about getting more

information about a product? 0-2 hours, 2-4 hours, 4-6 hours, 6+ hours?

4.)   Do you know the procedure that the Wisconsin employees follow when providing

information to the Minnesota employees?

5.)   Describe the process that you follow after you receive information from Wisconsin.

6.)   What are the problems that you are experiencing with the current process?

7.)   What improvements would you like to see to the current process that would benefit you and

your job?

8.)   What improvements do you think would benefit the process and the company?

9.) How do you feel when the information supplied by Wisconsin is insufficient?

Questions for Wisconsin employees:

1.) Do you believe that the information provided to Minnesota is sufficient? Why or why not?

2.) Have you ever sent information to Minnesota that you knew was insufficient? If yes, please explain?

3.) Is there a procedure that you follow when you gather information for products?

4.) Are you experiencing any problems with the current process?

5.) What improvements would you like to see to the current process that would benefit you and your job?

6.) Do you have enough time to gather the correct information?

7.) Describe the process that you follow when you start gathering information for a new product.

8.) Do you know the process that the people in Minnesota follow after they receive information that you provided?

9.) How do you feel when people from Minnesota ask you for more information about a product?

10.) How much time do you think you spend when you have to communicate with Minnesota people about providing more information?