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**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ON HOW COMMUNICATION BARRIERS
CAN ADVERSLY AFFECT THE GROWTH OF AN ORGANIZATION**



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English is without a doubt the actual universal language. It is the world's second largest native language, the official language in 70 countries, and English-speaking countries are responsible for about 40% of world's total GNP. English can be at least understood almost everywhere among scholars and educated people, as it is the world media language, business communication, and the language of cinema, TV, pop music and the computer world. All over the planet people know many English words, their pronunciation and meaning.

The concept of a Universal Language is more significant only now, in the era of world mass communication. Before this era Greek, Latin, French were to some extent universal languages, though mainly in Europe. By a lucky coincidence due to factors above, English, the Universal language is one of the simplest and easiest natural languages in the world. The only other simple and easy languages are constructed ones. Vast amounts of skill, expertise and knowledge remains hidden in organizations because of language and cultural barriers. Native Spanish, German, Dutch, Turkish, Chinese or Bahasa Indonesia speakers all make a daily effort to understand, speak and write English. Native English speakers try to understand the many variants of non-native speakers. When it comes as a second language; misunderstandings, irritations, feelings of exclusion and a sense of inferiority, are daily challenges for non-native English speakers trying to communicate in the language of global business. What exactly happens and how can global organizations help employees become more effective in this intercultural language and its various communication styles? The Non-native speakers try to learn the language. Gradually they learn together and try to get used to each other's accents and accept the language mistakes inevitably made. They try to figure out what a good translation would be for a particular expression and how the words are to be interpreted and valued in our own language. There are some points which are found in native and non-native speakers when they speak in English.

What can both native and non-native English speakers do?

- Observe if people frown or squeeze their eyes. This is often body language for not understanding a speaker.
- Ask once, twice or even three times if you do not understand.
- Ask questions frequently in order to know if that what is discussed is also understood.
- Summarize often or ask others to summarize for you.
- Invite a non-native English speaker to participate in the discussion and reassure him that if the



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language is a problem you will help.

- Native English speakers avoid proverbs, expressions, metaphors, slang, jargon and abbreviations.
- Non-native English speaker avoid translating proverbs, metaphors or jokes from your own language into the English language.

Barriers of Communication

Even if English is the global language of business, cultures maintain their own style of communicating. This frequently causes serious misunderstandings and irritations especially as we have no insight into our own communication style and the affect this has on people with a different cultural background. Some may be offended by the directness of a foreign colleague while others find indirectness a cause for suspicion.

There are cultures where people need many words to express themselves, such as in Italy or in India, while in other cultures people limit themselves to the minimum number of words possible, such as the Danish or the Dutch.

(1) Semantic Barriers

There is always a possibility of misunderstanding in the process of communication. It is generally from the sender because of lack of vocabulary or with pronunciation. The other assumption is from receiver. The receiver may listen half or partial and will misunderstand the meaning of the sentence. The words, signs, and figures used in the communication are explained by the receiver in the light of his experience which creates doubtful situations. This happens because the information is not sent in simple language. This barrier is created because of the wrong choice of words, in civil words, the wrong sequence of sentences and frequent repetitions. This may be called linguistic chaos.

The second reason of semantic barrier is of a symbol or a word which have different meanings. If the receiver misunderstands the communication, it becomes meaningless. For example, the word 'tear' can have different meanings in the following sentences:

(a) Did you tear your shirt?

(b) He busted into tears.



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(c) I have to tear off from this book.

The third barrier is of translation. Non-native speakers has tendency to translate the sentence into their native language and then to understand it. A manager receives much information from his superiors and subordinates and he translates it for all the employees according to their level of understanding. Hence, the information has to be moulded according to the understanding or environment of the receiver. If there is a little carelessness in this process, the translation can be a barrier in the communication.

Many a times the speaker tries to assume things. Fourth barrier in communication is assumption. It has been observed that sometimes a sender takes it for granted that the receiver knows some basic things and, therefore, it is enough to tell him about the major subject matter. This point of view of the sender is correct to some extent with reference to the daily communication, but it is absolutely wrong in case of some special message,

Every organization has its own separate language. The fifth drawback in any organization is their jargons. It has been seen that the people working in an enterprise are connected with some special technical group who have their separate technical language. It is generally used during the time of work in their organization but when they move out they carry this and will fail to communicate the things properly. Their communication is not so simple as to be understood by everybody. Hence, technical language can be a barrier in communication. This technical group includes industrial engineers, production development manager, quality controller, etc.

(2) Psychological or Emotional Barriers

The importance of communication depends on the mental condition of both the parties. A mentally disturbed party can be a hindrance in communication. Following are the emotional barriers in the way of



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communication:

The first emotional barrier is of the sender's message. Sometimes it happens that receiver tries to dig out the meaning without a second thought. Before he receives the message he would not know either the message will be correct or incorrect. Therefore at times the exchange of communication in an organization fails to interpret the correct messages from others.

The second barrier in every organization is Attention. The employees may at times think that they can pay attention while they are doing their work. Major problem arises when they do this. For example: if the person is busy on his call and his colleague tells him something important but the former will not get what actually latter conveyed because his mind was lacking attention on him. Thus, there arises psychological hurdle in the communication.

The next hindrance is Loss by Transmission and Poor Retention. When a message is received by a person after it has passed through many people, generally it loses some of its truth. This is called loss by transmission. This happens normally in case of oral communication. Poor retention of information means that with every next transfer of information the actual form or truth of the information changes.

According to one estimate, with each transfer of oral communication the loss of the information amounts to nearly 30%. This happens because of the carelessness of people. Therefore, lack of transmission of information in its true or exact form becomes a hindrance in communication.

The fourth psychological barrier is Distrust. For successful communication the transmitter and the receiver must trust each other. If there is a lack of trust between them, the receiver will always derive an opposite meaning from the message. Because of this, communication will become meaningless.

(3) Organizational Barriers

Organizational structure greatly affects the capability of the employees as far as the communication is concerned. Some major organizational hindrances in the way of communication are the following:

The first is policies of the company. Written communication takes time in this world of IT. The policy of the company at times becomes the hindrance of the communication. In the present era, communication is done via e-mail rather than on calls. In such situation anything could be conveyed in short time and without



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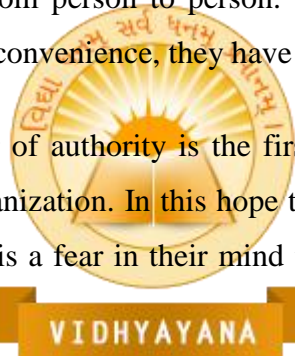
formal written communication.

The second is Status. In any organization the communication is hindered in hierarchy. Under the division of categories the communication channel becomes more complex especially when communication processes from bottom to top. For example, when a lower-level employee has to send his message to a superior at the top level there is a lurking fear in his mind that the communication may be faulty, and because of this fear, he cannot convey himself clearly and in time. It delays the decision making.

(4) Personal Barriers

The personal barriers will be different from person to person. Taking a few into consideration there are common in all. From the point of view of convenience, they have been divided into two parts:

(a) Barriers Related to Superiors: Fear of authority is the first that is seen in any employee. A person desires to occupy a high office in the organization. In this hope the officers try to conceal their weaknesses by not communicating their ideas. There is a fear in their mind that in case the reality comes to light they may have to move to the lower level.



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Lack of faith in subordinates affects the growth of the organization. Top-level superiors think that the lower-level employees are less capable and, therefore, they ignore the information or suggestions sent by them. They deliberately ignore the communication from their subordinates in order to increase their own importance. Consequently, the self-confidence of the employees is lowered.

(b) Barriers Related to Subordinates: Sometimes the subordinates do not want to send any information to their superiors. When the subordinates feel that the information is of negative nature and will adversely affect them, an effort is made to conceal that information. If it becomes imperative to send this information, it is sent in a modified or amended form. Thus, the subordinates, by not clarifying the facts, become a hindrance in communication.

Lack of incentive to the subordinates creates a hindrance in communication. The lack of incentive to the



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subordinates is because of the fact that their suggestions or ideas are not given any importance. If the superiors ignore the subordinates, they become indifferent towards any exchange of ideas in future.

Conclusion:

There are many barriers to effective communication. Some we can fix, some we can learn to live with. What is important is that the organization must be aware of them. It can then take the appropriate action, which will greatly enhance their chances of providing the audience with a memorable presentation, one which achieves the aim of effectively communicating the message. Therefore effectiveness and efficiency in any communication medium the barriers to communication should be kept at bay as much as possible to ensure that the message is adequately delivered to the required recipient and the feedback gotten as desired.



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