COMMUNICATION AS A FACTOR OF LEADERSHIP STYLE

Dayana Chorbadzhiyska[1], Nadia Mironova[2]

Abstract

Effective communication establishes good interpersonal and work relationships and facilitates cooperation. What are the effective styles of leadership behavior and how communication affects employee motivation and satisfaction? The article examines the influence of the way leaders communicate with their subordinates on their behavior and the formation of attitudes towards the performance of tasks and the attitude towards the whole company.

Keywords: *communication; leadership; relationships; efficiency; motivation;*
JEL Codes: *M10, M12, M14, M16*

Introduction

Developing technologies, remote work and modern resources of communication are changing the way that companies manage their employees, and the approach to control and giving orders is increasingly losing its effectiveness. Is it time for mentoring to give way to a new model of leadership communication through dialogue to better deal with the huge flow of information and turn leaders into good communicators?

The article examines the necessary personal qualities for successful leadership through the prism of communication. A literature review of scholars who have studied the problem of communication and leadership and their results is presented, as well as a study of some of the most successful leaders of today. The main problem discussed in the article is the influence of communication on the chosen leadership style through the internal communication of the organization and employee satisfaction.

The methodology used to develop this article is a combination of literature analysis and research done through articles, journals, reports and other studies by some of today's most successful leaders.

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[1] PhD Candidate, Department of Management, University of National and World Economy, dayana.chorbadzhiyska@gmail.com, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9892-7434

[2] Prof. Dr., Department of Management, University of National and World Economy, n.mironova@unwe.bg, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2218-8772

Leadership

Leadership is the ability to motivate a group of people to achieve a common goal. A successful leader must have a combination of personal and leadership skills that will make others follow him. The question has been asked many times - are you born a leader or become one? There are people who are naturally gifted with certain leadership qualities, more than others, who need to improve certain skills to be leaders.

Often the best expert in a field rises to a leadership position, believing that once he is successful in his field, he will be a perfect leader. This is very misleading, because the expert achieves success with his own knowledge and skills, but to be successful as a leader he must organize and motivate others in such a way that they apply their best knowledge and skills. And this from a psychological point of view is the ability to work and communicate with people, which not everyone has or can develop (Todorova, 2016).

However, what are the qualities needed to be a leader?

One of the first theories of leadership considers it through the presence of certain innate characteristics in leaders, ie. leaders are born as such, assuming that these are personal characteristics that distinguish leaders from their followers (Stoitsova, 2015). Years later, one of the most famous researchers in theories of leadership – Ralph Stogdill derives five leadership characteristics: intelligence, dominance, self-confidence, activity and knowledge (Stogdill & Bass, 1990).

Fiedler was one of the first scientists to introduce the influence of the situation in determining the success of leadership in his book „Theory of leadership effectiveness". According to his theory, task-oriented leaders are focused on getting the job done and tend to be authoritarian. Relationship-oriented leaders put people first and use creativity and teamwork to complete the project. According to Fiedler, situational favorableness depends on three factors: the relationship between leaders and members, the structure of tasks and the position and power of the leader. Leader-member relationships refer to the level of trust team members give their leader (Verkerk, 1990).

D. Helrigel, S. Jackson and J. Slocum grouped the various studies in the field of leadership into four categories: theories of leadership traits (qualities); behavioral theories; situational theories; theories of transformational leadership (Petkova-Gurbalova, 2019).

The behavioral approach to leadership styles became known in the 1950s for its focus on the behavior of leaders rather than their characteristics. Analyzing the behavior of leaders to their subordinates, three main leadership styles stand out (Raichev, 2017):

• Authoritarian – characterized by a strong focus on tasks, impatience and quick decisions. The leader does not allow discussion of his decisions gives tasks and controls their implementation.

• Democratic – a collective style of management in which the leader manages together with his employees. The leader delegates power to individuals and offers cooperation in decision-making.

• Liberal – minimum power of the leader and maximum freedom of subordinates.

The „Full-range leadership model" of Bass and Avolio is one of the most studied models of leadership behavior, which describes two types of leadership styles - transactional and transformational. Transactional leaders make decisions based on the rules of the organizational culture and provide feedback to followers for successful enactment of an agreed-upon role. Transforming leaders change their co-workers' perceptions of significant things and encourage them to look at themselves, the opportunities and challenges of their environment in a new way. This style of leadership is based on the leader's behavior, not his communication skills (Allen, 1984).

A new theory of leadership is presented by Russian professor Anatoly Zankovsky of the Russian Academy of Sciences, according to whom the main thing a leader must have is the ability to resolve conflicts in a constructive way. Leadership is a modern ideal of behavior based not on one's background and status, but on one's personal and professional values (Zankovsky, 2014).

Communication and leadership

One of the first theories analyzing leadership – Fiedler puts communication and the relationship between leaders and members of the structure as extremely decisive for the effectiveness of leadership.

Zankowski's theory of conflict resolution in a constructive way involves the use of a type of communication in which the leader is able to increase organizational effectiveness even in conflict situations by using psychological factors for communication.

Effective organizational leadership is described by the professor with the help of a three-factor model, which considers this phenomenon in the space of corporate culture and includes value, active and relational components. The components of activity and attitude correlate with the factors „results orientation" and „people orientation", traditionally emphasized in leadership research and demonstrating their validity at the group level.

According to his theory, effective communication can ensure overcoming the negative trends, at the level of „people orientation" observed in the management of various companies, to update and use personal resources and potential of both the leader and the staff of the organization to achieve socially significant corporate and individual (personal, professional, social) goals (Zankovsky, 2014).

The democratic style of leadership is characterized by the discussion of problems and decision-making together by all while ensuring sufficient freedom and initiative of members, encouraging mutual exchange of information and cooperation, control is joint.

In the liberal style, employees have the opportunity to choose their roles in the group and to determine the requirements and criteria for performing tasks. Everyone gets the necessary information on their own, there is no strict control and general decisions are more difficult to make. This style stimulates creative activity.

Professor Rita Linjuan Men of the Department of Public Relations at the University of Florida explores the relationship between transformational leadership, communication channels and employee satisfaction. Through a web survey of 400 employees working in medium and large companies in the United States, she concluded that transformational leadership has a positive effect on the organization's internal communication and employee satisfaction in relationships. Transformational leaders most often use information-rich channels to communicate with followers.

The use of personal channel leaders is positively related to employee satisfaction. Employees mostly prefer emails to receive information from the organization about new decisions, policies, events or changes, followed by general meetings of employees and interpersonal communication with managers (Men, 2014).

The communication competence, styles and channels used for communication by the leader also influence the attitude and behavioral results of employees. Leadership communication shapes employees' perceptions because leaders who communicate clearly and convincingly about goals and objectives gain the trust of followers, and the two-way nature of interpersonal communication channels, such as team meetings, group problem-solving sessions, improves the relationship between employees and managers better and promotes a sense of community and belonging among employees to the team and the company as a whole (Cameron & McCollum, 1993).

Leadership is the ability of the individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organization, using communication that helps to change aggressive leadership through control into leadership and symmetrical communication that promotes understanding, cooperation, responsiveness and the creation of long-term and mutually beneficial relationships.

Research on transformational leadership in recent years has gained increasing popularity in various fields due to its success in analyzing the effectiveness of leadership. Transformational leadership places a strong emphasis on relationships, individual consideration, meaning, and empowerment, and thus has specific implications for communication and relationship management.

In contrast to traditional approaches to how to develop messages to change attitudes or behavior, various studies have shown that the basic premise of a symmetrical model of communication is how people and leaders use communication to correct their thinking and behavior instead of controlling or manipulate how the other party thinks or behaves. In this way, symmetrical communication promotes understanding, cooperation, responsiveness and the creation of long-term and mutually beneficial relationships.

When managers and employees engage in dialogue and are heard, it is easier to disseminate company information needed by employees to promote mutual understanding and role-setting. In this way, symmetrical communication stimulates organizational culture and persuades or controls employee behavior for management purposes, building quality relationships between employees and the organization, and encouraging employees to be most effective (Men, 2014).

Influence of communication as a factor in the leadership style of some of the most successful managers

For many modern leaders, showing concern for employees and spending more time communicating with them may sound like a lack of managerial skills and a weak character.

However, a large-scale study of google refutes this stereotype of leadership behavior. Google's so-called „Oxygen" project is trying to prove that the qualities of the manager do not hire a group of statisticians to assess the differences between the managers with the highest and lowest ratings. The data for analysis are collected with the help of evaluations from employee surveys, interviews and other sources of staff feedback. Instead, however, they prove that good governance actually matters.

Google's director of human resources, who led the study, Laszlo Bock, concluded that to be a manager, particularly in engineering, he thought you had to be a better technical expert than the people who work for you. After the study, this quality turned out to be the least important thing. The most important thing is the ability to communicate with people. The study identifies coaching skills, good communication, concern for team members and support for career and professional development as key to a successful leader (Kolar).

Another successful leader – Steve Jobs is not accidentally called the most exciting and talented communicator in the corporate world. His way of communicating is not just communication, he informs, trains and entertains his Apple employees (Gallo, 2011).

According to the Forbes ranking of the most successful leaders, it is impossible to become a great leader without being a great communicator. A survey of the American company The Hariss poll among 1,000 employees shows that a lack of emotional intelligence in the way business leaders and managers communicate leads to many problems in companies. According to the respondents, the communication problems that

violate effective leadership are the lack of clear instructions, refusal to talk to subordinates, lack of interest in the life of employees outside work, unwillingness to remember the names of employees, lack of time to meet with employees (Schwantes, 2017).

The leaders of some of the most successful companies in the world are defined as perfect communicators.

Elon Musk – founder and CEO of some of the largest companies (PayPal, SpaceX and Tesl.a Motors), he is a persuasive speaker who manages to make his employees believe that the future of the companies will be amazing and that they will all achieve their goals together.

Wall Street analyst creates a platform with which he measures and evaluates the impact of the presented speeches of famous people. He discussed Musk's communications style as a vision communicator. Better communicators use persuasion and action-oriented language, as does Musk (Schwartz, 2016). Musk's success was probably due to his effective interpersonal skills. Often quoted in various sources and an example of a good communicator, he has tact in communication, ie. built interpersonal skills: to listen, to have manners, social skills and to really understand who you are talking to. In his communication he shows a combination of great interpersonal skills, being inspirational and exhibiting trustworthiness.

Elon Musk's interpersonal skills include the ability to listen to his colleagues, clients and audience. He is analyzed as always polite and attentive to the people he deals with.

He knows how to create relationships and connections in a business sense, as well as how to act in various often unique environments or situations. This is what makes him a good communicator and a successful leader (Sutter).

When presenting successful communicators, we can't help but mention Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, the world's largest computer software company. He's known for using creative strategies to help people understand complicated, stubborn problems (Gallo). His famous speeches begin with the initial attention of the audience - foam flowing on stage, the sound of a flying helicopter and everything else that can be impactful. At the same time, he is not a supporter of modern technologies in communication and does not even use a Power Point to prepare presentations, he just talks.

In one of his most famous interviews related to climate change, he uses plush toys to present the release of steam gases from everything people do – agriculture, transport, manufacturing. Accumulating various plush toys, he illustrates the impact of building construction on the climate and the use of all the necessary amount of concrete, cement, wood - all that emit greenhouse gases. In most of his most impressive speeches, which have a huge impact on the audience, he does not use modern communication technologies, but only – plush toys.

Mary Barra is the chairman and CEO of General Motors Company. As the head of an automobile company, she illustrates that despite resistance to gender stereotypes, social concepts of effective leadership can be built. She has a tendency to be extremely candid and honest with her staff. In return for her candor, Bara expects to receive candor in return. She wants company employees to talk when something is wrong and to face problems directly. To help in this effort, she uses social media. She blogs monthly on Linked In's Pulse, uses Twitter regularly and posts on Facebook (Rosen, 2014).

Bob Iger is the CEO of The Walt Disney Company, identified as the most powerful man in entertainment. To be a successful leader, he says, is simple: As a leader, the success of your employees and ultimately your company depends on your commitment to yourself, your team and your brand: Ultimately, effective leadership means you go beyond what you set out to do. It presents 9 important key skills of every successful leader, with communication ranking second in importance after the ability to balance work and rest.

According to him, every leader should develop strong communication skills, because the better the leader can communicate his strategies orally and in clear language (that is, not by email, using corporate jargon), the more effectively they will be implemented. This also applies to non-verbal communication: body language plays a big role in establishing trust among your team.

Effective communication also requires clarity. The leader must be clear in the expectations and assessments of others, and only then should he expect them to be honest with him. Bold business leadership and power are not about good communication, protection according to him is to remove any connection of the leader's own identity with the company he manages, so that you can assess situations as objectively as possible.

Critical element of any good leadership strategy is open communication and feedback. Asking for feedback encourages the people who work, and also brings invaluable insight to every leader, to be aware of everything that happens in the company he runs. Iger gives some advice to leaders - sit down with your team members and direct reports during lunch to seek feedback and advice. This not only builds trust, but increases your own self-awareness when looking at another person's point of view in pursuit of common goals (Iger, 2020).

Conclusion

Based on the research, it can be summarized that effective leadership communication supports the formation of a system of individual values through the worldview of the employee, which acquire personal meaning and set a specific value attitude of employees to organizational life and achieving company goals.

Effective communication is an essential component of professional success, whether at the interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organizational or external level. Many organizational problems arise as a result of poor communication. It is this paradox that underscores the need for leaders to focus on becoming great communicators.

The acquired skills and / or acquired knowledge are valuable only insofar as they can be applied in practice when required. What the big number one communicators have in common is that they have a heightened sense of situational and contextual awareness. The best communicators are great listeners and perceptive in their observations.

The author's opinion is that every communication is of key importance for every leader, regardless of his chosen leadership style. Leadership will be much more successful through the use of effective communication:
- praise for a job well done through personal thanks;
- requesting opinions and ideas from employees;
- sharing information and providing feedback;
- getting to know the employees.

It does not matter the chosen leadership style for successful management, as well as the communication channels used, it is important to use a type of communication in which the leader can increase organizational efficiency even in conflict situations, to influence, motivate and enable all employees to express their opinion and offer their ideas, which will promote understanding, cooperation, responsiveness and the creation of long-term and mutually beneficial relationships.

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