

The role of communication in interpersonal relationships at work



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ABSTRACT

This work aims to investigate communication practices at work and their direct effects on the quality of interpersonal relationships in professional environments. This is a quantitative research with Large-N sampling, applied in two stages in the municipality of Tangará da Serra-MT, in 2022 and 2023, a random sample of 724 workers of the retail trade and service companies of the municipality. The results indicate that the professionals are unaware of their communicative capacities and limitations, constantly attributing to others the causes of internal conflicts. In addition, most workers recognized as positive their interactions with the managers of the company, clearly informing the tasks and attributions of the position in most of the moments of communication, with a tendency to cooperation as a dynamic most practiced at work.

Keywords: Communication, Relationships, Management, Work.

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, it has been possible to notice significant changes in the studies of communication in the business space and in the labor market as a whole. However, these changes present throughout society tend to affect companies as well, since the constant hiring of new employees causes changes in the internal relations of the organization between staff and their leaders. In addition, companies do not absorb these changes with such precision or speed, since each employee has different opinions, practices and behaviors, often out of step with the daily collective work.

With the role of managing a certain sector or company, the person in charge must be able to deal with all kinds of people and understand their way of thinking and acting, being understandable and acting positively in relationships, since this role can fall into the hands of a professional with little training to deal with the internal communication of the company and its dysfunctional processes. One can perceive clear problems of failures in communication and relationships, generating hostile climates



and demotivating dialogues. The lack of efficient communication or errors in the organization's processes tend to produce discomfort and demotivation in daily work.

The lack of this tool in a company will make it an unmotivated and unbalanced environment, interfering with its development as an organization and hindering its growth in the labor market, employees in turn may have an increase in stress, conflicts with other members of the company and low production. The company will then suffer, with increasingly tight deadlines and goals more difficult to achieve, in view of the failed communication within the environment and without someone in charge to curb this poor internal development.

This article aims to understand how this tool can assist in the development of a company and its implementation in organizations today. This being a fundamental role for a company that wants a good development both with its employees and its consumers, since we can understand if the company has good communication and transmits the necessary information clearly, or if it has the lack of this tool.

2 COMMUNICATION AND THE QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK.

The communication addressed in companies arises initially from the principle of communication used in humanity since its beginnings, being this a natural process and that which allows us to express ourselves in positive or negative ways how we feel in relation to a certain situation, behavior or action addressed. For Chiavenato (2000), communication is a resource used by both individuals and corporations for the transmission of ideas, objectives, express the wills and clarify the information obtained, the author divides this activity into two reasons: a) transfer of information in a clear and objective way, so that there is a perfect understanding of what is intended to achieve, b) the action must motivate, assist and cooperate for the accomplishment of the activity that that particular objective requires.

In addition, communication can come on several occasions, with many or few individuals, in different ways and at different levels, such as interpersonal communication that is based on the exchange of information and obtaining knowledge between two or more people, and intrapersonal ones, where the sharing and exchange of ideas with oneself is sought (SERRA, 2007).

"Communication is responsible for 90% of my success, without a doubt" (CORCORAN apud GALLO, 2007, p.09), a phrase that remains current and valid even today, considering that communication is the basis of the company that aims for success. As seen, communication enters as the way to pass on and transmit an idea or information in an organization, the lack of this tool may cause future problems.

For Gracie (2010), there is a complex relationship in business communication that serves as support for the image of a particular company or entity, including its consumers and their conviction.



In this way, the idea arises that it is a necessary tool for the flow of the company to run in a favorable way to all, seeking not only its advancement in the market.

Thus, business communication is any type of communication present in companies, being divided into two main groups, Internal Communication that aims to ensure the adherence of the internal public (employees, shareholders, collaborators) of an institution, ensuring the mastery of professionals in the flow, clarification and sharing of information, using the balance between the demand for communication and the expectations of professionals, in order to propose greater commitment of employees who share the same objectives. However, the External Communication process is addressed to all those who are indirectly involved in a given company (governments, competitors, customers) (MALHEIROS; FERREIRA, 2016).

Business communication was considered systemic and aims at a strategic perspective for its application, a system that covers several positions in the organization, from the lowest to the heads of the company. This activity seeks its purpose in creating, maintaining or changing the image that will be associated in the future with a comparison and its audience (CAHEN, 2005).

For Cahen (2005), when classified as a systemic activity, we have that Business Communication has its actions as something perpetual and not ephemeral, sticking, as far as possible, to actions considered systematic instead of individual actions. The entity that aims to use this systemic tool, must undergo evaluations in various perspectives of the market.

Therefore, the use of interpersonal communication is essential for all companies to achieve their goals, since communication itself is of paramount importance for the growth of professionals and especially for business. Therefore, in the absence of dialogues, complications and conflicts are likely to arise. According to the 8th Annual Proudfoot Productivity Report and the Trust Index of the Great Places to Work (GPTW, 2014), much more important than communication tools and their interaction channels, is interpersonal communication as the main resource of efficient management, productivity levels are directly linked to the quality of business communication. Subsequently, the lack of objective and clear communication can present harmful consequences, impacts and delays in deliveries or even in the decline of business.

It is of paramount importance to highlight that the use of interpersonal communication is in practice the construction of a respectful, harmonious relationship that presents assertiveness in the professional scope, favoring the reduction of conflicts and practicality in solving problems. Therefore, active leaders and professionals possess not only assertiveness but also emotional intelligence, which enables mastery with others and the ascendancy of a new professional position.



3 METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the current conceptions of employees and managers in relation to business communication, focusing on the dynamics of social interaction at work and management practices in trade and service companies.

The research was characterized by the quantitative approach, with the participation of 724 individuals, therefore, a randomized sampling of the *Large-N* type. For Creswell (2010, p.21), "quantitative methods involve the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and writing the results of the study." This is an investigative endeavor to verify the current condition of business communication practices, since the basic principle of interaction between employees and their managers in the formation of healthy and efficient relationships for the work environment is conceived.

Quantitative data collection was carried out in two stages, in a first phase in 2022 and later in 2023, in the municipality of Tangará da Serra-MT. Printed questionnaires with closed multiple-choice questions were applied to general trade professionals and service providers in the municipality.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study was conducted through a randomized survey that featured closed multiple-choice questions, with the participation of 724 individuals during the years 2022 and 2023, trade workers aged 16 and older. The main purpose of the results obtained was to observe and analyze the perception of business communication by employees and their managers. The analysis of these data is essential for the investigation of the behavior of corporations and their communicative practices, since it is understood that the development of the institutional image, conflict management, planning and decision-making are processes carried out correctly when there is efficient communication.

The educational profile of the research subjects is mostly composed of professionals with basic training at the secondary level, that is, 46% of the respondents and 35% with higher education, the rest of the workers only with the elementary level of education totaled 19%. Therefore, these are mostly individuals with few professional learning experiences at the university level, spaces where topics related to the dynamics of the world of work are discussed more intensely.

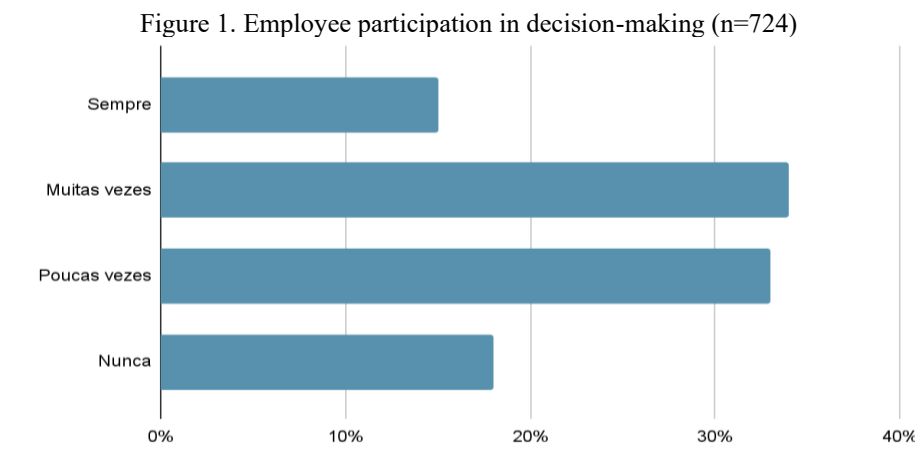
Initially, the research questionnaire aimed to investigate the quality of the information passed to the execution of the tasks common to the interviewee's position. The responses indicated that the tasks were clearly explained frequently for 76% of the participants. When asked to perform a self-assessment of their own communicative skills, 52% of the interviewees describe that they have good communication with other colleagues, at least 35% say that their communication is satisfactory, and finally, 13% consider their own communication relatively bad or bad.

Thus, the initial characterization of the participants reveals a relatively positive scenario to address communication practices at work and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Spaces of



clear experiences of explanation of commands and tasks in which communicative interactions occur with relative effectiveness are demonstrated.

Next, the sphere of participation and engagement of workers in the decision-making process was verified, at least in issues related to the work sector itself. The quality of relationships between employees and managers can be associated with the level of interaction and especially the perception of openness to participate and be heard in important moments of the company.



Source: Research data (2023)

It is understood that meetings transform the calmer environment for the resolution of dysfunctions and / or problems, becoming less conducive to generate conflicts and misunderstandings. The results showed that 49% of the interviewees even participate in some form of discussion about issues in the sector, which indicates a significant level of openness and participation.

When reflecting on the dynamics of work in the company, it was questioned whether the tasks of the position potentiate more competition, cooperation or individualism. Thus, only in 9% of the cases the service promoted competition among workers, 22% established individualism in the function, which means little need for interaction to make decisions or perform the tasks of the sector, and finally, 69% of the survey participants declared that cooperation is still the most practiced dynamic at work. And cooperation is the embodiment of efficient communication.

In terms of the quality of communicative interaction between managers and employees, participants were asked to characterize the most frequent *top-down vertical type of communication*.



Table 1. Communication between immediate managers and the employee (n=724)

Aggressive communication	5%
Confusing communication	21%
Satisfactory communication	36%
Nice communication	38%

Source: Research data (2023)

In this perspective, around 38% of employees claim that their managers perform a pleasant communication at work, another 36% agree that they present a satisfactory communication, although 21% affirm that their communication with management is usually confusing or even aggressive in 5% of occurrences. The data reveal positive conditions for cooperation and the creation of good interpersonal relationships in 74% of interactions between managers and employees.

In the questionnaire, there was a question with the possibility of more than one alternative, with a total of 875 answers (n=875), in order to verify the reasons for greater interaction with the management of the company, in its majority the interactions between employees and managers have as predominance 32% for guidance on the services of the sector, 22% to receive *feedback* about their performance in the industry, 35% to discuss goals and plans of the company or even talk about matters related specifically to it, with the frequency of only 11% to receive warnings or calls.

This data reflects the dynamics of interaction between employees and managers, especially with regard to the commands and tasks to be supervised by management. It is a systemic dimension that organizes the actions and attributions of the most varied positions and functions, at the same time that it seeks to model behaviors according to the company's plans and ideals. Thus, it is possible to highlight the instrumental nature of business communication by effectively functioning as an important management tool necessary to guide those led in their professional actions and build satisfactory relationships for the company.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The article aimed to investigate the process of interpersonal communication at work, its relevance in the market and its role within the company, together with the statistical survey, some perceptions of the workers of the local trade and service companies were analyzed.

Based on a survey conducted on the condition of business communication and the quality of interpersonal relationships at work, the data can also help to direct institutional actions about training and courses focused on improving communication between individuals. Initially, it is noted that many professionals are fully unaware of their capacities and limitations in communication, constantly attributing to others the causes of internal conflicts. This lack of self-knowledge and responsibility for communication can lead to misunderstandings, demotivation, and hostile climates in the workplace.



Interpersonal communication was highlighted as an essential resource for efficient management and increased productivity. The quality of relationships at work is directly linked to the dynamics of interpersonal communication and proactive professionals must continuously develop communication skills to promote a healthy work environment, in addition to intrapersonal communication where one seeks to share and exchange ideas with oneself.

Data analysis revealed that most participants have a basic educational background at the high school level, so the importance of investing in training and in the development of communication skills for employees is highlighted, in order to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships at work. Although the survey data indicates that respondents typically have their tasks well explained in their respective work sectors and 87% rated communication as satisfactory or good, it is evident that there is still little employee participation in the decision-making process related to their specific sectors. This finding generates a sense of little autonomy and silence in their own sectors.

In short, communication plays an important role in interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Through efficient communication, companies can strengthen employee collaboration, productivity, and engagement, as well as provide capacity-building training for managers and subordinates, resulting in a healthier work environment geared toward organizational growth.



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