

Effective communication plays a pivotal role in shaping the culture of an organization. In my organization, where diverse teams collaborate regularly, communication practices either strengthen the culture or create barriers that hinder progress. Clear, open, and inclusive communication enhances the culture, fostering collaboration, mutual respect, and a sense of belonging. On the other hand, lack of transparency and misunderstandings arising from cultural differences can weaken the organizational bond and create division.

One of the practices that significantly enhances the culture is open-door communication. Leaders and team members are encouraged to engage in open discussions, whether it is about project concerns or personal development. This practice cultivates trust and shows that every opinion matters. An example of this is when project leaders frequently host brainstorming sessions, where all members are invited to contribute ideas freely, regardless of their role in the organization. Such forums promote innovation and make individuals feel valued. According to Edward Schein (2004), creating a safe space where people feel comfortable sharing ideas is critical to fostering a healthy organizational culture. This open dialogue not only allows for better problem-solving but also enhances team cohesion, as people feel heard and respected.

In addition to open-door communication, the organization emphasizes cultural awareness through regular workshops. These sessions are designed to help employees understand the diverse backgrounds of their colleagues, which in turn promotes empathy and better interpersonal communication. For example, it became evident that indirect communication is more common in some cultures, whereas others favor direct communication. Recognizing these differences helps avoid misinterpretation and foster an environment of mutual respect. As Hall (1976) suggests, understanding the context in which communication occurs is essential in

intercultural settings, and this practice ensures that misunderstandings are minimized, and collaboration is more seamless.

However, some communication practices do not enhance the culture and, in fact, create challenges. For example, communication through rigid hierarchical channels slows down decision-making and leads to frustration. Employees are sometimes required to pass messages through multiple levels of management before action can be taken, leading to delays in project completion. This process also diminishes the sense of autonomy, as people feel less empowered to make decisions or provide input directly to leadership. In contrast to the open-door policy, this formal chain of communication creates a disconnect between leadership and employees, limiting the flow of innovative ideas and solutions.

Moreover, reliance on digital communication without face-to-face interactions has created barriers in some instances. Emails and messaging platforms, while efficient, sometimes lack the nuance of in-person conversations, leading to misinterpretations. For example, feedback delivered via email can sometimes be perceived as harsh or critical when that was not the intention. This challenge could be mitigated by encouraging more video calls or in-person meetings when providing feedback or discussing sensitive matters, which would allow for tone and body language to play their role in communication.

In conclusion, effective communication practices such as open-door policies and cultural awareness workshops contribute to a strong, inclusive culture. On the other hand, rigid communication structures and over-reliance on digital communication without personal interaction can hinder the culture. Balancing these practices to prioritize clarity, inclusiveness, and empathy is key to fostering a positive organizational environment.

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