BUSINESS COMMUNICATION (MGC- 614)

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Question 1

The ‘Shut up and listen’ program was launched with the aim to make way for an open and transparent approach to communication. This change in the internal communication strategy led to revolutionizing the whole industry in terms of communications and corporate culture. HSBC being a traditional and hierarchical management structure, employees found it difficult to communicate and cope in a stringent environment. The most successful companies manage to create an environment where people feel free to speak up, and feel it’s their responsibility to speak up and this is exactly what HSBC tried doing with their ‘shut up and listen’ program.

According to the social penetration theory, interpersonal communication moves from relatively shallow, non-intimate levels to deeper, more intimate ones. The theory states that relationships begin and deepen through self-disclosure. In the beginning, people establish relationships by disclosing many simple, harmless facts through small talk. As relationships grow, the rate of self-disclosure slows while the facts disclosed become increasingly intimate in nature. Intimate self-disclosure allows others to penetrate a person’s public persona and discover his or her innermost self. Relationships stagnate when the people involved refuse to self-disclose.

Now, in reference to the case based on the internal communications in HSBC given, we can understand that once the rules were implemented, employees initially found iyt difficult to communicate. Gradually, there was an improvement, employees started complaining and having discussions centred to problems and queries. And once everyone got the hang of it, the conversations became broader, had more depth and came to a personal level.

This can be closely compared to the social penetration theory. It takes time to build an interpersonal relation and as in when you get comfortable, the capacity of the conversation increases, topics get deeper and not superficial.

HSBC had aimed to achieve a work atmosphere where everyone felt a sense of belongingness and could communicate with the top-level managers at ease without any hesitation. They started with awkward conversations initially, but now have evolved where communication flows naturally, making the atmosphere healthy and transparent. They did not force into making it work, but instead followed rules. The manager listens, there is no agenda and that the employees could speak and the time belongs to them. And all this played into making HSBC first of its kind with such efficient and healthy work atmosphere, with slowly trying to build interpersonal relations with all the employees in the organization.

Question 2

A crisis communication plan is a set of guidelines used to prepare a business for an emergency or unexpected event. These plans include steps to take when a crisis first emerges, how to communicate with the public, and how to prevent the issue from occurring again.

Crisis communication plans focus on the company's response and how it will communicate with its stakeholders. These steps ensure information reaches employees, partners, customers, media, the general public, and any other valuable stakeholders. Most importantly, these plans guarantee a quick release of information, as well as a consistent message on all company platforms.

While your communication plan will differ depending on the crisis you're dealing with, below are some common strategies that businesses use to deliver an effective response.

How to develop a crisis communication plan?

1. Identify the audience for your communication
2. Identify the key outcomes you are seeking. Is communication to inform, persuade, and coordinate or to appease?
3. Identify the message that should go to each audience.
4. Identify the modes of communication you plan to use, e.g. one to one, group meeting, team meeting, organization’s newspaper, project newsletter, letter, posters, email, web site, etc. Note that the richer the message you intend for, the more likely it is that you will have to spend more time and be more personal than you would if you had a message that is easily transmitted.
5. Identify the communicator. There should be only one spokesperson ideally.
6. Identify the schedule on which communication will be done.
7. Determine how you will evaluate the effectiveness of your communication and make adjustments as you go.

Question 3

Dear Chris,

Temporary change to the terms and conditions of your employment

Further to recent discussions, I write to confirm that we have agreed to the following temporary changes to your terms and conditions due to the impact of the coronavirus on the business:

You have agreed to be employed on commission basis from effective today.

The amendments will be effective from 30-june-2020 and will operate until further notice.

I will inform you as soon as I have more information about how long these temporary arrangements will be in place.

To confirm that you accept these temporary changes to your terms and conditions please sign and return the form below and return it to me. Please also keep one copy of this letter for your records. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thanking You,

Your Faithfully,

ABC Ltd.

Question 4

Dear sir/ Madam,

As a senior management of the ABC University, I’m writing to request that I have come across a novel idea to start an online university during this time of crisis. Due to the pandemic, all the universities are closed and students globally have been affected by the closure of schools and higher education institutions in response to the COVID-19. Hence, Online education enables the teacher and the student to set their own learning pace, and there's the added flexibility of setting a schedule that fits everyone's agenda. As a result, using an online educational platform allows for a better balance of work and studies, so there's no need to give anything up. Given the need to address these concerns, I would like to mention the reasons for starting an online university:

1) Improved attendance.

2) Trackable learning: The performance and learning ability of students is easily traceable in online classes.

3) Flexibility: Online courses give you the flexibility to spend time with work, family, friends, significant others or any other activity you like.

4) Creating High Calibre Learning Pathways for Future: Online education is the key and perhaps the best path to up skilling.

5) High Engagement: Online learning materials are visually stimulating, concise, and more interactive combined with features like surveys or polls, quizzes, etc.

6) Quick Assessment: Online classes will enable the teachers to quickly assess the learning of students as and when they teach.

Question 5

Ineffective communication basically means if you as a sender cannot convey the message to the receiver doesn't understand, the communication fails. From the above statement “Flight 3411 from Chicago to Louisville was overbooked. After our team looked for volunteers, one customer refused to leave the aircraft voluntarily and law enforcement was asked to come to the gate. We apologize for the overbook situation.” we can indeed perceive that the brief statement made by the United on the context that a passenger was being violently pulled out of his seat definitely stands out to be ineffective due to the following reasons :

· INDIRECTNESS: They didn’t provide an exact answer as to why the passenger was being pulled out of his rather , rather they are indirectly making others believe that he was pulled out because due to overbook situatuation .

· LACK OF CONCIOUSNESS AND CLARITY: Here United hasn’t provided a clear cut answer to why the passenger was being thrown out as they tried to hide their mistake by saying it was due to overbooking .

· COMPLAINING: All United tried to do was address the situation as not their fault and they tried to pin the blame on the passenger.

· UNEMPATHETIC: Here United has ignored whatever that passage had to through as they didn’t even feel the need to apologize for forcefully throwing him out.

· IMPENDING REACTION: By not precisely addressing the issue and by ineffective communication they are either hiding something or they are not ready to take responsibility for it.

· TRYING TO WIN THAN COMMUNICATE: Rather than trying to take responsibility og their own actions United has tried to project it as the passengers mistake and tried to win over the controversy than communicate what really happened and apologise for the same.

· UNAPOLOGETIC: United has deviated the actual problem and tried to apologise just for the sake of it and which comes off as an ineffective mode of persuasion.

From the above, we can identify that whatever United tried to communicate did not go as well as what they had anticipated as a result of which it lead to ineffective and baseless communication .In addition to this we can also understand that as the statement released by them is not precise it calls for semantic , social or physical barriers which too makes communication ineffective .

The communication regarding the incident happened on Sunday March 2017 was ineffective. Because the united could have had a proper arrangement of booking the seats for its flight. There was not a clear management to see the number of passengers who have booked for particular flight. The united used to over book the passengers for the flight thinking that any of them will cancel in the future. But which is not always possible. So that situation had occurred and it has to face it. No one volunteered to vacate the flight as a result they had to drag a passenger.

In today’s world the message will flow faster in social media that in no time it will reach from one end to another. Without keeping such things in mind these incident happened. And the video went viral.

Another mistake from the side of the united was the response was not quick. It took really long time to the united to respond to the public about the issue happened. A week gape made the public think twice about the mistake done by them.

Later on the spokesperson told that after the team looked for volunteers, one customer refused to leave and law enforcement asked to come to the gate. And they mentioned apologies for over book. But not for the passenger with whom they behaved brutally.

There should be an immediate response and apology from the side of the company to overcome the crisis in the future.