



Impact of Covid-19 on communication strategies in organisations.

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Abstract

The ongoing outbreak has affected and continues to affect people at different stages in different ways. People of various age groups were influenced in manners that one cannot even think of; schools did not take place physically, workplaces were shut for a long period, the uncertainty of the virus caused mental health issues and the stress of everyone's safety just added on to it. The mode of communication shifted from traditional to online at once, dramatically. Not only did this bring in a number of things in a person's mind but also left them confused.

This paper talks about the impact of the Corona Virus disease on business organisations. Specifically, its effects on the already existing communication strategies in organisations. The research work of this paper began with the researcher going through a number of online journals, papers and articles to get the gist of the title of this paper and understand what its purpose is; the methodology of this paper was the use of secondary data. Then, going through published articles to write reviews of literature. This included the basic crux of all the chosen studies. The researcher has then mentioned the research objectives and the research questions. For this paper, it was the significance of effective communication strategies in general and in a work from home setting and the role of emails in precise business communication. The data for the analysis of the aforementioned pointers were taken from the references mentioned at the bottom, which is also the content that this paper has been limited to. All the research objectives have been analysed and evaluated in the findings of the paper and the discussions include a conclusion and personal opinions on the way businesses have let the outbreak affect their daily workflow.

Introduction

COVID-19 developed rapidly into a worldwide pandemic. In January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared CoronaVirus disease a health emergency. Immediately, 81% of the global workforce imposed full and partial closures in workplaces.

While the world continues to get affected by the outbreak, it has been difficult for humans to function the usual way. In addition to its threat to human lives, it has had a dramatic financial impact on various levels.

To halt the spread of the disease, accommodation of strategies was crucial. In order to navigate the correct and efficient way of communication, the focus shifted from the physical and traditional way of working to everything being conducted virtually.

Organisations found themselves ill-prepared for a situation as unlikely as this. Minor changes require great effort. Adapting to work from home is now equivalent to adapting to technical aspects such as online software and virtual meetings. With the ever-evolving digital technologies, it has been difficult for people of various age groups to learn new things, and unlearn old teachings. When the possibility of losing jobs was combined with the uncertainty of the virus, work from home was looked at as a possible solution.

Work from home is a situation when an employee completes an organisation's tasks outside the company's premises via virtual communication with the employer. For this to smoothly function, efficient communication is a basic essential.

Literature review

1. *Dwivedi, Y. K., Hughes, D. L., Coombs, C., Constantiou, I., Duan, Y., Edwards, J. S., ... & Upadhyay, N. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on information management research and practice: Transforming education, work and life. International Journal of Information Management, 55, 102211.*

This study talks about the impacts of an occurrence such as COVID-19 and includes a variety of perspectives from the contributors of the study. This ranges from the role of digitalisation, information management to information systems. It also includes the way in which businesses across the world have been severely affected due to the Pandemic.

2. *Nguyen, M. H., Hargittai, E., & Marler, W. (2021). Digital inequality in communication during a time of physical distancing: The case of COVID-19. Computers in Human Behavior, 120, 106717.*

Digital technologies have come to great use in recent years. This study talks about a number of pandemic conditions, but, specifically, about digital inequality, which is the imbalance in Internet access, skills and other uses of it. It also involves factors that influence digital communication during the outbreak and its development over the past two years.

3. *Savić, D. (2020). COVID-19 and work from home: Digital transformation of the workforce. Grey Journal (TGJ), 16(2), 101-104.*

The crux of this paper is to highlight the development and the transition of the working methods from being traditional to the stage where most offices are digitised. It covers a number of aspects such as telecommuting, work from home and remote work. It has also identified the essentials for the transformation: Digital ethics, the generation gap and many more.

4. *Van Assche, A., & Lundan, S. (2020). From the editor: COVID-19 and international business policy.*

This paper highlights different perspectives about the impact of COVID-19 on international businesses and their policies. It also mentions the measures used in response to the outbreak that majorly affected several multinational enterprises, which is what this study is based on. Physical

distancing and travel restrictions constrain the ability of MNEs'. Even though there are substitutes, it has been extremely difficult for them to cope both; locally and internationally.

5. *Chanana, N. (2020). Employee engagement practices during COVID-19 lockdown. Journal of Public Affairs, e2508.*

Today, that most of the world is functioning from home, employee engagement has been difficult. It is very common for companies to develop strategies that might improve online engagement. Overall, this paper talks about how firms have dealt with engaging employees, effective online teamwork and further implications that organisations came across during the same period.

Research objectives

1. To highlight the significance of effective communication strategies.
2. To analyse the impact of COVID-19 on communication strategies in a work from home setting.
3. To highlight the role of emails in precise communication strategies.

Research questions

1. What is the significance of effective communication strategies?
2. What was the impact of COVID-19 on communication strategies in a work from home setting?
3. What is the role of emails in precise communication strategies?

Limitations

This research paper has been limited to the journals, articles and research papers referenced at the end of the paper.

Research methodology

The research work for this paper commenced with reviewing a number of journals, research papers and articles based on the impact of COVID-19 on communication strategies in organisations. Only secondary data was used in this study and the material was collected from the internet.

Findings

With the virus still spreading rapidly and with a number of variants, it has been difficult for the firms to work in full capacity, even though the rules are now at ease, the virus is uncertain and affects various humans in different ways. Efficient communication is and has been one of the most vital and major aspects when a firms' smooth functioning is taken into consideration.

In order to establish a professional and respectable working condition between two or, a group of people constructive conversations play a massive role. Until two years ago, maintaining relationships was an easy task but today while everyone is at the comfort of their houses most of the time, physical distancing has made it difficult to work digitally. Not only have many companies been affected financially and economically, internally they have been attacked to a great extent. Basic business procedures such as brainstorming and pitching ideas are, now, a great task for many. Studies show a dramatic decrease in productivity level in most cases. This is due to the mental health issues caused by the stress of not having proper job security and the continuous news about the worst-case virus scenarios.

Business communication promotes motivation among the employees. Just by informing the people of their tasks over the phone or a brief video conference, the quality level of the output is set off. Workplace conflicts are common and easy to resolve. However, not in a situation that we are currently in. According to research, most misunderstandings arise due to ineffective communication tactics. This, further, results in insecurities and in turn, affects the business with low levels of performance. Healthy conveyance of thoughts is not only restricted to businesses but it goes well beyond it. Improvements in client relationships are always of utmost significance to organisations. The reason for this is that these firms are more likely to build a solid consumer base, and hence a loyal clientele. Mentally, communications might also help organisations boost employee job satisfaction. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, job satisfaction is at an important level. Most importantly, companies that can communicate effectively internally and with clients hold a strong, positive reputation in front of the world. This helps investors get attracted to the business. The depth of effective business communication goes beyond limits and is one of the most common essentials for a long-term business.

As a result of following government protocols, working from home is something people have come across every day for the past two years now. Naturally, in order to deal with the external outbreak as a firm, companies have prioritised internal management and communication among employees, and in doing so, a number of strategies were adopted. Being in an unfamiliar territory like the current pandemic denormalises the traditional way of working. The biggest challenge that is being faced by the world is employee engagement. Keeping employees connected is a time-consuming task. Some researches show the negative impact of remote working on the morales of various teams. Information, during times like this, should be passed on to employees in a clear and empathetic way. This has caused a greater need for regular meetings and collaborations.

Another major challenge is external crisis communication. The front a company presents as a whole to the world is vital and shows how efficient internal communication is. Having knowledge about and addressing

the crisis helps consumers trust a firm. As unnatural as the times are, without continuing normal communication activities, the firm will eventually dissolve.

In response to the virus, companies have done a great job at identifying their employees' needs of finding a relatable and authentic voice, that might help boost their morale and motivate them. Company leaders have decided to be upfront with their subordinates about the work situations while also putting in place their personal goals.

The most used form of business communication today is email, at least in the current times. While it is professional and efficient, it is also not time-consuming. It stays at both ends and hence, is fully reliable. Not to forget, they get delivered extremely fast and is a free tool. Once a person has access to the internet, no extra expense is required. As easy and accessible as they are, they make the perfect choice for online work communication. Email ethics should be taken into strong consideration while writing them and the use of colloquial terms should be avoided at all costs.

Discussions

Firms were gravely affected when the lockdown was announced and then extended by a few months. All the major work that took place in a physical office was supposed to be transformed into online work at a glance. It was natural for companies to panic in a situation like this. Even though the use of technology is not new, it grows every day and keeping a track of it might not be an easy task for everyone.

Firms have tried their best to improve their communication strategies during times like this by trying to increase employee management. Some strategies might not work, but they are always replaced by better ideas.

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