

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP BY COMMUNICATION

Anca VĂCAR¹

Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania

Abstract:

A leader is the person who knows how to influence others in order to achieve certain goals. Leaders don't force others to change, they help others to do that. As Charles S. Lauer said, "leaders don't force people to follow, they invite them on a journey".

The aim of the paper is to observe the role of communication used by good leaders in the process of influencing others. For this objective to be achieved, there is conducted a research from secondary resources.

Organizational productivity at all levels is determined by the person who set the objectives, this is why communication is a very important factor. It is impossible to be a good leader without being a good communicator. If we look back in history, all the world's greatest leaders were excellent communicators. Being a good communicator involves being a good listener, permanent adaptation to the others needs and the context the message is sent.

At the end of the paper there are presented some recommendations to increase communication between leaders and his followers. Also there are presented some communication skills that make good leaders to be great. So, we can conclude that one of the most important keys to leadership success is communication.

Keywords: leader, communication, follower

JEL: M21

According to P. Forsyth (Forsyth, 2007), a good leader is a person who is "correct, approachable, firm, respects people in their collective and their point of view, is honest and discreet. Good communication is also very important. And so, people feel that they benefit positively from this inter-relation".

Because the man is a social being, which means also belonging to a group, he feels the need to communicate and develop good and lasting relationships with the group. The affiliation to a group can be understand as an

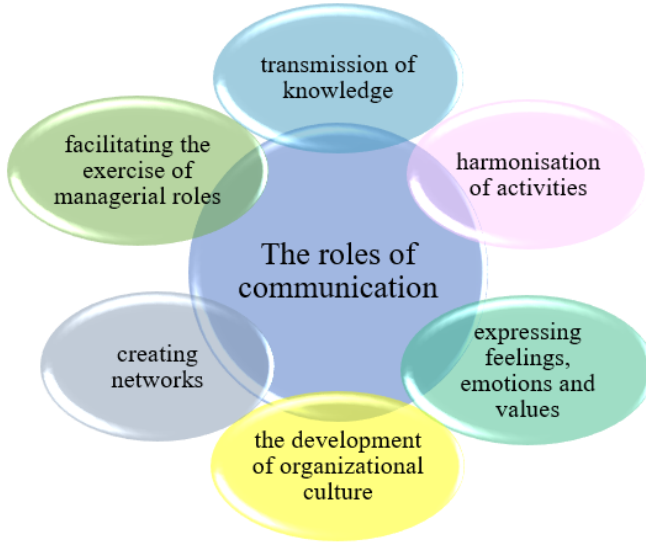
¹ Assistant professor / Ph.D., Faculty of Economics, email: anca.vacar@ulbsibiu.ro

interaction between an individual and a group that can lead to the acceptance of its norms, the values declared and practiced by it, the development of positive emotional relationships, common concerns and actions which ultimately leads to certain group driven behaviors. Because of these important aspects, communication is essential within any group, whether small or larger. All groups have a common feature, namely people and that is the conscious and accepted meeting of a number of individuals with common goals and values in order to achieve common goals.

For leaders, through communication they can outline the objectives the group will achieve, they can identify the main ways of achieving them and also they can motivate people involved in achieving these goals. Encountered in various forms as, written, verbal or non-verbal, communication is indispensable to any group, whether formal or informal, and it is a very important process because the interactions between individuals are intense and largely dependent on the characteristics of the issuers and receivers. According to Ovidiu Nicolescu and others (2008), communication is “the process of transmitting information, in the form of symbolic messages, between two or more persons, some of them being the emitters and the others being the receivers, by means of specific channels”. The effectiveness of communication depends on the existing communication system within the organization, through which all messages, both formal and informal, are received, transformed and transmitted forward.

In Marian` Nastase (2007) point of view, communication fulfills the following roles presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The roles of communication



Source: personal adaptation after M.Nastase, 2007

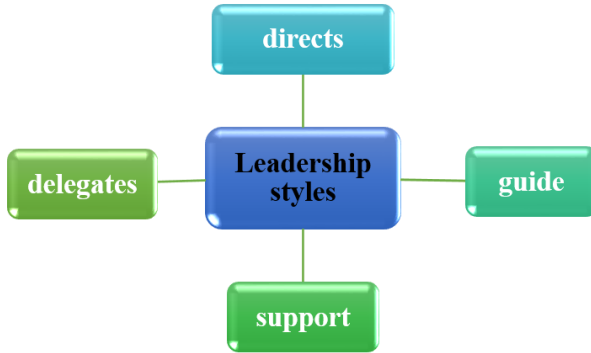
By communication is meant the interaction between two or more persons, between whom certain information is circulated, analyzed and interpreted. If the communication process is not properly conducted, there are very negative effects on those involved in the process but also on the climate and performance of the organization or the group. The quality of the communication process depends to a large extend on its components.

According to Marian Nastase (2007), leadership implies “a strong communication dimension through which messages aimed at setting goals or convincing supporters are transmitted”.

An important aspect emphasized by M. Nastase (2007) is the observation of the personal leadership style of each person, which depends on the personal characteristics of the leader, but also on other external factors such as the features of the members with which the leader works, the tasks to be performed and the contextual situation in which the change takes place. These leadership styles can determine and influence communication within the organization (Figure 2). Depending on these aspects, the following leadership styles (Nastase, 2007) can be highlighted as the leader:

- gives direction – the task to be done is complex, the staff involved in carrying out the task do not have the knowledge to complete it, thus is required the appropriate motivation of those involved;
- gives advice (guide) – in this case the staff is more experienced in accomplishing the task and the degree of motivation of those involved is necessary to be higher. Thus, “the leader helps them to understand the problem and emphasizes the creation of harmonious working relations”;
- gives support – it is essential the involve of the leader because in this case the skills necessary for the task to be achieved already exists, good working relations are developed and the level of motivation is superior; “the leader will direct the ideas and energy of the group, listen to the suggestions of team members and involve them more in decision making”;
- delegates – and to this, trust is essential in the process of this temporary assignment of tasks and competencies to a subordinate; in this case the involved staff is highly motivated and has the ability to achieve performance; as a consequence, communication decreases in intensity because after the delegation of the task, the leader will perform more surveillance and consultation, only if it is necessary.

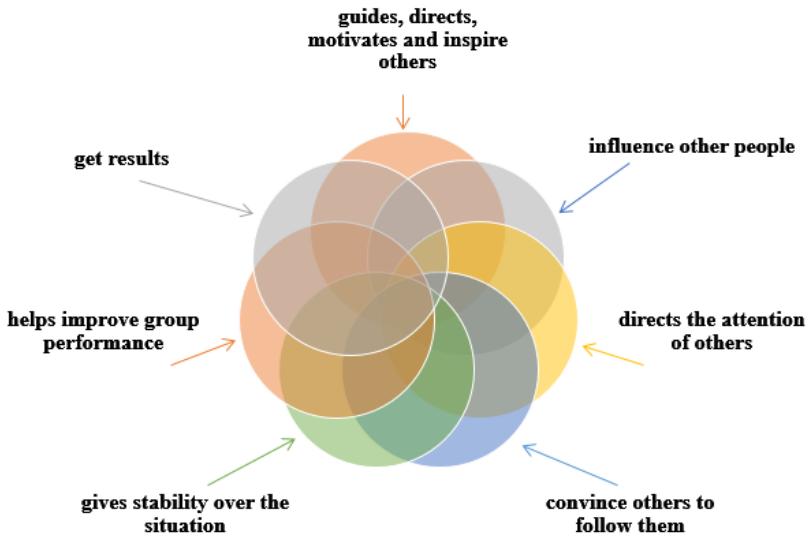
Figure 2. Leadership styles



Source: personal adaptation after M.Nastase, 2007

According to a study published by Harris Poll (2006) about employee engagement, the most important factors a leader should use to determine supporters to act are: clear communication of the vision, building trust in the organization, involving employees in decision making, guiding after values and principles, providing feedback to his employees. Daily, leaders are engaged in different ways of communication. Thus, researchers have come to the conclusion that leaders, by their role, are the people who guide, direct, motivate and inspire others; they influence other people in the organization or community; give direction and directs the attention of others; convince others to follow them; give stability over situations; help improve group performance and achieve results. This results are presented in the Figure 3. Characteristics of leaders.

Figure 3. Characteristics of leaders.



Source: personal adaptation after Harris Poll's study

If the leader wants to gain the trust, attachment and dedication of his supporters, the most important thing would be to improve communication skills, because if he cannot communicate clearly and effectively and he does not know how to use the appropriate tools so that the message can be received correctly, will not be able to get the expected answer from the supporters.

A study of Harvard School of what is needed to gain success and to be promoted in an organization claims that the person who succeeds in business is the one who is capable of communicating, making good decisions and getting these things with and through people.

At the end of this paper, here are presented some recommendations to increase communication between leaders and his followers, recommendations given by Hewitt Associates. Here are ten principles that every great leader should know:

1. *Everything communicates.* The way programs, policies, tools, and initiatives are designed and delivered communicates more strongly than the marketing and information about them. As a leader, how you act and what

you do, communicates more clearly than the words coming out of your mouth.

2. *Model the behavior you are looking for from others.* Communicate with your employees the way you would like to be communicated with — transparent, open, with respect and trust. And do the things you believe matter. If you focus on employees and customers, so will everyone else.

3. *Have a point of view.* It's much easier to have consistent communication when you have a clear brand or market-facing value proposition and core values — whatever you want to call it. But whatever you call "it", you better have it. Just be sure it is clear, easy to remember, makes sense for the business, has an element of inspiration, differentiates you as an employer, will hold up for at least ten years, and is everyone's job to live it — and that means you.

4. *What you hear is as important as what you say.* Communication is a two-way process. Have a number of upward channels and do something with what you hear — and tell people about it.

5. *You haven't communicated anything until you have been heard by your audiences.* Understand your audience. Take a lesson from the marketers — know the demographics and psychographics of your various audiences and tailor communication messages, content, style, and channels to them.

6. *There's a big difference between "information" and "communication".* Communication influences thoughts, feelings, and actions. Information simply informs. And how you communicate depends on what you are communicating.

7. *Communicate courageously.* If you communicate openly and honestly, you will make some mistakes but those mistakes will be better than the bland, sanitized, and uninspiring communications in many companies. And there will be times when you don't have the answer. Admit it. Your employees will understand and will respect your courage and honesty.

8. *Remember you are competing for attention.* Every employee receives hundreds of messages every day. Your message competes with all of them. Each person selects what to pay attention to and what to ignore.

9. *If it looks important, it must be important.* How you package the communication about programs has a big impact on perceptions of the program itself. Match the packaging to the level of importance. And if you follow up, it must be even more important. Too many executives think

once they've communicated, they are done. They couldn't be more wrong. Redundancy matters.

10. *Practice*. Great communicators practice. A lot. Writers write and rewrite. They are good at what they do because they work at it.

In conclusion, we can say that without effective communication, a manager is not an effective leader. In fact, communication capacity is essential in the process of transmission of information and the ability to communicate effectively is one that allows a manager to move into a leading position.

References:

- *Forsyth, P., 2007, Cum să motivezi oamenii, Editura Rentrop & Straton, București;*
- *Năstase, M., 2007, Lideri, leadership și organizația bazată pe cunoștințe, Editura ASE, București;*
- *Niculescu, O., Verboncu, I., 2008, Fundamentele managementului organizației, Editura Economică, București;*
- *Harris Poll Survey conducted in December 2003, www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp.*
- *Worldwide Email Usage Forecast, 2002-2006: What's Coming Your Way (IDC#27975);*
- *Ten Principles of Leadership Communication, http://www.aon.com/human-capital-consulting/thought-leadership/leadership/article_leadership_communication.jsp.*