

COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

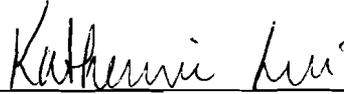
By

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree in
Training and Development

Approved for Completion of 4 Semester Credits
THRD-735 Field Problem in Training and Development



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August 2005

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ABSTRACT

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Communication within the Workplace

(Title)

Training and Development

Dr. Katherine Lui

August 2005

42

(Graduate Major)

(Research Advisor)

(Month/Year)

(No. of Pages)

American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual

(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

Communication is the process of sharing ideas, information, and messages with others in a particular time and place. Communication includes writing and talking, as well as nonverbal communication (such as facial expressions, body language, or gestures), visual communication (the use of images or pictures, such as painting, photography, video or film) and electronic communication (telephone calls, electronic mail, cable television, or satellite broadcasts). Communication is a vital part of personal

life and is also important in business, education, and any other situations where people encounter each other (Encarta, 1998).

The purpose of this study was to discover whether or not there was a communication gap between the supervisors and the customer service representatives and/or unit leaders within organization, XYZ. The data was collected from the customer service representatives and/or unit leaders through the use of a multiple choice single answer survey. The survey was distributed via face-to-face (drop-off-survey). Eighty seven percent of the surveys were returned to the researcher.

Although once rumored that there was a lack of communication within the organization, the result of the research was quite the opposite. Majority of the participants straddled the fence when asked about the overall satisfaction of communication within the organization. They thought that their supervisor's communicated well. And like other organizations they usually received most of their information through the grapevine.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Trust in the Lord with all you heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

I would like to thank my heavenly father for giving me the strength to complete my research paper. When I felt like given up he encamped wonderful people around me to whisper in my ears, "You can do it!"

I would like to thank my husband and my children for the love and support. I Love You !!!

I would like to thank my best friend, Tamala Shaw Davis and my favorite cousin, Karon Dodd for inspiring me to continue. I'm proud of the both of you.

I would like to thank my co-workers for listening and participating in the survey.

Also, to my wonderful research advisor, I would like to thank you for the many emails, faxes and most of all understanding. I appreciated everything!!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
List of Tables.....	vii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
<i>Importance of the Study</i>	2
<i>Purpose of the Study</i>	3
<i>Definition of Terms</i>	4
Chapter II: Review of Literature.....	7
Chapter III: Methodology of Procedures.....	12
<i>Research Design</i>	12
<i>Population</i>	12
<i>Sample</i>	13
<i>Instrumentation</i>	13
<i>Data Collecting and Recording</i>	14
<i>Limitation of Study</i>	15
Chapter IV: Analysis Findings.....	16
<i>Results</i>	18
Chapter V: Conclusions.....	34
<i>Recommendations</i>	35
References.....	37
Appendix A: Survey.....	39

List of Tables

¹ Table 1.0: Impression of communications within this organization.....	18
Table 1.2: Information received.....	19
Table 1.3: Information needed to do my job.....	20
Table 1.4: Supervisor's communication skills.....	20
Table 1.5: Sources in which information is received.....	21
Table 1.6: Satisfaction with communication	22
Table 1.7: Ideas and/or concerns are considered.....	22
Table 1.8: Change within the organization.....	23
Table 1.9: Information received from other supervisors.....	23
² Table 2.0: Impression of communications within this organization.....	25
Table 2.1: Information received.....	26
Table 2.2: Information needed to do my job.....	27
Table 2.3: Supervisor's communication skills.....	28
Table 2.4: Sources in which information is received.....	29
Table 2.5: Satisfaction with communication.....	30
Table 2.6: Ideas and/or concerns are considered.....	31
Table 2.7: Change within the organization.....	32
Table 2.8: Information received from other supervisors.....	33

¹ Table 1.0 through 1.9 reflects overall frequency and percentages

² Table 2.0 through 2.8 reflects individual groups frequency and percentages

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the glue that holds a society together. The ability to communicate enables people to form and maintain personal relationships. And the quality of such relationships depends on the caliber of communication between the parties (Brennan, 1974).

Communication is the process of sharing ideas, information, and messages with others in a particular time and place. Communication includes writing and talking, as well as nonverbal communication (such as facial expressions, body language, or gestures), visual communication (the use of images or pictures, such as painting, photography, video or film) and electronic communication (telephone calls, electronic mail, cable television, or satellite broadcasts). Communication is a vital part of personal life and is also important in business, education, and any other situations where people encounter each other (Encarta, 1998).

Over the past three years, the researcher had the opportunity to work within an organization in which communication is vital to its employees as well as to the customers with whom the organization serve. The researcher spent time working within the customer service department and had overheard numerous conversations regarding the lack of communication between the supervisors and

it's customer service representatives and/or unit leaders. With this in mind, a study was completed within the organization to determine if there was an internal communication gap that existed between the parties.

When there is an internal communication gap within an organization there is usually a breakdown in the way information is been sent from the sender to the receiver. This is precedent in organizations that have a top down hierarchy. In this type of hierarchy it can be difficult for bottom level employees to obtain information regarding changes within the organization.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

We live in a world filled with other people. We live together, work together, and play together. In our personal lives, we need each other for security, comfort, friendship, and love. In our working environment, we need each other in order to achieve our goals and objectives. None of these goals can be achieved without communication.

Communication is the basic thread that ties us together. Through communication we make known our needs, our wants, our ideas, and our feelings. The better we are at communication, the more effective we are at achieving our hopes and dreams

(Alessandra, Hunsaker, 1993).

Based upon conversations among the customer service representatives, this study is important because there appears to be a lack of communication within the organization. Some of the representatives feel as though the supervisors have daily meetings, but no information is shared regarding the

company changes and/or procedures.

When there is an internal communication gap it becomes difficult for anyone to effectively achieve goals. The customer service representative and/or unit leaders main responsibility is to relay information to the customers with whom the organization serve. If changes are not shared with the employees than they may risk the chance of giving the customers incorrect information. There will also be inconsistencies among the representatives when handling telephone and/or written inquiries.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not there's an internal communication gap that exist between the customer service representatives and unit leaders and the supervisors. The three objectives of this study was to:

- 1) Discover whether or not there is an internal communication gap between supervisors and the customer service representatives and/or unit leaders within the call center.
- 2) Determine the subject's perception of their immediate supervisors level of communication.
- 3) Identify the ways in which employees usually receive most of their information.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Sender - somebody or something that sends or transmit something.

To establish yourself as an effective communicator, you must first establish credibility. In the business arena, this involves displaying knowledge of the subject, the audience and the context in which the message is delivered. You must also know your audience (individuals or groups to which you are delivering your message). Failure to understand who you are communicating to will result in delivering messages that are misunderstood (Fowler, 2005).

Message - a communication in speech, writing, or signals

Written, oral and nonverbal communications are effected by the sender's tone, method of organization, validity of the argument, what is communicated and what is left out, as well as your individual style of communicating. Messages also have intellectual and emotional components, with intellect allowing us the ability to reason and emotion allowing us to present motivational appeals, ultimately changing minds and actions (Fowler, 2005).

Channel – a course or a means of communication or expression

Messages are conveyed through channels, with verbal including face-to-face meetings, telephone and videoconferencing; and written including letters, emails, memos and reports (Fowler, 2005).

Receiver – These messages are delivered to an audience. No doubt, you have in mind the actions or reactions you hope our message prompts from this audience. Keep in mind, your audience also enters into the communication process with ideas and feelings that will undoubtedly influence their understanding. Your audience will provide you with feedback, verbal and nonverbal reactions to your communicated message. Pay close attention to this feedback as it is crucial to ensuring the audience understood your message (Fowler, 2005).

Context – the words or phrases or passages that come before and after a particular word or passage in a speech or piece of writing and help to explain it's full meaning (Encarta, 2005). The situation in which your message is delivered is the context. This may include the surrounding environment or broader culture i.e. corporate culture, international cultures, etc. (Fowler, 2005)

Customer Service Representative- works in an inbound call center, usually communicates through written or verbal correspondence.

Supervisor – Someone who direct and inspect the work, actions, or performance of : oversee (Webster's II Dictionary, 1988)

Unit Leader – assist the supervisor in answering any question that the customer service representative may have regarding written and verbal correspondence.

Feedback- comments in the form of opinions about the reactions to something

intended to provide useful information for future decisions and

development (Fowler, 2005)

A literature review was completed to determine the importance of internal communication within the work environment.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In every society, humans have developed spoken and written language as a means of sharing messages and meanings. The most common form of daily communication is interpersonal- that is, face-to-face, at the same time and in the same place (Encarta, 2005).

Communication barriers can pop-up at every stage of the communication process (which consists of sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback and context) and have the potential to create misunderstanding and confusion. To be an effective communicator and to get your point across without misunderstanding and confusion, your goal should be to lessen the frequency of these barriers at each stage of this process with clear, concise, accurate, well planned communications (Fowler & Manktelow, 2005).

Communication, the heart of business, is the most important of all entrepreneurial skills. The destiny of the business depends on the quality of your relationships. Your ability to transmit information helps both clients and employees feel they can communicate with and ultimately trust you (Black Enterprise, Charles, 1998, pg 116).

Internal communication is more important today than in previous years partly because the business and market conditions are more complex. There is a lot of information in the marketplace and it's crucial that employees understand it. The development of a strategic internal communication strategy and its

implementation can provide a number of benefits to organizations, such as keeping employees motivated and engaged, and sharing clear, consistent messages with employees in a timely manner (Black Enterprise, Clemons, pg 46). Internal communications do not need to be extensive to be useful. The important factor appears to be a continuous flow of information, even if all the answers are not in yet—simply report progress. Think of your employees as public speakers for the business, because they are. Whether they are talking with customers or their neighbor at home, they are conveying a picture of the company and how it is doing. The more they are informed, the better they can represent the company in the broader community...(Phelps, 2000).

Personal relationship is what organizations are all about—or should be. An organization, whatever its size, mission, or motive is merely a collection of people assembled to pursue a common objective. An organization functions through its people, who in turn function through communication (Brennan, 1974).

Employees have their own sources, their own information system, separate from the management channels. These usually carry the news ahead of communications from management. Not that the employee network is flawless. That system transmits information indiscriminately. Fragments. Rumors. Gossip. It may not always operate in the best interests of the organization, but it does provide a check-point when management fantasies are disguised as information. Furthermore, it enables employees to participate in the communication process, and it fills their need for information which at least

seems to come from a credible source: another employee (Brennan, 1974).

Employees, like all people, require outlets for their thoughts and feelings. And they find them. So don't arbitrarily assume that the relative absence of employee complaints is a positive sign. Employees may be expressing themselves through other channels: meetings with fellow employees, union representatives, government agents; or through passive-aggressive behavior such as work slowdowns, carelessness, tardiness, absenteeism, and apathy. These can be symptoms that employees feel other means of participation are unavailable to them (Brennan, 1974).

The skill of listening becomes extremely important when we talk about "upward communication." There are many avenues through which management can send messages downward through a business organization, but there are few avenues for movement of information in the upward direction (Nichols & Stevens, 1999).

Skilled communicators are able to build rapport with coworkers and business associates, which can help move projects along more efficiently. They know whose expertise to tap when they need assistance and are adept at resolving conflicts and building consensus among team members (USA Today, 2002). One's effectiveness in employing the attributes of leadership and the strengths of a company is enhanced by one's aptitude for communication. When leaders and managers are better understood and appreciated, they are followed

and supported (Daedalus, 1996).

Many popular theories on workplace communication focus on the differences between men and women, suggesting that the sexual divide causes communication to break down. Women are seen as being more empathetic and oblique than men. Other variables that cause people to mix their messages include differences in age, culture, and socioeconomic background. Some tips to help managers bridge any communication gap were (Fortune 1994):

- 1) Listen actively for the subtext of people's words.
- 2) Persuade rather than command.
- 3) Target your words to your audience.
- 4) React to content, not to people's manner of expressing themselves.
- 5) Let people know that criticism is welcome.
- 6) Make your intentions clear before acting.
- 7) Assume that people take responsibility for what they say.

Unclear communication not only results in errors and missed deadlines, but also lies at the root of many other serious workplace issues, such as low employee morale and poor job performance. Managers should invest the necessary time to ensure that project goals and instructions are free of ambiguity and foster an environment that encourages the open exchange of ideas (USA TODAY, 1999).

By successfully getting your message across, you convey your thoughts and ideas effectively. When not successful, the thoughts and ideas that you convey do not necessarily reflect your own, causing a communications breakdown and creating roadblocks that stand in the way of your goals-both personally and professionally (Fowler & Mankelow, 2005).

Getting your message across is paramount to progressing. To do this, you must understand what your message is, what audience you are sending it to and how it will be perceived. You must also weigh-in the circumstances surrounding your communications, such as situational and cultural context (Fowler & Mankelow, 2005).

Consistent inattention to communication, its functions and malfunctions, hampers the efficiency and profitability of our organizations and stifles the development of those who inhabit them. As long as we ignore, rationalize, or deny our failures as communicators, for that long will we shrink from responsibility rather than grow toward our intellectual, emotional and contributive potential. (Brennan, 1974).

In the workplace, supervisors and their employees have opportunities to develop non-threatening, mutually rewarding relationships. These can be quite conducive to individual and corporate health. They are akin to what in our personal life we call meaningful relationships. Supervisors who attain such relationships with employees are said to practice “ positive human relations.” True. But it’s done through communication. (Brennan, 1974).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF PROCEDURES

Research and Design

A quantitative research methodology was used for the research to determine if there was a communication gap within the organization. A multiple choice single answered survey was distributed to the customer service representatives.

A survey can be a powerful tool to improve communication between different parts of an organization. Surveys are especially useful for establishing upward communication links from lower-level employees to management (Edwards, Thomas, Rosenfeld, Booth-Kewley, 1997).

Population

The survey was distributed to non-exempt customer service representatives and/or unit leaders who are within Building B. The participant's involved included males and females with 6 weeks to 16 years of experience within the department. A total of 111 surveys were distributed to the CSR's and UL's. A total of 97 surveys were completed. The participants were informed per instructions on the survey and through face-to-face conversation that their participation was voluntary and the answers in which they chose would remain confidential, with the exception of the final results from all the participants.

Sample

The research was conducted within organization XYZ, located in Madison, WI. The company has an estimated 400 customer service representatives, 30 unit leaders and 37 supervisors which are located in three separate buildings (building A, B, and C). The research was completed in Building B. Within Building B, the customer service department is divided into 10 units. Each unit has one supervisor and one unit leader. The total amount of customer service representative's in each unit range from 13-17 employees. The customer service department is in a call center environment. The supervisors report to the manager. The customer service representatives are non- exempt union employees.

Instrumentation

The survey distributed was through the use of a free survey template from *SurveyConsole.com*. Some questions were revised in order to meet the objectives of the research. The survey consisted of ten multiple choices single answer questions and one open ended question. The participants were asked single answer questions to discover whether or not there was an internal communication gap between supervisors and the customer service representatives and/or unit leaders within the call center, to determine the subject's perception of their immediate supervisors level of communication and to identify the ways in which employees usually receive most of their information. The survey was distributed to the employees by the researcher via face-to-face

contact (drop-off-survey). The drop-off survey, combines features of face to face interviews with mail surveys. In this case, surveyors go door-to-door, personally delivering questionnaires to individual household or businesses. Respondents complete the questionnaires on their own and then either return them by mail or keep them for the surveyors to collect (Salant & Dillman, 1999). The researcher chose face- to-face contact because it gave the participants the opportunity to ask questions and to have a visual picture of whom and where to return the surveys. The participants were asked to complete the survey and return it to the researcher no later than Thursday of the same week. The researcher requested that the customer service representatives indicate “NP (not participating)” at the top of the survey if they chose not to participate.

DATA COLLECTING AND RECORDING

The researcher requested that the participants return the survey via face-to-face. Eighty seven percent of the surveys were completed. No one chose to indicate “NP” at the top of the survey. The surveys that were received were turned over and placed in a binder; periodically the surveys were shuffled to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. The surveys were given a number, than divided into the number of years in which the participants had been employed within the organization. A Microsoft program, Excel was used to determine the percentage rate of each answer given by the participants.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study were that the researcher could not distribute the surveys to forty-three employees. Some of the employees are on the telephone for seven hours a day and have to meet their mandatory set goals. Because of this some employees could not complete the survey. Also, because the participants work in an office setting there's usually numerous documents on their desk. The survey was printed on white paper, therefore causing the survey to blend in with the other documentation. Other employees were not available to complete the survey due to absentism (vacation, personal time, sick, FMLA, etc) and/or assisting another department on the day the surveys were distributed.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The present study were designed to determine whether or not there were an internal communication gap that existed between the customer service representatives and/or unit leaders and the supervisors. The three objectives of this study was to:

- 1) Discover whether or not there was an internal communication gap between supervisors and the customer service representatives and/or unit leaders within the call center.
- 2) Determine the subject's perception of their immediate supervisors level of communication.
- 3) Identify the ways in which employees usually receive most of their information.

A survey was hand delivered to 111 customer service representatives and/or unit leaders who had been employed within organization XYZ for less than a year to sixteen years. A total of ninety-seven surveys was completed and returned to the researcher. The representatives and/or unit leaders responded to questions regarding the communication within their organization.

The representatives that responded to the survey are impressively diverse thirty six percent of the participants was employed for 1 year or less. Fifty- seven

percent was employed for two to five years. Five percent employed for ten to fifteen years and one percent for sixteen years.

To the contrary, the result suggests that 43% of the representatives and/or unit leaders were neutral regarding the overall satisfaction of communication within this organization. 27 % were satisfied and only 22% indicated that they were dissatisfied . Although majority of the representatives were neutral, 40% indicated that the organization gave them a limited amount of information. 27 % felt that they were adequately informed and 19% thought the organization kept them fairly well informed.

When asked how would you rate your supervisor's communication skills, 21% indicated excellent and 33% marked that their supervisor communicated very good and 25% indicated good. Also, 53% indicated that whenever there was change within the organization their supervisors inform them most of the time. A 27% response was given to the supervisors informing them all the time and 18% chose almost never informs me.

Like many organizations, the majority (29%) of the representatives indicated that they received most of their information through the grapevine. 19% company email and 16% marked their supervisors. Unfortunately, because some participants chose multiple answers were marked by twenty seven percent of the respondents; I was unable to get a true percentage of where the representatives received most of their information.

The overall result of the survey indicates the complete opposite of the rumors that were overheard. There does not appear to be a lack of communication

overall, but possibly a lack of communication from supervisors within a couple of units within the organization.

RESULTS

TABLE 1

Which best describes your impression of communications within this organization?

Item Response	Frequency	%
Keeps us fully informed	2	2
Keeps us fairly well informed	18	19
Keeps us adequately informed	27	27
Gives us only a limited amount of Information	39	40
Doesn't tell us much at all about what is going on	10	10
Answer was unclear	1	1

N=97

TABLE 1.2

How do you feel about the information you receive?

Item Response	Frequency	%
I can almost always believe it.	10	10
I can usually believe it.	48	48
I can believe it about half the time.	37	37
I usually can't believe it.	2	2

N=97

TABLE 1.3

I have the information I need to do my job.

Item Response	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	6	6
Agree	48	49
Neutral	29	29
Strongly Disagree	3	3

N=97

TABLE 1.4

How would you rate your supervisor's communication skills?

Item Response	Frequency	%
Excellent	21	21
Very good	32	33
Good	24	25
Fair	13	13
Poor	6	6
Unclear answer	1	1

N=97

Table 1.5

From which of the following sources do you usually receive most of your information?

Item Response	Frequency	%
Grapevine	28	29
Bulletin Board	0	0
Company Newsletter (Intranet)	0	0
My supervisor	16	16
Unit leader	4	4
Group meetings	1	1
Company Programs	4	4
Company emails	18	19
Multiple answers	26	27

N= 97

TABLE 1.6

Overall, how satisfied are you with the communications within this organization?

Item Response	Frequency	%
Very satisfied	1	1
Satisfied	26	27
Neutral	43	43
Very dissatisfied	4	4
Unable to identify answer	1	1

N=97

TABLE 1.7

I feel confident that management considers my ideas and/or concerns.

Item Response	Frequency	%
All the time	4	4
Some of the time	25	26
Undecided	42	43
Almost never	20	21
Never	6	6

N=97

TABLE 1.8

Whenever there is a change within the organization, my supervisor

Item Response	Frequency	%
Always inform me	26	27
Inform me most of the time	51	5
Almost never informs me	17	18
Never informs me	2	2
Unable to identify answer	1	1

N= 97

TABLE 1.9

The information that I receive from my supervisor is consistent with the information received from other supervisors.

Item Response	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	7	7
Agree	35	36
Neutral	32	33
Disagree	20	21
Strongly Disagree	3	3

N=97

What topics do you feel are important for you to know more about and would like the organization to inform you during future communications?

Contract issues

Policy and/or procedural changes

Future and/or general changes that are coming and how to prepare for it

Correct procedures for completing work correctly

Adequate training for job changes

Training and/or how to use new programs

Overtime and/or for special projects

All information that can help improve goals and job skills

New updates within the system

Legitimate reasons why things cannot be updated or corrected

More feedback on the quality and quantity of work completed.

Information regarding promotions

To much to list

Information regarding other departments.

Positions available within customer service

New forms

The result of the study was also divided among the number of years in which the participants had been employed within the organization. It appears that majority of the answers to the questions were consistent regardless of the number of years employed.

In Table 2.0 it shows that majority of the answers given by Group A and Group B participants were toward the organization given a limited amount of information and been adequately informed. The 6 years or more participants was split fifty- fifty with their impression.

TABLE 2.0

Which best describes your impression of communications within this organization?

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Keeps us fully informed	1	2	1	2	0	0
Keeps us fairly well informed	8	22	10	18	0	0
Keeps us adequately informed	10	29	14	25	3	50
Gives us only a limited amount of information	13	37	23	41	3	50
Doesn't tell us much at all about what is going on	3	8	7	13	0	0
Unable to determine correct answer	0	0	1	2	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

In Table 2.1 an overwhelming 69% of Group A can usually believe the information given, whereas 46% of Group B can only believe it about half the time. One third of Group C felt that they could always believe it, one third usually believe it, and one third can believe it about half the time. According to the result there may be an issue with trust within Group B.

TABLE 2.1

How do you feel about the information you receive?

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1 yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
I can almost always believe it.	2	6	6	11	2	33
I can usually believe it.	24	69	22	39	2	33
I can believe it about half the time.	9	26	26	46	2	33
I usually can't believe it.	0	0	2	4	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

The majority of participants in Table 2.2 across the board agreed that they had the information needed to do their job. Although 20% of Group A and 39% of Group B was neutral, 50% of Group C indicated that did not have enough information.

TABLE 2.2

I have the information I need to do my job.

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1 yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	4	11	2	3	0	0
Agree	9	54	26	46	3	50
Neutral	7	20	22	39	0	0
Disagree	3	9	5	9	3	50
Strongly Disagree	2	6	1	2	0	0
N= total	total	35	56		6	

In Table 2.3, an alarming percentage of participants in all groups indicated that their supervisor's communication skills was either good, very good or excellent. The researcher found this somewhat contradictory to Table 2.4 in which a small percentage, but the majority agreed that they received most of their information through the grapevine. It is important to note that in Table 2.4, 32% of Group B checked multiple answers. If the participants would have chosen one answer the results could have possible went toward the supervisor making it consistent with Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3

How would you rate your supervisor's communication skills?

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1 yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Excellent	6	17	14	25	1	17
Very good	17	49	15	27	0	0
Good	5	14	17	30	2	33
Fair	5	14	7	13	1	17
Poor	1	3	3	5	2	33
Not answered	1	3	0	0	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

TABLE 2.4

From which of the following do you receive most of your information?

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
The grapevine	10	28	16	29	2	33
Bulletin Board	0	0	0	0	0	0
Company Newsletter	0	0	0	0	0	0
My supervisor	6	17	9	16	1	17
Unit leader	2	6	2	4	0	0
Group meetings	1	3	0	0	0	0
Company programs	1	3	0	0	0	0
Company emails	7	20	8	14	3	50
Gave multiple answers	8	23	18	32	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

Table 2.5 shows a slight change in the answers given. The previous result showed that Group A and Group B gave similar answers. In this table 46% of Group A was neutral and 40% were satisfied whereas 43% of Group B was neutral and 29% was dissatisfied and Group C was 50% neutral and 50% dissatisfied.

TABLE 2.5

Overall, how satisfied are you with the communications within this organization?

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Very Satisfied	1	3	0	0	0	0
Satisfied	14	40	12	21	0	0
Neutral	16	46	24	43	3	50
Dissatisfied	3	9	16	29	3	50
Very dissatisfied	1	3	3	5	0	0
Unable to identify answer	0	0	1	2	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

The results show that the majority of all three groups were undecided in Table 2.6 regarding management considering their ideas and/or concerns.

TABLE 2.6

I feel confident that management considers my ideas and/or concerns.

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
All the time	2	6	2	4	0	0
Some of the time	5	14	19	34	1	17
Undecided	21	60	18	32	3	50
Almost never	6	17	12	21	2	33
Never	0	0	5	9	0	0
Unable to determine answer	0	0	1	2	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

Table 2.7 is consistent with Table 2.3 in which more participants in Group A and B agreed that their supervisors communication skills were good or above. These groups also feel as though their supervisor informs them most of the time when there is change within the organization. 67% of group C states that their supervisor almost never informs them.

TABLE 2.7

Whenever there is a change within the organization, my supervisor

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Always inform me	10	29	15	27	1	17
Inform me most of the time.	21	60	29	52	1	17
Almost never informs me.	4	11	9	16	4	67
Never informs me	0	0	2	4	0	0
Unable to determine answer	0	0	1	2	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

Table 2.8 shows that more of the participants did not make a chose on whether or not their were consistency with answers among the supervisors.

Table 2.8

The information that I receive from my supervisor is consistent with the information received from other supervisors.

Item Response	Groups					
	A 1 yr or less		B 2-5 yrs		C 6 + yrs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	3	9	4	7	0	0
Agree	17	49	17	12	1	17
Neutral	11	31	17	30	4	67
Disagree	3	9	16	29	1	17
Strongly disagree	1	3	2	4	0	0
N=total	total	35	56		6	

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Communication is very important in every aspect of our lives. In order for any relationship to work properly we have to learn to communicate effectively with each other. The importance of communication hasn't changed from the time in which John Brennan wrote *The Conscious Communicator* in 1974 to the time Shel Holtz wrote *Corporate Conversations* in 2004. The fact still remains that in order for any business whether entrepreneur, partnerships or corporate offices to succeed we have to communicate with someone to voice our ideas and/or concerns.

The literature review addressed the importance of internal communication. It provided the researcher with background information on the different ways and the different styles of communication. Needless to say, face-to-face communication seemed to remain the number one style of communicating within organizations. Research has also found that a lack of communication within an organization can decrease productivity, lower moral and be the cause of other serious workplace issues.

The researcher found that the outcome of the survey was the complete opposite to what was overheard in previous conversations. Based upon the answers given on the survey, more people were neutral and/or thought that the communication was satisfactory within the organization. Majority of the participants also felt that their supervisor communication skills were very good.

Although they agreed that the supervisors communicated effectively, more customer service representatives and/or unit leaders admitted to hearing most of their information through the grapevine. As the number of years increased in experience within the organization, it appears as though this particular group had a negative view of internal communication. The participants were consistent in saying that they wanted more information about the policy changes and/or procedures, the contracts and they wanted adequate training for the different computer programs.

Some of the employees vent about a lack of communication when they feel as though their voice is not been heard. Also, when they continue to find out about information through the grapevine versus from their supervisor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher would recommend for future research that the survey exclude any neutral options. Although by eliminating this option it forces the participants to answer one way or the other. The researcher believes that you will get more precise answers.

The supervisors can also following communication techniques can be used by any leader to increase the level of internal communication in the company and therefore the level of the company's efficiency (Fishman, 2000).

- 1) Find out if those listening to you hear what you say and interpret it correctly. One way of doing this is to ask questions that will show the understanding level of those with whom you are speaking. If you are

addressing a group meeting, allow time at the end of the meeting for questions.

- 2) Share information with employees whenever possible. One of the most sensitive areas in management involves how much company information should be shared with employees. Many feel that information should be given on a need-to-know basis. Their reason is that information given loosely can result in company secrets getting out to the competitors.

Supervisors can also share information with the employees through weekly and/or biweekly meetings. The supervisor should include in their meetings any information that is bringing about a change within the organization. If representatives and/or unit leader have questions about other personnel issues the supervisor should direct the customer service representatives to the correct source that can give them an answer.



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APPENDIX A

SURVEY

This research has been approved by the UW-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46.

I understand that by returning the/this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions regarding this study please contact the investigator Beverly Mallett-Hamer at bmhamer@msn.com or advisor, Dr Kat Lui at LuiK@uwstout.edu, 263 Technology Wing/Jarvis Hall, Menomonie, WI 54751 (715) 232-5634. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB administrator, Sue Foxwell, Director, Research Services, Institutional Review Board Administrator for the Protection of Human Subjects, 152 Vocational Rehabilitation Bldg, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751 (715)232-2477, foxwells@uwstout.edu

Please fill in the answer that best fit your experience when dealing with communication within this organization.

1. Which best describes your impression of communications within this organization?

- Keeps us fully informed
- Keeps us fairly well informed
- Keeps us adequately informed
- Gives us only a limited amount of information
- Doesn't tell us much at all about what is going on

2. How do you feel about the information you receive?

- I can almost always believe it.
- I can usually believe it.
- I can believe it about half the time.
- I usually can't believe it.

3. I have the information I need to do my job.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4. How would you rate your supervisor's communication skills?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

5. From which of the following sources do you usually receive most of your information?

- The grapevine
- Bulletin board
- Company Newsletter (Intranet)
- My supervisor
- Unit leader
- Group meetings
- Trove, Knowledge Tools, or Textbook
- Company e-mail

6. Overall, how satisfied are you with the communications within this organization?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

7. I feel confident that management considers my ideas and/or concerns.

- All the time
- Some of the time
- Undecided
- Almost never
- Never

8. Whenever there is a change within the organization, my supervisor

- always inform me.
- inform me most of the time.
- almost never informs me.
- never informs me.

9. The information that I receive from my supervisor is consistent with the information received from other supervisors.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. How long have you been employed within this organization?

- 1 year or less
- 2-5 years
- 6-9 years
- 10–15 years
- 16 or more years

11. What topics do you feel are important for you to know more about and would like the organization to inform you during future communications?

