

## EMBARRASMENTS IN MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION

Voinea D.V., Buşu O.V., Opran E.R., Vlăduţescu Ş.\*

**Abstract:** The study is circumscribed Management Science. It aims to investigate for the first time embarrassments of managerial communication. After an overview of evolution of the managerial communication is revealed that the problem of embarrassments of managerial communication was not ever studied. Using meta-analytic and observational procedures and methods are highlighted that the main generators of embarrassments are communicators, as basic elements of communication, those who initiate, perform, maintain and/or interrupt communication. There are recorded three kinds of embarrassments to communication: easily gotten over difficulties, difficult gotten over and barriers almost insurmountable. It is observed that intervene of some endogenous factors of the communication process and/or exogenous factors in the communication process. The first category factors are subjective and are manifested in misunderstandings, lack of consensus, differences of opinion, disagreements and conflicts; they are partly due to the asymmetric nature of the communication situation manager vs. subordinate. The second category factors are objective (physical) and are related to environment in which communication performs (context, situation, setting), the channels of communication, media and noise.

**Key words:** managerial communication, communication embarrassment, difficulties, obstacles, communication barriers.

### Managerial communication evolution: the current state of research

Managerial communication is the type of communication that performs in organizations, at the initiative of the management team, with the direct involvement of the management team, in order to achieve practical the strategic objectives of the organization. The managerial communication bases were made in the 1970s.

In its evolution about half a century, managerial communication got through three phases: the separation phase of organizational communication (1970-1979), the consolidation phase as communication specific practice and separate field of research (1980-1999) and autonomization phase as specialty in management science and as managerial strategic intervention type (after 1999 to present).

The beginning phase (1970-1979) is closely linked to organizational communication, managerial communication detaching of organizational communication. In organizational communication process is observed that exist a communication which managers perform it as team with other organizational stakeholders; this type of communication is called managerial communication. T.M. Tillico (1972) is the first who marks scientific the phrase "managerial communication"; he deems it necessary to be introduced in the research and

---

\* Assistant Voinea, Dan Valeriu; Assistant Professor Opran, Elena Rodica; PhD Buşu, Oprea Valentin; Associate Professor Vlăduţescu Ştefan; University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters.

✉ corresponding author: stefan.vladutescu@yahoo.com;

practice of management. Then H.S. Dennis (1975) validates the idea of managerial communication and he considers it is required "the construction of the managerial communication" (Dennis, 1975) (See also Axley, 1984).

By the end of this first stage of evolution, from the theoretical fundament attention is focused on practical aspects of managerial communication. This passing from the theoretical approach to focus on practice is a sign of the quickly evolution of new research field and primary defining of a new theoretical framework: managerial communication. In this regard, J.M. Lahiff and J.D. Hatfield insist on "importance" of "managerial communication practices" (Lahiff and Hatfield, 1978) and R.C. Huseman and E.R. Alexander provide evidences for the thesis that communication is a fundamental component of "managerial function" (Huseman and Alexander, 1979).

In the consolidation phase of managerial communication (1980-1999) take place two major processes: managerial communication is defined as a necessary practice in organizations and managerial communication sets up as a specialized field of research. This is the stage of theoretical modeling. First, in the current managerial communication is found out the existence of some patterns, the possibility of changing them and the possibility of introducing / implementing new and more effective patterns (Schiemann and Graen, 1984; Rasberry and Lindsey, 1986). Smelter, Glab, Golen and Gilsdorf, taking into account the existence of some new patterns, develop the first model of managerial communication (1986).

The main approach of the stage is the location within the field limits of research and objective self-assessment. Now managerial communication begins to internalize, to look from inside (Shapiro, 1984). With the self thinking, managerial communication becomes strategic: it is decided that managers communication with members of the organization have not carried out random or arbitrarily, but communication has to be performed according to a plan, in relation to some clearly defined objectives, framed in precise terms and executed by the emergence of specialized methods (Smelter and Hyness, 1994). Already in 1988 managerial communication is considered being an "important" component of strategic management (Stegman, 1988). Also, now develops the first practical guides containing procedures, techniques and procedures of managerial communication (Munter, 1992).

On the other hand, in the researches of managerial communication deepens the specific of the managerial communication in relation to gender (Birdsall, 1980), relative to the business environment (Driskill et al., 1992) and relative to the effects speed of the internal environment (Sullivan et al., 1991). Also, the research investigates the use of some nonverbal communication components in managerial communication (proxemics and haptics) (Smeltzer and Werbel, 1986). During this time, around 1995, managerial communication is asserting also in Romania (Câdea and Câdea, 1996).

In the autonomously phase of managerial communication (after 1999 until today) are recorded two main processes. The first mainly process of autonomization

consists of accession managerial communication to status of the communication specialist within Management Science. In this section, managerial communication performs:

- a) is "rethinking" (Buzzanell, 2000),
- b) performs "strategies for teaching managerial communication" (Hynes, 2002),
- c) refines managerial communication model derived from Smeltzer, Glab, Golen and Gildorf in 1986 and is obtained "the Managerial Communication Climate Model" (Robertson, 2005),
- d) reconfigures managerial communication domain as a "field of research" (Bell and Marin, 2008),
- e) reveals the "scientific" character of treatment the "managerial communication situations" (Bell and Matin, 2012) and
- f) creates a perspective, a new vision on crises approach in organizations (crisis is now understood as "failure in managerial communication" and is looking for solutions of crisis to improve the managerial communication - Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer, 2012).

In connection with this first process in 2015 R.L. Bell and D. Roebuck notes: "We examined numerous articles published between 2004 and 2013 and found an increasing usefulness for managerial communication research on the main topics of management" (Bell and Roebuck, 2015). The second main process of autonomization is to implement in practice and in direct intervention by means of managerial communication in the organization environment. It develops a common practice of managerial communication in organizations (Arman et al., 2013) and highlights effective styles of managerial communication (Dasgupta et al., 2012). Our opinion is that embarrassments and failures of communication are inevitable. The essential is that they to be monitored and controlled so as not to reach crisis. Our research focuses on embarrassments of communication in managerial communication. This aspect did not the object of any research so far.

The outside world, nature in its variety, our neighbors and even ourselves, emit signals, outside or to our own person and, then, sometimes even accidentally, to gather, to receive or to capture these signals, to give them, reporting due to their previous experiences or construction, the value of signs. We are becoming, therefore, receptors of some information that we accidentally intercepted, even if they were not directly intended. Such information, provided by signals that are not necessarily targeted can be routed. Intentionally directed information becomes a message that involves existence of a transmitter and a receiver.

Communication involves reversal of messages within the relationship which gather two entities, even if the messages are not of the same order. It involves creating of a sense, depending on the correlations between our facilities of perception of the signals, of the richness of vocabulary (to decode them), of imagination (to interpret them), as of memory, in order to maintain consistency when in our turn, we become senders and we address messages around.

### **Why we are communicating in organization?**

To this question there are plenty of explanations and answers, but we will focus on a few regarded the most important by specialists:

- communication establishes and maintains relationships between employees, positively influencing the interpersonal relations and organizational climate, ensuring the management of crisis situations, conflicts and tenseness reconciliation;
- management functions cannot be operationalized without communication; goals-setting processes, to achieve conformity with organizational structure, harmonization of the actions with initial objectives and to eliminate some dysfunctions, training of employees, is based on the messages transmission;
- underlying the motivational process, communication makes possible identification, knowledge and correct using of the various categories of needs and incentives to guide employees behavior through performance and satisfaction;
- communication contributes to correctly installing and efficiently of relations, of understanding and mutual acceptance between leaders and subordinates, colleagues, people from inside and outside of the organization, ensures relationship maintaining with the upper echelon;
- through communication is provided data related to system status and about situation development; by the achieved feedback, communication reveals the improving possibility of the individual and overall performance of the organization.

The manager must understand and use well the language, both verbal and nonverbal one, for efficient management of its company. Without understanding the power and effects of the language, he cannot operate optimally to adjust and synchronize individual efforts of his subordinates. In this respect, he should be a convincing speaker, an effective listener and a leader able to resolve a conflict through dialogue. For this he must be prepared to develop the needed skills for effective communication. Procedural, communication in a company consists in the exchange of messages (information) between frames, the movement of orders and commands, in the sharing of some affective states and value judgments, having as finality obtaining of effects in training, education, the activity, the representations and opinions of the employee.

### **Managerial communication**

Managerial communication involves not only messages sending, but also mindsets changing, attitudes and managers' behavior, but also subordinates'. W. W. Neher (1997) identifies the primary functions of organizational communication as:

- compliance-gaining;
- leading, motivating, and influencing;
- sense-making;

- problem-solving and decision-making;
- management of conflict, negotiating, and bargaining.

The functions of communication in organization are various (Munter, 1982; Hynes, 2005; Ahmed et al., 2010):

- to motivate employees,
- transmission of decisions,
- to promote organizational culture,
- employees training,
- to create the image,
- information regarding activities and implementing decisions.

For optimum operation of any human community, regardless of its nature and size, communication is the indispensable element. Continuous exchange of messages leads the unity of views and, by default, action, by harmonizing knowledge regarding the goals, ways and means to achieve them, by promoting necessary skills, by relative homogenizing of the groups to the actual aspect (emotional, sentimental) and motivational (views, interests, beliefs, attitudes). Through communication is achieved unitary coordination of effectively organizational behavior. Otherwise, to communicate means to inform, to say, to explain, to share, to give orders, to persuade, to be related, to listen, to join for acting. The efficiency of managerial communication occurs when related people receive just in time the right information (Ślusarczyk and Golnik, 2013; Smarandache and Vlăduţescu, 2014; Dima et al., 2014).

#### **How is performed the communication process in organization?**

Theoretically, communication in the organization should pursue strict the hierarchical circuit, defined as lines of authority and relationships of formal reporting. From this point of view can be highlighted several types of communication used by managers:

- Horizontal communication - suppose information flow moving between departments or their units, usually as mean of efforts coordinating.
- Bottom up communication - suppose information flow moving from the bottom to the top of the organization;
- Top down Communication - the information flow moving from the top to the bottom of the organization (Roberts and O'Reilly III, 1974).

In art of management skills, communication is essential for experience of human understanding. According to the specialists, the conclusion is that, most of managers of organizations follow the formal lines of authority from charts. This point of view is available, especially to the examples of communication from top bottom and from bottom up. American psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg (2004) shows that there is a highly effective interpersonal communication, like nonviolent communication - communication without violence, without coercion. He states that there is a special form of human interaction which he calls "Giving from whole

hearted". When we are offering from soul, we do not expect rewards. This dedication enriches both transmitter, and receiver who feel pleasure, lack of fear, shame or blame for the consequences. The transmitter will feel self-esteem, feeling that he lives whenever he notes that his efforts change positively human life, attitude or his behavior.

For a competent manager is very important to support and to develop the relationship of communication, to ensure the freedom of speech, of expression. To succeed in this matter the manager uses empathic and support communication (Grabara and Dima, 2014; Grabara and Man, 2014).

Empathic communication aims understanding of the interlocutor, adoption of his reference to be able to see things through his own prism. For an empathetic manager matters more the paradox "to influence, must let yourself influenced, to get, you must first give". To trigger the empathy, the manager must meet three conditions:

- the existence of a present or evoked empathy model;
- the existence of an internal condition;
- faith in transposition convention "in the skin" of the other.

Supportive communication emphasizes aspects of correlation between communicators and focuses on providing the support for the interpersonal communication relationship. Managers will communicate supportive not only to be agreeable, nice, and pleasant or to get social acceptance, but also to achieve optimal the purpose and communication objectives (Danciulescu and Colhon, 2014; Grigoraş et al., 2014). Communicating supportive, the manager will meet eight specific rules of communication in guidance and counseling:

- validate the interlocutor;
- listen supportive;
- assume the responsibility for what you communicate;
- communicate concrete and specific, not generally;
- assure the continuity of communication;
- assure the congruence of communication;
- "attack" the issue, not the person;
- describe, not evaluate.

It must be said that to communicate effectively are not enough knowledge about communication, but requires skills training and their use according to the circumstances.

### **Embarrassments caused by subordinates**

Their source is either security desire, or the lack of involvement in the organization life or factors related to temperament or work climate. Such difficulties are manifested in various forms (Rogers and Roethlisberger, 1952; Button and Rossera, 1990; Sonnenberg, 1990; Klimova and Semradova, 2012):

- reserve of subordinates to express their own views for fear of not "upset" superiors or not to jeopardize the status;
- certainty that the subordinates issues does not concern the manager;
- lack of communication ability lead to the abandon of a dialogue on its own initiative;
- tendency to consider that any idea, proposal of completion automatically involves the existence of a deficiency of the manager activity.

The more modification of instructions, orders are frequent, the more it creates dissatisfaction among subordinates, unfavorable highlighting the manager capacity and competence.

### **Embarrassments caused by managers**

As initiators and coordinators of communication, managers tend to raise artificial barriers in communication with subordinates or their counterparts due to:

- difficulties in information transmission capacity (insufficient documentation; tendencies to: oversize introductory explanations, to transform the dialogue into monologue; stereotypes in the mode of transmission and presentation; using a high tone and marked by irritability; using of inappropriate language; lack of attention or skill in directing dialogue to achieve an objective, listening capacity deficit etc.) (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Bell and Martin, 2012);
- low listening capacities or incorrect listening (lack of respect beside interlocutor showed through impatience, hurry, parallel solving of other problems etc.; low capacity to focus on substance of the matter; prejudices related to the fact that the subordinate cannot have better ideas or suggestions for solving problems; tend to intervene during exposure and to present exactly the opposite version, discouraging and blocking further dialogue; the tendency to believe that any idea, proposal of improving of an area automatically imply the existence of a tolerated deficiency of control etc.) (Vlăduţescu, 2013).

### **Summary**

In managerial communication embarrassments are inevitable and will never disappear. People are imperfect and different; they have biases, interests and different expectations. Pertaining to human personality, communication cannot be perfect. Not being perfect, it is imperfect. Among the manifestations of imperfection in communication are laid embarrassments: difficulties, obstacles, barriers. The communication management, mostly, communication problems are subjective. They are generated both managers and subordinates. Behind communication embarrassments of managers are ineffective management styles, and behind embarrassments induced by subordinates is the lack of communicational culture.

## References

- Ahmed Z., Shields F., White R., Wilbert J., 2010, *Managerial communication: the link between frontline leadership and organizational performance*, "Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications & Conflict", 14(1).
- Arman R., Wikström E., Dellve L., 2013, *Managerial communication practices. Health care managers' everyday structuration*, "Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration", 16(2).
- Axley S.R., 1984, *Managerial and organizational communication in terms of the conduit metaphor*, "Academy of Management Review", 9(3).
- Bell R.L., Martin J.S., 2012, *The Relevance of Scientific Management and Equity Theory in Everyday Managerial Communication Situations*, "Journal of Management Policy & Practice", 13(3).
- Bell R.L., Martin J.S., 2014, *Managerial Communication*, Business Expert Press.
- Bell R.L., Martin J., 2008, *The promise of managerial communication as a field of research*, "International Journal of Business and Public Administration", 5(2).
- Bell R.L., Roebuck D., 2015, *An Increasing Usefulness for Managerial Communication Research on the Main Topics of Management*, [Available at SSRN 2552340].
- Birdsall P., 1980, *A comparative analysis of male and female managerial communication style in two organizations*, "Journal of Vocational Behavior", 16(2).
- Button K., Rossera F., 1990, *Barriers to communication*, "The Annals of Regional Science", 24(4).
- Buzzanell P.M. (Ed.), 2000, *Rethinking organizational and managerial communication from feminist perspectives*, Sage.
- Căndea R.M., Căndea D., 1996, *Managerial Communication*. Bucharest, [Expert Publishing House](#).
- Dănculescu D., Colhon M., 2014, *Splitting the structured paths in stratified graphs, Application in Natural Language Generation*, *Analele Stiintifice ale Universitatii Ovidius Constanta-Seria Matematica*, 22(2).
- Dasgupta S.A., Suar D., Singh S., 2012, *Impact of managerial communication styles on employees' attitudes and behaviours*, "Employee Relations", 35(2).
- de Figueiredo, C.M.M., 2014, *Emotions and Recommender Systems: A Social Network Approach*, Doctoral dissertation, Universidade do Porto.
- Dennis H.S., 1975, *The construction of a managerial communication climate inventory for use in complex organizations*, In annual convention of the International Communication Association, Chicago.
- Driskill L.P., Ferrill J., Steffey M.N., 1992, *Business & Managerial Communication: New Perspectives*, Dryden Press.
- Grigoraş G., Dănculescu D., Sitnikov C., 2014, *Assessment Criteria of E-learning Environments Quality*, "Procedia Economics and Finance", 16.
- Huseman R.C., Alexander E.R., 1979, *Communication and the managerial function: A contingency approach*, "Readings in Organizational Behavior
- Hynes G.E., 2002, *Strategies for Teaching Managerial Communication*, "Business Communication Quarterly", 65(3).
- Hynes G.E., 2005, *Managerial communication: Strategies and applications*, McGraw-Hill.
- Klimova B.F., Semradova I., 2012, *Barriers to communication*, "Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences", 31.

- Lahiff J.M., Hatfield J.D., 1978, *The winds of change and managerial communication practices*, "Journal of Business Communication", 15(4).
- Lillico T.M., 1972, *Managerial communication*, Pergamon Press.
- Modrak V., Radu S.M., Modrak J., 2014, *Metrics in Organizational Centralization And Decentralization*, "Polish Journal of Management Studies", 10(2).
- Morrison E.W., Milliken F.J., 2000, *Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world*, "Academy of Management Review", 25(4).
- Munter M., 1992, *Guide to managerial communication*, Pearson Education India.
- Negrea X., 2014, *Objectivity between illusions and professional standards in today's journalism*, "Social Sciences and Education Research Review", 1(1).
- Neher W.W., 1997, *Organizational Communication – Challenges of Change, Diversity, and Continuity*, Boston, Allyn and Bacon.
- O'Brien J., 2014, *Football and Spanish Cultural Life: some contemporary perspectives and observations*, "Social Sciences and Education Research Review", 1(1).
- Panko R.R., 1992, *Managerial communication patterns*, "Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce", 2(1).
- Rasberry R.W., Lindsay L., 1986, *Effective managerial communication*, Kent Publishing Company.
- Roberts K.H., O'Reilly III C.A., 1974, *Failures in Upward Communication in Organizations: Three Possible Culprits*, "Academy of Management Journal", 17(2).
- Robertson E., 2005, *Placing leaders at the heart of organizational communication - As a tribute to Ed Robertson, a return to the Managerial Communication Climate Model shared in SCM in January 1997, an approach as*, "Strategic Communication Management", 9(5).
- Rogers C.R., Roethlisberger F.J., 1952, *Barriers and Gateways to Communication*, "Harvard Business Review", 30(4).
- Schiemann W.A., Graen G.B., 1984, *Structural and interpersonal effects in patterns of managerial communication*, Unpublished manuscript, Department of Management, University of Cincinnati.
- Seeger M.W., Sellnow T.L., Ulmer R.R., 2012, *Communication, Organization, and Crisis*, Communication Yearbook 21.
- Shapiro I.S., 1984, *Managerial communication – the view from inside*, "California Management Review", 27(1).
- Smarandache F., Vlăduţescu Ş., 2014, *Towards a Practical Communication Intervention*, Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 46.

## ZAKŁOPOTANIE W KOMUNIKACJI MENEDŻERSKIEJ

**Streszczenie:** Niniejsze badanie odnosi się do Nauk o Zarządzaniu. Ma ono na celu zbadanie po raz pierwszy zakłopotania w komunikacji menedżerskiej. Po dokonaniu przeglądu kształtowania się komunikacji menedżerskiej wykazano, że problem zakłopotania w komunikacji menedżerskiej nie był nigdy badany. Wykorzystane meta-analityczne i obserwacyjne procedury oraz metody naświetlają, że głównymi generatorami zakłopotania są komunikatory, jako podstawowe elementy komunikacji, które inicjują, wykonują, utrzymują i / lub przerywają komunikację. Istnieją trzy zarejestrowane rodzaje zakłopotania w komunikacji: trudności łatwe do przezwyciężenia, trudne do przezwyciężenia i bariery niemal nie do pokonania. Obserwuje się interwencję niektórych czynników endogennych i / lub czynników egzogennych w procesie komunikacji. Czynniki

pierwszej kategorii są subiektywne i objawiają się nieporozumieniami, brakiem porozumienia, różnicami zdań, sporami i konfliktami; wynikają one częściowo z powodu asymetrycznego charakteru sytuacji komunikacyjnej kierownika wobec podwładnego. Czynniki drugiej kategorii są obiektywne (fizyczne) i związane są z otoczeniem, w którym przeprowadzana jest komunikacja (kontekst, sytuacja, ustawienie), kanałami komunikacji, mediami i hałasem.

**Słowa kluczowe:** komunikacja menedżerska, zakłopotanie w komunikacji, trudności, przeszkody, bariery komunikacyjne.

### 在管理溝通糗事

**摘要：**本研究是外接管理科學。它的目的是調查的管理溝通的第一次尷尬。在管理通信的發展狀況後發現，並沒有學過管理溝通的尷尬問題。使用薈萃分析和觀察的程序和方法，強調了尷尬的主發電機是溝通，溝通的基本要素，那些誰發起，執行，維護和/或中斷通信。有記錄的三種尷尬溝通的：容易得到過的困難，很難得到過和障礙難以逾越的差不多。據觀察，介入的通信方法的一些內源性因子和/或外源因素，在通信過程。第一類因素是主觀的，表現在誤解，缺乏共識，意見，分歧和矛盾分歧；他們的部分原因是交際場合的經理與下屬的不對稱性。第二類因素是客觀的（物理）和相關的環境中進行通信（背景下，局面，設置），通信，媒體和噪聲通道

**關鍵詞：**管理溝通，交流的尷尬，困難，障礙，溝通障礙