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职场
定位沟通

Professional
Communication

居延安

葛丽尼

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Professional Communication

A Relationship Management Approach

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内 容 提 要

世界各国的大学生、研究生都面临着同一个挑战：如何一毕业就能找到称心的工作。如果你还没学会怎么编写自己的简历，还不知道如何应对求职面试，那么就别指望走出校门就能找到一个如意的职位。而一旦聘书到手，如何去适应新的单位、适应新单位里一张张生疏的面孔，又将马上成为你面临的新挑战，而且其中的困难比你想象的要大得多。多少年来你一直以为你对别人的话总是洗耳恭听的，没想到去了新单位，新同事却说你对别人的话既听不进又听不懂。多少年来你一直以为自己是个舞文弄墨的好手，没想到老板却说你“要命，连个便条都写不像！”你从没有想过，新的职场定位要求你一言一行都必须像个成熟的职业人员。挑战和问题接踵而来，你不仅扮演不好职业人员的角色，而且连个人的生活也被搅得乱七八糟，一时间不知如何来平衡了！从你受聘的第一天起，一直到你离开单位的那天为止，你可能在你的办公室里经历过种种情绪波动和打击。这些问题，还有别的许多难以预料的挑战，说到底是个职场定位和关系管理的问题。

本书的两位作者先后在中美两国的名牌大学里任教，长年为中美各种职业人员作职场定位和关系管理的咨询，具有丰富的理论和实践经验。本书将帮助你理解和应对各种职场定位挑战，并手把手地教你如何掌握打开各种关系管理之门的钥匙。本书只出英文版，先与中国的大学生和研究生见面，再于美国出版。毫无疑问，本书将成为一本国际性的畅销读物。

Summary

Why is it that some people are highly successful in an organization and the larger social environment while others keep failing miserably? We believe that the key to success, among other factors, lies in how you interact with others and manage your relationship with them. The book takes a unique relationship management approach, in which we focus on six success factors, namely, communication, common interest, credibility, commitment, collaboration, and compromise, the so-called 6C's. The book discusses some of the new challenges of professional communication in context of the changes that have been occurring in society since the turn of the 21st Century.

The first challenge that any graduating college student faces is how to find a job. Don't expect to land the best professional position if you have not learned how to write a resume or present yourself in an interview. Once you have got the job, you will soon feel the need to adapt to the new organization and the people there. The challenge can be enormous. You had all along believed that you were a good listener, but your new colleagues now say you are not. You had all along felt proud of your writing skills, but now your new boss says you can't even write a memo correctly. And you never thought you could be thrown into situations where you have to speak like a mature professional. You might be overwhelmed by other problems that you had never foreseen. Even after having spent years in an organization, you might still find it difficult to balance between being an effective professional and being a person whom you have always wanted to be. From Day One when you enter an organization to the day you choose or are forced to leave, you may have felt frustrated, alienated, or angry within the confines of your office. You will encounter these issues, and many others. This book will provide you with the knowledge to handle these situations professionally and confidently.

We will take you through all these challenges and provide our advice and suggestions informed by our own researches and life experiences working and living in the United States, China and other parts of the world.

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1.

Professional Communication in a Changed Professional Environment

In order for relationships to thrive we must rely on six key factors :

*Communication
Common interest
Credibility
Commitment
Collaboration
Compromise*

These factors form the foundation for this book. We will introduce these concepts in this chapter, and will apply them throughout the book.

6 C's of Professional Communication

Communication
Common Interest
Credibility
Commitment
Collaboration
Compromise

Current Social Trends

Technology
Mobility
Acceleration
Change

Why Is Professional Communication Important?

Communication is that which establishes, maintains and/or terminates human relationships. Professional communication is that which establishes, maintains and/or terminates professional relationships. Success in any professional field requires communication and management of relationships. However, it is not communication alone that leads to successful relationships which, in turn, leads to success in one's profession. Successful professional communication and successful professional relationship management need five more C's. These are common interest, credibility, commitment, collaboration, and compromise, all of which serve as the guiding principles and criteria with which to determine whether or not one is on the right track in professional communication and professional relationship management. So, we have six C's, which are communication plus

the five just listed.

We all know that being effective in managing professional relationships is key to becoming successful in one's professional career. These include relationships with supervisors and subordinates, vendors and suppliers, customers and potential customers, co-workers and others who work in the same buildings, and all of them must be managed properly in order for us to be successful. Management of these relationships takes time. In our fast-paced society we need to remember to slow down and focus on the relationships we must maintain in order to be successful.

Advances in information and communication technologies have changed the way professionals communicate. The 21st century is here and with it came tremendous change in professional life. Global competition, new technologies, and the increased pressure for speed from the preceding century are now joined with weapons of mass destruction, increasing health-care costs, privacy concerns, ethics scandals and new diseases such as SARS. In the last 15 years almost everything about working has changed. The way we communicate, the relationships we have at work, the technology we use, the security of our jobs, time spent on organizational tasks, even the physical location of where we work has changed from the traditional work environment of the not so distant past. What many called the old social contract — mutual loyalty and support between organizations and their employees — has been replaced by frequent job changes, increased competition, part-time and contracted employees, downsizing, all resulting in tremendous change in the relationship between an organization and its employees.

Given the increase in the use of new technologies, as well as self-directed teams, and nontraditional workplaces, the importance of interpersonal relationships in organizations has escalated. We live, love, work, play and will eventually die within complex organizations. Organizations are further made up of intricate sets of human relationships. This book concentrates on professional relationships in the organization.

Relationships in organizations are different from non-work relationships. Unlike our non-work relationships, most work relationships are involuntary. We work with people because we must in order to accomplish our work-related responsibilities. In this book we will examine professional communication as the ongoing process by which we develop, maintain and eventually terminate a complex series of organizational relationships.

6 C's of Professional Communication

In order for relationships to thrive we must rely on six key factors: **communication**, **common interest**, **credibility**, **commitment**, **collaboration**, and **compromise** (Ju, 2003). These factors form the foundation for this book. We will introduce these concepts here and they will be more completely explained throughout the chapters to come:

Communication

In order to more effectively communicate in the organization, we must first understand the flow of communication. When asked for the first element required in a model of communication, the first item most often offered is the message. This makes sense, as it is the most visible part of the communication process. Our focus and the focus of this book, however, will not be on the communication process of a single act — the transmission of a message. Instead, we will focus on the long-term relationship between the interactants, and therefore begin the discussion of the model with the sources and receivers. In any communication interaction we are simultaneously senders and receivers of messages, however, for ease of use we have made the roles distinct in our model. Messages are composed of symbols which we as senders encode to attach meaning, and as receivers we decode to assign meaning to the symbols. It is important to remember that the meanings are not in the message itself but in the senders and receivers. That is, what a particular word means to us may not be what it means to someone else. A word stimulates a meaning in our minds that can be different from the meaning it stimulates in the mind of our colleagues. No word has meaning apart from the person using it. In order to be successful in our relationships we must adapt our messages to the background and shared experiences of our colleagues so that they can understand our ideas.

Each of us comes to an interaction with a set of filters through which we will experience the message sent and received. These filters, represented by the spirals in the sender and receiver ovals, are our cognitive and emotional experiences. When I say the word “cat”, because of your filters, your cognitive and emotional experiences, you may think of a warm, cute, orange kitten; a black snarling beast with claws and fangs; or anything else that comes to mind. With only the word “cat”

to go by, the cat you now have pictured in your mind is never going to be the same as the cat I have in mine. Our filters shape what the word "cat" represents to each of us; therefore communication can never be perfect, but can be very exciting due to this challenge. Of course, we can try to make the process less imperfect. Our shared experiences make this goal of shared meaning more possible.

Shared experiences are represented on the model by the overlapping rings in the center of the model. The more shared experiences we have, the more the rings overlap. When we form relationships with others, we have more shared experiences to draw from, and therefore more opportunities for shared meaning. This explains the common exchange when you meet someone and they ask, "Where are you from" and the common follow up question after you reply, "Oh, do you know Mr. Jones?" While we might all understand the possibility of your actually knowing "Mr. Jones" is unlikely, it allows us the opportunity of finding shared experiences. Just as messages are affected by the individuals involved in the communication, they are also affected by the channel through which they are sent.

Channels available for communication in most organizations are vast, including face-to-face, e-mail, large meetings, team meetings, teleconferencing, web-casting, memos, bulletin boards and many others. Channel selection becomes very important when communicating with those with whom we have relationships, as each of us has preferred channels for communication that may vary by message type. In order to build and maintain relationships we need to be sensitive to these preferences.

Feedback occurs when the receiver has had the opportunity to decode the message, and sends back a message about how the first message was received. This feedback can be verbal or nonverbal. For example, if you agree with a message you could say "I agree" (verbal) or nod (nonverbal). Feedback is very important in assessing shared meanings, for if the receiver has a quizzical look the sender can infer that shared meaning was not achieved and therefore follow up with additional information to make the meaning more clear.

All the while, this exchange takes place within an environment. The environment in which we communicate has a profound effect on the way we communicate and what will be said. We will likely communicate differently in a conference room than a cafeteria; differently at the office holiday party than at the monthly staff meeting. The external en-

vironment also affects communication in our organization. For example, if it is a time of war or economic instability, messages sent within the organization are likely to be different than those sent when the environment is less uncertain.

The lightening bolts throughout the model represent the anything that interferes with communication. This interference is noise and can be both external and internal. External noise can be any external distraction such as construction noise outside the window, or the glaring florescent lights that keep you from seeing the visual aid clearly. Internal noise includes daydreaming about your next vacation, your feelings about the speaker, or wondering how long it will be until you break for lunch.

Through the above analysis, we begin to understand how complicated the process of communication is and how difficult it is to come to shared meaning with the receiver of our message. We also understand that the possibility for shared meaning is enhanced through shared experiences. Therefore, communication in organizations should not be thought of as a singular act but instead, within the context of relationship building and maintenance.

In any organization, communication moves vertically, laterally, and diagonally, internal to the organization, and also flows external to the organization. Communication between you and your boss is vertical. Communication with a co-worker is lateral. Diagonal communication is probably most prevalent in today's organization, where communication is between people from various levels of the hierarchy, different departments, and perhaps different countries, but within the same organization. Also a great deal of communication occurs between an organizational member and those external to the organization. Depending on where the arbitrary line is drawn, external communication can include: customers, vendors, shareholders, government agencies, the mass media, and the public at large. This arbitrary line between internal and external organizational communication is increasingly becoming blurred and in the future the distinction may likely become irrelevant. For the purposes of our discussion we include the distinction, as it is important to consider the different needs of individuals as receivers when they are internal or external to the organization. For example, it is likely that those internal to the organization may have more shared experiences and therefore the message will be different than if we were communicating with a potential customer. All four types of communication

will be used in the process of building and maintaining professional relationships in the work place.

C Common Interest

Common interest is the basis upon which professional relationships and all other relationships are formed, maintained and managed. Common interest, as suggested by the word “common,” must be something that is shared by the stakeholders in a relationship. In a professional context, common interest ranges from profit sharing goals, joint product(s) development, and skills and capabilities sharing, to interest in a common social cause and even small things like car-pooling. It also includes non-work factors such as having gone to the same university, membership in the same civic organization, or having children who play on the same sports team. It's important for potential relational partners to identify potential areas of common interest before they launch a relationship. One of the most significant pitfalls in professional relationships is when one loses sight of the importance of upholding common interest — interest that is shared and seen as important by both or all sides. It is essential to view the protection of common interest as that which protects one's own interest. Common interest may shift from one area to another as time goes by and situations change. If it is no longer possible for any one of the relational partners to identify the common interest for the relationship, the relationship would soon become problematic and might have to end or be transformed to a different level of association (Ju, 2003, pp. 116 - 120).

C Credibility

No relationship can be successfully maintained if credibility is lacking on either side of a two-party relationship. Credibility is being known for being reliable and is very much built upon trust, honesty and openness. It takes time to build up one's credibility, and real credibility is, therefore, time-honored. In a professional relationship, it is extremely important to be honest and trustworthy when it comes to sharing information or taking concerted action. When you've failed, say “I've failed.” When your chance of winning is 50-50, say “the chance of winning is 50-50.” You might appear, at the beginning, “incapable” or even “stupid.” But in a long run, as long as you have made your effort