

# **PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION USED IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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## **Abstract**

Undoubtedly, internal communication in public administration is the most sought after point of good management practices. The activity of public institutions based on principles such as the principle of face-to-face or online communication, the principle of information, the principle of motivation and the principle of unity of success are an integral part of public administrations. The implemented principles have the role of improving the activities of civil servants, which can increase the level of efficiency. The lack of an efficient communication within the public institution will lead to unproductiveness, misunderstandings, frustrations and non-fulfillment of work tasks, implicitly of the job description. Time, planning work tasks, clear setting of priorities; self-discipline, punctuality, perseverance, are an essential pillar in labor productivity. This study aims to reflect and understand the nature of communication as an activity and as a process in the context of the present transformations and how important the principles of communication are in the performance of employees.

## **Keywords**

Communication, public administration, principles, civil servants.

## **JEL Classification**

C88, D83, L63, L96.

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## **Introduction**

Communication is the source from which any human being can produce, through which he interacts, works, acts, undertakes things. It is an indispensable tool in everyday life that establishes life and work relationships. Without communication, human interactions would be impossible. Everything around is communication. "Nothing should be considered isolated, everything and every being exists and is situated in a set of interacting elements" (Watzlawick et al., 1972).

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Communication refers to the exchange of information, experiences, between sender and receiver, being a bidirectional, cultural and constructive action. One of the biggest concerns is the connection between the meaning of communication and the concern for performance (Bruno, 1993).

A definition of communication is given by Baron R., who argues that "the process by which a party (called sender) transmits information (messages) to another party (called receiver)" (Baron, 1983). Because one can talk about communication, understand and approach some of its techniques, it is essential to identify some of its concepts. Thus, for the communication to take place, several elements are essential, such as the sender (the one who initiates the message), who starts the communication process and is at his discretion to prepare the message, turning it into a code capable of being interpreted by receiver (recipient of the message), being assigned a meaning, thus encoding the message. The receiver is the recipient of the message, because it determines the success of any communication and is also responsible for the coding communication process, which translates into the transformation of the signals received through the communication channel and through this interpretation. The role of communication is a fundamental one, which creates services, professionalism, connections between employees and gives them logic, understanding, transparency and productivity.

### **1. Review of the scientific literature**

At present, public administrations are not only content with having competent employees, but must also have developed communication skills and abilities that will contribute to increasing productivity in the workplace, implicitly to the development of public institutions and professional growth. According to Duterme C., he relates communication in the contemporary organization "to a planned dimension, to voluntary action within the community, to information management and, in a more elaborate form, to a consensus on organizational culture" (Duterme, 2002).

In this context, as a place where employees and civil servants produce, public administrations are directly linked to the work activity for its development and survival. We could deal with different types of institutions that exist in society, because all of them, in one way or another, are part of the activity of human labor. However, we have chosen to focus our discussion, in this paper, only on the public administration as a whole.

The work activity includes the intelligent mobilization of the employee, knowledge and experience, the ability to reflect, to adapt, to react to situations and to resist the orders that exist in the labor relations. Thinking about communication means thinking about work.

Establishing effective communication is an effective way to get employees to act on the needs of the public administrative institution, fully integrating into the organizational culture. A formal definition of an organization is "a group of people engaged in specialized and interdependent activities in order to achieve a common goal or accomplish a mission." (Gortner et al., 1994).

Therefore, communication must take place in a way that helps employees to perform their tasks without errors and distortions. This avoids resumption, dissatisfaction, decreased

performance, procrastination, lost time and an anti-progress move. In addition, communication promotes team integration in search of excellent results, making a strong contribution to building and sustaining interpersonal relationships. This is the process by which the civil servant is the perfect craftsman, designer and sculptor in the correct implementation of the communication strategy.

Nowadays it is very difficult to find a job, an occupation, a profession, a job that does not involve the worker to participate in the communication relations of the public institution in which he carries out his activity. Employees must assimilate the information issued inside and outside the public institution, which opinion, cooperate, build knowledge, which are in constant interaction with managers and other officials of the organization, which are ready to respond to requests from citizens.

Internal communication is considered fundamental to improving the smooth running of public institutions and seems to demonstrate a successful relationship. Listening plays a crucial role in the organization. One of the big problems is that we do not listen and are distracted by various thoughts, noises, objects, movements, etc. So listening means understanding what the speaker is saying, but unfortunately many use listening to prepare for what is right to say instead of understanding what is being said. From here, things get trickier, and this is where the true meaning of life lies.

## **2. Research methodology**

The reason for our choice to research communication is that institutional governance in the public sector has a higher level of importance, given that institutions are most in need of effective communication, due to the fact that they have a very important role to play and an extraordinary impact on any public administration through the role of civil servants in interacting with and accurately informing citizens. In this article, we focus on communication and communication principles that bring institutional value. The purpose of this article is to show the importance of communication and its principles.

## **3. Results and discussions**

In the context of the organization, it is essential to understand the state of communication in it, first of all through a statement of fact, as well as through the opinion of its employees, using questionnaires and interviews, about the motivational level it shows us. However, for communication to be effective at the level of each public administration, there must be a solid foundation based on sound principles.

## **4. The four principles of communication in public administration**

### **The principle of face-to-face or online communication**

Communication is one of the most significant requirements for the good performance of civil servants, in line with the managerial perspective of public administration. It is clear that everyone wants to get something good out of their efforts, but this does not only require a diploma or certain skills only in a certain field, it takes communication to turn tasks into reality.

Effective communication gives you opportunities such as efficient speech, better professional relationships, clear messages, enthusiasm, productivity at work. Communication, in its broadest sense, is a powerful force that creates stability and shapes us.

Unlike face-to-face communication, online communication uses technology, which in turn offers new opportunities such as live meetings from anywhere in the world, sending documents online and receiving them in a very short time, connecting with an unlimited number of people who discuss using video. However, in order for them to work, working systems must be developed in the public administration that lead to the desired results. For online communication you need to adapt, study, acquire new qualities and skills, information about the programs or platforms you work on. The quality of adapting to what follows gives employees a step forward in their careers.

The way it works will always change, whether it is a pandemic like the one with the new coronavirus and employees work from home or hybrid, whether they work from the office or change communication strategy or work software, etc. Here comes resistance to change, where many do not see change as a good thing, but are skeptical, preferring to use old software or even worse, pen and paper, in an era when technology makes our work easier. Convenience is one of the factors that negatively influences the activity within public institutions. Resistance to change is manifested by lack of motivation, boredom, laziness, harmful elements that lead to unproductivity.

### **The principle of information**

It is becoming increasingly clear that information means knowledge, and knowledge is performance. The information is based on an efficient, well-developed communication, based on a strategy implemented at the level of public administration. According to Erik N. "information is an action dependent on the resources of technology, while communication is a matter of human relations" (Erik, 2001). In the context of information dissemination, communication stands out as a vehicle that educates, indoctrinates and acts as a stimulus of behavior, which deserves an analysis of its purpose.

The principle of information is part of a well-structured communication strategy, which aims to correctly inform employees, send and verify on time information such as meetings, e-mails, documents received from the outside, from the inside, especially if there is a time limit or for which a response is requested. In this sense, communication has a role "to encourage active listening, the circulation of information, the facilitation of joint work, the promotion of the spirit of cooperation. In a word, it develops the sense of community" (Détrie and Meslin-Broyez, 1995).

**The principle of motivation**

Increasing productivity in public administration is directly linked to a work environment that encourages the motivation of civil servants. In this sense, one of the actions that contributes most positively to this adequacy of the work environment is assertive and healthy communication.

Some attitudes can be adopted to improve the work environment, promoting greater integration and motivation in the team. Here are the 7 essential recommendations for getting this encouragement / motivation:

- Adopt constructive feedback at the institution level: act professionally if you need to get someone's attention because of misbehavior or activity that needs to be redone. Conducting a private conversation with that person, must be done always with great respect. This is a constructive feedback that will help a lot in the professional training of those who listen to the message.
- Be humble: apologize whenever necessary. This does not show weakness, but respect for other colleagues. This also applies to personal life.
- Note: If you receive incorrect information, do not hesitate to clarify it. Respect and prudence are essential to maintain a balance between professionalism, competence and well-being.
- Be aware: if the mood heats up in a debate, try to ease the tension without raising your voice and do your best to quickly dissolve the unpleasant scenario. To easily perceive this type of situation, it is important to exercise emotional intelligence.
- Understand the importance of the external environment: enthusiasm can vary from person to person because it is an internal process. However, the motivation is influenced by the external environment, which includes the way in which the public administration communicates and relates to the employee. Therefore, it is important to ensure the application of organizational culture and the execution of actions that influence a good organizational climate.
- Understand the importance of employees: Human behavior in the organization varies according to the personal experience of each employee, and communication must adapt and take into account these individual differences.
- Encourage the connection with the profession and the institution you belong to: communication, when carried out effectively, promotes the employee's involvement in the principles of the public institution of which he is a part, leading to the consolidation of their values in relation to the partners. It is a tool that promotes synergy and motivation to achieve the desired results.

**The principle of the impulse to success**

Behind the success of each public institution is a well-developed work strategy, which in turn is an effective communication strategy, designed to simplify the activities of public administration and provide new opportunities for career advancement and, consequently, growth, productivity. However, in order to succeed, you need to know what it means to lose, or to be difficult. However, these things cannot simply happen, but the action must take place. Thus, the action is in turn based on the motivation of civil servants, such as:

- The wage;

- Increases;
- Service car;
- Holiday and / or meal vouchers;
- Work phone;
- Improvement courses;
- Medical insurance;
- Medical tests;
- Coaching.

Coaching is a way to invest in both professional and civil servants. The method effectively contributes to transforming the lives of employees in a positive way, being an impetus to the desired success. One of the great benefits of coaching, for example, is understanding and practicing emotional intelligence and establishing connections with others. This concept will help civil servants to distinguish which sentimental traits are the most interesting for a certain environment and which are not. The goal is to learn how to adapt their emotions to any location and any situation and how to create better connections with co-workers.

Communication was considered increasingly important in the success of any organization, being seen as a vital tool within it. In turn, motivation is a complex concept, which, due to its importance in any public institution, is viewed in a very simplistic way.

Organizational communication is a key component of efficiency and effectiveness, the first being the potential ability of systems, simple or complex, to produce results, and the second is considered the ability of an employee to produce results responsibly. However, responsibility is also defined by the organization of working time. As there is always a risk, it is more important for the civil servant to face that risk or the difficulties encountered in carrying out the work than to avoid the risks and difficulties. The opportunity for risk and difficulty is to acquire new skills and knowledge which, in turn, bring productivity.

Effective work refers to understanding between officials, when the message is conveyed and understood correctly, clearly and on time, when there are no barriers to communication and when everything is based on communication strategies and principles.

### **5. Dead time vs. live time**

Time is an extremely valuable tool, which when used correctly and turning it into our ally, we will be able to have important benefits, such as:

- Increasing productivity;
- Planning work tasks;
- Clear setting of priorities;
- Self-discipline;
- Punctuality;
- Perseverance;
- Establishing the main and secondary objectives;

- Less stress;
- Much better communication

Dead time is a common problem in public administration. Misuse of social networks means downtime, running on Tik-Tok, Facebook or Instagram, as well as using the phone for games, are big problems at the administrative level. The solution to these problems is to transform dead time into living time through communicative activities, such as: planning, consulting the work agenda, checking e-mails, sending and receiving information, studying the communication strategy, etc. Misuse of these communication channels can affect work and the productivity of civil servants, including public administration performance. Therefore, there is a need for effective communication strategies, a process of anticipation of events, new ways of working. These issues represent a new opportunity to create new governance models in public administrations to capitalize on the potential of civil servants.

Studying the communication strategy should be a priority for every employee. This will increase productivity, which creates a close connection between employees. Communication strategy can remove many barriers to communication, such as:

- Misunderstanding the message;
- Speech stress in meetings;
- Sending and receiving clear messages;
- Vulnerability;
- Punctuality;
- Perseverance;
- Aggressivity;

However, for a communication strategy to be effective, all civil servants must be involved in creating and implementing it in the organization. Successfully diagnosing and managing the biggest problems in the organization is the first step towards achieving the goals and objectives of the public institution. In order for the goal to be achieved, the working mechanism must be continuously improved. This means that the communication strategy and its principles can be modified or adapted along the way according to the needs of each public institution.

### **Conclusions**

Investing in communication in a public institution can be considered a key and essential tool for the performance of an organization, facilitating the overall organizational management, improving the relationship between employees and beneficiaries of services provided.

It is also necessary to avoid distortions of information and to improve, through a strategic communication plan based on sound principles such as face-to-face or online communication, the principle of information, the principle of motivation and the principle of success, and the common values integrated in achieving results and achievement of objectives.

The strategic communication plan or communication strategy must have a solid basis based on the fundamental principles on which it will be built and, of course, on which it will operate. Following the steps in the communication strategies, better environments and working relationships will be created, routes will be created in terms of information delivery. The delivery of information must have a valid, curative content, passed through filters that make the information as clear as possible, which will simplify the activity of civil servants.

Communication strategies based on working principles without setting a work agenda with clear objectives and time management will not bring the desired results. Therefore, it is imperative to eliminate downtime because the misuse of communication platforms in an interest other than work leads to unproductiveness, inattention, non-execution of work tasks and superficiality.

Therefore, the elaboration of a communication strategy based on principles and time management followed by its study by public administration employees and its observance will provide the institution and implicitly with civil servants facilities such as the transmission and understanding of messages in an efficient way.

It is very clear that the communication strategy, having behind it a combination of factors such as perseverance, desire, creativity, empathy and a better connection with others, but also the values that resonate with the proposed objectives, is the one that provides an overview of the institution. The communication strategy must be clear, precise and competitive based on principles, in order to increase the productivity of the public institution, implicitly of civil servants to meet their needs, as well as those of external beneficiaries.

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