



## Organizational communication at managerial level: A study of Sangam, cooperative dairy in Guntur district, AP

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### Abstract

Communication has been found to contribute much more to the effective functioning of the organizations especially if it has large number of stakeholders such as employees, customers as well as different types of public. Mutual understanding and knowledge about other groups who work together in an organization is very much essential. Especially those at the level of top management as well as those who supervise all the activities at a broader level should be aware of the communication process as they are the important components in upward as well as downward communication. The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of Organizational Communication in Sangam dairy. Since the company has been dealing with large number of stakeholders that run into more than two millions of people directly and indirectly the researcher shall try to find the significance of the communication. The role played by the managers would be studied as they act as a vital link between both the top management as well those in subordinate as well as those at other levels. The study used quantitative research method and conducted survey to collect data from the employees at managerial level to find out the contribution of this segment to the successful communication and the rate of satisfaction. A sample of around 207 selected from the employees was selected for the study and were asked find out their opinions as to how the managers have been playing their roles in communication. The empirical data was analyzed by means of frequency measurement and testing of the hypothesis. Recommendations were made to broaden the scope to achieve maximum efficiency in communication.

**Keywords:** top management, measurement, efficiency

### Introduction

The general theory of excellence in public relations and communication management is based on a two-way symmetrical communication world view. While managers can plan two-way symmetrical systems of communication, the latter cannot be fully effective without changes in culture and structure (Grunig 1992, 531) [8]. Biesel *et al.* (2012, p. 129) [2], explained that “the supervisor-subordinate relationship is a microcosm of the organizational universe. When supervisors communicate with subordinates their interactions are an observable manifestation of organization in action. Communication audits in recent years have indicated that employees prefer personal communication from their immediate supervisor, senior executives and small group meetings (McCathrin 1989) [12]. Employees are most satisfied with information that helps them make sense of their situation by explaining how their jobs fit into the organizational mission, about organizational policies and plans, and about relationships with key constituencies in the organization’s environment (Grunig 1992, Grunig and Dozier 2002, 487) [8, 9]. Right from the beginning of inception of organizational communication its importance at the managerial level has assumed significance. Redding and Thompkins (1988) [15] identified three periods in the development of organizational

communication and in the first phase i.e during the Era of Preparation (1900 to 1940) primary focus was on public address, business writing, managerial communication, and persuasion. The Era of Identification and Consolidation (1940-1970) witnessed the beginnings of business and industrial communication at group level. Over the last century, the organizational communication has evolved dramatically as the dialogue between business and academics grew at a fast pace. Redding and Thompkins (1988) [15] concluded that during 1960s it had finally achieved moderate degree of success in breaking from its ‘business and industrial’ shackles, and gaining a reasonable measure of recognition as an entity worthy of serious academic study” (p.18). As communication evolved, research continued to develop, and this specialization continued to redefine itself.

In Organizational Communication much of the time would be spent focusing on developing skills in organizational socialization, interviewing, individual and group presentations, work relationships, performance evaluation, conflict resolution, stress management, decision making, and communicating with external publics. In early 1920s itself along with public-speaking training for corporate executives (Putnam & Cheney, 1985) [15], early works like Dale Carnegie’s “How to Win Friends and Influence People” in

1936 focused on oral presentation and written communication skills for managers to succeed in organizations. Putnam and Cheney (1985) <sup>[15]</sup> summarized four primary domains of the specialization of modern organizational communication research. They are 1) Communication channels, 2) Communication climate, 3) Network analysis and, 4) Superior-subordinate communication. Since 1980s work on organizational culture, power and conflict management, and organizational rhetoric have also been added. An analysis of 23 introductory organizational communication textbooks (Aust, Limon and Lippert, 2002) <sup>[1]</sup> showed that commonalities occurred in the coverage of multiple approaches and topics. As interpersonal relationships are a large part of organizational communication, it makes sense that a great deal of research focuses on how interpersonal relationships are conducted within the framework of organizational hierarchies. Thus, the communication in superior-subordinate relationships is a focal point for many organizational researchers (Stohl and Redding, 1987; Putnam and Cheney, 1985) <sup>[15]</sup>. The relevance of human resource management theory to this study is the benefits of its managerial communication style. To achieve its new strategic goals and successfully manage the accompanying changes, private institutions need excellent managerial/supervisory communication. A participative management style accompanied by informal, empowering communication will encourage staff to take responsibility and employ self-direction in carrying out their jobs. According to the theory, a climate of trust and openness and frequent communication between managers and employees at the PHEI will lead to satisfaction with the institution's communication. Successful companies have skilled managers who communicate well with people at all levels. This leads to a range of positive outcomes. Working relationships are optimized, creativity is encouraged and employees feel an increased sense of belonging and commitment to the organization. This has both psychological effects in terms of increased employee satisfaction and tangible bottom-line benefits in the form of increased company profits.

### Management communication

This study is positioned in one of the sub-fields organization communication i.e., management communication the only field of study that integrates communication and management. Management communication follows a functional approach where communication is intended to influence management decisions. The focus is on the internal communication process, that is, the informal interpersonal communication between a manager and his or her employees (Reinsch in Groenewald 1998, 47; Steyn and Puth 2000, 6) <sup>[7, 16]</sup>. Management communication refers specifically to communication between managers and their subordinates, as well as between top management and their employees (Groenewald 1998, 47) <sup>[7]</sup>. Although the institution relies heavily on supervisory/managerial communication to inform and motivate its employees, the latter were experiencing uncertainty and dissatisfaction with the institution's communication among other things. The members who are part of it feel that they were not receiving timely information about what was expected of them, how they were doing and

where the organization was going. They also feel that they were involved in the decision-making processes. In order to achieve the goals of the modern organizations successful management communication with its focus on the informal interpersonal communication process is crucial. If management communication is practiced successfully in the organizations employees will experience communication satisfaction which, in turn, will have an impact on the institution's effectiveness. Management communication is thus considered particularly relevant as a framework for this study. Senior management should take steps to arrange meetings with staff. At the same time, employees do not expect a great deal of face-to-face communication from senior managers as they realize that they might not have enough time despite of which they anticipate regular face-to-face exchanges with their immediate line manager.

Though surveys consistently show that the preferred channel of communication for employees is face-to-face contact, organizations tend to give pre-eminence to e-communications (Clampitt, 2013) <sup>[13]</sup>. Feedback is put to effective use. It is clear that upward communication is important here. The earlier perspective of internal communication as unidirectional messages being sent down from the top of the hierarchy has been transformed into a recognition of the importance of two-way communication by obtaining feedback from employees at all levels, and listening to and acting upon what they have to say (Davey and Liefhooghe, 2003) <sup>[14]</sup>. Managerial communication includes upward and downward communication. Tourish and Hargie (2004, p.189) <sup>[18]</sup> concluded that, "Upward feedback, upward communication and open door policies deliver significant organizational benefits". Organizations therefore need to foster upwards communication but managers face a perennial problem in obtaining open, honest, upwards feedback, since what they are told travels through the filters of employee ingratiation (whereby employees try to gain favour with managers by telling them how great they are, how effective their decisions are, etc.), self-efficacy biases (managers want to believe they are effective and so believe such flattery), and norms of compliance and conformity. Managers naturally want to hear that they are doing well, thereby creating an effect that has been termed the boss's illusion (Odom, 1993) <sup>[13]</sup>, wherein the manager believes the false positive information. This means that the boss may very well be unaware of problems down the line. As a result, organizations need to actively foster upwards communication. This means that formal systems (audits, surveys, suggestion schemes, etc.) should be in place to maximize honest feedback from employees. The net effect of increased information provision was to improve satisfaction with the overall communication climate." (Hargie *et al.* 2002, p. 429) <sup>[10]</sup>.

### Review of literature

Effective communication is important for a number of reasons. Survey by a UK based representative sample of 1,018 non-managerial employees, and 1,091 managers found that in terms of motivating factors while material rewards were important, job satisfaction was the most important and relationships with colleagues and immediate manager were rated in the top five wherein 31% of employees identified

better treatment from their employer, more praise and a greater sense of being valued. However, while 69% of managers stated that they were “always giving feedback” to their staff, just 23% of employees felt that this was the case (one-third of the number of managers who thought this). It is understood that there is a disconnect here between the views of managers and employees. The second study was a survey of 46 CEOs/ Senior Leaders in the UK by the Marketing Society (2013), which found that what they regarded it as the main essential leadership skills at this senior level. All of these leadership skills relate in some way to communication and some are totally communication-focused. In this approach, managers recognize the innate ability of employees. They believe that employees are hard working, intelligent and determined to perform their tasks right the first time. They typically adopt a participative management style that encourages such behavior, that is, loose control, heavy delegation of authority, and a reward system designed to promote initiative, creativity and high job performance. At the heart of a participative style lies communication (Gibson and Hodgetts 1989, 38) [6]. Organizations can be most effective by developing a communication plan that focuses on internal messaging and media, but is also equipped and able to evolve around external messaging. Other managers, think that their communication with employees is sufficient, pointing to one of the biggest problems with communication, namely, the illusion that effective communication has been accomplished (Van der Merwe 1998) [19]. Classical management theory of Fayol (1949) [5] focused on how management worked specifically looking at what managers should do to be most effective. Fayol opined that each individual should know his/her role in an organization. He argued that organizations should be grouped in precise hierarchy that limits the flow of communication to top-down communication, and the number of employees directly under the supervision of one manager.

### Methodology

The study is focused in the cooperative sector in general, and on Sangam dairy in particular. Since its various units are located at various places and the main office is also far removed from the main line it minimizes the opportunity for meaningful face-to-face interactions between field staff and managers at all levels of the organization. As the field staff come across milk producers and milk buyers regularly that run into hundreds it is difficult for staff at various levels to communicate with head office staff that are in transit between fixed posts. Sangam, a milk producing dairy in cooperative sector was established in 1989, in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. With more than 1200 permanent employees and a strong marketing division the dairy has milk producers, milk buyers and procurement as well as marketing staff as stakeholders. In the organization the staff is divided into managers, supervisors, subordinates, peer group. The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the relationship between internal communication practices, communication satisfaction, and job satisfaction. We intend to test the hypothesis that communication satisfaction acts as a mediator between an organization's internal communication systems and satisfaction. Finally, in all of these factors synergistically combine to minimize the extent to which staff can actively

engage in meaningful internal organization communication. The study tried to find out whether organizational communication at Sangam is mainly guided by those principles.

### Hypothesis

**H1:** Communication between among staff especially with the top levels such as managers is crucial for the organizations.

**H2:** Communication at managerial level is significantly different with other levels such as supervisors.

**Objectives:** The researcher tried

1. To find out as to what type of issues are generally discussed with other levels.
2. To find out the satisfaction with the quality of information received from various sources.
3. To find out to what extent the management communication relationship is observed.

As the quantitative analysis is the best paradigm for organizational communication which explains the communication interaction process effectively the researchers used it. It delves deeper into issues that the quantitative method cannot explain. Survey method was used in collecting relevant data on the channels of communication and their effectiveness in disseminating information to the public's at the diary. The study sample size is of 250 employees who were selected in a multi stage sampling method. CSQ considered as the best measure of communication satisfaction in the organizational arena” (Clampitt and Downs, 1993) [13] and Communication audits as well as other instruments were used and a questionnaire was developed which was used to gather data. Questionnaires made it easy to collect large quantities of data from considerable number of people who are working in the organization. The researcher administered questionnaires to a total of 250 across all the four groups of stakeholders. The rate of return of the survey questionnaires was 94%. Respondents were top management, employees at supervisory level and included the staff from internal publics of the organization, mainly those in the production as well as marketing community.

### Findings

The data collected from the sample was tabulated and analyzed to study the relationship between variables. When the respondents were asked as with how many employees do you communicate every day at work 52.2% respondents would interact with less than 20 employees, followed by 20-50 employees(41%), 50-100 employees (4.4%) and above 100 employees (2.4%). (Table.1)

**Table 1:** Percentage distribution of the respondents, according to the no. of employees in the departments

S. No	No. of Employees	Frequency	Percentage
1	Below 20 employees	108	52.2
2	20 to 50 employees	85	41.0
3	50 to 100 employees	9	4.4
4	100 above	5	2.4
	Total	207	100

The respondents were questioned about the frequency of interaction with employees at various levels on various issues such as personal, job related, general and others. With regard to frequency of the interaction with the embers in Top Management on Personal Issues, 52.2% of the respondents interacted rarely, followed by very rarely (34.3%), normally (11.6%), very regularly (1%) and regularly(1%). In case job related issues, 37.7% interacted regularly followed by normally (24.2%), very regularly (19.3%), rarely (10.6%) and very rarely (8.2%). In case of General Issues 28.5% of the respondents interacted rarely, followed by normally (27.5%), regularly (27.1%), very rarely (11.1%) and very regularly (5.8%). In case of other issues, 40.6% of the respondents interacted with top Management rarely, followed by normally

(25.6%), very rarely (23.2%) and regularly (10.6%).

With regard to frequency of the Interaction with the superiors on personal Issues, 51.2% of the respondents interacted rarely, followed by very rarely (32.9%), normally (12.6%), regularly (1.9%) and very regularly (1.4%). In case of job related issues, 59.4% of the respondents interacted regularly, followed by very regularly (22.2%), normally (13.5%), rarely (3.4%) and very rarely (1.4%). In case of general issues, 44.4% of the respondents interacted regularly, followed by normally (28.5%), rarely (12.6%), very regularly (7.2%) and very rarely (7.2%). In case of other issues, 33.3% of the respondents interacted normally, followed by rarely (25.1%), regularly (23.7%) and very rarely (17.9%) (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Percentage distribution of the respondent’s according to issues of interaction

Group	Issues	Very Regularly		Regularly		Normal		Rarely		Very rarely		mean	Std. Dev
		fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%		
Top Management	Personal	2	1.0	2	1.0	24	11.6	108	52.2	71	34.3	4.18	.745
	Job related	40	19.3	78	37.7	50	24.2	22	10.6	17	8.2	2.51	1.161
	General	12	5.8	56	27.1	57	27.5	59	28.5	23	11.1	3.12	1.106
	Others	-	-	22	10.6	53	25.6	84	40.6	48	23.2	3.76	.928
Superiors	Personal	3	1.4	4	1.9	26	12.6	106	51.2	68	32.9	4.12	.806
	Job related	46	22.2	123	59.4	28	13.5	7	3.4	3	1.4	2.02	.791
	General	15	7.2	92	44.4	59	28.5	26	12.6	15	7.2	2.68	1.026
	Others	-	-	49	23.7	69	33.3	52	25.1	37	17.9	3.37	1.034

Chi square value = 756.49, df = 28, P =0.000<0.01

Respondents expressed satisfaction with the information received from various resources such as top management, superiors, peer group and others. With regard to quality of information received from top management, in case of timeliness, 68.1% of the respondents were satisfied, followed by very much satisfied (23.7%), average (6.8%), not at all satisfied (1%) and not satisfied (0.5%). In case of accuracy of information received from top management, 71% of the respondents were satisfied, followed by very much satisfied (21.3%), average (6.8%), not satisfied (0.5%) and not at all satisfied (0.5%). In case of usefulness of information received from top management, 66.7% of the respondents were satisfied, followed by very much satisfied (25.6%), average (6.8%), not satisfied (0.5%) and not at all satisfied (0.5%). In case of aptness of information received from top management, 68.1% of the respondents were satisfied, followed by very much satisfied (19.8%), average (11.6%) and not at all

satisfied (0.5%).

With regard to respondent’s satisfaction with the quality of information received from superiors, In case of timely, 65.2% of the respondents were satisfied, followed by very much satisfied (26.6%), average (7.2%), not satisfied (0.5%) and not at all satisfied (0.5%). In case of accuracy of information received from superiors, 66.2% of the respondents were satisfied followed by very much satisfied (26.1%), average (6.8%), not satisfied (0.5%) and not at all satisfied (0.5%). In case of usefulness of information received from superiors, 64.3% of the respondents were satisfied followed by very much satisfied (27.5%), average (7.2%), not satisfied (0.5%) and not at all satisfied (0.5%). In case of aptness of information received from superiors, 68.6% of the respondents were satisfied, followed by very much satisfied (22.7%), average (7.7%), not satisfied (0.5%) and not at all satisfied (0.5%) (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Percentage distribution of the respondent’s satisfaction with the quality of information received

Group	Variable	Very much satisfied		Satisfied		Average		Not satisfied		Not at all satisfied		mean	SD
		fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%		
Top Management	Timely	49	23.7	141	68.1	14	6.8	1	0.5	2	1.0	1.87	0.629
	Accurate	44	21.3	147	71.0	14	6.8	1	0.5	1	0.5	1.88	0.574
	Useful	53	25.6	138	66.7	14	6.8	1	0.5	1	0.5	1.84	.601
	Apt	41	19.8	141	68.1	24	11.6	-	-	1	0.5	1.93	.596
Superiors	Timely	55	26.6	135	65.2	15	7.2	1	0.5	1	0.5	1.85	.612
	Accurate	54	26.1	137	66.2	14	6.8	1	0.5	1	0.5	1.83	.604
	Useful	57	27.5	133	64.3	15	7.2	1	0.5	1	0.5	1.82	.617
	Apt	47	22.7	142	68.6	16	7.7	1	0.5	1	0.5	1.87	0.594

Chi Square value = 12.45981 df = 28 P value = 0.995 > 0.05

With regard to Management Communication/Relationship, 49.8% of the respondents trust the top management, followed by to some extent(41.5%), average (6.8%), little (1.4%), and very little (0.5%). In other case, 50.7% of the respondents said that, to some extent their boss trust them, followed by to a great extent (41.1%) and average (8.2%). In other case, 48.3% of the respondents said that, to some extent management is sincere to give information, followed by to a great extent (38.2%), and average (13.5%). In other case, 52.2% of the respondents said that, to some extent their boss listens what they say, followed by to a great extent(32.4%), average (11.6%), very little (2.4%) and little (1.4%). In other case, 34.3% of the respondents said that, at an average they feel free

to disagree with their boss, followed by to some extent (23.2%), little (22.2%), to a great extent (14%) and very little (6.3%). In other case, 31.9% of the respondents said that, to some extent, they can tell their boss that things are going wrong, followed by little(24.2%), to a great extent(21.7%), average (14.5%) and very much little (7.7%). In other case, 37.2% of the respondents said that, to some extent their boss praises them for a good job, followed by average (30.4%), to a great extent (20.3%), little (9.7%) and very much little (2.4%). In other case, 38.6% of the respondents said that to some extent their boss maintains friendly relations with them followed by to a great extent (28.5%), average (24.2%), little (5.3%) and very little (3.4%) (Table 4).

**Table 4:** Percentage distribution of the respondents according to the extent the Management Communication/Relationship is observed

Sl. No.	Variable	To a great extent		To some extent		Average		Little		Very Little		Mean	Std deviation
		Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%		
1	The extent you trust the top Management	103	49.8	86	41.5	14	6.8	3	1.4	1	0.5	1.61	0.721
2	The extent your boss trusts you	85	41.1	105	50.7	17	8.2	-	-	-	-	1.67	0.622
3	The extent to which management is sincere to your information	79	38.2	100	48.3	28	13.5	-	-	-	-	1.75	0.677
4	The extent your boss listens to what you have to say	67	32.4	108	52.2	24	11.6	3	1.4	5	2.4	1.89	0.841
5	The extent you feel free to disagree with your boss	29	14.0	48	23.2	71	34.3	46	22.2	13	6.3	2.84	1.116
6	The extent you can tell your boss that things are going wrong	45	21.7	66	31.9	30	14.5	50	24.2	16	7.7	2.64	1.272
7	The extent your boss praises you for a good job	42	20.3	77	37.2	63	30.4	20	9.7	5	2.4	2.37	0.990
8	The extent your boss maintains friendly relations	59	28.5	80	38.6	50	24.2	11	5.3	7	3.4	2.16	1.011

Chi Square value= 409.1955096 df = 28 P=0.000<0.01

With regard to Communication/Relationship with Supervisor, 54.6% of the respondents said that, to some extent supervisor listens and pays attention to them followed by to a great extent (34.8%), average (10.6%). In other case, 51.2% said that, to some extent supervisor offers guidance in discharging duties, followed by to a great extent (37.7%), average (9.7%) and little(1.4%). In other case, 49.8% of the respondents said that, to some extent supervisor trust them, followed by to a great

extent (36.2%), average (14%). In other case, 49.3% of respondents said that, to some extent their supervisor is open to ideas, followed by to a great extent (37.7%), average (10.6%), little (1.9%) and very little (0.5%). In other case, 37.7% of the respondents said that, to some extent, the amount of supervision is right, followed by to a great extent (34.3%), average (27.5%) and little (0.5%) (Table 5).

**Table 5:** Percentage distribution of the respondents according to Communication/Relationship with Supervisor

S. No.	Variable	To a great extent		To some extent		Average		Little		Very Little	
		fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
1	Supervisor’s listening and paying attention	72	34.8	113	54.6	22	10.6	-	-	-	-
2	Supervisor offering guidance in discharging duties	78	37.7	106	51.2	20	9.7	3	1.4	-	-
3	Supervisor’s trust	75	36.2	103	49.8	29	14.0	-	-	-	-
4	Supervisor’s opening to ideas	78	37.7	102	49.3	22	10.6	4	1.9	1	0.5
5	Amount of Supervision	71	34.3	78	37.7	57	27.5	1	0.5	-	-

Chi Square value= 51.73958959 df = 16 P Value= 0.000012<0.001

With regard to level of communication and satisfaction, 52.7% of the respondents thought that, to some extent trust for management determines the communication, followed by to a great extent (40.6%), average(6.3%) and very little (0.5%). In other case, 52.2% of the respondents said that, to some extent, superiors have influence in communication, followed by to a great extent (34.3%) and average (13.5%). In other case,

52.2% of the respondents said that, to some extent, superior has understanding of the problems faced by the subordinates, followed by to a great extent (29%), average (16.9%), little (1.4%), very little (0.5%). In other case, 42.5% of the respondents said that, to some extent importance of communication determines the upward mobility followed by to a great extent (41.1%) and average (16.4%) (Table 6).

**Table 6:** Percentage distribution of the respondents according to level of communication and Satisfaction

Sl. N.	Variable	To a great extent		To some extent		Average		Little		Very Little		Mean
		fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	
1	Trust for management determining the communication	84	40.6	109	52.7	13	6.3	-	-	1	0.5	1.61
2	Extent of influence of superiors in communication.	71	34.3	108	52.2	28	13.5	-	-	-	-	1.67
3	Superior's understanding of the problems faced by Subordinates	60	29.0	108	52.2	35	16.9	3	1.4	1	0.5	1.75
4	Importance of communication in determining the upward mobility	85	41.1	88	42.5	34	16.4	-	-	-	-	

Chi Square value = 30.87271553 df value= 12 P value=0.00205<0.01

### Conclusions

From the study the researcher made the following suggestions to improve the communication affective as it was found to be significant in organization.

1. The employees especially at the level of top management need to improve interaction i.e. internal communication with other employees about personal, job related and other issues also as they are observed to lesser which is very much essential to improve work culture in organisations.
2. Same activity shall also be taken up at supervisor level as the respondents opined that other than job related issues they seem to be keeping away form personal, general and other issues.
3. Majority of the employees also expressed timeliness, accuracy, usefulness and aptness of the information and it should be improved to maximum level so that no gaps would hamper the communication process.
4. As no consolidation is observed with regard to management issues the organisation especially at the top level and supervisory level should try to reach the staff with innovative, comprehensive and effective communication processes.
5. Comparatively supervisory level communication considered to be more satisfying and the seriousness should be continued to further a healthy and working environment.

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