

THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN BUSINESS

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Abstract: Information comes to us from millions of sources all over the world and through every possible channel of communication. The world of business tends to rely on language nowadays. In a world of information businesses can be successful or not if they are able to share knowledge, overcome boundaries and coordinate global resources, all of which depending on better communication. Professionals in the economic field have to produce a variety of messages every day: letters, emails, reports, instructions, proposals, procedures, memoranda etc., all of which may be informative, persuasive or both. It is obvious then that writing and speaking skills are extremely important in business and business people have to be effective communicators, mastering communication skills in all forms.

Cuvinte cheie: business, communication, language, modern, challenge

Clasificare JEL : M40, M41

1. INTRODUCTION

It is commonly thought that business is about action and language is irrelevant but the latter plays an important role, directly or indirectly in so many spheres of activity: advertising, public relations, market research, internal and external communications, relationships with customers, developing new organizational and reporting structures, transforming management styles. Words are important in issuing statements or strategic plans because they are interpreted differently by different groups. There is evidence that the meaning of words is, generally speaking, unreliable and unpredictable and this applies to business communication, as well.

The classical art of rhetoric can be applied to the day-to-day needs of modern business people since clearly reasoned persuasion is vital for professionals working in the economic field who must convince others of their point of view. In Barry Eckhouse's view it is "an openly competitive activity, in which working professionals debate issues, defend positions and evaluate the arguments of others. Because of this", he further explains, "we should not be surprised to find that written and oral communication in business, particularly when practiced at the middle and upper levels, is characterized less by a need to inform and more by an obligation to argue" and this argument is not seen as an impediment to cooperative interaction but as a vehicle for promoting it.[1]

2. CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

In traditional business communication, figures are preferred, a simple balance sheet requiring no translation but even the use of figures has evolved to a high level of sophistication. In Fiona Czerniawska's view in her book entitled *Corporate Speak: The Use of Language in Business*, "more and more companies are finding that some of their most important assets-people, knowledge, commitment are non-quantifiable. And they are realizing that, if they cannot express the assets in terms of figures, then they cannot use financial metrics to manage them. It is therefore not surprising that they are turning to something other

than figures to fill the gap-words: mission statements, commitments to quality, customer charters, corporate advertising-the list is growing exponentially.[2]

In Western business, there is a constant appeal for straight, plain language, a language devoid of technical jargon and obscure meanings. In Barry Eckhouse's view, in his book entitled *Competitive Communication: A Rhetoric for Modern Business*, "communication in modern business is essentially a competitive activity, a rhetorical venture in which writers and speakers attempt to gain advantage over other forces that contend for their audience's attention"[1]

Giving and receiving criticism is a communication challenge because, as Harry E. Chambers asserts, "the ability to deliver critical messages appropriately demands exceptional skill; and once again, it is a skill which people rarely get any training. Even more difficult is accepting negative comments, constructive criticisms or critical judgements about one's work"[3]

Another challenge is establishing effective communication with one's boss since it has a tremendous importance for his/her current activity, opportunities in the future and his/her whole professional life.

3. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

In spite of the rapid changes in communication technology writing is still a requirement for all kinds of business people who have to write countless letters, reports, memos and give various presentations, both formal and informal. Plain English means clear communication, not a formal style created to impress. It has to consider three aspects: clear style-writing, readable sentences, organization-starting with one's main point, for instance, and layout-the appearance of one's page and the words on it. In Harry E. Chamber's view, expressed in his book *Effective Communication Skills for Scientific and Technical Professionals*, "Communication is an art, not a science. It encompasses inconsistencies, interpretations and emotional variables and is greatly influenced by every individual's unique frame of reference and life experience. All communication, whether delivered or received, is processed through our internal belief system, a mechanism that is commonly called our "filter"[3]

With the ever-increasing amount of information nowadays, communication plays an ever-increasing role. Effective communication is based upon the correct comprehension of your message by the receiver and the accuracy of the information transferred to various groups of people or individuals is what really matters here. As Harry Chamber further argues, there are "three major factors that influence the accurate transfer of information:

1. The receiver's ability to process the message;
2. The receiver's willingness to process the information
3. The receiver's accurate comprehension of the message"

Persuasive writing is the most demanding because in there is an obvious difference between the kind of writing that college graduates had to do in school and the kind of writing they are expected to do in their profession.

As college students they used to write for appraisal, for a reader that was supposed to evaluate their ideas and not to multiple audience including both an external client with technical expertise and an internal supervisor with no technical background at all. They didn't write in the style that is used to produce memoranda and they weren't used to writing collaboratively which is now a characteristic of business writing.

Conciseness and careful word choice are two requirements of business writing, contributing to creating the most of meaning for the least investment in time and effort.

These concise and well-chosen words must be put in the best possible order, giving the impression of someone in control of his material and helping the reader to grasp meaning without too much effort.

Punctuation should be also carefully considered since it promotes the clarity of the writer's ideas and affecting the meaning of the writing.

If we want to create a sense of credibility and professionalism, grammar should not be ignored because otherwise it will cause misreading and misunderstandings.

As Jane Cleland states, "Writing well in business involves more than merely following the rules of grammar. It requires a keen understanding of two things:

1. Your objective: what do you want your readers to do as a result of reading your material
2. Your target audience-what is going to motivate your readers to do whatever it is you want them to do?[4].

4. CONCLUSIONS

It is obvious that writing and speaking skills are extremely important in business and business people have to be effective communicators, mastering communication skills in all forms (non-verbal included).

AS Neil Thomas and John Eric Adair state in The Concise Adair on Communication and Presentation Skills, the term "communication is rooted in Latin where it meant to impart, to participate and to share and is viewed as "the process by which meanings are exchanged between people through the use of a common set of symbols" (i.e. usually language)[5]

Business people must have the ability to communicate clearly and concisely but they also have to keep in mind that business writing is a different kind of writing from what they learnt in school. Besides, English is evolving quickly and they have to be aware of the contemporary standards of business communication.

5. Bibliography:

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