

Effective Communication of Librarians in the Dot Com Era

Atin Nandi*

Department of Central Library, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India

Abstract: Librarians are spending lots of money for collection development, adoption of latest technologies, infrastructure development etc. The paper throws light on different types of communications, soft skills and hard skills, barriers of communication and how to overcome barriers. Interpersonal skills are very useful concept. Author also discusses different ways by which librarians can improve their Interpersonal skills to provide better service. Risk based thinking not only bring forth users' satisfaction at its optimum level but also usher qualitative library service in this dot com era.

Keywords: Euphemism, Hard skills, Interpersonal communication, Intrapersonal communication, Soft skills.

1. Introduction

The word communication has been derived from Latin word communis, which means common or sharing. The evolution of communication began its journey in the olden days. Cave paintings were the primitive form of communication. Many milestones had to be crossed to reach to shore of modernity. Alexander Graham Bell is regarded as the father of modern communication. Several communication models like - Shannon and Weaver model, Wesley and MacLean model, Berlo SMCR model, Aristotle's and Lasswell's model were presented one after another. Good communication brings forth happiness, satisfaction, motivation. Bad communication on the contrary makes others frustrate, sad, demotivated. Communication is very important phenomena for survival. Books are container of captive thoughts and they cannot perambulate independently into the minds of enthusiastic learners. It is Librarians who can make right contact with right users at right time. Librarians should have watchful eyes so that library resources and services are utilized at its optimum level. Effective communication plays a vital role in this regard.

2. Communication

Communication is a process of transfer or exchange of data/information/signals/knowledge within two or more people verbally or non-verbally. Thinking process of a person also falls within the purview of communication. Elements of communication are-context, sender, encoder, message, channel, decoder, receiver, feedback and noise. In fact, context is the prime element of any communication process. Context is

the setting in which communication takes place. While determining the context-cultural, historical, psychological, social and physical factors are taken to be in consideration. Nonverbal communication can be carried out through-gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, posture etc. Verbal Communication includes - Intrapersonal Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Small Group Communication, Public Communication. Effective communication is conveying of message or information without any distortion. However, the style of communication plays a vital role. There are four types of communication styles Passive, Aggressive, Passive-aggressive, and Assertive.

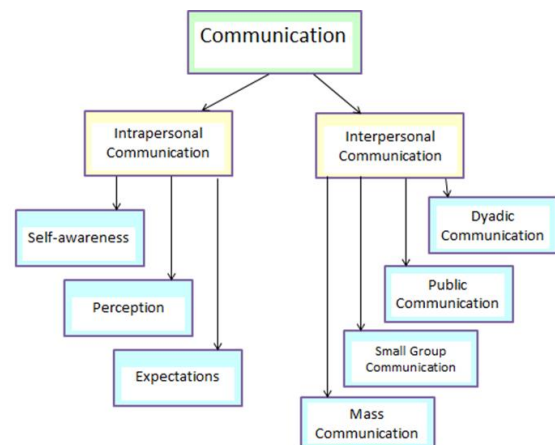


Fig. 1. Types of communication process

A. Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal Communication is confined within one's brain. This type of communication is either thinking form, written form or in vocal form. There are three different types of Intrapersonal communication - Self-awareness, Perception and Expectations

- *Self-awareness:* Self-awareness deals with emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence. It is extremely difficult to live happy life for a person who is devoid of Self-awareness.
- *Perception:* Perception is a cognitive process which deals with three stages - selection, organization and interpretation. Perception helps to understand how one

*Corresponding author: atin@library.iitkgp.ac.in

look at others and communicate with them. Perception process differs from man to man as individual's thinking process is different.

- *Expectations*: It is planning on something and subsequent prediction that may happen in future.

B. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication takes place between two or more persons either with verbal or with non-verbal methods. Verbal communication is oral (spoken) communication. Non-Verbal communication can be brought about through writing, body language, facial expressions, gesture etc. There are following types of Intrapersonal Communication.

- *Dyadic Communication*: Here communication process takes place between two persons. It may be through - face-to-face interaction, exchanging e-mail, WhatsApp chatting.
- *Small Group Communication*: Here communication process is carried out between small group of people
- *Public Communication*: Here source of information is generated by a single person, which is been received by a huge crowd or public. Example – a person is delivering lecture within public.
- *Mass Communication*: The process of distributing information to a large remote audience through mass media (like radio, television, newspaper, internet etc.) is called mass communication.

3. Skill

It is the capability of a person to perform a job or a function very efficiently. Skills can be developed by vigorous training or through experience. There are two types of skills – Hard Skill and Soft skill. In order to achieve success in life, both type of skill is required.

A. Soft skills

Soft skills are inherent human qualities which can be applied amicably in work place. Some soft skills qualities are – Assertiveness, Attitude, Communication, Customer service, Conflict resolution, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Decision Making, Flexibility, Information Literacy, Innovation, Interaction, Leadership, Listening, Motivation, Negotiation, Networking, Positivity, Problem-solving, Self-awareness, Time Management, Teamwork, Work Ethic.

B. Hard skills

Hard skills are technical abilities that can be achieved through formal education and training. Example includes – Data Analysis, Data Visualization, Profit Forecasting, Scheduling etc.

C. Difference between Hard skills and Soft skills

Hard skills and Soft skills are entirely different concept. However, combination of those skills will ensure perfect balance between his/her knowledge and interpersonal attributes.

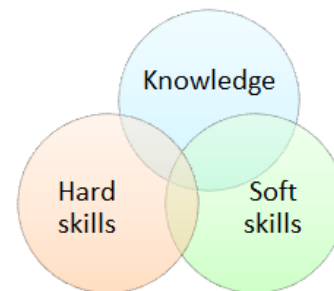


Fig. 2. Knowledge, Hard skill and Soft Skill

Table 1
Communication styles

Style of Communication	Type	Body language , Mentality	Example
Passive	I lose you win	Lack of eye contact, polite, lifeless, indifferent, avoiding problems	You need not to be worried at all, it is my fault.
Aggressive	I win you lose	Rolling eyes, very rude and angry, self-centered	Hay listen to me, it is your headache, not mine.
Passive-aggressive	I lose you lose	Direct eye contact, Calm	Take it easy, we shall have to accept the loss.
Assertive	I win you win	Direct eye contact, calm but firm, mutual respect, reduces anxiety, good feelings.	You can keep 50% of the price money

Table 2
Interpersonal Communication versus Intrapersonal Communication

Characteristics	Interpersonal Communication	Intrapersonal Communication
Involvement	Two or more person or a group of persons	Only one person
Media used	Mobile or land phone, Computer, Loud speaker, Television,	Brain, Note book, Audio / video recording
Deals with	Exchange of thoughts / ideas / feelings	Interpretation of data / knowledge for decision making
Visibility	Visible	Invisible
Media	Verbal or Nonverbal Media is required	Media is not required

Table 3
Hard skills versus Soft Skills

Characteristics	Hard skills	Soft skill
How to achieve	Can be obtained through formal education and training.	Can be achieved through professional and personal experiences
Measuring capacity	Yes, it can be measured.	Cannot be measured
Physical attribute	Tangible	Intangible

4. Barriers of effective communication

There are several factors because of which Interpersonal communication cannot be effectively conducted. Those barriers are - Physical barriers, Personal Barriers, Gender Barrier, Cultural barrier, Language barrier, Status barrier, Emotional barrier, inadequate attention, Traditional concept, Lack of mutual trust, Lack of attention, difference in perception.

5. How to Overcome?

Several ways are there to overcome communication barriers. Some of those are as follows,

- Jargons should not be used unnecessary
- Habit of active listening should be developed
- Reduction of noise level
- Body language should be very good
- Constructive Feedback
- Choosing of right media
- Emphasis on face-to-face communication
- Organizing training program relating to effective communication
- Avoidance of judgment

6. Risk Based Thinking

A well-known fact is, “Good managers manage risks, poor managers manage problems”. Risk based thinking is a unique concept of ISO 9001:2015. Here risk is positive side of risk, which would ensure consistency of quality and enhance customer confidence and satisfaction. It includes series of activities – identification of risks and opportunities, proper planning is to address them, careful implementation and checking the effectiveness of action (adopting techniques like - Audits and internal reviews, Analyzing Key Performance Indicators, Project evaluations). Risk based thinking helps to develop Risk Management.

7. Communications of Librarians

Fame of a library depends not only upon resources or sophisticated service it renders, but also upon the effective communication of Librarian; otherwise recognition level will not reach up to the mark. Stakeholders of a library are – vendors, visitors, audit persons, user and staff members. Many seats are found to be reserved for specially abled uses in various Postgraduate and Undergraduate levels. Librarians should create a barrier-free atmosphere so that those persons can get opportunity to prove their ability and talents like those of abled-bodied persons. Every user should be treated equally irrespective of disability. Library staff members should use polite or descend words instead of using bad or swear words. This is known as euphemism. Hence one should not utter words like – disabled, handicapped, vikalanga, physically challenged etc. It is advisable to use words like – differently abled, specially abled, divyaang etc. Vendors are coming to library for their business. They are supplying hard copy items as well as electronic resources. Librarians should not have any regional feelings. Vendors should be convinced not to supply old books,

remainder titles. They should be tuned to be very honest. Library visitors should get excellent hospitality. Librarians should have very positive attitude for library staff members. Which theory – X or Y - to be applied? It is context dependent. However, it is better to go for Y-Theory. Librarians should fruitfully utilize management techniques to win the hearts of staff member even when they possess negative mentality. Thus a short tempered librarian cannot be a good manager.

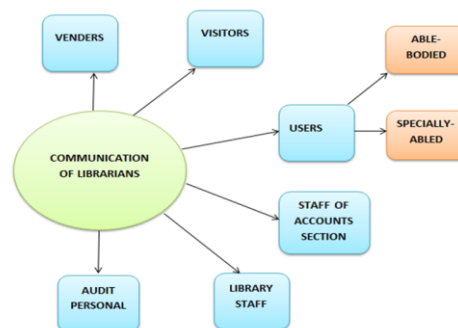


Fig. 3. Communication with Library Stakeholders

8. How will Librarians Improve Interpersonal Skills?

A. It comprises of series of activities

- *Teaching skill:* Librarian should continuously update his / her knowledge and strive to sharpen teaching skills. Library Orientation Program should be organized at the beginning of Academic section in order to expose the hidden treasures of library. It must be delivered in a highly interesting manner with power point presentation along with live demonstration. A virtual library tour may also be floated into library website.
- *Team spirit:* Librarians should have ability to interact professionally with all the existing members of the team. All the members should be convinced with good communication skills, so that each of them can do real contribution in order to achieve target or goal.
- *Empathic mind:* Librarian should have empathetic mind and should listen others very carefully without making any interruption. Persons feeling upset should neither be ignored nor should ridicule in mocking tone.
- *Delicate dealing with problematic persons:* Some persons are very cunning and critical. They sometimes pollute the entire atmosphere of the workplace. Librarians should not loose temper but should intelligently deal to handle such persons.
- *Eye contact:* Anger, fear, love, surprise, happiness, sincerity, honesty – all such thoughts and feelings are reflected through eyes. Eye contacts are absolutely necessary for effective Interpersonal communication.
- *Reading habits:* Librarians should cultivate extensive reading habit to sharpen his / her knowledge on different aspects. This will ensure better dealings with different category of people on different topics.
- *Conflict resolution:* Librarians should able to resolve

conflicts and try to prevail positive work environment.

- *Credit to qualities:* Librarians should build a good relationship by giving credit to good qualities of co-workers.
- *Be assertive:* Assertive behavior will make everyone happy and it will bring forth less stress, more confidence and more trust.
- *Motivating people:* Motivating persons will bring forth positive energies and goal will be achieved ultimately with joint efforts.
- *Efficient negotiating:* Librarians should have very good negotiating skills towards procurement of journals, online databases, e-books etc. This bargaining technique is very much profitable for library.
- *Leadership:* Effective communication skill is very essential which will establish reliability and ultimately set up strong bond within employees. Employees will be motivated to work under such strong leadership.
- *Risk management:* Librarians should engross in risk-based thinking in order to develop Risk Management helpful to render qualitative library services.

9. Ishikawa Diagram

Prof. Kaoru Ishikawa contributed a lot in the field of Quality Management. He designed a diagram known as Ishikawa Diagram. It is popularly known as Cause-And-Effect Diagram of Fishbone Diagram. This concept is employed in this paper to determine the root causes for low utilization of library resources.

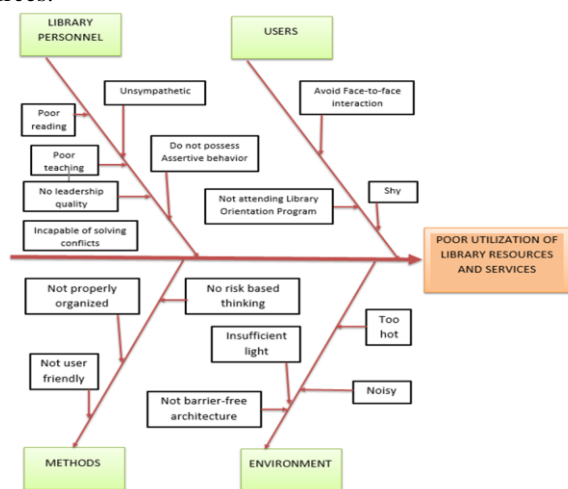


Fig. 4. Ishikawa diagram relating to low utilization of library resources & services

10. Conclusion

Librarians along with the library staff should communicate effectively and efficiently with the users. Short tempered users should be tackled carefully. Activities of different sections of library (e.g., Acquisition, Technical Processing, Circulation, Periodical, and Non-Book Section) should have to be floated into library website to avoid any type of miscommunication. Librarians should gear up to improve his/her interpersonal skills which are highly important to achieve success in workplace. The concept of Risk based thinking should be implemented to ensure improvement of service quality which inevitably enhances users' satisfaction to a great extent.

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