

Gender Communication At Workplace

D V R KAMESWARI
(Department of English)
S V I T, Patney Center, Secunderabad.

ABSTRACT

This paper mainly focuses on Gender Communication issues, communication differences in interpersonal relationships especially at workplace. It also given insight into Barriers of Gender Communication, how the gender communication differences impact relationships, success in life, organizing business at large. It gives emphasis on how Gender communication differences identified at workplace, way to bridge gaps, how to combat the same, tips & strategies to follow to reduce or avoid the differences at workplace. Finally it probes us as to why we cannot take a step forward, apart from organizing to prepare ourselves to live in an equally paced world because “ everyone as Unique”.

Key words: Gender, Flat culture, team sport, invisible rules, stereotypes.

INTRODUCTION: The discipline of communication has grown in popularity from the time, profession of journalism and speech decided, in the mid 1980s that the term communication plays major role and reached to an excellent heights and rooted to all fields of theory and research.

Over time, the groups grew closer together and began to recognize the significance in the theoretical and research interest. Some supported it as practical discipline, but modern researchers rapidly changing the theories, approaches which are helpful to all the fields to avoid gender discrimination, to provide equal opportunities to all as per the constitutional provisions.

It is an age old discussion and problem that male and female communication is different. We heard Dr.Gray’s words that male are from mars and women are from Venus., or generally we listen “He just won’t listen” or “ She complains too much”.

But it is not all in our minds. There is a scientific evidence that we just don’t talk the same language. Communication is not as simple as saying what we mean. How we say what we mean is crucial and differs from one person to the next.

MEANING: Communication is sharing of information between two or more individuals, the act of conveying information. Communication has so many components.

i) Gender and discourse: Devito

Gender issues: Communication differences in Interpersonal relationships.

At times, difference in women and men’s communication styles and seem to be constant and overwhelming. For e.g., Men and Women can be short tempered, aggressive, timid, task oriented, sentimental or may be foolish but now a days, a lot of attention has been devoted to the idea that women and men communicate very differently as if they are coming from different planets, which is only because of interpretation.

According to research studies, women are greater extent than men, are sensitive to interpersonal meanings.

INVISIBLE RULES:

Women and men communicate most effectively when they understand the invisible rules (2)* unique to each gender. Research presented by Dr Patterns in her video, “The invisible rules: Men, Women and teams” indicates each gender is a culture in itself raised with invisible rules of conduct. Sometimes, we become intolerant and defensive for small reasons, if we are working with someone of the opposite gender. We don’t realize men and women come from different cultures, raised in different situations.

TEAM SPORT:

When the boys are growing up, they play different games, roles all of which are hierarchical team sports they learn how to compete, be competitive, to be aggressive, how to take risks, to win, strategize and mask emotions. They learn how to garner power, manage conflicts without becoming emotional.

ii.Leadership news, spring 1998: www.au.dif.mil

FLAT CULTURE: Girls grew up, not with team sports with people they like and like to learn culture lessons from doll games in which there are no winners or losers.

TEAM SPORT Vs FLAT CULTURE AT WORK PLACE :

A very big challenge tht women face today is that most organizations are run by rules of team sports in which men are expertised.This fact does not allow women from learning hierarchical, goal focused rules or the strength of the flat.

Process oriented focus is needed and both styles need to be successful. It is utmost important to promote communication between men and women at workplace.

GENDER BARRIERS IN COMMUNICATION AT WORKPLACE:

Researchers identified different gender traits tend to be more common and these tendencies create open communication among with employees.

Feelings/Facts: Human reports that women focus more on feelings where as men focus on logic and facets (3)* like business, sports. Women are interested to ask questions, to gain insight and understanding whereas men are less interested to ask questions, more interested to give and gain information.

Trust/Achievements: Women focus on learning; meet new people and attempts to gain trust. But men focus on establishing their credibility by talking about the achievements.

Misunderstanding:

Gender communication specialist, Barbara Annis says, men report that women interpret in different way and they focus more on relationship building when they meet new people, men may doubt their professionalism. Women may perceive them as too aggressive.

iii. Forbes.com

Gender Communication differences & Strategies.

It is amazing that women and men use different processes for decision making, processing information and leadership. Men are always, more of task oriented but women are relationship oriented and make new people comfortable.

Processing information & Decision Making:

In this area women look at options out loud while men are tend to process, till they come up with a solution. They think women's way is a sign of weakness.

Individual Styles: Men interpret the face to face communication as too personal. Women nod their head, to show they are listening. But men think head nod means agreement. Surprisingly women didn't agree at all. Women maintain eye contact. But men take it as a challenge to their position & power.

Time and Space: Men spend more time and space at meetings. But women try to make sure, there is more equality in the room. But many Contrary studies shown, men talk more than women.

Finally, all the wrong interpretations may lead to misunderstanding and can result in team breakdown, no cooperation, and lack of coordination, which impacts the organizational success

iv. Gender Communication differences & strategies article: Simma Lieberman.

Strategies to reduce gender communication gap at workplace:

Being a TV news reporter and 36 years as a professor of communication – Friedman coined fabulous rules which are like mantras to be implied in any business or organization.

- 1) Hit the head line
- 2) Attitude while taking message is important.
- 3) Better to ask open ended questions to avoid interpretations.
- 4) NO BULL – Any bad news to be delivered in person.
- 5) Ask/Say...”could/can you please get the information to me?
I would like it to get before 4 pm today”.

- 6) Don't be naysayer Even if we know either the boss or colleague wrong, never show negative impression. Instead ask open ended question to show respect.
- 7) Both should be aware of each different styles of communication (Verbal & Non verbal).
- 8) Be aware of biases.
- 9) Recognize and appreciate—different styles of communication.
- 10) Be open in discussion. Accept that each one has their own characteristic features in their communication.
- 11) Welcome the contributions of women in decision making.
- 12) Make leadership effective.
- 13) Try to learn styles of communication and be able to use both for organizational vision & mission.

V. www.monster.com article.

Vi. Gender and communication at work—Barret.

CONCLUSION: It is somehow impossible to come to a definitive conclusion, gender and communication studies generally promotes the idea that these differences are socially learned and are thus fluid and dynamic. Men and women learn to communicate in both masculine and feminine styles and make strategic choices about which style is more effective for a given context. Men and women need to deal with complexity and diversity of situations in today's world, both personally and professionally, in order to find similarities and use those differences to achieve greater goals together, because “Everyone is Unique in the world”.

References:

1. Gender and discourse—13/E Devito
2. Leadership news, spring 1998
3. www.av.aff.mil
4. www.forbes.com
5. www.monster.com—article
6. Gender and communication at work—Barret.