

Advantages and Challenges of Promoting Dialogue Within Organizations

Janelle C. Adams

Alliance University

LDG690: Organizational Communication and Leadership

Dr. Naran Jallim

2/22/23

Dialogue Within Organizations

Introduction

Dialogue is considered to be balanced communication where each person is given the opportunity to speak and be heard (Eisenberg et al., 2016, p. 144). The four features of dialogue include: mindful communication, equitable transaction, empathic conversation, and real meeting. Having mindful communication requires that you be conscious of your communication and this leads to conversations with more integrity. In organizations, being mindful means that you analyze communication situations and create tactics for accomplishing goals and you will think actively about different communications options. An equitable transaction is where each individual has the chance to express their opinions. Despite this, that does not mean each participant has an equal say in decision-making and there may or may not be quality communication. Having empathic conversation is where one has the ability to understand the world in a way that another person does. In an organization, this allows understanding in different departments and allows the control of diversity and inclusion. Dialogue as real meeting refers to a communication that promotes a genuine communion between individuals that rises above ranks or opinions and gives recognition to each group's common humanity (Eisenberg et al., 2016, pp. 144-149).

Advantages of Promoting Dialogue

In the article "The Importance of Open Dialogue With Your Team", Tori Utley (2017) outlined three points: (1) You're not always right, (2) You need diversity of thought, (3) Your transparency will shape company culture. By having open dialogue with your team, you can correct errors along the way. Setting your pride aside and allowing "wrongs" to be corrected in

team dialogue allows for an end result of success for the organization. Each group member in an organization has a unique experience and skill set that should be used together. Tapping into the talents of each member helps to refine your business and create strategies that will be successful. Honest conversation is key to making positive change. Having transparency with your team allows for trust to be built within your organization. As a leader, including your team in strategy conversations and challenging yourself to be vulnerable can lead to a happy and successful company. According to the text, promoting dialogue within organizations “can increase employee satisfaction and commitment, reduce turnover rates, and lead to greater innovation and flexibility within an organization” (Eisenberg et al., 2016, p. 152).

Challenges of Promoting Dialogue

Alison Davis (2018) states that the five biggest obstacles in dialogue within organizations are: (1) Starting with different levels of understanding, (2) Holding back, (3) Listening without hearing, (4) Showboating, (5) Prematurely moving to action. To overcome different levels of understanding, it is important to brief participants in order for everyone to be on the same page. Those with more knowledge may give insight as to how their thoughts evolved and this allows others a chance to ask questions. In group settings, some people are more comfortable showing their perspective while others may be more reserved. A way to overcome this is by breaking the ice and allowing people to share their personal past experiences that relate to the discussion. Another difficulty in dialogue is individuals not making the effort to understand others, or “listening without hearing”. Practicing empathic listening is important in understanding the way others feel. Overcoming showboating, which is defined as “trying to to attract attention by conspicuous behavior”, requires that extra time is added for dialogue or adding breakout

exercises such as poster making. This allows people to work together to accomplish something rather than making a speech. In team dialogue, it is also important to fully discuss the topic before rushing to a decision.

Conclusion

Dialogue within organizations is an integral part of success. However, effective dialogue is even more important. As stated above, promoting dialogue within organizations can increase employee satisfaction and commitment while reducing turnover rates. If not done properly, the organization lacks a sense of trust, which leads to less thoughtful listening and communication. Promoting meaningful dialogue and allowing feedback is key in creating a better team and a successful organization.

References

Davis, A. (2018). *Dialogue is Difficult to Do Well. Here's How to Overcome the 5 Biggest Obstacles*. Inc.

<https://www.inc.com/alison-davis/dialogue-is-difficult-to-do-well-heres-how-to-overcome-5-biggest-obstacles.html>

Eisenberg, E. M., Goodall, H. L., Jr, Trethewey, A., & LeGreco, M. (2016). *Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint*. Bedford/St. Martin's.

Utley, T. (2017, May 1). *The Importance Of Open Dialogue With Your Team*. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/toriutley/2017/04/30/the-importance-of-open-dialogue-with-your-team/?sh=64a6c960550e>