

BUS326: Organizational Behavior

Final Project

Magnus Mesters

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Defensive and Non-Defensive Communication

Communication is an important factor in all areas of everyday life and, of course, also in working life, which should ensure a common or shared message in the exchange of information between different people. Communication is a way through which people can freely share their feelings, thoughts, and ideas. In this paper, I will focus on communication within a company or organization. Since people have different ideas and feelings, communication is a means that must be structured, especially in organizations, in order to avoid conflicts in the long run. Communication between two or more people within an organization is called interpersonal communication. There are different ways for communication to take place. On the one hand there is the non-verbal communication, which summarizes the elements that do not contain words and language. The scientific article, *Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Business Activities*, by Livinia Nadrag from 2022, states, "Nonverbal communication in business can have a crucial role especially when it comes to cultural differences in the same company or during negotiations involving people belonging to different cultures", and thus shows us how important it is to have a good command of verbal communication. As already mentioned, another way of communication is verbal communication, which summarizes the elements of spoken words. In verbal communication, there are two types of communication. These are defensive and non-defensive communication. Both types of communication are very different from each other in the way they are communicated.

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In order to examine and analyze both concepts more closely, I have selected three scholarly articles that will help me in my information gathering and evaluation. First, I would like to focus on the concept of Defensive communication. Defensive communication describes the type of communication in which messages are formulated maliciously, aggressively, withdrawn or passively. This type of communication usually arises from insecurities and fears, which can be released, for example, by the feeling of control over one. Defensive communication leads to inefficient and destructive dialogue within an organization, as problems are not communicated in a factual and productive manner, but rather a working atmosphere prevails in which problems are blamed on others. In the scholarly article, Impact of Communication Climate on Conflict Management Styles among Employees, written by Nazia Jahangir, Aasima Safdar, and Beenish Zaheen, from 2021, defensive communication is defined as "A person makes himself protective which guides him towards aggressive and harmful disputes defined by defensive communication". Based on this statement, it can be said that defensive communication has a negative impact on communication and social interaction within a company, both in the short term and in the long term. The 2020 scholarly article, Exemplary and Unacceptable Workplace communication skills, by T. Coffelt goes so far as to say, "Deception, aggression, and defensive communication behaviors surfaced as noteworthy, unacceptable practices, frequently leading to termination of employment." According to this assumption, defensive communication that an employment relationship cannot work in the long run frequently leads to termination of employment. Based on both excerpts, it can be seen that defensive communication is an ineffective and negative way of communication. In the worst case, this type of communication can also lead to the dissolution of working relationships, since a productive exchange does not take place.

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Non-defensive communication is based on messages that are assertive, direct, and powerful. There are different ways and possibilities which one can use to express oneself non-defensively. One way is to ask the counterpart open-ended questions. By asking open-ended questions, the other parties are encouraged to think and are given the opportunity to share themselves and feel heard. Another way to not communicate defensively with the counterpart is by making statements. Reasoned statements, which are formulated directly, impartially, and subjectively, have a sovereign effect on the other party and stimulate a meaningful and argumentative exchange. This exchange, which is conducted openly, subjectively, and fairly, ensures that both parties feel respected and build a basis for discussion. A third component, which I would like to use at this point, is the use of predicting consequences. The realistic, neutral, and appropriate prediction of consequences is perceived by the recipients as determined and resolute. These qualities make one confident and ensure that people who correctly predict the consequences of an action are respected and seen as credible. Credibility is important for non-defensive communication because it guarantees that a truly fair and neutral dialogue will be conducted. Non-defensive communication is the type of communication that must be understood and practiced by managers, leaders, but also in general by "normal" employees. It ensures that a fair and profitable dialogue can take place without blaming each other for problems or situations. Rather, non-defensive communication brings respect and honesty to a company, which can be used as a long-term orientation and strengthen the community.

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All three authors have incorporated different aspects in their scientific articles and show different facets of communication in general, as well as communication in detail. From topics such as non-verbal and verbal communication to detailed statements about defensive and non-defensive communication, the authors show different views. However, all three authors are very much in agreement on one view. This view is the opinion that mastery of communication itself is the means it takes to work together in an organization in a lucrative and long-term manner. For example, the article, Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Business Activities, by Livinia Nadrag from 2022 states, "Poor communication can lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the messages, orders, recommendations." The article Impact of Communication Climate on Conflict Management Styles among Employees by Nazia Jahangir from 2021, states on the topic of communication in organizations, "A team can work in highly systematic manner by an important factor which is a satisfying working atmosphere; the enthusiasm of an employee enhanced by positive communication climate which played consequential role in it." The third scientific article, Exemplary and Unacceptable Communication Skills by T. Coffelt from 2020 says on this topic, "At times, employees lose their jobs because communication skills fail to meet the organization's expectations."

In summary, communication within an organization is fundamental to its success and existence. If there are deficiencies in communication, the entire organization will suffer. Communication methods, such as verbal as well as non-verbal communication are part of this. But more specific communication strategies, such as defensive and non-defensive communication all play into the success of a company.

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Avoiding defensive communication and establishing a non-defensive communication structure in an organization is the foundation for a long term healthy communication in an organization.

Works Cited

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