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## **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE NIGERIAN BREWERIES**

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### **Abstract**

*The paper examined the importance of communication to any organization. It explained further that for any organization, whether private or public, formal or informal, to successfully attain its set goals and objectives, effective communication is germane. Given the important role communication plays in the development of an organization, the study examined the effectiveness of communication as the live wire of an organization with specific interest in the Nigerian Breweries. It also investigated the ineffective communication as a function of organizational disharmony. Finally, it ascertained the flow of communication in the organizational hierarchy. The study is a survey research using questionnaire to elicit information from the respondents. The study was carried out at the Nigerian Breweries Plc., Ibadan. Relevant data were collected and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicated that communication is the live wire of an organisation and it has a bearing on the quantity of output. The study also reveals that lack of communication leads to industrial conflicts in an organisation. It was also found out that there exists good upward and effective downward communication within the hierarchy in the brewery. The study concluded that management must practice and apply communication methods effectively for the organization to move forward and to develop its potentials fully.*

**Keywords:** Communication, organisation, effectiveness, efficiency and Nigerian Breweries.

### **Introduction**

Communication is the act of passing information and news. It is the exchange and transmission of meaning and purpose. It is the very essence of a social system of an organization. Organizational communication is the collective transfer of information from a sender to a receiver, with information being understood by the receiver (Akindele 2008). However, Stephen (1993) defined communication as the process of establishing a commonness or oneness of thought between a sender and a receiver. He further said that an idea, no matter how great, is useless until it is transmitted and understood by others. Central to this information is that, for communication to occur, there must be a transfer of information from one party –the sender, which is received and understood by the other party – the receiver.

For any organisation, whether private or public, formal or informal, to successfully attain its set goals and objectives, the importance of effective communication as a tool of informing, persuading, understanding, instructing, directing and stimulating the actions (motivating) to enhance industrial and commercial harmony, internally and externally, should neither be over looked nor neglected.

The duty of a manager is to get things done through people; however sound and innovative the manager's ideas may be, if he cannot effectively communicate this to his subordinates, the idea

becomes useless. Hence, communication can be regarded as two-traffic and can be seen as interchange of ideas and information, attitudes and opinions.

From the foregoing, one can easily say that without effective communication, managerial functions such as directing, staffing, and organizing, controlling among other things cannot take place since effective communication is desired to dispatch managerial decisions and steps to be taken to effect decision.

In many organisations, communication is generally thought of in terms of:

- a. The media of communication such as memos, reports and circulars;
- b. The skills of communication such as giving ideas, chairing meetings, interviewing and
- c. The organisation of communication such as the chain of command, committees, briefing group.

These three aspects of communication sum up the formal official communication within the organisation and must be distinguished from the informal aspects of communication such as the so called grapevine that is gossips, rumour and the like.

Communication could easily be called the live-wire of organisational management. It is one of the most important tools in the kit of any organisation. It has been asserted that communication is a constant and critical factor in the well-being of an organization. It is therefore important that managers must practice and apply communication methods effectively for the organisation to grow and develop its potentials fully. It is in view of this, that this study seeks to examine the relationship between effective communication and organisational productivity, with keen attention on Nigerian Brewery as its scope. This is to fill the dearth of studies on the scope chosen.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to look at communication as the live-wire of an organisation. Other specific objectives are to:

- i. determine the relationship between effective communication and level of productivity;
- ii. ascertain the effect of high and low levels of management's communication on the organizational productivity; and
- iii. investigate the effect of communication between unions and management.

### **Literature Review**

The term communication has varied meanings but the word communication was derived from the Latin word 'communis' meaning common. Thus, it is through transmitting meaning from one person to another that information and ideas can be conveyed. This is supported by Cole (1973) and Oribabor (2000) who defined communication as "transfer of information from the sender to the receiver with the information being understood by the receiver". There are also the elements of 'noise', which is anything that distorts the message sent and the feedback, which tells the sender whether the message is received, and how the receiver perceived it. Therefore, according to Scolt and Mitchell (1976), communication is the act of inducting others to interpret an idea in the manner by the speaker or writer. From the above definitions, it can be seen that communication is a two-sided concept which involves the sender of information, who is also the

person who had the thoughts, ideas or feelings which are transmitted through the proper channels and the receiver who on getting the information sent – in, decodes in order to extract meaning which aids understanding.

Some communication involves the comprehension of messages, which can only be carried out by the mind; it is therefore logical to say that communication is a human process. However, the process is more than speaking or writing, reporting and dealing with correspondent, although all these are essential tools of communication and must be mastered. In essence, this is to say that for good communication to exist, transmitted thought or idea must be perceived by the receiver exactly the same way it is envisioned by the sender through clarity of information and proper use of mode and channels. For communication to be regarded as a key to managerial efficiency, the managerial objectives and goals made at the top level of managerial hierarchy must be well communicated to all parts of the organisation with clarity stating the objectives and probably the tasks or functions to be carried out before the objectives can be achieved. Furthermore, there should exist a proper feedback in order to measure the extent to which the information pass out is well understood.

Management by definition is getting things done through people participating in the co-ordination of resources and objectives, that is, the continuing process of achieving order efficiency through intelligent decision that governs an organisation. This process simultaneously involves communication through symbols, using words to denote the exchange of ideas, emotions and feelings. Thus, participation in communication is a social process involving human beings, having said that, “No man is an island”. These words are so evidently true today since the people of the word rely upon one another for products, services and peace as a result of industrial revolution that led to specializations.

Communication is the act of people talking, listening, seeing, feeling and reselling to each other, their experiences and their environment. The success of an organisation can be seen to depend on its management, also it can be seen that management and communication are inseparable, hence managers need to master communication principles and skills. Communication has been called the capacity of an individual or group to convey ideas and feelings to another individual or group and where necessary to evoke a discriminating response. In the organisational environment, it is an applied skill, a technique for getting co-operation, for setting an organisation to work and control is also exercised by the giving and receiving of information via communication.

Communication can be in many forms but it can generally be termed to have the following methods: oral, written and symbolic or visual forms. However, we are interested in all the various methods of communication that exist. As such, the following can be said to be obtainable:

**Written Method:** These are principally letters, memos, reporters, notices and printouts. The written word is more permanent and less liable to misinterpretation. It encourages the sender of the message to think it before dispatch. The disadvantages of this method are that it take longer time to effect than oral method and is still liable to misinterpretation despite the efforts of the writer to be clear and logical.

**Oral Communication:** These are usually messages of one kind or another and telephone conversations. It may often lack the considered nature of written communication, but it does have

the advantage of immediate feedback. In the case of face-to-face meetings or conversations, it has the added advantage of being accompanied by various forms of non-verbal behaviours such as facial expression, gesture and body posture.

**Communication through Visual Aids:** Visual aids, which can be used by organisations. Examples are: filmstrips, posters, visits to other organisations and exhibitions. It enables employees of the organisation to see things for themselves as they really are.

Other forms or methods of communication that exist in an organisation are:

**Consultative Committee:** These committees are made up of workers' representatives and top managers. Direct discussion between these two groups of people ensures that management is aware or receiving a feedback of the reaction of their workers to their decision and policies.

**Communication through Line Management:** This basically channels work instruction from management to the workers. It is possible for this channel to be used as a check and control mechanism. Management can send down instructions and employees can send up their grievances.

**Communication through Union Representatives:** This method is usually used during disputes between management and workers. It is used to negotiate a peaceful settlement to whatever problem exists between management and workers.

**Induction Meetings:** This is a method used in informing new employees about the company; it gives them a description of what their job entails. It informs them about the channel available for the settlement of grievances; it also enlightens them on company policies and so on. Other methods of communicating within the organisation would involve the use of: Notices and notice boards, Bulletins and circulars, Interdepartmental committees and Coordinating committees, etc. Management can use all or a combination of these various methods of communication within the organisation. The important thing to note is that management should use the method which best suits the environment, situation and the other parties involved in the communicating process.

### **Electronic Media in Communication**

Various electronic devices that aid communication are used by organisations all over the world. Examples of such electronic equipment are: electronic typewriter, fax machines, personal computers, cellular phones, web sites and pages, etc.

### **Telecommunication**

The new Webster dictionary defines telecommunication as 'the science of communication by electronically transmitted waves as by radio, television, telegraph, etc. Any communication transmitted in this manner is telecommunication. Nowadays, many organisations have several items of equipment which are used to transmit information between the organisation and the outside world. Some items of equipment are also used to effect good communication within the organisation itself. A good example of this is the internal telephone called the "intercom." Notable examples of such items of equipment are discussed below.

### **Examples of good communication items of equipment are:**

**Telex:** When it is necessary to quickly share important information between offices and divisions, many organisations make use of the telex. Telex permits direct-two-way communication and provides a written record of the conversion. It is also possible to communicate with other organisations that have this telecommunication equipment.

**Faxsmile:** Fax mile communication, also known as fax, uses the telephone lines to transmit text, drawings and photographs. This process can be useful to organisations that need to quickly exchange detailed charts, graphs and sketches. The system transmits anything that can be copied and does it in records.

**Telephone:** The telephone is involved in almost every business transaction, especially in modern business transactions. The phone service now includes a wide variety of innovations and features that speed up communications and increase efficiency. Such features include: hold, reminder, call pick –up, automatic call back, etc. Several banks now make bank-by-phone services available to their customers.

**Mobile Phones:** This is in vogue nowadays. Managers now carry around personal phones via the “cellular system”. The cellular as it is commonly called in Nigeria is useful to managers who are out of the office frequently but need to make contacts.

**Teleconferencing:** This is when a group of people interact using audio and video media with moving or still pictures. It is usually used during large group meetings or conferences.

**The Computer:** Electronic Data Processing now makes it possible to handle large amount of data and to make information available to a large number of people. The computer can handle, organize and analyze timely data fast, depending on what it has been programmed to do. The computer has so many features that can be useful to the managers and make his work faster and more effective. It is also possible for the manager to send faxes and answer phones on the latest computers today.

When an organisation has a computer ‘network,’ it is possible for a manager to “log into” a “get into” another manager’s computer to get vital information (using the former computer). Any confidential information is coded and the computer only releases the information on production of the password, so such confidential information cannot be filtered. Another good advantage of the computer to an organisation is the ‘internet.’ When an organisation subscribes to the internet, it will be linked to other subscribers in the world and the manager can get information from any part of the world. The computer is truly a commendable and impressive communication equipment. The future of fast and effective communication lies in the computers. A computer scientist said, “computers are the future.”

### **Methodology**

The study is descriptive in nature. Primary and secondary sources of data were employed in data gathering. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaire from the workers while in-depth interviews were conducted for the customers and suppliers of the company. The study was limited to the Ibadan Branch of the Nigerian Breweries Plc., located on Ibadan-Ife expressway, Ibadan, Oyo State. The study was essentially on the communication between the company and its stakeholders; the public with which the company is regularly communicating with include: its employees, managers, the government, suppliers and customers/consumers within the industry.

The target population was the existing members of staff in the company totaling 1,300. The sampling size was 150 and a questionnaire was administered on them. All copies were returned. Five (5) respondents are managers, while the other one hundred and forty-five (145) respondents vary from clerks, secretaries, drivers, supervisors to foreman, etc. There was no discrimination with regards to sex, age, tribe, official design or even material status.

The instruments used to carry out this study were two different questionnaire designed for the purpose. The first questionnaire was used to collect data from managers that are the management of the company. Five (5) managers were among the respondents of the study. All the copies of the questionnaire were recovered from the managers. The second set of questionnaire were used to collect data from the other members of staff of the Nigerian Breweries Plc. Thirty (30) copies of the questionnaire were administered and twenty nine responded.

For the purpose of this research work, Chi-square was used to analyse the data collected.

## **Result and Discussion**

The non-parametric statistical test chi-square was used to test the formulated hypothesis.

**Table 1**

### **Chi-square Test**

|                    | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2 –sided) |
|--------------------|-------|----|------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-square | 4.081 | 1  | .043                   |

*Source: Fieldwork, 2016*

### **Testing of Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between communication and workers.

Productivity.

Since  $\chi^2_c = 4.081$

$\chi^2_t (1, 0.05) = 3.84$

$\chi^2_c < \chi^2_t$  that is,  $4.081 > 3.84$

Through the result, the study rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there exists a significant relationship between effective communication and productivity in a firm.

**Table II**

### **Chi-square Test**

|                    | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2 –sided) |
|--------------------|-------|----|------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-square | .344  | 1  | .558                   |

*Source: Fieldwork, 2016*

### **Testing of Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between job description and employee's output.

Since  $\chi^2_c = .334$

$\chi^2_t (1, 0.05) = 3.84$

$\chi^2_c < \chi^2_t$ , that is,  $0.334 < 3.84$

Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. As such, there is no significant relationship between job description and employee's output.

**Relationship between Lack of Communication between Workers, Management and Industrial Conflicts**

**Table III Model Summary**

| Model | R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .533 | .284     | .257              | .22222                     |

Source: Field, 2016.

In table above  $R = (.533)$  indicates that there exists a positive relationship between the two variables i.e the more the lack of communication, the more will be industrial conflicts.  $R$  Square of 0.284, however, indicates that only 28% percent of changes in the industrial conflicts is accounted for by lack of communication.

**Table IV: ANOVA**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| 1     | Regression | .529           | 1  | .529        | 10.707 | .003 |
|       | Residual   | 1.333          | 27 | .49         |        |      |

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

$H_0$ : There exist no linear relationship between lack of communication between workers and management and industrial conflicts.

**Critical Region**

If  $P$  –value (sig)  $\leq 0.05$  reject  $H_0$ , otherwise reject  $H_1$ .

**Decision**

Since  $P$  (sig) value (0.03)  $< 0.05$  at 5 percent level of significant,  $H_0$  is rejected and we conclude that there is a linear relationship between lack of communication between workers and management and industrial conflicts.

**Table V**

**Chi-square Test**

|                    | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2 –sided) | Exact Sig (2-sided) | Exact Sig (1-sided) |
|--------------------|-------|----|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1.875 | 1  | .171                   |                     |                     |

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between effective communications and productivity.

Since  $\chi^2_c = 1.875$

$\chi^2_{(1, 0.05)} = 3.84$

$\chi^2_c < \chi^2_{(1, 0.05)}$ , that is,  $1.875 < 3.84$

Therefore, we will reject the alternative hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant relationship between effective communication and productivity.

**Relationship between lack of communication between workers and industrial conflicts**

**Table VI** ANOVA

| Model |            | Sum of squares | Df | Mean Square | F    | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|------|
| 1     | Regression | .133           | 1  | .133        | .600 | .495 |
|       | Residual   | .667           | 3  | .222        |      |      |
|       | Total      | .800           | 4  |             |      |      |

*Source: Fieldwork, 2016*

$H_0$ : There exist no linear relationship between lack of communication between workers and management and industrial conflicts.

Critical Region

If P-value (sig) < 0.05 reject  $H_0$ , otherwise reject  $H_1$

Since P (sig) value (.495) > 0.05 at 5 percent level of significance,  $H_1$  is rejected and we will conclude that there exists no linear relationship between lack of communication between workers and management and industrial conflicts.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study clearly revealed that among the staff members, effective communication affects productivity, that is, effective communication in an organization or firms determines the productivity and output of workers. This confirmed the work of Akindele (2008) and Fajana (2007). Equally, job description for employees by their employers does not determine the output of employees. Also, lack of communication between workers and management can lead to the increase in industrial conflicts. The higher the lack of communication, the higher will be industrial conflicts in a firm.

Among the managers, it can be deduced that effective communication does not affect their productivity; likewise, lack of communication between them could not increase industrial conflicts.

**Summary of Hypotheses Testing**

This study examines effective communication and organizational productivity using Nigerian Breweries Plc, Ibadan as a case study. It has been established through this study that there is need for effective communication for an organisation to run smoothly and sufficiently.

It has also been established that a good working environment/atmosphere can increase productivity. Through effective communication, the conflict of interests between the management and workers can be channeled towards the attainment of the general objectives of the organisation.

The causes of conflicts as identified by the respondents are as follows:

(i) Basic day-to-day work related crisis (ii) Conditions of service (iii) National labour crisis (vi) Failure or breakdown of negotiations (v) Disagreement on some negotiated terms (vi) Misinformation and delay in payment of remunerations (vii) Salary non-increment (viii) Conflicting expectations of management and staff – a high profit remuneration respectively (ix) No work, no

pay during June 12 crisis (x) Late payment of salary (xi) Disagreement on the review of fringe benefits.

With an effective communication network in place, many of these causes of conflicts in the past could have been put to check. This study has established the fact that a relationship exists between effective communication and high productivity output. The reason for this relationship is that with effectiveness of the organisation. The organisational policies are made known to them to ease taking actions or decisions on certain issues. The employee's functions and duties are well described and communicated to employees; new information is readily made available to employees, etc.

With all these, time is not wasted on ambiguities as everybody knows what to do and everyone is aware of the ultimate goals and objectives of the organisation and will work towards it because the organization's success is also their success. Ineffective communication, on the other hand, can cause conflicts and disharmony within the organisation. Twenty eight (28) out of the thirty four (34) respondents in our study had witnessed at least one conflict in their organisation. Some of the factors that lead to ineffective communication are as follows:

- i. Absence of communication tools i.e. notice boards, handbills, memos, intercoms, public address system, telephone, fax machine, etc.
- ii. In organisation where these amenities are available, the employees may not know how to utilize them properly. In this case, it would be more necessary to educate them.
- iii. Some managers limit the flow of information to staff.
- iv. Some managers are inaccessible to their employees. These managers are inaccessible to their employees and are not aware of the reactions of their employees in their working environment and conditions of service. The managers are also not aware of the employees' reactions to the organisation's policies. It has been advised that organisational plans and policies should be jointly authorized because it is more likely that both parties would respect and conform to these plans and policies.
- v. A distortion in the medium of communication or a lack of feedback can also be responsible for ineffective communication.
- vi. Lack of job description can lead to an overlap in the job. This can lead to conflicts and also decrease output.

Ineffective communication on the whole can ruin an organization's feedback on employee's performance on job can be viewed as a way of motivating the workers. The flow of communication between higher levels and management and their employees can increase output. In this situation, a cordial relationship exists between the managers and the employees. The managers liaise regularly with their subordinates and operate an open door policy, where the employees have access to the managers. The situation facilitates the exchange of ideas and generate solutions to the problem where the employees are made to feel important and wanted. It boosts their morale and zeal to work harder because of the sense of belonging that this situation breeds.

Hypothesis 1 confirms that effective communication in an organisation determines the productivity of workers. This hypothesis was tested and validated.

Hypothesis II, which states that “effective communication of employees’ specific functions and duties (job descriptions) will increase the employees’ output” was tested and validated. Managers in our study do not regularly update employees on what their functions and duties are, but with proper effective communication, the job routine can easily explained and understood.

The last hypothesis tested stated that lack of communication between workers and management can lead to industrial conflicts. The hypothesis is valid. Lack of communication between management and workers results into industrial unrests. Unless individuals or groups can freely make known to others instructions, orders, wants, opinion and feelings, these things will remain locked up in the minds of the intending communicator and this means that no action can be taken upon them. It must be said that management has to take most of the blames where communication is deficient because it is the one responsible for creating a conducive environment for free interactions. It is also management’s responsibility to recognize and overcome barriers to effective communication in the organisation. Communication plays a vital role on our daily lives but inspite of this, a lot of people have taken it for granted. It is imperative that people should be taught and enlisted on the role that effective communication can play.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

To the researcher, it appears that management communication is the number one problem in business today; while technology has advanced in leaps and bounds, managers’ understanding of the sustenance of the process of communication has not advanced to high levels. Communication could easily be called the lifeblood of an organization’s management. It is one of the most important tools in the kit of any manager. It is therefore important that managers must practice and apply communication methods effectively for the organisation to grow and develop its potentials fully. In actual fact, as the people become more important than the tasks they are performing, communication will inevitably become more crucial. Thus, in a people oriented organization, people management cannot be achieved without good communication. It is inconceivable to think of an organisation without people and where there are people, there has to be communication.

On the basis of the research findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Management must continue to make itself accessible to its employees to explain what is needed of them, so as to avoid a gap in communication as this breeds confusion which leads to conflicts.
- ii. Organisations should always provide regular neutral grounds on which management and staff can meet for discussions on matters affecting the workers i.e. relationships in the organization. This can be done in the form of staff meetings, joint cumulative committees, seminars, etc.
- iii. Both management and workers should strive to channel their conflicting interests to the overall objectives of the organisation.
- iv. Responsibilities and lines of authority should be clearly defined and announced.
- v. Training and development of communication skills should be made a priority for both managers and staff members.
- vi. The higher level of management should always try to involve the lower level of management in having discussions that relate to their scope of work.
- vii. The communication network should not be clumsy and must be clearly defined so that information will not be lost or distorted in the communication process.

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