

Effective Communication in Globalized Societies

Prabuddh Banerjee

Assistant Prof. Deviprasad Goenka Management College of Media Studies

prabuddh.banerjee@dgmcms.org.in

Abstract:

The onset of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has helped realize the dream of the world being “global village”. The increasing globalization has made societies diverse. India is no exception to this trend. Today, people from different nationalities, cultures, religions; languages and sensibilities travel to India for various reasons such as work, education, physical wellbeing and leisure. Similarly many Indians travel world over for the same reasons. They have their distinct opinion, perception and cultural backgrounds ingrained in them by education and surroundings.

Today, an organization must recognize the uniqueness of all people. In January 28, 2011 Indian Coast Guard intercepted 15 Somali pirates on the Arab Sea off Mumbai coast. The pirates were handed over to Mumbai police for interrogation. The Police could not cull out any information from them as they had no expert who could communicate to them in their native language! As the borrowed interpreters are not trustworthy; their translations are not admissible in court. This case had a huge negative impact on the image of Mumbai Police.

Globalization leads to integration of economies and societies through exchange of ideas, technologies, goods, services, capital and people. A globalized environment can throw many

challenges at effective communication. Poor communication can result in poor performance of an organisation.

Companies those value this diversity and equip themselves to overcome such impediments have a competitive advantage over those who do not. Growing business of South Korea and Japan with the US is a classic example of excellent cross cultural and multi-linguistic communication. The growing need for English as language of business cannot be over emphasised in India.

This paper will address the emerging issues due to globalization of societies. Learning new languages, acquiring new skills, assimilating new cultures has become an ongoing process to remain employable and successful. Against this backdrop, the paper explores the role of business organizations that employ diverse workforce and develop effective methods of communication to remain competitive in the global village.

Keywords: Globalization; Effective Communication; Competitive Advantage; Diverse Work Culture, communication skills, Intercultural communication

Content:

1. Introduction
2. Impact of Globalization on Communication
3. Intercultural Communication
4. Positive Impact of Diverse workforce in Business Organisations
5. Competitive Advantage through Skilled People

6. Importance of People in Diverse Societies
7. Training and Skill Development
8. Conclusion

“Human beings are drawn close to one another by their common nature, but habits and customs keep them apart”. Confucius, Chinese thinker and social philosopher, 511BC–479BC

Introduction:

The process of globalization is one of the biggest ideas of the 20th century. Several observations seem to indicate that globalization has brought greater prosperity across the world.

These include investment (particularly foreign direct investment), the spread of technology, strong institutions, sound macroeconomic policies, an educated workforce, and the existence of a market economy.

Furthermore, a common denominator which appears to link nearly all high-growth countries together is their participation in, and integration with, the global economy.

Communicating effectively in a globalised society could be a big challenge even when both sides are speaking the same language because confusion or misinterpretation can crop up due to cultural or national differences. It has been recorded from last few decades that poor communication can lead to reduced organizational performance.

Technology has dealt a huge impact on international business and helped them the way they would communicate their products and services to consumers across the world. Multinational businesses operating out of several nations at once have to communicate to their managers and employees of diverse nationalities, sensibilities and cultural background. And use this diversity in their workforce for innovation and competitive advantage.

Diversity can have a profound influence in today's global marketplace interacting with different cultures those have the potential to increase their brand presence internationally resulting in increased revenues, broader customer base and scale of economies. It helps the business to increase its market share, build synergy with several teams across world and help enhance their communication skills.

Effective communication within the organisation creates an environment of mutual respect, appreciation, trust and helps build employee morale. In case of mergers and acquisitions efficient communication can also facilitate the employees to deal with change more effectively. This can motivate improved productivity, help them take good decisions. Lack of communication can make employees cynical and lose their trust and respect for the organisation.

How often have we heard, "why is it so hard for to communicate to each other".

Impact of Globalization on Communication:

Effective communication in globalized societies can be a challenge. Even when both parties speak the same language there can still be confusion due to national and intellectual

differences. There are several examples from the business sector that demonstrate how poor communication can lead to below par organizational performance.

International businesses must develop inherent capabilities to communicate with its employees and customers in diverse culture in order to fulfill the organization's mission and create value for its stakeholders.

The use of information technology has had a deep impact on how organizations will communicate globally and market their products and services. However, with the progression in technology organizations must still be aware of the culture annoyance that can potentially pose impediments in trying to increase profits and market share.

Everybody in commerce today needs to better appreciate other ethnicity, customs, as well as other age groups, gender groups, and lifestyle groups. All this can happen only if there is an effective communication among all the human resources, from top to bottom.

As people become more globally connected the ability to communicate across cultural borders has gained increasing importance.

Organizations involved in international business operations for them it is of paramount importance that managers are effectively communicating with their subordinates across the world.

Emphasis should be placed on using individual distinction to create improvement. Training and development of individuals involved in intercultural interactions should involve more than simply promoting cultural adaptation.

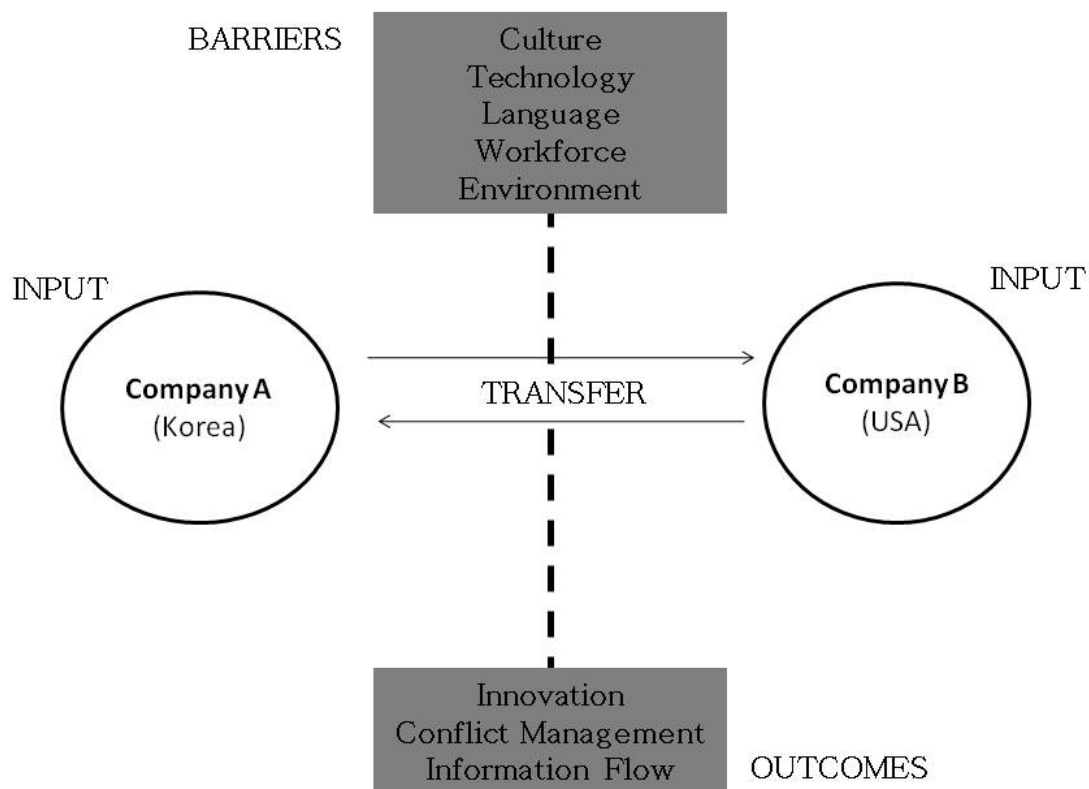
Communication is imperative for the companies to reach out to its customers and establish the differentiations of their products and services from their competitors. Companies that are effectively able to communicate cross culturally have a competitive advantage because they can devote more time and assets to carry out business and less time on internal and external communication issues.

Demonstrate the importance of communication on building relationships globally consider the instance of the United States and South Korea. Notwithstanding major cultural dissimilarities, South Korea and the United States have been able to build up a communication process that many other countries seek to imitate.

The function of communication is to convey ideas and information from one entity to the other. The first step in communication is input; someone must say something that is received by someone else.

From an organizational viewpoint there are many obstacles that can hamper the flow of communication. These barriers include society, technology, language, personnel, and setting. These traditions and customs sway policies and measures applied by businesses. Technology is simply the use of mediums such as email, Internet, text messaging, and cell phones to communicate.

Successful cross-cultural messaging creates a conversation, unbroken transfer of information. This transfer of information addresses our supposition and clarifies points we do not understand. It also provides the opportunity for us to ask questions and confirm the information that was received.



Cross Cultural Communication Model (source: Bharat C.Thakkar & Lowell C. Matthews)

Company management that has to communicate cross-culturally can use the following steps:

1. Develop clear and succinct expectations for how the organization will achieve its objectives;

2. Make certain that employees comprehend their responsibility in the organization;
3. Organizational leaders should be willing to devote time to communicate;
4. Bear in mind that communication is a two-way process, listen before you speak.

Intercultural Communication:

“In 1983, Levitt argued in his seminal article “The Globalization of Markets” that advertising and marketing can be standardised across cultures, and since then there has been a heated debate as to whether or not advertising can be standardised across cultures. In Levitt’s view, globalisation is transforming the world into a ‘homocultural’ market place where all customers can be persuaded by the same advertising appeals and values, irrespective of the culture they belong to. If this is true, such a homogenisation of culture would have a number of important advantages from a marketing point of view.

Brands and brand image could be standardised without any great problems across countries, and little adaptation would be required in local markets. There would also be significant cost savings in producing advertising, as local market testing and localised advertising design would be essentially a thing of the past.”*(Cross-cultural advertising research: What do we know about the influence of culture on advertising? Stephan Dahl, Middlesex University Business School, London)

Cross Cultural Advertising:

Cross cultural advertising has many features such as appeals, themes, usage and protagonists and many other specific factors. The assortment of the features tested mirror the numerous aspects that make any advertisement exclusive, as well as the diversity of possible approach that can be used to investigate advertisements. Although this ‘versatile personality’ of advertising makes the medium rich and attractive to study cross cultural communication these studies can roughly be divided in three classes: Sociological, ethnological and cross cultural psychological studies.

Sociological study:

Research of this type usually focuses on a certain aspect of society as portrayed in advertising, and typically tries to contrast culturally inspired norms such as gender roles across different countries. (E.g. Gilly, 1988; Tansey, Hyman, Zinkhan and Chowdhury, 1997; Maynard and Taylor, 1999)

Ethnological Study:

Studies in this category rely on a set of historic and general society values to explain perceived differences in advertising in two or more countries (e.g. Mueller and Caillat, 1996; Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund, 1996). This type of research generally does not focus on cultural dimensions.

Cross-cultural psychological research:

This type of research aims to provide a somewhat deeper explanation of observed differences in advertising by linking appeals and observations to cultural dimensions, and hence tries to

forecast value and appeal differences in various countries (e.g. Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996). It usually tries to explain observed differences and similarities by using fundamental dimensions of cultural variability.

Cross cultural psychological study tries to establish perceived differences and similarities of cross cultural and intercultural in communication. By creating the relation between experiential differences and cultural proportions, cross-cultural advertising study aims to identify, at least likely, a certain degree of predictability in the observed differences.

Positive Impact of Diverse workforce in Business Organisations:

Business organizations across the world are now recognizing the need and the positive impact of diversity in their workforce, because diversity can help businesses to hire talent from different ethnic and cultural groups that would enrich the talent pool of the organization help fulfill their corporate objectives.

Diversity is particularly vital in today's international market, as companies' network with diverse cultures and clients. The payoffs touch every area of the trade by the probability resulting in increased inventiveness, increased efficiency, *new approach*, new language skills, global perceptiveness, new processes, and new resolution to difficult problems.

Greater nimbleness, better market knowledge, stronger customer and society loyalty, improvement, and enhanced employee staffing and retention the businesses that fail to see the significance of Diversity and inclusion might find themselves unable to draw and keep the kinds of clientele, workers, and business partners that comprise our changing world in coming years.

Among the advantages of diversity in the workplace are:

1. **Augmented Efficiency:** Diversity and Inclusion brings in varied different talents together working towards a common objective using different sets of skills that fire up their devotion and increases their retention and output

2. **Augmented Inventiveness and Problem solving:** With so many different and diverse minds coming together many more answers will arise as every individual brings in their way of thinking, operating and solving problems and decision making

3. **Draw and Retain talent:**

That adds a competitive edge to any business. Feeling included and valued increases allegiance and feeling of belonging. Language skills pool is enhanced and drives organization forward either to compete in the International world or to boost its diverse consumer base

4. **Helps to build harmony in teams and improves communication skills:** that brings in new perspectives and practices that profit the whole team

5. Applying the proper diversity and holistic management practices does not only save money on **litigation expenses** generated by biased lawsuits but is the right thing to do for the business.

6. **It enlarges market share and create a contented different customer base:**

By relating to people from different environments. It can drive India and its status to claim its place and success in the global business world of the 21st century.

Competitive Advantage through Skilled People:

For companies their people have become more important assets because other resources have become less crucial in today's dynamic and fluid marketing and business environment. All

companies have equal access to technology, financial resources, raw material, information it's the workforce of an organisation that provides the cutting edge.

The traditional sources of success are products, processes technology and economies of scale can provide competitive leverage. But in 21st century organizational culture and capabilities of its people have come in to greater prominence.

A company's ability to derive benefit let alone advantage from technology which is readily available and understood by their competitors will be successful only if they can deploy it speedily and effectively. Investment in cutting edge technology alone cannot replace the skills and motivation of the workforce.

It actually makes the workforce extremely vital for its success. The more sophisticated technology needs super skilled people, with higher level of investments on employee's disruption in the process can be very expensive. For example banks with fully online systems with fully integrated branches and operations means that people at the backend operations would have to absolutely accurate, efficient and reliable since the data entered by them would instantly transfer the funds and will make crucial changes in accounts.

Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) machines needs constant human intervention to perform flawlessly.

Importance of People in Diverse Societies:

As we saw the other sources of competitive advantage have become less important, what remains crucial is the organisation, its employees and their work culture. For instance an Airline that operates in several countries and employs a wide variety of workforce through improved skills can improve its profitability through high levels of efficiency and productivity (more

passengers) per employee. If they can reduce their turnaround time compared to other airlines then it will give tremendous boost to its productivity. And they can sustain this advantage by enlightened management and continuous skills development.

Training and Skill Development:

If a company has to sustain its competitive advantage it has to achieve it through its workforce and then skills of this workforce is critical. Corporate history of The USA shows that between 1929 and 1982 education prior to work accounted for 26% of growth in productivity. With learning and on the job skill enhancement it climbed to 55%.

In fact learning in the school and learning on the job became driving factors in economic growth of America. As India enters 21st century it has become more apparent that demand for more skilled workers is on the collision course with quality and quantity of the workforce supply.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion we can conclude that effective communication, enlightened management of people and continuous skill development in diverse and globalised societies can help them maintain sustained growth and competitive advantage.

Without robust internal communication in an business entity, it is not only difficult but is impracticable for that organization to communicate with its external parties like customers, government, society, suppliers, leaving the organization becoming a failure. So, in globalised societies to be a successful organization with a diverse workforce a firm should concentrate on improving its internal communication, skill development and service conditions of its people.

References:

- Cristina Rodriguez: Language Diversity in the Workplace, 2006, New York University of Law Brandon Levy-The Role of “Globalization” in Economic Development
- Ruth V. Aguilera and John C. Dencker The role of human resource management in cross-border mergers and acquisitions, 15:8 December 2004 1355–1370 Int. J. of Human Resource Management
- Frank T. Rothaermel Volume 18, 201–225 Copyright rs 2008 by Elsevier Ltd. Competitive advantage in technology intensive industries, Technological Innovation: Generating Economic Results Advances in the Study of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Economic Growth,
- Jyoti Jindal Globalization- ISSN: 2278-9359 (Volume-2, Issue-12) It’s Socio-Economic Impact in India, International Journal of Emerging Research in Management &Technology
- Jeffrey Pfeffer -Competitive Advantage Through People: Unleashing the Power of the Work Force
- Lowell C. Matthews and Bharat Thakkar- The Impact of Globalization on Cross-Cultural Communication, Chapter 13
- Martín Rama January 2003 Globalization and Workers in Developing Countries, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2958,
- Rania Ahmed Azmi: 2006 Business Ethics as Competitive Advantage for Companies In the Globalization Era Communicating in A Culturally Diverse Society

DGMC International Journal of Media, Communication & Management
Vol.1, Issue 1, March 2018

- Ritu Rana - FEB.-2013 ISSN NO: 2319-7471 Effective Communication in a Diverse Workplace, INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENHANCED RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT & COMPUTER APPLICATIONS VOL. 2 ISSUE 2,
- Stephan Dahl Cross-cultural advertising research: What do we know about the influence of culture on advertising? Middlesex University Business School London
- Richard S. Tedlow Rawi Abdelal Harvard Business School- Theodore Levitt's "The Globalization of Markets": An Evaluation after Two Decades