Chapter 7: Directing

Exercises — Exercises

Q1 What is informal communication?

Informal communication is communication that takes place without following the formal lines of communication. It is generally referred to as the 'grapevine' because it spreads throughout the organisation with its branches going out in all directions in utter disregard to the levels of authority. It arises out of the needs of employees to exchange views that cannot be done through formal channels.

Q2 Which style of leadership does not believe in use of power unless it is absolutely essential?

The Laissez-faire (Free-rein) style of leadership does not believe in the use of power unless it is absolutely essential. Under this style, followers are given a high degree of independence to formulate their own objectives and ways to achieve them.

Q3 Which element in the communication process involves converting the message into words, symbols, gestures etc.?

Encoding is the element in the communication process that involves converting the message into communication symbols such as words, pictures, gestures, etc.

Q4 The workers always try to show their inability when any new work is given to them. They are always unwilling to take up any kind of work. Due to sudden rise in demand a firm wants to meet excess orders. The supervisor is finding it difficult to cope up with the situation. State the element of directing that can help the supervisor in handling the problem.

Motivation is the element of directing that can help the supervisor handle this problem. Since workers are unwilling and show inability when given new work, the supervisor needs to stimulate them to act in a desired manner. By using appropriate motivators — financial incentives like bonus or productivity-linked wages, or non-financial incentives like recognition and job enrichment — the supervisor can induce employees to willingly take up the excess work and meet the targets.

Q5 What are semantic barriers of communication?

Semantic barriers are concerned with problems and obstructions in the process of encoding and decoding of a message into words or impressions. They arise from the use of wrong words, faulty translations, different interpretations, technical jargon, unclarified assumptions, symbols with multiple meanings, and a mismatch between body language and verbal message. For example, the word 'value' can mean monetary worth, emotional regard, or intellectual importance depending on the context, leading to misunderstanding if the receiver perceives the wrong meaning.

Q6 Explain the process of motivation with the help of a diagram.

The motivation process is based on human needs and follows a cycle: Unsatisfied Need → Tension → Drives → Search Behaviour → Satisfied Need → Reduction of Tension. An unsatisfied need of an individual creates tension, which stimulates drives. These drives generate a search behaviour to satisfy the need. Once the need is satisfied, tension is reduced. For example, Ramu, who did not have breakfast, felt hungry (unsatisfied need), became restless (tension), walked on the road looking for food (drives + search behaviour), found a hotel and had a meal (satisfied need), and regained energy (reduction of tension).

Q7 State the different networks of grapevine communications.

Grapevine (informal) communication may follow four types of networks: (i) Single Strand Network — each person communicates to the other in sequence. (ii) Gossip Network — each person communicates with all others on a non-selective basis. (iii) Probability Network — the individual communicates randomly with other individuals. (iv) Cluster Network — the individual communicates only with those people whom he or she trusts. Of these four, cluster is the most popular network in organisations.

Q8 Explain any three principles of Directing.

Three important principles of directing are: (i) Unity of Command — a person in the organisation should receive instructions from one superior only. If instructions come from more than one superior, it creates confusion, conflict, and disorder. (ii) Maximum Individual Contribution — directing techniques must help every individual contribute to his maximum potential for the achievement of organisational objectives. A good motivation plan with monetary and non-monetary rewards can bring out the untapped energies of employees. (iii) Harmony of Objectives — effective directing should provide harmony between individual objectives and organisational objectives by convincing employees that their personal rewards and work efficiency are complementary to each other.

Q9 In an organisation, one of the departmental manager is inflexible and once he takes a decision, he does not like to be contradicted. As a result, employees always feel they are under stress and they take least initiative and fear to express their opinions and problems before the manager. What is the problem in the way authority is being used by the manager?

The manager is following an Autocratic (Authoritarian) style of leadership. An autocratic leader gives orders and expects subordinates to obey without question; he is dogmatic and does not wish to be contradicted. Communication is one-way, flowing only from manager to subordinate. This style creates stress, suppresses initiative, and discourages employees from expressing their opinions and problems, as evident in this case. While autocratic leadership can be effective for quick decision-making, it generates dissatisfaction and reduces creativity among employees.

Q10 A reputed hostel, GyanPradan provides medical aid and free education to children of its employees. Which incentive is being highlighted here? State its category and name any two more incentives of the same category.

The incentive highlighted here is Perquisites (fringe benefits). It belongs to the category of Financial Incentives, as these benefits — medical aid and free education to children — are measurable in monetary terms even though they are provided in kind rather than cash. Two other financial incentives of the same category are: (i) Retirement Benefits — such as provident fund, pension, and gratuity, which provide financial security after retirement. (ii) Co-partnership / Stock Option — employees are offered company shares at a price lower than the market price, creating a sense of ownership and motivating them to contribute to organisational growth.

Q11 Discuss Maslow's Need Hierarchy theory of motivation.

Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, outlined in 1943 a theory based on the hierarchy of human needs. He felt that within every human being there exists a hierarchy of five needs: (i) Basic Physiological Needs — the most basic needs such as hunger, thirst, shelter, sleep, and sex. In organisations, basic salary satisfies these. (ii) Safety/Security Needs — needs for security and protection from physical and emotional harm, e.g., job security, stability of income, pension plans. (iii) Affiliation/Belonging Needs — needs for affection, sense of belongingness, acceptance, and friendship; satisfied through cordial colleague relations. (iv) Esteem Needs — needs for self-respect, autonomy, status, recognition, and attention; e.g., job titles. (v) Self-Actualisation Needs — the highest level, referring to the drive to become what one is capable of becoming, including growth, self-fulfilment, and achievement of goals. Maslow's theory rests on four assumptions: (a) people's behaviour is based on their needs; (b) needs follow a hierarchical order from basic to higher; (c) a satisfied need no longer motivates — only the next higher need motivates; (d) a person moves to the next level only when the lower need is satisfied. Although some propositions have been questioned regarding the classification and rigidity of the hierarchy, the theory remains widely recognised because it helps managers identify the need level of employees and provide appropriate motivation.

Q12 What are the common barriers to effective communication? Suggest measures to overcome them.

Barriers to effective communication can be grouped into four categories: (i) Semantic Barriers — arise from wrong words, faulty translations, symbols with multiple meanings, unclarified assumptions, technical jargon, and mismatched body language. (ii) Psychological Barriers — include premature evaluation of a message, lack of attention by the receiver, loss of information through transmission and poor retention, and distrust between communicator and communicatee. (iii) Organisational Barriers — include restrictive organisational policy, rigid rules and procedures, status differences creating psychological distance, complexity in organisation structure causing distortion, and lack of communication facilities. (iv) Personal Barriers — include a superior's fear of challenge to authority, lack of confidence in subordinates, unwillingness of subordinates to communicate, and lack of proper incentives for communication. Measures to overcome these barriers: (a) Clarify ideas before communication — study the problem in depth and state it clearly. (b) Communicate according to the needs of the receiver — adjust language and content to the education and understanding level of the receiver. (c) Consult others before communicating — involve subordinates in developing the communication plan to gain their cooperation. (d) Be aware of language, tone, and content — the language should be understandable and not offend sentiments. (e) Convey things of help and value to listeners — relate the message to the interests and needs of the audience. (f) Ensure proper feedback — ask questions and encourage the receiver to respond. (g) Follow up communications — regularly follow up to remove hurdles in implementing instructions. (h) Be a good listener — patient and attentive listening resolves many communication problems.

Q13 Explain different financial and non-financial incentives used to motivate employees of a company?

Financial Incentives are those measurable in monetary terms: (i) Pay and Allowances — basic salary, dearness allowance, and other allowances; increments may be linked to performance. (ii) Productivity Linked Wage Incentives — wage plans that link payment to increase in productivity at individual or group level. (iii) Bonus — incentive offered over and above wages or salary. (iv) Profit Sharing — employees receive a share in the profits of the organisation, motivating them to improve performance and increase profits. (v) Co-partnership / Stock Option — employees are offered company shares at a price lower than the market price, creating a sense of ownership; e.g., Infosys has implemented this scheme. (vi) Retirement Benefits — provident fund, pension, and gratuity providing financial security after retirement. (vii) Perquisites — fringe benefits such as car allowance, housing, medical aid, and free education for children. Non-Financial Incentives focus on psychological, social, and emotional satisfaction: (i) Status — ranking of position in the organisation satisfying esteem and social needs through authority, responsibility, and prestige. (ii) Organisational Climate — characteristics like individual autonomy, reward orientation, and consideration to employees that positively influence behaviour. (iii) Career Advancement Opportunity — skill development programmes and sound promotion policy enabling employees to grow to higher-level jobs. (iv) Job Enrichment — designing jobs with greater variety, higher skill requirements, more autonomy, and personal growth opportunity. (v) Employee Recognition Programmes — acknowledging employees' achievements through congratulations, notices, awards, and mementos. (vi) Job Security — assurance of stable future income and work so employees work with greater zeal. (vii) Employee Participation — involving employees in decision-making through joint management committees, work committees, etc. (viii) Employee Empowerment — giving more autonomy and powers to subordinates, making them feel that their jobs are important.

Q14 In an organisation all the employees take things easy and are free to approach anyone for minor queries and problems. This has resulted in everyone taking to each other and thus resulting in inefficiency in the office. It has also resulted in loss of secrecy and confidential information being leaked out. What system do you think the manager should adopt to improve communication?

The organisation is currently relying excessively on informal communication (grapevine), which, while fast, lacks structure and leads to inefficiency, loss of secrecy, and leakage of confidential information. The manager should adopt a Formal Communication system. Formal communication flows through official channels designed in the organisation chart and may be vertical (upward or downward) or horizontal. It is generally recorded and filed. By establishing clear communication channels — such as written memos, official notices, prescribed reporting structures, and formal meetings — the manager can ensure that information flows in an orderly and controlled manner, confidentiality is maintained, and accountability is established. At the same time, the manager should not entirely suppress informal channels but should use them intelligently to gauge employee reactions while keeping official matters within formal networks.