

INFOGRAPHICS

Weekly Meeting Highlights 17.9.20

Direct/indirect communication: How is it today? Same or different by industry? How should it be?

<u>The Details</u>

- "If you know only one thing, you know nothing"
 - Multiple bits of information must be compared in order to be effectively analyzed
- There is no global standard for communication, interactions in the business-world
 - Heavily context dependent
 - Who is in the meeting?
 - What variety of languages are spoken amongst participants?
 - How familiar are participants with one another?
- Indirect communication may be prevalent for the following reasons:
 - Individuals not wanting to stand out
 - The unconfirmed belief that everyone thinks the same thing
 - Fear of being wrong
 - Belief that one's opinion is not worth mentioning
 - Not one's place to speak-up (hierarchy-related)
- Japanese are taught to listen well and not to communicate well

Indirect Communication

Prevalent within all cultures / organizations

- Differ in form based on
- region/culture
- Each culture has their own version of indirect communication
- More closely related to 建前, tatemae ○ ~One's visible feelings
- Thought of by some as nuanced and therefore pleasant
- May be confused for politeness
- Can lead to misunderstanding between
- speakers and listeners
 Closely tied to hierarchy within organizations
- Can lead to ineffective
 - instructions from superiors
 Assumption that things are understood
 - Fewer follow-up questions
 - May stifle sharing of important information

Effective Communication

- Confirmation is Key
- Nurtures and encourages polite disagreement
- Encourages evidence-based analysis of topics
- Considerate of international variations in communication-styles

Improving Communication

- Demonstrate effective communication from top leadership
- Ask confirmation questions
- Please share your understanding with the group
 - Red-light, Yellow-light, Green-light meeting structure
 - Encourage critical questions
 - Encourage judgement-free portions of meetings
- Provide opportunities for all participants to share/question

Direct Communication

- More prominent in Western cultures
- More closely related to 本音, hon'ne
 ~One's true feelings
- Perceived as more effective
- Can gives speaker a sense of false strength
- Often interpreted as too direct
- May be poorly received by listeners
 Likely to stifle communication
- Argument avoidance
 Less common worldwide
- Less common worldwide
 May be seen as inconsiderate of other communication styles
- May stifle sharing of important information

TWF Considerations

- Effectiveness of communication is more relevant than indirect/direct
 - Polite disagreement about specific points is very useful
 - *Psychological safety* : constructive disagreement is needed
- Green-light feedback
 - Keywords/phrases to be used during feedback sessions
- Honnae Forums within companies
 - When employees are given an authentic opportunity to speak frankly about their companies, they do provide real information
 - Needs to be implemented in incremental phases
- Management cannot be expected to reasonably resolve all issues for employees
- How does indirect/direct communication relate to managing hierarchy and position?
- How do 21st century skills connect with indirect/direct communication
- It is essential to understand and recognize that comparisons are key to understanding
- Ways to effectively leverage the reality that institutional practice is easier to change than culture
- Remote work may be having a positive impact on more direct/effective communication because

<u>Useful Links</u>

Red-light, Yellow-light, Green-light Communications (<u>https://thoughtbot.com/blog/red-light-yellow-light-green-light-a-design-e</u> <u>xercise-for-getting-the-whole-teams-feedback</u>)