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Communication and the Written Memorandum

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COMMUNICATION

AND

THE WRITTEN MEMORANDUM

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I. INTRODUCTION

"Nobody ever tells me these things."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner?"

"I guess I should have included you in the list of people getting my memo."

How often have we heard these words? Avoiding these are what communication is all about. I have chosen to study a communication tool, the written memorandum, as my culminating project. It has been chosen because of the severe lack of good communication skills and principles used in organizational management today. This is particularly true with regard to those special techniques used in writing a memorandum.

Because communication for management can be such a broad topic, using the written memorandum, in particular exploring its possibilities for constructive use and showing how effective it may be as an agent of management from the top line manager to the subordinate, will be the focus of this paper. The paper will develop the following: the importance of solving the problem of poor communicative skills in writing a memo, the definition of the terms communication and the written memorandum, the processes and patterns of communication, the uses of the written communication, and the format of writing a memorandum. A case study of the written memorandum, using the Providence Program, Inc. (a resocialization center for juvenile offenders) as a research model, will conclude the project along with specific recommendations on the improved use of written memoranda as an effective management tool.

After six years of working as an administrative assistant for the Providence Program, Inc. I became quite aware of the formal flow of communications between all levels of its management, particularly through the

use of the written memorandum, and because of my interest in the admini-

stration of the program, I have chosen it as a model for my case study.

Providence Program, Inc. is a program organized into five components

with particular emphasis on rehabilitation of the juvenile offender.

These inter-related components are: an Assessment Center, an Alternative

School, a Group Home for Boys, a Work-Study Program, and an After-Care

Program. Because all of the facilities are not located in a central

building, but spread throughout the community in four locations, there

is a continual flow of communications through the organization. One of

the major obstacles in this unusually well-organized operation of the

Providence Program, Inc. is the excessive use of the written memorandum.

I have delved into the subject of communication hoping to find a "tool"

to help develop a clear method for writing memoranda for the management

of Providence. With this objective in mind, I feel the proper usage of

the principles of a written memo will increase the work proficiency of all

levels of management as well as increase the communication skills of each

staff member.

II. COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW

Great leaders of the world have for thousands of years used the
written word as a tool to communicate with their people. The Semites,
Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, and Romans used symbols for their communi-
cations and messages. With the invention of the printing press, communi-
cation between nations became widespread, and revolutions of all kinds
occurred simultaneously--educationally, politically, and intellectually.
With the development of Samuel Johnson's dictionary in 1755, Noah
Webster's dictionary in 1828 and the first typewriter in 1867, a new era
of communication was evolving. With this surge of printing, the news,
knowledge and commercial information was now available to all persons of
all nations. Their interests heightened in education and politics.
Communication was to become one of the most important industries of the
world. By World War I communication via the written communique came into
greater importance. Today the study of communications includes large and
diversified topics, encompassing the many published communications such as
newspapers, books, magazines, as well as the internal communiques of
business managements.

Communication among people is a problem; not a new one, but one that
faces everyone, everyday of our life. In fact, it seems that each day our
newspapers emphasize examples of poor communications. For example, a
story on the St. Louis Cardinal baseball team appearing in a local paper,
written by Jeff Meyer (Appendix 1.), emphasized and illustrated the poor
communications the manager, Vern Rapp, had with his players. Mr. Meyers
says, "Rapp never really knew the definition of what he believed was his
strength: communication. His door was always open, but his mind was
always closed." The article on communication between parent and child

4.

(Appendix 2.) as well as the article on the St. Louis Public School System

(Appendix 3.) are also excellent examples of the importance of communication between the speaker and the listener.

How does this system of communication work, either oral or written, between individuals? Or in the examples given above? The communication system itself must achieve some purpose and that purpose is the message the communicator writes or speaks. It must be heard, received, and understood by the receiver. It is the recipient who actually communicates, for if he does not receive the message, he has not heard or read or understood the communication. If the communicator believes he is delivering one message, and he wants his communication to succeed, the receiver must interpret the meaning in the same way it was given. In Vern Rapp's case he had turned off his hearing mechanism. Before he even uttered a sound his players had tuned him out because of their total dislike for the man. Their emotions interfered so much it kept the players from receiving his messages.

Because of our failures at our attempts to communicate properly some of us have tried "doing our own thing", such as sensitivity training, assertive training, transactional analysis, or even extra-sensory perception. These self help programs have become quite popular in aiding our person-to-person communication. Even our actions, body language, and facial expressions can influence us in communicating with each other. Our gestures, our tone of voice and our environment can play an active role in communication.

III. DEFINING COMMUNICATIONS

To introduce the necessity of properly written memos and their

relationship to management communications, it is necessary to under-

stand the meanings and definitions of communication, managerial communi-

cation and the memorandum.

The American Management Association defines communication as:

> an exchange of information and/or any behavior that results
> in an exchange of meaning. Communication is a mutual exchange
> of facts, thought, opinions or emotions. This requires pre-
> sentation and reception, resulting in common understanding
> among all parties - this does not necessarily imply agreement.[1]

This implies that our attempts at communication are not always an actual

communication due to the lack of our understanding of each other. In a

written communication it can mean "imparting or exchanging thoughts of

information in a process which includes a writer, material, facts, ideas,

information, recommendations, conclusions which the writer wants to

communicate to a reader or group of readers."[2] The American College

Dictionary defines communication as coming from the Latin word communis,

meaning common, the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or

information by speech, writing, or signs.

Because the focus of this project is on managerial communication a

specific definition of organizational communication is needed. George

Vardaman, in his book Managerial Control Through Communication, defines

it as follows:

> By communication we mean the flow of material, information,
> perception, and understandings between the various parts and
> members of an organization... all the methods, means and
> media of communication (communication technology), all the
> channels, networks, and systems of communication (organiza-
> tional structure), all the person-to-person interchange
> (interpersonal communication), and all the data and infor-
> mation necessary to carry out organizational tasks (job

relevant communication). It includes all aspects of communication: up, down, lateral; speaking, writing, listening, reading; methods; media, modes; channels, networks, flow; interorganizational, interpersonnel. And when seen in this light, it is apparent that communication is central to managerial control and to organizational survival. [3]

Another definition of communication in an organization, managerial communication, is the means of passing information by using channels of the grapevine, a formal chain of command or even a complaint box. Communication is an act of imparting ideas or making a person understand another; it is an act of inducing others to interpret an idea intended by the speaker or writer. In business communication should be purposeful and transmit information from one person to another or to a group of persons to achieve mutual cooperation and action.

Communication by management can succeed only if the manager "effectively communicates not merely information but also attitudes, moods, and emotions."[4] The manager must understand all principles of communication so his subordinates can effectively communicate with each other. Communication must be a "two way street", free, open, and easy for a relaxed level of dialogue. It is the art and skill of getting others to do the things you want accomplished.

"Communication concentrates on goals to be reached, giving employees the information they need to do their part. It motivates them to overcome the obstacles, seeks and channels their participation."[5]

One of the main purposes of communication is to insure cooperation and change. Communication must be, then, a transfer of information between more than one person and must be clearly understood or else the message will be completely ignored or misunderstood. Peter Drucker says in Management, Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices that a communication cannot be received unless the message is in the perception of the recipient.

The recipient is the true communicator. Human behavior plays such an important part in communication that many messages are not accepted because the receiver's personal feelings become involved and form a barrier to the communication.

Drucker continues to say that words with pleasant associations are more easily retained and words that are negative tend to be suppressed. He feels that words with little meaning to the recipient do not make the necessary demands, do not appeal to our emotions and consequently will not demand any action for change. Drucker feels that managerial communications should make demands on people: to do something, to believe something, and to appeal to our emotions. If these values fit into the goals of the recipient of the message or his purposes or values, then the communication will be received. If the message goes against our motivations and the communication is resisted and opposed, it will not be received favorably and there will be no communication between the sender and the receiver.

According to Drucker unless the message can "key" into the receiver's own values, at least to some degree, there is no communication. It is not just enough to listen or read, the sender must focus on something common to both sender and recipient as well as focusing on the motivation or perception of the intended recipient. You need to know the receiver's feelings, values, and operations if you really want your managerial communication to work.

To ensure this good reception you must have the correct atmosphere and attitudes. If the relations between two persons are good it will not be difficult for the recipient to understand the message and in return give his full cooperation.

DEFINITION OF WRITTEN MEMO

"A memorandum, usually called a memo, is a standardized form used for sending written communication within an organization from one department to another or from one person to another."[6] A written memo is usually short, limited, used to convey information in the form of an internal office or intra and inter-organizational written letter or report, and used for routine communication. Because the written memo serves as a permanent record it sometimes is used instead of oral or verbal messages. It maintains a permanent record on pertinent subject matter and should be put into clear form and stated in plain language.

A written memo conveys information which makes it an important medium of exchange. Most often the reader wants information, recommendations, or background material concisely stated in easy to understand language. This memo is an easy form of transacting official business and becomes an effective organizational tool because of its briefness and informalness. The memo does not take the place of a formal letter, a bulletin or report.

"The horror of that moment," the King went on, "I shall
never forget!"
"You will, though," the Queen said, "If you don't
make a memorandum of it."
                              --Lewis Carroll,
                                   Through the Looking Glass

IV. SELECTION OF A COMMUNICATION MEDIUM

Now that the world of communication has been introduced, particularly managerial communication, and a little of its background, it is time to delve into the actual methodology of a communicator in an organization. The communicator must make many decisions during the day in order to expedite the work flow. Much of this will be in the form of information and/or instructions, orders, meetings, telephone calls, etc. In this manner the manager keeps in touch with all members of the staff in the organization.

Many authorities have written on the selection of proper communication media. Background information from Auren Uris' Developing Your Executive Skills, explains in some depth how to choose the proper means for communicating. Excerpts from other sources are included for information on the selection of a communication medium.

Because there are certain advantages and disadvantages in using either the written or oral message, the sender must select the proper form or medium for the communication. This is the key to greater communication effectiveness. The advantages and disadvantages listed on the following page are this author's distinctive synthesis of several sources. All of them are important in the decision of choosing the correct medium. These choices are the personal preference of this author.

Most of the items are self explanatory, although a few introductory comments are in order. Policies, rules, and job descriptions are always in written form so as to have a permanent record of the regulations governing the organization. Retention of certain information as contracts, financial data, etc., for legal purposes are necessary to all organizations.

For further clarification of written records the following definitions

may be of value to the reader. <u>Policies</u> can be verbal or written, prefer-ably written, and serve as a guide for thinking and acting in specific situations. Policies define the area in which decisions are made and managerial action will take place. If these policies are verbal there is likely to be some misunderstanding.

<u>Procedures</u> define the sequence of operations that are to take place in order that work can be accomplished. Procedures are usually a series of related tasks that make up this sequence.

<u>Rules</u> specify certain behavior that is either required in an organiza-tion or prohibited. <u>Methods</u> prescribe how a task is to be accomplished and are specific and detailed. <u>Standards</u> provide a basis for evaluating the performance of required tasks and are a unit of measurement.

All of these together influence and direct much of the required behavior in an organization, and they are primarily designed to enhance the coordi-nation and efficiency of that behavior.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
1. Written Records	**1. Written Records**

notes or memos
   permanent
   tangible record
   pre-thought message
   precise and accurate
   brief or lengthy
   guides to learning:
      policies, rules,
      job descriptions
	notes or memos
	   slower method than oral
	   sometimes delayed
	   no control at recipient's
	      end
	   one way form limited to
	      permanent words
	      on paper

2. Face-to-Face or Spoken
            (oral)
	2. Face-to-Face or Spoken
	            (oral)

personal contact makes it
informal; sets a mood;
rapid and quick response
less complicated
permits show and discuss
      (visual)
	not permanent
	may not be easy
	   to terminate
	subjects the person
	   (recipient) to
	   pressure from
	   higher authority

3. Meetings	**3. Meetings**

permit discussion
multi-way flow
permit visuals with show
and tell or explain
	time consuming
	field day for person
	   who monopolizes the
	   conversation

4. Phone	**4. Phone**
speed permits questions and answers can be done from desk.	no record of conversation interruptions
5. Formal Report	**5. Formal Report**
comprehensive organized at leisure disseminated widely	takes considerable time. slow in writing; slow in reading

It is now a matter of choice when deciding which medium may be needed to get the effect or the message across. Sometimes two or more media may be used, such as an oral message being followed with the same message in written form.

There are other media of communication to be considered that are a form of dialogue, or conversation between two persons. The value of these are that they are face-to-face and your emotions, feelings and tone of voice may more easily set the mood of the conversation. For certain pur- poses these more personal conversations may be very effective. They are:

Trivia - breaks the ice and eases tension

Gossip - a "cousin" to trivia, an escape valve, mostly harmless, but an exchange of insignificant thoughts; can be damaging when distorted, and really a danger. Gossip frequently endangers the employee because the messages are often incorrect. This is often a detriment to the organization since all this incorrect gossip must be smoothed away and corrected. This is time consuming for any director or executive.

The Grapevine - an extension of trivia and gossip; a channel of trivia and gossip through which they are transmitted. Sometimes the grapevine is faster than a formal network of communication. Some information may get distorted, particularly if the gossip is incorrect. The grapevine usually carries some information that is relevant to the personal interests of the employee. The negative infor- mation of the grapevine is more likely to flow down while the positive information flows up.

Silence - no verbalization gives us time for our mental processes to recap what has been said; time to recoup from verbal mental "gymnastics" and time for our battery to recharge.

Other techniques of dialogue or conversation may be in the form of discussion, confrontation, or argument. A contrary opinion or disagreement may be justified when your opinion can be constructive or you need to put your views on record. When disagreements occur alternative methods can be discussed. Joining forces to solve the problem may be mutual benefit. Using mutual respect for one another and a feeling of friendship leads to better achievement of the goals of the organization.

Memos on controversial matters should not be written in an impulsive manner, as the memo then puts the words of the writer on permanent record. Better that the memo should sit on the writer's desk than to be distributed through the organization before the heat of the anger has passed.

Studies have revealed some interesting data on effectiveness of various media. In <u>Principles of Management</u>, George R. Terry says "memos, letters, and bulletin boards are relatively the least effective for most communication. In general, face-to-face communication carries the message much better than printed media."[7] There are numerous reasons to support this cliam which is often heard in the literature on managerial communications. For instance, although a writer may spend ample time in writing his message, sometimes these communications have the disadvantage of being poorly composed. These messages are not always received clearly, and will then have to be followed with oral communications. This leads to additional time and expense. It would be wise and prudent for the writer of any communcation to take ample time in deciding the most effective medium for sending his message. In any communication the objective will be to achieve

change, whether or not it is achieved formally. The writer must use his communication to not only get things done but to improve the human relations of his organization.

V. WRITING THE MEMO

The process of writing memos of communication is not terribly complex, but certain writing skills must be employed to be sure your message is being received. The memo writer must be aware, first of all, of the principles of communication so the receiver as well as the sender can effectively communicate.

Efficiency of writing rests entirely with the writer and is his responsibility alone. Writing a memo requires thinking first of the message, and its purpose, and then carefully and thoughtfully planning the message. Consequently, you must always keep your reader in mind. With your thoughts prepared in orderly fashion you can easily organize your materials in logical sequences of events and ideas.

The message must be written coherently with correct grammar and must meet certain criteria. In this manner it will be more easily understood. Shurter and Williamson, _Written Communication in Business_, suggest the following fundamentals to make the memo easier to understand:

1. Write on the level of your reader's understanding
2. Be concise
3. Watch your pace
4. Keep your sentences short
5. Put your qualifying ideas in separate sentences
6. Use paragraphs to break your text into readable units
7. Avoid too much use of the passive voice
8. Use verbs
9. Be direct
10. Keep your tone appropriate
11. Be specific

These authors also state that because of the "pressure of time" and "urgent conditions", sometimes memos are too hastily written. But, this factor sometimes makes it an important "medium of exchange". Consequently, the factor of time will make the memo writer have to decide on its main purpose. He must "subordinate every fact or idea to this central idea or

main purpose and show how these facts or ideas are related logically to the central theme. He must reject any material which is superflous, irrelevant, or unnecessary for the readers understanding of the central idea."[9]

Weaver says in Persuasive Writing that the following rules should be remembered when writing memos:

1. Keep the reader in mind at all times
2. Keep your sentences short
3. Use familiar, concrete words whenever you can and wherever you can
4. Use the word you need, but try to find synonyms of one or two syllables for the long ones
5. Watch out for redundancy
6. Use parenthesis, quotation marks freely, brackets, dashes, and question marks to make reading easier
7. Try to get a verb into the act in every ten words. Do not let nouns do the work a verb should do.
8. Prefer verbs in the active voice, especially when writing about people.[10]

Weaver continues to say that it is impossible to follow all these suggestions at once, but they should be used as guidelines to aid in the drafting and editing of written memoranda and reports.

VI. THE FORMAT

The form used in a written memo is quite simple and merely consists of the following in this order:

First Line - Shows who is to receive the memo or message and his title

TO:

Second Line - Shows who the sender is and his title

FROM:

Third Line - Usually shows what the subject matter may be

RE or SUBJECT:

The last line is for the date

DATE:

Your message should be decided upon before you dictate, and if ~~their~~ its purpose is complete and clear with the correct conventions of effective writing, your communication will have less problems in accomplishing its purpose. No signatures are needed on memos, but sometimes the sender puts his initials next to his typed name.

Some organizations have printed forms that are specifically made for the memorandum. These help the writer get on immediately with his message and place all pertinent information under the proper title as to who wrote it, whom it is to be sent, when it was written and what the subject matter is. Consequently, it is then easily typed, read, and filed.

The best guide for material to be included on a memo form is to ask who? what? when? and where? The rules for writing a publicity release for the news media are much the same for writing a memorandum, inasmuch as the same questions are asked. In asking "Who?", you are stating the involvement of the people in the memo and who may be affected, or consulted, who may have caused the situation and/or who may add to it. "What?", will

consider the specifics of data of what will happen or has happened.
"When?" decides on the time element to be considered, such as when a
report may be due and/or when a decision must be made. "Where?" specifies
the exact place the situation may occur, either within an entire organiza-
tion or within one part of a program.

VII. THE COST AND TIME EFFECTIVENESS

It has been said that "50 million file drawers hold an estimated 250 billion pieces of paper in American offices, and the total mounts daily."[11] Too many memos slow down communication and sometimes secretaries can never keep up with the mountains and back log of typing. Memos should be cut down to a bare minimum where it becomes a meaningful and useful tool of information. If the memo is short and easy to understand it will save time for all concerned. If the memos are brief and to the point it has been argued that "15% of all forms can be eliminated."[12] Alfred M. Cooper, in his book The Art of Good Listening, states that our working hours are allocated in the following spans of time, "16% reading, 9% writing, 45% listening, and 30% talking."[13] 75 - 90% of our working hours are allocated to communication, and Flippo says "10% are in reading, 5% in writing, 50% in listening and 35% in talking."[14] Comparison can be made to Nicols and Stevens figure of "4% reading, 11% in writing, 63% listening, and 22% in talking."[15] Even though the authors do not come to an agreement on the time allocated to each skill, it is quite evident that a great deal of our working hours is spent in communication.

One of the disadvantages of the written memo is the cost of writing and distributing it. How many executives stop to analyze the cost of their memos and the time and effort spent to think through the message, dictate it, have the secretary type and distribute the memo, as well as the time spent for the recipient to read and answer the memo? In an article published in 1967, Eric Webster said "the cost of unnecessary memos is uncountable but colossal."[16] It would be wise for today's manager to stop and think before he writes his next memo.

VIII.   KINDS OF COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

It is important to have a two way process of communication to be an effective communicator. Usually executives use the patterns of upward, downward and lateral flows of information. These patterns provide an efficient manner of getting information from one group to another. (See figure 1, page 22.)

The downward flow should achieve action or some type of response from the employee. It orders, directs and transmits a message from the sender to the receiver. It can be used for reassurance to the employee as well as motivation. Downward communication is not always successful,as it cannot function alone and must be used with upward communication that has been successfully established. The subordinate will not accept downward communication if there is not some credibility of the message or some feeling of allegiance to the sender as a leader or person. Downward communication focuses only on what the higher level has to say.

Some downward channels from management are:

1. chain of command
2. posters and bulletins
3. company periodicals
4. letters to employees
5. employee handbooks
6. information racks
7. loudspeaker system
8. pay inserts
9. annual reports
10. grapevines
11. group meetings
12. labor unions

Upward communication is a channel of sending messages from the lower to the higher level. It is used as a feedback but frequently tends to flow slowly. Often it is difficult to initiate by the subordinate because of the level of prestige the manager may have; his higher status sometimes interferes in this flow of communication. The subordinate's lack of education may even prevent him from communicating freely and coherently. It is possible for this barrier of communication to be blamed on the superior's inadequacy of articulating to the subordinate.

As Keith Davis states, there are certain areas in which a subordinate can keep his manager informed to improve their upward communication:

1. any matters in which his suprvisor may be held accountable by those senior to him

2. any matters in disagreement or likely to cause controversy within or between any units of the organization

3. matters requiring advice by the supervisor or his coordination with other persons or units

4. any matters involving recommendations for changes in, or variances from, established policies

5. any other matter which will enable higher management to improve economic and social performance

Some of the methods to improve upward channels of communication are:

1. counseling
2. grievance or complaint system
3. consultive supervision
4. group meetings
5. suggestion systems
6. opinion surveys
7. open door policy
8. encouragement of employee letters
9. letters to the editors
10. face to face contact
11. through the grapevine

Although some of these methods do improve upward channels of communication they all have disadvantages as well as advantages. For example, group meetings are advantageous in that they allow many persons to participate and at the same time give them a sense of belonging in theorganization. Also, these meetings may be helpful in distributing information. Some of the disadvantages are that the meetings have a tendency to run for long periods of time and, unless the chairman or director is a strong leader, the meetings may get out of hand or off the agenda quickly. Many times a strong participant monopolizes the conversation so much that only his viewpoint is being heard.

As far as employee letters or letters to the editors are concerned, the basic disadvantage is the lack of two way communication. These letters do nothing more than give a message from the writer to the receiver, do

not usually require an answer, and unless the recipient understands and
perceives the message, these letters do little more than give information.
Consequently, they are only downward or upward communication as the case
may be.

The Flow of Information Along Formal Communication Channels

Downward
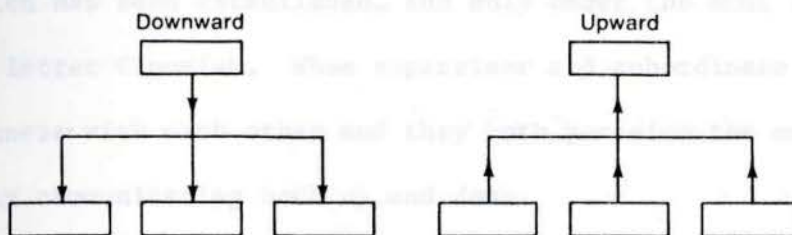
From a higher to a lower level: Carries policies, orders, directives, and performance standards. Is used to evoke action from subordinates and coordinate activities.

Upward

From a lower level to a higher level: Carries control information pertaining to performance. Is used as a feedback device.

Lateral
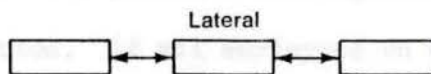
Between functions on the same organizational level: Carries information vital to the effective performance of work between functions that are interdependent. Is used to coordinate activities by the exchange of data. Also used by staff for transmitting technical information necessary to facilitate the work of other functions.

Diagonal
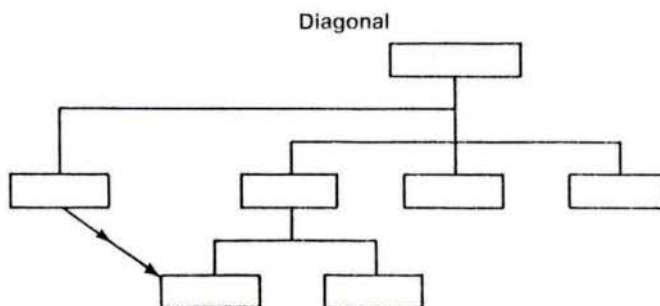
Between special staff groups and line functions: Used by staff to transmit information and advice to line. Sometimes used by staff to exercise functional staff authority.

Source: Haimann, Theo and Scott, William G. Management in the Modern Organization. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974) p. 319.

The formal communication channels in an organization are necessary for information to flow properly. These channels are usually formal or official and informal. Each carries messages from one person to another, downward, upward, lateral or diagonal. The problems with the downward flow of information are many. This flow cannot be successful until upward communication has been established, and only under the most ideal conditions can the latter flourish. When supervisor and subordinate have respect and openness with each other and they both perceive the message, then they are truly communicating both up and down.

Lateral communication, which would appear on the surface to be the most natural and freest form, can actually be one of the most difficult. Employees on the same level are apprehensive of both responsibility and authority, and resent any possible infringement on their own position within the organization. If all employees on the same level of the organization are able to work harmoniously, lateral flow of communication will be maximized.

IX. HIERARCHY AND COMMUNICATION

It is not always easy to communicate exactly what we mean. Most often we are misunderstood and our message does not come across. Frequently, hierarchy or the rank of staff in an organization plays a part in communicating and keeps upward communication from flowing freely.

In his essay on bureaucracy, Max Weber describes the characteristics of bureaucracy as functioning in the following manner: "the principles of office hierarchy and of levels of graded authority mean a firmly ordered system of super - and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the high ones."[18] Because of this bureaucracy of office hierarchy, channels of communication tend to flow easily downward from the top level of management and sometimes create the difficult flow of communication channels upward or even laterally. Some employees feel inadequate or inept, or beneath their superiors, and hesitate to ask their supervisors for help in solving problems. No one likes to show his ignorance. Even the level of social or economic status may prevent a free flow of communication; the lower the worker the more difficult it becomes for him to communicate upward. Consequently, good understanding of the employees and the encouragement of upward channels of communication as well as downward will enhance the performance and communication of all management.

X. COMMUNICATION ANALYZER CHARTS

The Communication Analyzer Charts on the following page were developed by the Research Institute of America. "These simple but effective instruments for checking your communication setup involve:

1. filling in the information called for in the appropriate column;

2. applying the check list questions to each entry you have made;

3. reviewing all questions answered No. They reveal points where your communications can be streamlined;

Chart II of the Communication Analyzer makes possible an examination of the communication you receive. It is to be used in the same way as Chart I.

Reexamine all the No answers. They are the ones that indicate either overloading or power shortage in your communications circuit."[19]

COMMUNICATIONS ANALYZER

⊝ COMMUNICATIONS ANALYZER

Chart I—Sending

Name of Communi-cation	To Whom Sent?	About What?	Method (Phone, written, face to face)?	Frequency (How often sent)?	Apply all questions to each item in the first column.		
						Yes	No
Example: Attendance Report	Bill Jones Per-sonnel	Atten-dance	Writ-ten Form	Weekly	1. Is the communi-cation really needed (that is, used) by the person receiving it?	☐	☐
					2. If it is a request for information, are you sending it to the best source?	☐	☐
					3. Does the com-munication ask for information already on hand in another form? (For example, payroll records may serve as an attendance record.)	☐	☐
					4. Are you commu-nicating too frequently about the same things? (A monthly report substituted for a weekly one may cut the job by 75 percent.)	☐	☐
					5. Are your com-munications frequent enough?	☐	☐
					6. Are you using the best method of communicating for this material? (See the Channel Chooser Chart.)	☐	☐

Excerpt from: Uris, Auren, <u>Developing Your Executive Skills</u>,
McGraw Hill Book Co., N.Y. 1955, P. 96

MANAGEMENT TOOL KIT

€ COMMUNICATIONS ANALYZER

Chart II—Receiving

Name of Communi- cation	From Whom?	About What?	Method (Phone, written, face to face)?	Frequency (How often received)?	Apply all questions to each item in the first column.	Yes	No
<u>Example</u> Expense Report	Acctg. Dept.	Dept. Exp.	Writ- ten	Monthly	1. Do you really need this com- munication (That is, do you use the information it contains)?	☐	☐
					2. Does it get to you on time (when it's sched- uled to).	☐	☐
					3. In time? (Geting to you "on time" may still not be in time to do any good.)	☐	☐
					4. Does it contain all the informa- tion you need?	☐	☐
					5. Do you need all the information it contains? (If not, you can take a load off the other fellow.)	☐	☐
					6. Does everyone who needs some or all of the in- formation receive it?	☐	☐
					7. Should you be passing along some of the information it contains?	☐	☐
					8. Are you getting this communica- tion in the best possible form for your needs? (For instance, you can't file a phone call for record- keeping.)	☐	☐

CASE STUDY

WITH

PROVIDENCE PROGRAM, INC.

RESEARCH DESIGN

My intent in this study was to decide if memos being written and received were clearly defined and effective (that is, produced the desired results of the sender and the receiver). So many superfluous and poorly written memos prevent the proper flow of communication in organizations today because objectives of the written memorandum are not being met.

To reach conclusions about these questions I designed a case study in the following manner using the Providence Program, Inc. for the research. First, I analyzed the written memorandum as it was used by the Providence Program staff to determine if this method of communication was obtaining the desired results. Second, I attempted to show the effects that the memos actually have had on the receivers as well as show some of the problems incurred in using this method of communication.

To evaluate the memos, I gathered information from the top level of supervisors and directors of the Providence Program, Inc., a not-for-profit organization. In personal, face-to-face interviews I documented the information by using three specific questionnaires that were par-ticularly relevant in the evaluation of the written memo and reflected the view of the writer as well as the recipient.

I used five memos from the Providence Program that were chosen ran-domly from the total pool written by the Executive Director and happened to illustrate some problems that occurred in communication by using the memo method. I analyzed the effect of these memos on the receivers and showed how communication methods may be improved by using specific sug-gestions to improve the flow of communication at Providence. I also showed how to implement the memo and how it may be used in decision making and problem solving.

Because of my past role as an Administrative Assistant at Providence for a considerable period of time, I became quite aware of the increasing amount of paper flow to and from all staff members in the form of the written memorandum. I felt that many memoranda could be dispensed with and other methods of effective communication used in their place.

I conducted these interviews in the offices of the Providence Program, Inc. at 607 N. Grand and chose to interview the Executive Director, who is the principal sender of the memos, and three of the Directors or Supervisors of the component organizations as the recipients. The Supervisors were the Business Manager, the Director of the Assessment Center, and the Director of the After-Care Program. These particular Directors were chosen because they were usually the direct recipients of the memos, and play an active role in the management of the program. At the termination of the interviews, I had informal discussions with these four staff members on their general feelings about writing memos and the effect these memoranda may have on their staff. I also chatted briefly with the two secretaries that are directly involved in this particular phase of management and was able to get some views on their feelings about the written memo as a communication tool.

To begin the case study five memos were chosen at random. The individual interviews did not take much more than thirty minutes and were conducted on an informal basis. Because I no longer worked in the program, I believe all those persons interviewed were open and objective in their answers. Previously, as a staff member, I felt I was almost an outsider to the majority of the staff. This was because of my very close working relationship for six years with the Executive Directors of the program, as well as my close relationship with the Board of Directors. I am sure the staff felt that I was more a member of management than a

subordinate. Fortunately, these feelings from the staff seemed to have vanished since I am no longer jeopardizing their positions.

In the following pages are the sample questionnaires, the criteria for evaluating memos, and the five memos that were selected. Following each memo are the tallies of the answers to the questions used in the interviews. First, the answers to the questionnaire I used with the Executive Director will be shown, and following these answers will be comments from the interview with him. Next, the answers to the questionnaire used in the interviews with the three Directors of the components on the same memo and their comments will follow.

Finally, my interpretations of the interviews will be followed by my analysis of the role of the pattern of memo writing in the broader communication network and organizational dynamics at Providence Program, Inc. I will conclude with a recommendation for action to the Executive Director of the Program.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (SENDER)

Because it is necessary to transmit a great deal of information to all levels of management, it would be ideal for all writers of memoranda and/or reports and letters to evaluate the style of their writing. After the main purpose of the memo has been determined the time has come to persuade the recipient to the point of view of the writer and guide the receiver to action. If the writer knows the recipient well the writer will have an advantage of getting feedback and make his future writing easier.

The following questions were posed to the Executive Director in the interview. However, these are useful criteria in analyzing or critiquing any memos. This list may also be used for the evaluation of all incoming or outgoing communications. The list is the author's synthesis of criteria from many sources and is intended to make the writing of memoranda much easier.

1. Is this memo accurate?

2. Will thismemo tell the recipient something they do not already know?

3. Is this memo written in a clear and concise manner? Is it direct and specific?

4. Is this memo in easily grasped form?

5. Does the tone of the memo match the expressed intent of the writer? Does it have a feeling of his own personality? His emotions?

6. Is this memo on the level of the reader's understanding? Does it use technical words or language beyond the reader's scope?

7. Is this memo limited to sentences of about 15 to 20 words? Shorter sentences will make the memo more readable and more effective.

8. Is the memo in paragraphs to break the text? Shorter paragraphs are more easily comprehended.

9. Is the memo written with the proper use of verbs? Is there too much use of the passive voice? Active verbs put life into your writing and passive verbs tend to be wordy and monotonous.

10. Does the memo convey to the reader exactly what the sender needs the recipient to do, say, or decide?

11. Does the memo convey to the recipient what the recipient should do with the information the writer is giving him? Or is the information so simplified that the memo does not need any action?

12. Does the memo state who is to receive the message? One or several persons, boss, subordinates or manager?

13. Does this memo need to be written for permanent records?

14. Does this memo cost too much in the time it took you to write it, having your secretary type it and distribute it in the organization?

15. Does this memo get the proper response or feedback that you intended?

To further evaluate incoming and outgoing communications, the following questions can quickly tell the sender if the memo should be written at all or perhaps another method should be used in its place:

1. Are the data relevant to the job? Useless data ladens you.

2. Could a form simplify the message?

3. Are you communicating too frequently about the same thing?

4. Does the information come on time or is it too late for your specific needs?

5. Can the memo be streamlined or shortened?

All these questions may not pertain to any given memo, but the answers to a few may hasten the writer's decision as to sending the memorandum or using some other channel of communication.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE DIRECTORS (RECIPIENTS)

1. What will you do with this memo after you receive it?
    Answer?   File?   Throw Away?

2. Will you act immediately if a job task or specific responsibility
    is assigned?

3. Have you received any information?

4. Will there necessarily be feedback to this memo?

5. Do you see any problems with this memo?

6. What sort of feeling do you have about this memo?

7. Are you able to judge the writer's feelings by this memo?

8. Do you think this memo should be a piece of information or perhaps
    ask you a question?

9. Does it contain superfluous detail?

10. Do you need it?

11. What information could you delete or dispense with?

12. Did the sender of the memo really get through to you, the recipient?
    How do you know? Did the job, if assigned, get done?

13. Do you as the recipient have any idea of the cost effectiveness -
    the energy/time that the Executive Director or the writer of the
    message spent on the memo?

14. Do you believe this same message could be as easily communicated by
    using a different method or media as:
    - telephone
    - face-to-face
    - newsletter
    - staff bulletin

After these questions are answered by the persons being interviewed it would

be important to discuss with them some of the weak spots in their communi-

cations.

M E M O R A N D U M   O N E

TO: TIM JONES, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

FROM: JIM RADFORD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: STAFF MEETINGS

DATE: January 19, 1978

I will be attending the weekly directors meeting in the future, beginning next week. As much as is feasible, I will give you my agenda prior to the meeting so that you and the Directors can be prepared to respond to my concerns and needs. As always, the meetings will center around your agenda and format as has been established throughout the year. There should be no change in these areas.

Furthermore, I would like for Mrs. Tuholske to attend the weekly Directors meetings to take the minutes. In turn, I would like for these minutes to be sent to all Directors for posting in their respective components. This procedure is intended to keep the staff informed as to current concerns and activities of the Directors, as a group, and what future trends might arise from such matters.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. I think this will expand upon our current lines of communication in a very positive fashion.

cc   Component Directors
     Jean Tuholske

JL

MEMORANDUM ONE

In Memo One, I questioned the Executive Director using the criteria for evaluating memos. These are his answers:

1. Is this memo accurate?

    Yes.

2. Will this memo tell the recipient something they do not already know?

    Yes.

3. Is this memo written in a clear and concise manner? Is it direct and specific?

    Yes.

4. Is this memo in easily grasped form?

    Yes.

5. Does the tone of the memo match the expressed intent of the writer?

    Yes.

6. Is this memo limited to sentences of about 15 to 20 words?

    Yes.

7. Is this memo on the level of the reader's understanding?

    Yes.

8. Is the memo written in paragraphs to break texts?

    Yes.

9. Is the memo written with the proper use of verbs?

    Yes.

10. Does the memo convey to the reader exactly what the sender needs the recipient to do, say, or decide?

    Yes.

11. Does the memo convey to the recipient what he intends to do with the information that he is given?

    Yes.

12. Does the memo state who is to receive the message? One or several

persons, boss, subordinates of manager?

Yes.

13. Does this memo need to be written for permanent records?

Yes.

14. Does this memo cost too much in the time it took you to write it, have your secretary type it and distribute it in the organization?

No.

15. Does this memo get the proper response or feedback that you intended?

Yes.

Comments:

The Director felt that this memo was a correctly written memo with explicit

information necessary for the recipients to have. It was written clearly,

concisely, was direct and specific. The memo was going to the right per-

sons, asking correct questions as well as clearly indicating what the

Director needed. This message was to be filed for permanent records, and

the Director only felt that it could have been shortened. The important

question concerning the cost brought much discussion, as the Director had

no idea about the cost of a written memo. My only comments were that I

thought it was not necessary to keep this particular memo as a permanent

record.

MEMO ONE

In Memo One I questioned the three Directors using the following Questionnaire.

1. What will you do with this memo after you receive it: Answer, File, or Throw it away?

   All answered they would file it.

2. Will you act immediately if a task or responsibility is assigned?

   Two Directors answered they would not act immediately, the third Director answered she was not sure.

3. Have you received any information?

   Two answered No.
   One answered Yes.

4. Is it necessary to have a feedback to this memo?

   Three answered No.

5. Do you see any problems with this memo?

   One answered No.
   Two answered Yes.

6. What sort of feeling do you have?

   One has a positive feeling
   One has a negative feeling
   One felt there was a message or undercurrent in the memo that was not being communicated.

7. Are you able to judge the writer's feelings by this memo?

   One answered Yes.
   Two answered No.

8. Should this memo be a piece of information or perhaps ask a question?

   Three answered it should be a piece of information.

9. Does it contain superfluous detail?

   One answered Yes.
   Two answered No.

10. Do you need it?

    One answered they needed it.
    Two answered they did not need it.

MEMO TWO

To: Tim Jones, Associate Director and Claretta Isom, Business Manager

From: James Radford, Executive Director

Re: Master Calendar of Reports

Date: ----

Please comprise a master calendar, with due dates, outlining when various reports, drawdowns, etc., should be submitted.

As new grants and contracts develop, please make sure to update the master calendar. Make sure that all components are surveyed as to make this planning document as comprehensive as possible.

Please design the calendar by month, including all items that are due for that month.

This document should illustrate, at a glance, what is due, when things are due, and to whom it is to be submitted. Thanks for your cooperation.

MEMO TWO

To the Executive Director the following questions were asked.

1. Is this memo accurate?

    Yes

2. Does this memo tell the recipients something they do not already know?

    The recipients knew about the memo previously

3. Is this memo written in a clear and concise manner? Is it direct and specific?

    Yes.

4. Is this memo in easily grasped form?

    Yes.

5. Does the tone of the memo match the expressed intent of the writer?

    Yes.

6. Is this memo on the level of the reader's understanding?

    Yes.

7. Is this memo limited to sentences of about 15 to 20 words?

    Yes.

8. Is the memo written in paragraphs to break texts?

    Yes.

9. Is the memo written with the proper use of verbs?

    Yes.

10. Does the memo convey to the reader exactly what the sender needs the recipient to do, say, or decide?

    Yes.

11. Does the memo convey to the recipient what he intends to do with the information that he is given?

    Yes.

12. Does the memo state who is to receive the message? One or several persons, boss, subordinates or manager?

    Yes.

13. Does this memo need to be written for permanent records?

     Yes.

14. Does this memo cost too much in the time it took you to write it,
     have your secretary type it and distribute it in organization?

     No.

15. Does this memo get the proper response or feedback that you intended?

     Yes.

Comments:

The writer of this memo thought that this was the best medium for this

particular message. There was no date put on the memo and no deadline

for the information that he requested. It was written correctly, con-

cisely and directly according to the principles set forth in this paper.

The only way to get a complete response to this communication and to make

sure the message has been received would be to put a due date on the memo.

In that way the proper results will be obtained, and at the proper time.

MEMO TWO

These are the questions posed to the one person directly involved as the recipient of the memo.

1. What will you do with this memo after you receive it? Answer?
    File? Throw Away?

    Put in piles of things to do.

2. Will you act immediately if a task or responsibility is assigned?

    No.

3. Have you received any information?

    No.

4. Is it necessary to have a feedback to this memo?

    Yes.

5. Do you see any problems with this memo?

    Time consuming to answer, but information worthwhile and needed.

6. What sort of feeling do you have?

    It is too time consuming to answer.

7. Are you able to judge the writer's feelings by this memo?

    Yes.

8. Should this memo be a piece of information or perhaps ask a question?

    Ask a question.

9. Does it contain superfluous detail?

    No.

10. Do you need it?

    No! Do not want to take the time to answer.

11. What information could you delete or dispense with?

    None.

12. Are you really getting the message? How do you know? Does the job get
    done?

Did not answer.

13. Do you have any idea of the cost effectiveness - the energy/time you and your secretary are spending on a written memo as well as that of the recipient?

Yes, very costly in time and funds.

14. Do you believe this same message could be as easily communicated by using a different method or media as: telephone, face-to-face, news-letter, staff bulletin?

Could be verbal, via telephone or in a face-to-face conversation.

Comments:

My feeling after interviewing a key manager is that this memo could have

been easily accomplished by a personal conversation and perhaps have had

better results. If the deadline is put on the memo better results will

be obtained. I had a feeling that this seemed like important and needed

details, but was additional busy work that should be accomplished routinely

at the onset of each school year or fiscal year.

MEMO THREE

To: Tim Jones, Associate Director, and Claretta Isom, Business Manager

From: James Radford, Executive Director

Re: Directors Meeting

Date: November 18, 1977

Please set aside time in your schedule to attend a director's meeting

from 1 P.M. - 3 P.M. on Friday, November 18, 1977 at the Administration

office.

It is important that all of you attend this meeting.

MEMO THREE

In this memo the following questions were asked of the Executive Director:

1. Is this memo accurate?

    Yes.

2. Does this memo tell something they do not already know?

    Yes.

3. Is this memo written in a clear and concise manner? Is it direct
    and specific?

    Yes.

4. Is this memo in easily grasped form?

    Yes.

5. Does the tone of the memo match the expressed intent of the writer?

    Yes.

6. Is this memo on the level of the reader's understanding?

    Yes.

7. Is this memo limited to sentences of about 15 to 20 words?

    Yes.

8. Is the memo written in paragraphs to break texts?

    Yes.

9. Is the memo written with the proper use of verbs?

    Yes.

10. Does the memo convey to the reader exactly what the sender needs
    the recipient to do, say, or decide?

    Yes.

11. Does the memo convey to the recipient what he intends to do with
    the information that he is given?

    Yes.

12. Does the memo state who is to receive the message? One or several
    persons, boss, subordinates or manager?

    Yes.

13. Does this memo need to be written for permanent records?

    No.

14. Does this memo cost too much in the time it took you to write it,
    have your secretary type it and distribute it in the organization?

    No.

15. Does this memo get the proper response or feedback that you intended?

    Yes.

Comments:

When I questioned the Director as to this being the best way of sending

the message he thought it was the best way. Nevertheless, on question

thirteen he answered that the memo need not be kept for permanent records.

If the memo does not need to be filed for permanency, then my suggestion

would be for his secretary to phone the message to the appropriate persons

to record the date of the meeting on their calendars.

MEMO THREE

In Memo Three I use the following questions to interview the three
component directors:

1. What will you do with this memo after you receive it? Answer?
    File? or Throw Away?

    > One answered she would file it.
    > Two answered that they would note the date and then throw
    > it away.

2. Will you act immediately if a task or responsibility is assigned?

    > All three answered yes.

3. Have you received any information?

    > Three answered yes.

4. Is it necessary to have a feedback on this memo?

    > Three answered No.

5. Do you see any problems with this memo?

    > One answered No.
    > One answered there was no reason for this meeting.
    > One answered she was up in the air as to the reason
    > for this meeting.

6. What sort of feeling do you have?

    > One had the feeling that the memo was informative.
    > One had the feeling that the memo made her feel anxious
    > about the message of a coming meeting.
    > One had the feeling that the memo made her feel apprehen-
    > sive and that the memo was too vague.

7. Are you able to judge the writer's feelings by this memo?

    > One answered Yes.
    > Two answered No.

8. Should this memo be a piece of information or perhaps ask a
    question?

    > One answered the memo should be a directive.
    > Two directors did not answer the question.

9. Does it contain superfluous detail?

    > Three directors answered No.

10. Do you need it?

> Two persons answered Yes.
> One person answered No.

11. What information could you delete or dispense with?

> One answered to delete the entire memo.
> Two answered that the memo was clear and nothing could be
> deleted.

12. Are you really getting the message? How do you know? Did the job
get done?

> All three persons answered Yes, the message did come
> across to them.

13. Do you have any idea of the cost effectiveness - the energy/time
you and your secretary are spending on a written memo as well as
that of the recipient?

> All three answered they knew the cost was high.

14. Do you believe this same message could be as easily communicated by
using a different method or medium as the telephone, face-to-face,
newsletter, or staff bulletin?

> Two answered the message could be given by phone.
> One answered the message should be put into the staff
> bulletin.

Comments:

It is evident that this very short message that was sent to the five com-

ponent Directors could have easily been given by the Executive Director's

secretary to each Director by a phone message, or perhaps even published

in the staff bulletin as a future date to remember. It is apparent that

the memo caused some sort of uneasiness as to the intent of the Director's

meeting, and the agenda should have been spelled out ahead of time.

MEMO FOUR

To: Tim Jones, Associate Director

From: James Radford, Executive Director

Re: Staff Manual

Date: March 16, 1978

Per our earlier discussion regarding the development of a staff manual,
I would like to suggest the following content item for inclusion in
the manual.

Continue to develop a file for the proto-type per my earlier directions.
Plan to have the proto-type finalized by June 30, 1978 or earlier.
Solicit ideas from the staff and feel free to add to the items I have
listed therein.

> History
> Personnel Policies
> Synopsis
> Job Descriptions
> Staff Roster
> Statement of Administrative Policy

MEMO FOUR

In the fourth memorandum the following questions were asked of the

Executive Director?

1. Is this memo accurate?

    Yes

2. Does this memo tell them something they do not already know?

    They knew of the message already

3. Is this memo written in a clear and concise manner? Is it direct
    and specific?

    Yes.

4. Is this memo in easily grasped form?

    Yes.

5. Does the tone of the memo match the expressed intent of the writer?

    Yes.

6. Is this memo on the level of the reader's understanding?

    Yes.

7. Is this memo limited to sentences of about 15 to 20 words?

    Yes.

8. Is the memo written in paragraphs to break texts?

    Yes.

9. Is the memo written with the proper use of verbs?

    Yes.

10. Does the memo convey to the recipient what he intends to do with
    the information that he is given?

    Yes.

11. Does the memo convey to the reader exactly what the sender needs the
    recipient to do, say, or decide?

    Yes.

12. Does the memo state who is to receive the message? One or several persons, boss, subordinates, or manager?

   Yes.

13. Does this memo need to be written for permanent records?

   No.

14. Does this memo cost too much in the time it took you to write it, have your secretary type it and distribute it in the organization?

   Do not know.

15. Does this memo get the proper response or feedback that you intended?

   Not as yet because the deadline is June 30, 1978.

Comments:

Again, if the message does not need to be kept as a permanent record then

perhaps it need not be written and could be done as efficiently in another

manner, e.g. by telephone or staff letter. I feel that if the Director had

analyzed the cost of the written memorandum he probably would have used

other media for transmitting his messages.

MEMO FOUR

All the persons interviewed were not addressed in this memo.

All questions were asked of only one person.

1. What will you do with this memo after you receive it? Answer it? File it? Throw Away?

   Answer as soon as possible

2. Will you act immediately if a task or responsibility is assigned?

   Gather information on a daily basis.

3. Have you received any information?

   Yes.

4. Is it necessary to have a feedback on this memo?

   Yes.

5. Do you see any problems with this memo?

   No.

6. What sort of feeling do you have?

   None.

7. Are you able to judge the writer's feelings by this memo?

   No.

8. Should this memo be a piece of information or perhaps ask a question?

   Should ask a question.

9. Does it contain superfluous information?

   No.

10. Do you need it?

    Yes.

11. What information could you delete or dispense with?

    None

12. Is this message getting through to you? How do you know? Does the job get done?

    Yes.

13. Do you have any idea of the cost effectiveness - the energy/time you and your secretary are spending on a written memo as well as that of the recipient?

        Yes.

14. Do you believe this same message could be as easily communicated by using a different method or media as: telephone, face-to-face, newsletter, or staff bulletin?

        No.

Comments:

The recipient of this memo felt that it was necessary to have it written

for a permanent record and that it was clear, concise, and to the point.

It is a time consuming task and one that perhaps should be shared with

the staff in a newsletter or staff bulletin. Even the Board Members of

the Providence Program, Inc. could be appointed to form a committee to

formulate new policies, and prepare a history of the program rather than

take valuable time from the staff members, many of whom are not qualified

to supply this information.

MEMO FIVE

To: All Directors

From: James Radford, Executive Director

Re: Retirement Program

Date: November 2, 1977

Mr. Milburn has now made two presentations, at which all interested
staff attended. Please let me know by Wednesday, November 9, 1977,
who in your component is interested in joining the plan.

MEMO FIVE

For the fifth and final memorandum the following questions were asked of the Executive Director:

1. Is this memo accurate?

    Yes.

2. Does this memo tell me something I do not already know?

    Yes.

3. Is this memo written in a clear and concise manner? Is it direct and specific?

    Yes.

4. Is this memo in easily grasped form?

    Yes.

5. Does the tone of the memo match the expressed intent of the writer?

    Yes.

6. Is this memo on the level of the reader's understanding?

    Yes.

7. Is this memo limited to sentences of about 15 to 20 words?

    Yes.

8. Is the memo written in paragraphs to break texts?

    Yes.

9. Is the memo written with the proper use of verbs?

    Yes.

10. Does the memo convey to the reader exactly what the sender needs the recipient to do, say, or decide?

    Yes.

11. Does the memo convey to the recipient what he intends to do with the information that he is given?

    Yes.

12. Does the memo state who is to receive the message? One or several persons, boss, subordinates, or manager?

    Yes.

13. Does this memo need to be written for permanent records?

    No.

14. Does this memo cost too much in the time it took you to write it, have your secretary type it and distribute in the organization?

    Do not know.

15. Does this memo get the proper response or feedback that you intended?

    Yes.

Comments:

As in the previous memoranda, if the memo need not be kept for a permanent record it might seem wise to find other effective media of sending the message, such as the telephone or face-to-face conversation.

MEMO FIVE

These questions were asked in the interview with the three component

Directors:

1. What will you do with this memo after you receive it? Answer? File

    or Throw Away?

    > Two answered they would throw it away.
    > One answered they would respond to it.

2. Will you act immediately if a task or responsibility is assigned?

    > Three answered Yes.

3. Have you received any information?

    > Two answered Yes.
    > One answered she was not interested in the message.

4. Is it necessary to have feedback on this memo?

    > Three answered Yes.

5. Do you see any problems with this memo?

    > Two answered No.
    > One answered that the memo was not written correctly.

6. What sort of feeling do you have?

    > One has a negative feeling.
    > Two had no feeling about it at all.

7. Are you able to judge the writer's feeling by this memo?

    > Three answered No.

8. Should this memo be a piece of information or perhaps ask a question?

    > They all answered it was correct the way it was written.

9. Does it contain superfluous detail?

    > Two answered No to the question.
    > One answered it contained no information of any importance
    > to her.

10. Do you need it?

    > Two answered Yes.
    > One answered No.

11. What information could you delete or dispense with?

>   Two answered they could not dispense with any information.
>   One answered that the memo should not have been written at all.

12. Did the message get through to you? How do you know? Does the job get done?

>   Two answered Yes.
>   One answered No.

13. Do you have any idea of the cost effectiveness - the energy/time you and your secretary are spending on a written memo as well as that of the recipient?

>   Yes, was the answer from all three Directors. And, yes, the cost was quite high.

14. Do you believe this same message could be as easily communicated by using a different method or medium, such as the telephone, face-to-face, newsletter, staff bulletin?

>   One answered that the memo should be written.
>   One answered that the message should be face-to-face.
>   One answered that the message should not have been written at all.

Comments:

As in the other memoranda, it might be wise to find other methods of sending this message such as face-to-face conversation. Because of the extreme cost of paper work a second choice would be to put it in a staff bulletin. After two meetings with the insurance man certainly those persons who were interested would have come forward by the time the memo was written.

INTERPRETATION OF CASE STUDY

In evaluating this case study I have had the feeling, after some conversation with the three Directors that the memoranda presently being sent to the staff are causing some uneasiness. The memos are sometimes vague and mostly in the form of downward communication. Two of the memos, Numbers 1 and 3, are definitely orders and only one way communication. They confuse the reader because of their vagueness and lack of details pertinent to the communication. The recipients feel they are "in the dark". The other three memos, Numbers 2, 4 and 5, are also giving orders, but these demand some response. The recipient feels that the feedback is too detailed and time consuming and should be done by some other member of the staff. If this were done, the recipients could continue with their usual overload of everyday work.

Some comments from the three Directors I interviewed are as follows:

1. there are too many memos written
2. the memos contain trivia and are irrelevant
3. the staff members use memos instead of the proper forms developed for particular purposes, e.g. memos are being written for reimbursement instead of using the reimbursement form
4. many memos should be staff bulletins or letters, disseminated either once a week or perhaps monthly
5. memos are being filed or even discarded, particularly when no feedback is necessary
6. the close proximity of all Directors' offices in one suite, on one floor make verbal or face-to-face communication easy and informal
7. the real problems of the agency are never in memo form for the purpose of staff feedback

My interpretations of this case study and research of the written memorandum were based on the principles of communication. Along with the criteria for a well written memo, I have come to the following conclusion:

1. If more effective communication in the organization is needed by

the use of a written memorandum, all senders should clearly define the purpose of their memo before it is written.

2. If the method chosen is the written memo, careful consideration must be given to the message to make sure that no duplication of another memo has been given.

3. If more of the messages were in a face-to-face conversation, or even in a telephone call, the remaining memos to the staff would be better received.

4. If many of these memos are not needed for a permanent record, the staff have a valid point that they should not be written.

5. If irrelevant material has been included in these memos and serves no purpose that material should be deleted.

Because of my work with this organization for so many years I think that the memorandum is an important tool for communication at the Providence Program. Unfortunately, it has been much overworked. My recommendation for action would include the following:

1. Evaluate the cost of the memo, including the time it takes to write, type and distribute it.

2. Carefully decide if the memo need be for a permanent record.

3. Make a decision if the memo could be communicated in a better way, as through newsletters or staff bulletins, or even verbally.

4. If the memo is to be written, make sure it is written correctly, and that there will be a definite flow of information, i.e., lateral and downward as well as upward. In this way the effectiveness of the memorandum will be enhanced.

I would also suggest that the Executive Director carefully evaluate the continual flow of memoranda in his office as well as those from

other members of the staff. Many memos in these offices are being received, but the flow of communication seems to be poor at times. The Executive Director's writing and verbal skills are excellent, but there would be less communication gaps if verbal messages were used more frequently.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Using a very simple conceptual model of research, the "one-shot" case study, I have based my hypothesis on the material I have read and studied. The observations I have made are from limited interviews with four persons at one particular period of time. I collected the answers to my questions, analyzed, and interpreted them and made some generalizations. The observations were conducted in a face-to-face interview using the same set of questions for the three Directors and a specific set of questions for the Executive Director. Due to the very different personalities of the three Directors, the answers to the same set of questions varied.

However structured the questions were, the interviews were conducted on a very informal basis and allowed for plenty of freedom for the interviewees to describe and/or develop certain areas which seemed most important to them, as well as to express their opinion on the values of a written memorandum at Providence.

Open-ended questions were not easy to ask and answer by both the interviewer and the interviewee. The questions did not require written answers except for the notes taken by the interviewer. Most of the questions permitted the interviewees to respond in a yes or no answer or by a simple sentence, describing their viewpoints or expressing their thoughts. No choice of answers was given except in the first question asked of the three Directors. These questions were quite flexible and made analyzing the questions somewhat difficult.

Because the Directors were not informed ahead of time that I was to interview them, their answers were quite spontaneous and permitted them complete freedom of discussion about the relative value of the

written memorandum. At all times I tried to avoid injecting my own theories on the value of these written memos into the conversation, in hopes that I would get the true feelings of the interviewees without biasing their response.

ROLE OF MEMO WRITING IN ORGANIZATIONS

Within any organization certain communication patterns seem to stand out. In this case study at Providence, it is the use of the written memorandum. But, though this pattern seems overused or underused in some cases, the roles these patterns play are an integral part of the entire communication network used in the management of the organization.

The use of the written memo, in particular, has a distinct role in an organization. These communication tools can influence, motivate and direct the behavior of the employee. The memo can be useful in decision making. The memo can enable the director or manager to get the most and the best from his employees and at the same time create a harmonious working climate where all personnel can find satisfaction in their work.

How this can be accomplished is no easy task and takes a skilled communicator, well versed in the theories of managerial communication, especially those of group dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Both verbal and nonverbal communication skills are further enhanced by the use of effective listening and semantics.

Because this case study examined the Providence Program, I felt that it was necessary to explain the nature of this organization and how communications, particularly the written memo, have been used as a management tool, sometimes effectively and sometimes not.

The very nature of the Providence Program is that of an hierarchal, centralized organization. As top leader the Executive Director is in complete charge of the program and its operation, and has to answer only to the Board of Directors. Although a decentralized organization design is formally established with five directors under the Executive Director, the program does not always function so smoothly. The reason for this

is the hierarchal nature of the group, looking up to the top of the structure at all times. Although given the power to run each component of their program, the Directors still have to answer to the Executive Director.

For some reason each Director seems to need and look for a leader for the final decision and is unable to take the total responsibility for his or her decisions. Because of this the communication channels are constantly clogged with excessive memo writing and an overflow of paper work. If one Director is communicating with his or her group via a lateral channel, the copies of these memos are placed on the Executive Director's desk for his perusal. If it is only a request for information the memo is put into the files of the Executive Director even though the message may be totally irrelevant. What is the reason for all this cross-fire of paper work? I can only surmise that it is in the nature of the staff members' personalities who may be sending the message; or perhaps the inability of the person to communicate freely or properly. It may be the fact that the sender of the message wants the boss to know that work is being done and the sender needs a pat on the back. Whatever the underlying cause may be, a remedy must be found!

The very structure and function of this organization, Providence, causes some restrictions within the group of five directors. The five directors on the surface are congenial and cooperative. Communications, though, at certain times are poor and limited. Four of the five directors are located in adjacent offices in the same building, and are free to talk to each other at all times, either face-to-face or by an inter-communication telephone. The fifth Director, located in a school building several miles away, communicates by the written message or sometimes by phone.

These five directors each have very specific job duties, none of them overlapping the other, but each one forming an important role in the structure of the organization. Together they add to the smooth performance of all of the employees. The pay rate, educational background and personal background are all about equal so that no one of them should feel superior to the others. Unfortunately, four of the five directors are continually being intimidated by the one director that controls the financial strings of the organization. This director's personality is very agressive and dominant, and consequently this director has established a stronger leadership role in the organization. This role seems to prevent the other directors from asserting themselves, and the communications within the organization are restrained. Therefore, rather than using the availability of face-to-face communications, or other verbal means, the written memorandum has been introduced. The task performance of this particular group of directors, although functioning effectively, has caused some uneasiness and dissatisfaction among all the staff subordinates as well as within the director's group itself.

Because of this very dominant personality within the organization, the motivation of the directors sometimes becomes critical and disrupts the morale of the other staff. The directors feel that their decisions are constantly being undermined, they are not actually particpating in the operation of the organization, and that decisions are only reached after this one director's approval. The balance of leadership is top heavy and not for the best of the organization. One dominant, aggressive director has caused uneasiness within their group, and instead of the cooperation that is needed to run the program there seems to be more competiveness, back-biting and pettiness.

Consequently, this internal disruption and poor group dynamics has caused the overflow of written messages. The directors' attitude about each other prevents a free flow of communication. They need to realize they are not competing for each other's position and should be able to communicate verbally, more freely. The directors need to be able to cooperate with each other as well as organize plans for a more efficient and better operating organization and not let their personal differences or behavior stand in its way.

This diagnosis of the problem of communication at the Providence Program, Inc. is one that is found in many other organizations, large and small. I believe that the attitudes and behavior of this particular group need to change, if only to effect better communication within the program and within their group itself. My interpretation of the case study leads me to believe that the written memorandum as used in the program should carefully be evaluated as to its disadvantages and advantages. The excessive use must be reduced if only to cut down the cost in time and money that it takes to write, type and send them through the organization.

I believe that there is a better chance for effective communication in Providence if the memo writing is reduced to a point where it is a beneficial tool of communication. All other channels of communication must be used more freely. The competitiveness of the Directors should be routed into a path of cooperation and mutual trust so that a truly beneficial network of communication will foster, using the media of the written memorandum.

CONCLUSION

After much research and investigation of the written memorandum ✓ and my readings on the topic of communication, and other forms of media, I have come to the conclusion that this very significant subject is perhaps the most important tool of organizational management. After much in depth study of this tool of management I find that there are even more serious problems that a manager must concern himself with in his use of written communications. Because of the limitations of this paper, the topic of semantics in communication, for example, was not covered but I feel that this is an important part of communicating with each other, not only in the world of work but in everyday life.

My conclusions on the form of using the written memorandum in organizations are that this media of communication must be used only for specific instances and as little as possible. More effective communication can be obtained if the communication is accomplished in verbal conversation rather than in writing. The writer must determine when the memo should be used and if this form will be the most effective manner of transfering the message. All persons using the written memo should carefully evaluate its use to their organization, particularly as to the cost effectiveness and to the purpose of an effective flow of communication.

If and when a memorandum is chosen for the communication, it must give the recipient a message in a short, clear and concise manner, and not be a lengthy, involved message that loses the reader after the first sentence. The written memo will not take the place of a formal letter, a formal report, a bulletin, job description or policy. The memo stands on its own as a very special form of communication and is necessary when:

1. it serves a large number of persons and cannot be communicated any other way

2. it is a message that is needed for further reference and must be in the permanent records of the organization

3. it clarifies the message and gives facts that are more easily referred to when in written form

Because communication is a facilitator for successful management, let us bridge the "gap" and use the written memorandum correctly and wisely for more efficiency in our organizations. Avoid overcommunication! Too much is as bad as too little.

FOOTNOTES

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[14] Edward B. Flippo, _Principles of Personnel Management_, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), p. 5.

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Cards' Brass Should Take The Rap

The baseball Cardinals last won the National League pennant and played in the World Series a decade ago, and here is an example to illustrate precisely what has been wrong with the once revered franchise: It took management an astounding 178 games to finally figure out that Vern Rapp lacked the necessary dimensions to be a major league manager.

Although the players may not have the athletic ability to scare the Philadelphia Phillies, at least they are smart enough to recognize an insecure, intractable manager when they see one. While management was sticking by its choice to succeed Red Schoendienst, the players realized as far back as the spring of 1977 that Rapp's shortcomings would be difficult to correct.

jeff meyers

The players' insight manifested itself last season in enough chaos to make the Cardinals the New York Yankees of the Midwest (except that the Yankees won despite the chaos). With General Manager Bing Devine refusing to listen to their complaints, the players released their anger through the media and in violatile clubhouse meetings. Instead of being heard, however, the players were either publicly spanked, traded or forced to wash behind their ears. Rapp was given a one- year extension on his contract.

Throughout the turmoil of '77, management refused to admit it had made a mistake by hiring Rapp, even though the signs were obvious.

The Cardinal management's head-in-the-sand attitude toward Rapp was symptomatic of what's been wrong with the organization. Bad judgment, stubborness and inflated egos all have played a part in the club's long association with mediocrity, and the responsibility for nine years of failure lies with Devine and, ultimately, club owner August A. Busch Jr.

Busch can't seem to decide whether baseball is a sport or a business, and the Cardinals and the fans have suffered because of his vacillation. When it comes to the club, Busch can make business decisions even though a sports decision is needed, as in the case of ignoring the fans by failing to acquire free agents. Or he can make emotional, irrational moves when a cool, calculated decision is in order — trading Steve Carlton is an example of pique getting in the way of logic.

It was Busch who began Rapp's problems with the players by secretly ordering him to institute grooming and dress regulations. For years, Busch had tried to get Schoendienst to clean up his players, but the easy-going, understanding Schoendienst continually bucked the Big Eagle. After 29 years in the minor leagues, however, Rapp was not about to defy his boss.

Ironically, Rapp's loyalty to Busch compelled him to take all the heat for the rules, and his heavy-handed implementation of them caused the players to rebel. Defending his rigid stance, Rapp once said, "I work for the boss and we're all part of the team. They were management's rules, so they were my rules."

Busch, it should be pointed out, never admitted last season that the rules were his idea and not Rapp's.

Even had the players known the origin of the rules however, it is doubtful whether Rapp would have been able to win their respect and admiration. He just didn't have the touch to handle major leaguers, and his epitaph should read: Here lies Vern Rapp — His door was always open, but his mind was always closed.

Aside from what the players felt was persistent self-doubt over his own abilities, Rapp never really knew the definition of what he believed was his strength: Communication. Rapp gave me the impression that communication was a word he thought was socially hip, but never fully understood its meaning. Communication doesn't only mean talking with a disgruntled player; it means listening, being sensitive, interacting. But Rapp seldom communicated. Instead, he became defensive when a player came to him with suggestions.

"Rapp feels that open communication was for me to say hello every day," said former Cardinals pitcher Al Hrabosky, who was exiled to the Kansas City Royals because of his feud with Rapp. "But everything we'd heard about him from the front office, that he was a communicator and worked well with young players, well, that was a snow job. All of those things were false."

Not since the football Cardinals hired

APPENDIX 1.

Meyers

Bob Hollway as coach in 1971 has a St. Louis team made such a gross misjudgment of a man's leadership qualities. But what can you expect from an organization that has traded away a Bake McBride for a Tom Underwood, and a Reggie Smith for a Joe Ferguson? An even more puzzling question: What took the front office so long to rectify its mistake?

Had Busch not been so oblivious to the feelings of his players, he might have fired Rapp midway through the '77 season and eliminated the intensely bad vibrations in the clubhouse. But at a celebrated press conference on July 21, Busch chose to scold Hrabosky for defying the rules and to extend Rapp's contract through '78. With advisers such as Devine and attorney Lou Susman at his side, why didn't Busch realize that Rapp's relationship with the players would not, or could not, change?

If anything, Rapp and the players had an uneasy truce this season. Despite the relaxation of the grooming rules, the clubhouse still was heavy with tension and Rapp's face was wrought with anxiety. He often stood alone in the dugout before games and made weak stabs at humor with the players. But even before Jack Buck exercised his journalistic rights by revealing Rapp's senseless clash with Ted Simmons, it seemed inevitable that the manager would have difficulty getting through the season without a confrontation of great magnitude.

Why did Rapp fail as a major league manager when his record in the minors was practically impeccable? Basically conscientious and dedicated, a good company man, Rapp simply may have been unprepared for his first, and perhaps last, shot at the majors. He never did adjust to a room full of carnivorous sportswriters or to a tough question and he could not understand or cope with the big leaguer's mentality.

In the minors, Rapp didn't have to worry about discipline or run-ins with players. Minor leaguers have a way of drifting into obscurity, and they are forced to get along with the manager to avoid being labeled as a troublemaker or as a player with an attitude problem. The Cardinals' players had no such worries. They were secure enough to beef about things they would have tolerated in the minors.

A couple of months ago I talked to Rapp about the then-upcoming '78 season. He was optimistic, and said, "I think you're going to find a totally different atmosphere on the club. Everybody'll be thinking as one." Then he added, typically, "But it doesn't always work out that way."

For Rapp, it certainly didn't work out. But at least the Cardinals won't have him to kick around any more.

Heisler Quits Mizzou

COLUMBIA, Mo. — John Heisler has resigned as assistant sports information director at the University of Missouri to take a similar position at the University of Notre Dame, where he will replace Bob Best, who resigned to become publicity director of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the National Football League.

Parent-child communication problems

By SAUL KAPEL, M.D.

The problem in communications between parent and child, indeed between any individuals, is that while the speaker believes he is delivering one message, the listener may be translating different from their original intent. Here are some examples of possible "translations" in communications from parent to child.

Father: "When I was a kid, I was afraid of coming home with anything less than an A. But you don't have to feel that way."

Child A: "What a great Dad! He really understands what kids are up against. He's so understanding. I'm really lucky I have such understanding parents."

Child B: "If that's really true, why is he saying it to me? Probably, he wants me to feel the same way but doesn't want to seem pushy. He really wanted those A's and this is a way to make me feel I ought to come home with A's. He'll probably be disappointed if I don't get them."

Child C: "He wants me to think he really didn't want them but only got them to please his folks. But that's not the way he really thinks. He probably doesn't think I can really hack it and so he's telling me that he just doesn't think I can do as well as he did."

And I could continue on with child D, E and F in this situation. The point for a parent is that not only may a child interpret remarks differently from the spirit in which they were spoken, but even within the same family youngsters may translate your words differently. It's not uncommon, and sometimes a parent may not realize it.

Some more examples:

Mother: "You're the oldest. Stop fighting with your little brother (or sister)."

Your child

Child A: "She always blames me. Why should I stop? I didn't start it. That kid is always protected. How come I'm always the one to blame? She never wants to find out what happened; just lands on me. It's not fair; she really doesn't like me.

"SHE ALWAYS expects more of me and gets angry before she knows the truth."

In this situation, and with this remark, the translations of child B, C, D, E and F will all have a similar ring to that of A.

Parent: "You can't go out until you do your homework."

Child A: "All right. I guess I should get it over with."

Child B: "Why not? It's my homework; I know better what has to be done. All they worry about is my homework, won't leave me alone for a minute. Don't they think I can take care of myself? They try to run my whole life."

Child C: "If I can't leave right now I'll be late and they'll leave me out of the game. My friends will think I don't care about missing the fun. Why can't they be like other parents? They really know how to torture a kid."

Parent: "If someone hits you, hit 'em right back."

Child A: "Thanks for the permission. Now I have an excuse in case I get into a fight."

Child B: "They expect me to fight back. Don't they know that I'm afraid I'll get hurt? I hate to fight, but they'll be disappointed in me unless I punch back."

Child C: "Is that really right? In Sunday school they teach us that we shouldn't hurt anyone else. Just because someone starts a fight doesn't mean it is right to hit back."

When you tell your youngster something, it's important to remember that he or she may not understand the message you intended to convey. Misinterpretation and confusion can never completely be avoided; messages will always be understood in terms of individual personality, the mood of the moment, needs and desires, and also an interpretation of the parent's behavior.

Saul Kapel welcomes comments on his column. Write to him in care of The St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Appendix 2.

'We are opening up channels of communication'

By CHARLES E. BURGESS
Globe-Democrat Education Writer

The week-long debate over teacher transfers in the St. Louis school system has brought into focus a variety of human, administrative and possibly legal problems.

The controversy surrounding the process aimed at achieving court-approved racial quotas by September has touched teachers, parents, administrators, school board members and other elements of the city.

Lawrence E. Nicholson
...calls methods open

The debate has had some positive and clarifying aspects, according to paricipants.

"It (the transfer) is not being done as it has been in some cities like Detroit, where it came as a big surprise," said school board member Lawrence E. Nicholson. The open and information methods generally being used are helpful to both teachers and the public, he said.

"I AM FEELING A little more hopeful that we are opening up channels of communication between blacks and whites . . . and we all are beginning to understand that this is creating as much anguish in the black community as in white neighborhoods," said a white minister, the Rev. Robert W. McNamara of Grace United Church of Christ.

He has been a leader in anti-transfer movements, for the most part centered publicly in South St. Louis, this year and last fall.

The week also brought arguments that the transfers have become "a numbers game" and may disrupt educational programs. The view seems to be shared

THE FUROR AROSE as a result of principal and teacher conferences late last week in which many veteran teachers learned, although they had suspected it beforehand, that they would probably be transferred.

Under a 1975 abreement approved by U.S. District Judge James H. Meredith, for the 1978-1979 school year the school system must complete the third yearly phase of realigning teaching and non-teaching staffs so no less than 30 percent of the total at each school is black or white.

The debate has had some positive and clarifying aspects, according to paricipants.

"It (the transfer) is not being done as it has been in some cities like Detroit, where it came as a big surprise," said school board member Lawrence E. Nicholson. The open and information methods generally being used are helpful to both teachers and the public, he said.

by some proponents and most opponents of integration.

For example, Nicholson, who is black and has a notable 30-year record of leadership in civil rights causes, said at a school board Personnel Committee meeting that the possibility that the process could disrupt key education programs should be considered.

If the problem cannot be solved, "perhaps we should go to the court and say the simple matter of numbers adversely affects the quality of education in this community," Nicholson said.

NINE OTHER BOARD members at the meeting appeared to agree with him, although Anita Bond, the board's other black member, said she would prefer an approach "that treated all teachers the same way."

But she qualified her remark by saying, "There are special cases."

The committee recommended that the full board explore the possibility of seeking from the court some relief for special programs.

Another legal challenge to the transfers could come from an ad hoc group of about 150 teachers, chiefly from South St. Louis schools, who met for the first time Monday in the Rev. Mr. McNamara's church.

ACCORDING TO individuals participating, the group is lining up plaintiffs and possible arguments for a legal action to be discussed in a meeting with attorney Anthony J. Sestric at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Dewey School, 6746 Clayton Ave.

Sestric is representing Concerned Par-

ents for Neighborhood Schools, a group opposing mandatory desegregation steps in a hearing that resumes May 8 before Meredith.

Superintendent Robert E. Wentz is scheduled to address the group's next meeting at 7:30 p.m. May 16 at the Grace church, and the transfer process should get much attention.

As to the possible move by board members, "when you have a court order it's a very delicate thing to suggest changes, but it's done all the time," an attorney for the school board said Friday.

Another attorney in the firm, John H. Lashly, reportedly cautioned board members in a closed session after Wednesday's tense Personnel Committee meeting that they must be careful to avoid any appearance of defying the court.

PROPONENTS OF large-scale desegregation here argue that the board agreed to the staff transfers in 1975 as the basis for the judge's consent decree and that the third-year phase again was ordered by the judge Paril 12.

"Our view is that the 30 percent (minimum of either race for any school is not enough, and we have taken that position," said J. Gerald Hebert, chief attorney in the case for the U.S. Justice Department.

He said the judge issued the latest order after a long conference with attorneys in which representatives of the school board outlined possible difficulties, "But the bottom line was that they didn't say they didn't want to do it or couldn't do it."

Much of the week's debate was on the formidable administrative task and human elements of the transfer process.

It's been said frequently that whites will be more affected than blacks, but the transfer formula actually involves the same number of each race: 180 black and 180 white teachers, and 129 black and 129 white non-teachers, according to the latest estimates of Burchard Neel Jr., associate superintendent for personnel.

HIS PROJECTIONS do show a weight on whites in percentages.

That's because whites constitute only about 1,930 (41 percent) of the system's 4,700 certified teachers and administrators, and 2,234 (39 percent) of the total roster of employee categories eligible in the transfer process, numbering 5,690.

The computations also show that another aspect of the weight on whites will be in those schools with mostly white staffs. Virtually all are in South St. Louis.

Fifty-one schools have majority white staffs, but in only four is the minority (black) staff representation now less than 30 percent. Two are special elementary schools, Busch for the exceptionally gifted, and Gallaudet for the deaf, and the other two are Cleveland and Southwest High Schools.

In contrast, 99 schools have majority black staffs and 72 of them now have less than 30 percent white representation — 66 elementary schools, Pruitt and King alternative high schools, and Northwest, Soldan, Vashon, Beaumont and Sumner high schools.

It means whites must be taken from

many schools where staffs now technically are in compliance with the court order to make up for the quota disparities in the predominantly black-staffed schools, Neel said.

THE FORMULA SHOULD bring all schools into compliance, but not system-wide staff racial conformity.

By fall, Neel said, most predominantly black-staffed schools will have a 70-30 black-white percentage ratio. Schools that now have a majority of whites on staffs should be at about a 60-40 white-black percentage, roughly the faculty-non-teaching ratio in the system as a whole.

J. Gerald Hebert
...'30 pct. is not enough'

Management Review
September, 1967
by
Eric Webster

Memo Mania:

FULL EMPLOYMENT is a man and his memo pad.

In most of its forms the memo, bane of big organizations, is a survival from the industrial dark ages of quill pens, high stools, low-cost clerical staff, no telephones and unlimited time. The memo's principal claim to fame is that it helps people make jobs for themselves.

Even the most famous names in

A MANAGEMENT REVIEW SPECIAL FEATURE

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Its Causes, Carriers and Cures

industry are not immune. In 1960, before a large oil company brought in management consultants, two tons of paper arrived daily at its head office. By 1966, the consultants had helped cut this to approximately one ton.

A publishing company's management letter cites the cost of adding one carbon to a single-page memo at $1.25. This cost represents the time and effort in transmitting, handling, reading and disposing of the carbon. It includes the time of the secretary in handling and making it; the time of the mail clerks in handling, sorting, distributing and delivering; the time of the receiving secretary; the reading time of the person to whom it is addressed; and the time of the people disposing of it, either as wastepaper or filing. The cost of unnecessary memos is uncountable but colossal.

Symptoms

Yet the misuse of the memo is a widespread business malpractice.

Here are some of the most flagrant misuses:

• *The memo to postpone work.* When you get a request for action, don't act. Send a note saying you're going to act. Then you can do nothing for a little longer with a clear conscience.

• *The memo to show how efficient you are.* "Following my memo of the first of last month. . . ." In other words, "Look what a lovely filing system I've got—bet you can't find your copy."

• *The malevolent memo.* Endless variations have been evolved by crafty memo writers to put the other man off balance, to inculcate feelings of guilt or unworthiness, to fence for superiority or to cover the sender and wrap up the recipient.

• *The militant memo.* A missive from the mild little man with a massive ego who sends it because he's afraid to come and say it.

• *The accusative memo*—designed "for the record." It will take the recipient hours to answer it and, if he does, the sender can always contest the answers. If he doesn't, the memoman has him "fixed" in the files.

• *The status-making memo.* "from the desk of. . . ." The ultimate in idiocy is when you have two desks corresponding with each other.

• *The "let's win friends and spread sweetness" memo.* The writer tells each recipient what a nice fellow he is. But because everybody gets one, nobody is pleased.

• *The "see-how-hard-I'm-working" memo.* Insecure subordinates are often compulsive communicators and shower memos on their bosses' desks like confetti. Given half a chance, they will spend more time telling him what they're doing than in doing it.

The true memoman is not satisfied until he's got pen pals everywhere. He builds up his list as jealously as any direct-mail specialist. Each time he sends out a memo, he can spend 15 minutes discussing with his secretary who should have it and who shouldn't, what order of precedence the names should take, who receives a copy of the enclosures and who receives the unreadable eighth carbon. Most insidious of all is the blind-copy memoman who writes ostensibly for one audience but who is actually writing for the unseen, unlisted recipients.

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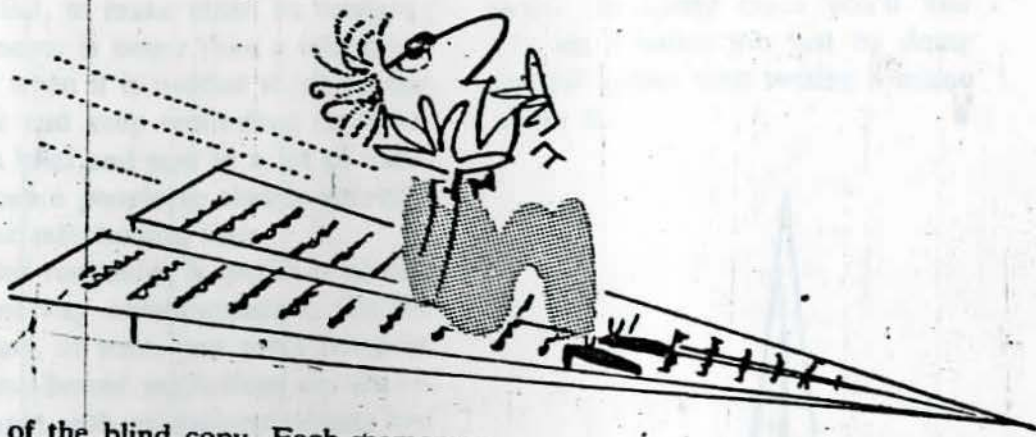
of the blind copy. Each memoman develops his own "in-group" and "out-group." The in-group gets everything. The out-group gets nothing and only hears the news of what it's supposed to be doing if a kindly in-grouper lends it his copy of the memo. The effect is always better if the in-groupers are the people who are not expected to act and the out-groupers are those who actually do the work.

Getting on fhe right lists can be like getting the key to the executive washroom. It's a real invitation to move with the mighty.

The memo-minded man often develops his own vapid vocabulary. He doesn't ask for "help" but for "cooperation" or "assistance." He doesn't "do" a thing, he "implements these desirable objectives." He never uses one word when two will say less. He talks about the "other alternative," "more preferable" or the "final conclusion."

He wraps it all up in woolly words and obscures the obvious.

In his hands, "clarification fills in the background with so many details that the foreground goes underground," to borrow an apt phrase from a magazine writer.

When his memo says he is "urgently considering" something, you may guess that he may get around to thinking about it in a day or so.

He is the master of the suspense-filled phrase that leaves you in limbo. He never tells you how, what, why, where and when all in one place. He refers you to "my memo of 21st September last, to be read in conjunction with the attached manifesto; see below." His flood of paper clogs the arteries of his company. His spate of words muddles the minds of co-workers and subordinates, his insular attitude paralyzes the paths to action.

Prevention

Nevertheless, the memo can still be useful in the hands of those who know how to use it—that is, as

seldom as possible. A memo is to remind, to make clear, to confirm. A memo is better than a telephone call when it is needed to sit on the desk and keep reminding, or when it is brief and sent to a lot of hard-to-locate people so that it actually saves telephoning time.

But remember a memo is always a one-way communication. On the phone, at least, you get a reaction. Memo-bound institutions are always fraught with misunderstandings and resentments. There is no quicker way for two executives to get out of touch with each other than for both to retire to the seclusion of their offices and start writing each other notes.

To find out how far you have succumbed to memo mania, examine your last month's output of memos (if your exasperated secretary hasn't thrown the whole lot away). Ask yourself how many were unnecessary, how many could have been handled by telephone, how many could have been shorter. Then you will have the measure of your own misdemeanors in memocraft and be

ready to stop working in waste-paper. In many cases you'll find you do a better job just by doing the job rather than writing a memo about it. ◆

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