Org Comm: Week 5 Drill Down Exercises

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Chapter 5:

1.   Describe two situations in which a manager selected the (a) proper channel(s) to communicate an important message and (b) improper channel(s) to communicate an important message. How does the B-C model help explain both situations?

- Proper Channel: Jennifer schedules a <u>face-to-face meeting</u> with Hailey and Olivia, two employees who have had noticeable tension between them for a few weeks, to act as a mediator and help the pair productively talk through their issue(s) and solve the conflict.
    - B-C Model: In this situation, the benefits outweigh the costs – meaning there is greater value incurred. For this potentially sensitive or difficult meeting, getting together face-to-face offers the chance for each individual involved to read emotional cues, consider non-verbal communication, account for tone to help prevent misinterpretations, ask unlimited questions, converse and interact more freely and easily, etc. With time given up for the meeting really being the only major cost, the B-C model shows how Jennifer made the right choice in choosing this channel.
- Improper Channel: Mark, the owner of a small-town coffee shop, sends a <u>text message</u> to one of his longtime employees, Kyle, telling him that he can no longer afford to continue employing Kyle and that he has to let him go.
    - B-C Model: In this situation, the benefits do not outweigh the costs – meaning there is little to no value incurred. With a message this important, the benefits of communicating it through a text – less time and energy invested, quickly sharing

information – pales in comparison to the costs, which could include hurt feelings, misunderstandings, less of an ability to ask questions, loss of reputation or loyalty, etc. Therefore, the B-C model shows that Mark didn't choose the proper channel.

2.   Describe three unintended consequences of introducing a new communication technology into an organization.

One unintended consequence of introducing a new communication technology into an organization is a loss of employee productivity due to time spent trying to figure out and understand the new technology. Any new introduction comes with a learning curve, but technology might take more time to adjust to as it can be complicated, especially for users who aren't especially technologically advanced. The time it takes to "play with" and learn how to fully use the new communication technology could take away a lot of time from actual work, costing the organization productivity. Another unintended consequence of introducing a new communication technology is that some employees may be reluctant to the new technology and resentful to those who introduced it, causing low morale within the organization. Lastly, new communication technology could lead to more communication over screens and less face-to-face interaction with co-workers. There are many benefits to talking in-person with others within an organization. These opportunities may happen less frequently, which would be an unintended consequence of introducing a new communication technology.

3. **Construct a chart with two columns. In Column 1, indicate three major reasons why a manager's channel portfolio would be composed almost entirely of *lean* channels. In Column 2, provide counterarguments to each reason. Construct a similar two-column chart focused on a managerial portfolio composed almost entirely of *rich* channels.**

LEAN

I don't have time for face to face discussions when I manage 20+ employees.	As a manager my role is to facilitate and make sure employees know changes or updates. Unfortunately, that may not be my only task and therefore I can't simply stop everything just have face-to-face understanding with everyone I manage. Although this would mitigate almost all misunderstandings
The use of email to get the word out through work channels is the most efficient and highest quality way to send out messages to all employees.	Email is considered a very lean and efficient channel when a manager doesn't have time for a small group meeting. But not every employee checks their email on a regular basis and can get the message in their proper inbox. Some messages get sent to spam, or junk folders because the software misinterprets what can be seen as crucial.
I use text messaging to update through use of phone and popular communication so that employees are updated in real time through their primary communication device.	Such tools help employees update and coordinate in real time but text messages can also be breeding grounds for confusion and lies. Researchers found that when people want to lie or convince others the majority choose text messaging over face-to-face communication.

RICH

A small startup is trying to review changes to employee rules and regulations with expansion. This would be an ideal rich communication due to the small amount of employees and using Face-to-face communication	**A counter argument to this rich channel of communication would be a sense of "information dump" as a reaction from employees. Whilst trying to make sure everything is clear, the practicalities get lost in translation because everything is stated in long drawn out sentences that cover any legal or liable implications.**
Employers try to guide employees toward offering feedback and insight to what can improve the company	**Face-to-face communication is a rich channel that can help people communicate properly, but also can lead to unnecessary and elongated conversation. In this sense employees might overly rant about what is wrong with the company. Writing their thoughts down on lean channels is much more likely to influence straight to the point objectives and skew ranting.**
Employers and managers try to communicate goals and understanding to employees through face to face communication	**As stated before a rich channel helps understanding but often takes time and resources. One great advantage in this situation would be to use lean channels. A lean channel with a written memo or email symbolizes authority, finality and leaves little room for debate or revolt, causing employees to stay on course with objectives or what needs to be done, rather than questioning.**

Chapter 6:

1. **Provide an example of where you have confused information with knowledge in your personal life (*Hint:* Think about a major purchasing decision.).**

   ● I (Mara) confused information with knowledge when I purchased my Dell laptop before I started college. I have an Apple Watch, an iPhone, an iPad, and Apple Airpods. I have had nothing but great experiences with all of these technologies made by Apple. I trust

the company and its products. However, upon purchasing a laptop for college, I asked my high school's IT Coordinator what his recommendation for a laptop was. He told me to get a Dell and rattled off a bunch of facts of why I should and what it could offer. I took this information and went with it, purchasing the Dell laptop. I should've gone back to my knowledge of Apple and its high quality, but I confused information with knowledge.

2.   Identify a functional and dysfunctional knowledge-sharing community. What are the key features that distinguish the two?

- One example of a dysfunctional knowledge sharing community comes from Chapter 6 reading about the D-I-K-A model. As a real life example, the chapter talked about how the NSA (National Security Agency) had a dysfunctional knowledge sharing community by taking into account "too much" information. As a security protocol this process pritoritizes taking in as much information as it can, instead of focusing on the information that can be deemed worthy or more of a threat to the nation. In this aspect too much information becomes a liability for the organization.

- One good example of a functional knowledge community is looking at a site of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) which can be found at CDC.gov. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this site was a knowledgeable objective base for anyone seeking practical important information when deciding how to deal with the pandemic according to their situation. It was highly classified, organized, and paraphrased so visitors could get the information needed without experiencing an "information dump" of unneeded info. Most of the information is verified for the public for consumption and works in tandem with the government and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The site also

allowed people to contact the CDC to share or confirm information when it was necessary.

3. Find a website that meets all the tests of evidence. Find another one that fails most of the tests. Provide specific examples.

● A website that Dr. Yoo of the Comm department likes to advocate for is Politifact.org This site serves to identify and relay political information in an independent and fair manner, as well as identifying if there are any biases or if there are any sort of false, misleading titles and information from a news source.

● A website that would mostly fail at showing evidence or factual information would be an internet community site known as 4chan. This site serves to not relay factual information but mostly to allow users to make parodies, memes, and humor regarding current social trends, culture or politics. One extreme example was the death of a girl named Heather Hyers who was killed at a protest. Some users didn't agree with the factual information provided on how Hyers was killed so they sought to twist and fabricate information by the truckloads in order to change the narrative and "troll." Dozens of conflicting discussion threads popped up on 4chan regarding Hyers' death and still continued to be fabricated over a month after her death as it had become somewhat of a trend.

Chapter 7:

1. What is an example of the most effective pat on the back you have received? Least effective? How were the two situations different?

- I (Jordon) am a teller at a credit union, and my most effective pat on the back revolves around one of the days when my drawer was off. This was rather early on in my training, and my boss was with me the entire day. She was right there beside me during each transaction, but when my shift was done, I was roughly $40 short. There was no explanation as to why I was off as my boss was watching my every move and nothing ever seemed to be done wrong. The fact that she was able to give me a little pick me up at the end of the day and say it happens to everyone really left me feeling much better. If I was alone and had committed such a mistake, who knows what would've happened! It was a huge sigh of relief to get that pat on the back at that stage in my training. When it comes to the least effective pat on the back, that came from my parents after a basketball game I announced. This was my first game doing the play-by-play without my lead partner, and I blew it at the end of the game when I didn't mention a senior setting his career high in points. I thought this was a huge thing to leave out, and I let myself down and was super hard on myself over the situation. I came home and was greeted by my mom and dad who were full of compliments, but their pat on the back wasn't as meaningful due to the state I was currently in. I didn't want to hear about all the things I did well and did right; instead, I was dwelling on the big missed call. At the end of the day, these are two entirely different situations for a number of reasons. First of all, with my family involved, it takes a bit more for their pat on the back to mean something as I've gotten so many from them in my lifetime. These situations are also different due to

my position in the workplace. As a teller, I was brand new and still learning the ropes, but in the other, I was humbled as I wasn't as prepared as I thought I was.

2. What is an example of the most effective corrective feedback you have received? Least effective? How were the two situations different?

- Sticking with the announcing situations, one of the most effective corrective feedback examples came over a period of time through a string of emails. There isn't one piece of feedback that sticks out the most; it was the fact that Damon Ryan (someone who I hadn't even worked with yet at the time) one of the most respected announcers in the Manitowoc County area, would take the time out of his day to email me after every single game. He would compliment me on the things I did well, but he would also give me constructive criticism – corrective feedback, if you will. As I said, it's hard to pick just one thing he mentioned throughout the course of the season, but I think him telling me it's okay to slow down and not call every second of the action really hit home. I was doing my best to include everything and not miss a second, but it's okay to take a second and step back. It's very hard for me to not talk fast while I'm on the air as I'm genuinely excited to be there and I can't hold back. Ultimately, some of the bits of advice he gave me about the equipment, speaking on air, and post game activities will always stick with me. Moving on, I didn't care to hear corrective feedback from someone at the credit union about a game I had the night before. They heard me do my "wrap" on the morning news, which is basically a game summary from the night prior. This coworker gave me some advice and tried to correct something that I was told to do in the first place. He made a comment about how I said the same thing too many times and should've

mentioned this or that, but his feedback meant absolutely nothing to me. I know for a fact he's never been in the position I was, so who is he to tell me what I did right and what I should change? I'm all for feedback and trying to get better, but there's a time and a place, and that's how those two situations differ from one another. If he would've corrected me for saying the wrong date or wrong pronunciation of a name, that's one thing, but don't say my format and style are incorrect when I'm just doing what I was told to do!

3.   List three common excuses that managers give for not providing effective performance feedback. How would you respond to each excuse?

● The first excuse that I've heard time and time again involves just that, time. Managers will talk about how they don't have time to fit everything into their schedule, but the age old expression says you need to make time! That's exactly what I would tell a manager, but put it in a different tone so it doesn't come off as rude or me telling them what to do. I think it's unacceptable that they can use time as an excuse. I get that there are only so many hours in a day, but effective performance feedback is going to make everyone better. Another common excuse is that it's not helpful. For a manager to think that giving feedback doesn't improve anything is one of the biggest misconceptions there is. Why would an employee be given this feedback but decide not to change their ways? That right there could get them fired. I don't think there is anything about giving performance feedback that is useless or unnecessary. The last and final excuse revolves around drama in the workplace. I think a manager has lost all control if their main worry about giving

feedback is that their employees will talk amongst one another and get upset about the things that were said. First and foremost, the feedback given should be confidential and there's no need to spread it across the workplace. If someone is immature and decides to do so to get at another employee, that's on them, and maybe it's someone you don't want working there moving forward. I think it's a hideous excuse to not give feedback because you're worried about what someone else might think of the feedback you gave to someone. Make sure each employee knows it's confidential and there's no need to talk about it with other coworkers. It's as simple as that!

Chapter 8:

1. Isolate a boundary-spanning challenge you see in your organization. Select one strategy that you think would have the most impact on the situation. Provide your rationale.

- One boundary spanning challenge discussed in this chapter that we (Mallory and Mara) have seen in our internship with the Green Bay Blizzard is unmotivated employees, whether that be in the front office, on the coaching staff, or in terms of interns. While we're very fortunate to have an overall stellar organizational team, there are a few "duds" who follow the silo mentality, concerning themselves with only a narrow span of issues and tending to not span boundaries to work alongside various co-workers. They keep their heads down, usually only do "just enough" of what is expected or required of them, and do not seize opportunities to go above and beyond for the good of the organization.
  - While many of the strategies explained would undoubtedly improve this boundary-spanning challenge, the one that would perhaps be most effective is

hosting problem-solving sessions. As a professional athletic franchise with a very small team running the show, proper communication and cooperation between the Blizzard's various working groups (ex: owners, front office, coaches) has proven to be quite difficult at times, which has subsequently created a lot of issues, tension, and conflict throughout the season. This is especially true as the season wears on and people start getting tired and caring less, particularly when our on-field performances and record are not where we'd like them to be. Designating a weekly or bi-weekly problem solving session where the members of each division gather together, face-to-face, to discuss and work through problems or concerns would, in my opinion, be quite helpful. It would reinforce the idea that we are all in this together, and every person on our team is a valuable, important part of the organization's success who needs to be giving it their all. Such meetings would also give each unit a chance to (politely and productively) call out team members who are not performing up to standards and give them a nudge in the right direction, so that they understand why and how they need to improve.

2. **What physical features enhance interdepartmental communication? Hinder it?**
   - Some physical features that enhance interdepartmental communication are minimizing walls, eliminating offices, and creating conference rooms for impromptu meetings. Oppositely, more walls and offices, and less conference rooms, hinder interdepartmental communication. Also, splitting up the higher ups (ex. directors/managers) and lowers' (assistant, interns, etc.) offices within the department can hinder communication interdepartmentally.

3. Construct a dialogue between managers of two different cultures who were charged with developing a new organizational policy about "working from home." Use Table 8.1 to identify and highlight the different cultural dimensions that come into play during the dialogue.

Grace and Li each work for a company that has offices in both the United States and China.

- L: "I'm very surprised INT is transitioning to having employees work remotely. I would have thought after the pandemic, it would be the goal to have everyone return to the office – not have all the employees stay at home forever."

- G: "Well, no one said we're switching to having everyone work remotely all the time. I think COVID-19 just changed the way organizations like ours do business, and INT feels there needs to be a policy in place."

- L: "But Brett told the two of us to develop a new policy for employees working from home. That sounds to me like we're all going to be working remotely from now on."

- G: "He would have told us, if that was the case. I think the company is just trying to be more flexible and find ways to adjust to the 'new normal' post-pandemic."

- L: "Maybe we should check with Brett. He's my boss, and I don't want to upset him by not following his directions."

In this exchange, cultural differences between the U.S. and China in terms of context and directness were highlighted. Li and Grace have both interpreted their superior's instructions very differently. Meanings are confused due to high vs. low context differences (first two bullets – situation vs. words) and direct vs. indirect (third and fourth bullets – explicit vs. implied). In the fifth bullet, Li's deference to authority valued in her culture is also highlighted.

Bonus Question (5 points):

Find a short video clip that illustrates a difficult to understand concept or idea discussed in chapters 5 – 8. Attach the link (or create your own video). Briefly explain your rationale.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUVZjF0Y-iU&t=42s

The video we've chosen briefly but succinctly explains the D-I-K-A (data, information, knowledge, action) Model, which was discussed in chapter 6. Although the textbook goes into excellent detail regarding the immense complexities of each letter of the DIKA acronym and why/when/where/how/for who it applies, we found that this video was beneficial in further explaining the information and cementing the ideas in our minds, as this topic was a little much to comprehend at first. This video was particularly fitting for us since it was made using quotes, charts, and information from our very own textbook, which made it easier to grasp the concept.