

Question 1

What do you understand by "ethical communication"? What are its elements.

Answer

According to the National communication Association, ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making and the development of relationship and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels and media. Ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering, truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity and respect for self and others'. While unethical communication threatens the quality of all communication and consequently the well-being of individuals and the society in which we live. In nutshell ethical communicators have a 'well developed sense of social responsibility'.

An ethical communication is one which:

- includes all relevant information
- is true in every sense and is not deceptive in any way.
- is accurate and sincere. Avoids language that manipulates, discriminates or exaggerates.
- does not hide negative information behind an optimistic attitude.
- does not state opinions as facts.
- portrays graphic data fairly.

Question 2

Write Short Notes On:

(a) Advantages of Ethical Communication

(b) Organization Values

Answer

- (a) **Advantages of Ethical Communication:** Ethical communication promotes long-term business success and profit. However, improving profits isn't reason enough to be ethical, as soon as the cost of being ethical outweighed the benefits, ethical choices would no longer be possible. One advantage of ethics long-term integrity. Surveys report

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that all employees want to work for organizations with high ethical standards. Competent people are likely to search for organizations that maintain high ethical standards. When competent people migrate toward ethical firms, everyone benefits because both competence and ethics are perpetuated.

- (b) **Organization Values:** Values are the principles and ideas that people or organizations strongly believe in and consider important. When people are in doubt about decisions, they frequently rely on deep-seated values to help them make the right choice. In organizations, reliance on shared values makes setting goals easier in the face of the competing ideas, desires, and objectives of individual employees.

One can get a good idea about the values of an organization by examining its vision and mission statement. These statements are short descriptions of the purpose of organizations and the directions they try to take to achieve success. Many organizations post their vision and mission statements in several places so that employees know what the organization values are.

Question 3

Suggest guidelines to handle communication ethics dilemmas.

Answer

Guidelines to handle communication ethics dilemmas:

- (a) **Maintain candour:** Candour refers to truthfulness, honesty, frankness and one should stick to these elements while communicating with others.
- (b) **Keep message accurate:** At the time of relaying information from one source to another, communicate the original message as accurately as possible.
- (c) **Secrecy:** One has to maintain secrecy and confidence in communication. So one should not divulge such information to others
- (d) **Ensure timeliness of communication:** The timing of messages can be critical. Delay in sending messages can be assumed unethical.
- (e) **Avoid deception:** Ethical communicators are always vigilant in their quest to avoid deception, fabrication, intentional distortion or withholding of information in their communication.
- (f) **Confront unethical behaviour:** One must confront an unethical behaviour in order to ensure a consistent ethical view point.

Question 4

State with reasons whether following statements are correct or incorrect.

- (i) *Rumours and gossips are synonymous.*
- (ii) *Lying breaks down the trust between individuals.*

Answer

- (i) *The given statement "Rumour and gossip are synonymous" is INCORRECT.*

Rumours and gossip seem to be an inevitable part of everyday corporate life. Even though rumours and gossip often travel through the same network, there is a distinction between the terms. Rumours tend to focus on events and information, whereas gossip focuses on people. Even though managers usually treat the information as "yet to be confirmed", it may cloud judgments about the employee. The information has a way of creeping into performance evaluations and promotion decisions, even if unintended.

- (ii) *The given statement "Lying breaks down the trust between individuals" is CORRECT.*

A lie is a false statement intended to deceive. Of all the ethical dilemmas, lying would appear to be the least morally perplexing. Most would agree that "one ought not to lie". Yet lies in business are more common than many would care to admit. Lying break down the trust between individuals, shaking the foundation of ethical communication.

Exercise

1. *What is an ethical communication?*

Hints

An ethical communication:

- ◆ includes all relevant information,
- ◆ is true in every sense and is not deceptive in any way.
- ◆ accurate and sincere. Avoids language that manipulates, discriminates or exaggerates.
- ◆ does not hide negative information behind an optimistic attitude.
- ◆ does not state opinions as facts,
- ◆ portrays graphic data fairly.

In a nutshell ethical communicators have a "well developed sense of social responsibility".

2. *Discuss whistle blowing.*

Answer

Any employee who goes public with information about corporate abuses or negligence is known as a whistle-blower. Corporations and managers legitimately expect employee loyalty. Greed, jealousy, and revenge motivate some whistle-blowers. Some are simply misinformed. Some confuse public interest with private interest. Certainly the community has a right to know about corporate practices that are potentially hazardous, yet courting the whistle-blower too aggressively can be problematic.