COMMUNICATION'S MANAGEMENT IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS. APPLICATION OF COMMUNICATION'S SKILLS IN MARITIME INDUSTRY

[1]IMASHOVA ZHULDZ, [2]KARZHAUBAYEVA ONAICHAN, [3]FELICIA SURUGIU, [4]SIMONA MINA

[1,2]*Caspian State University of Technologies and Engineering, Kazakhstan,*
[3]*Maritime University of Constanta,* [3]*University Ovidius of Constanta, Romania*

ABSTRACT

Which are the purposes for Communication courses regarding the professional training in maritime industry? As such, here there are some certain hypotheses and objectives regarding the needs of communication skills in maritime domain.

Why do we need communication's skills?

One of the main objectives is to know our interlocutor: we need to relate in order to know our interlocutor within the first 5 minutes of relating. Eric Berne in "What do say after we say Good Afternoon (Hello), considers that the process finding out requires an analysis:

o   Of the first 20 words (through the dynamic elements of expression: volume, tonality, rhythmus)

o   The first 20 steps (walking is an expressive non-verbal element-we walk in certain manner when we are enthusiastic and in a different manner when we are under the pressure of the negative emotional stimuli: stress, anxiety, pain).

o   The first 20 breaths (the control of breathing is a fundamental non-verbal communication's element in managing stress and anxiety; the success of our tasks, which involve crisis or unforeseen situations, is determined by this control)

o   The first 20 looks: glances and looking are fundamental communication's vectors.

Up to the interpersonal communication's skills improving, the main objective of the paper is to establish correct labor and employee relations, within the shipping domain. The relations between managers and their employees must be handled legally and effectively. Employer and employee rights must be addressed. It is important to develop, communicate and update human resources policies and procedures so that managers and employees know what is expected of them.

Keywords: *managing, conflicts, communication skills, maritime industry.*

1.   INTRODUCTION

There are some rules also applied in communication in shipping:

o   Open and directly communication: keep the communication simple and to the point. This should be the basic style of communication. Considering the numerous emails from various receivers an average person reads daily, the simple and to the rule simply works.

o   Not all the receivers of your message are the same. We have to identify their preferred channel of communication. We would rather forward a cargo claims to a lawyers's firm through mail instead of using the internet, having printed out all the necessary documents. We should also include an accompanying letter, explaining the situation and succinctly and directly explain the case.

➢   Another fundamental objective in the communication's process is represented by adaptability. The communication's skills are measured by a fundamental attribute: the adaptability to difficult, conflicting communication scenarios, adaptability to new and diverse situations. The human being is extremely comforted by what exists within the area of anterior experiences and in discomfort towards the new and different situations. What do we do when we notice differences: we try to transform them according to our own habitat and comfort…

➢   The communication's skills are necessary in order to make ourselves known to the interlocutor the way we want, and not in a manner that is expected by the interlocutor. Ever since entering a room, to the manner in which we activate the window of our hidden inner self and do not allow our interlocutors to identify our stress, pain and anxiety resources, or the manner in which we advertise ourselves during a job interview, are all part of the communication's process.

➢   Managing conflicts is another important objective in improving communication skills.

2.   CONFLICTS IN MARITIME INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

2.1 Human resources approaches in maritime industry

Conflict has existed and it will always exist among people, either separate, or in different groups. Wherever people are, ideas, conjunctures, values, styles, standards, will exist, and they might determine conflicts. Generally conflict might be determined by the following:

✓   Objectives
✓   Purposes
✓   Aspirations

✓ Unconfirmed expectations
✓ Habits
✓ Prejudice
✓ Competition
✓ Sensitivity
✓ Especially aggressiveness – the most important of the conflicting presumptions.

In S. Deep's and L. Susman's opinion[1,p.120], three causes in perpetuating conflict can be identified:

o We live in a world that is more complex and diverse, a world in which different people desire different things. Only a few things satisfy everybody, as well as the known fact that the human being is apprehensive of different or new situations.

o Working with people means the existence of an ongoing source of conflict.

o Incompatibilities, vanity, egos and egocentrism can only be presumed and/or potentially conflicting situation;

o We live and work in a world that imposes certain limits regarding our resources. In this context, the organizational conflicts are determined by the organizational restrictions and to the same extent by the invariably limited resources.

The dynamics of the organizations, just like those of the groups, comprise a consensus as well as dialogue and conflict, because, just as R. Hall[2,pp.30-70] pointed out, "The conflict constitutes an inherent organizational process". In this context, the present scientific task's objective is to point out a few of the trigger conflict motivations within the work groups, as follows:

❖ The existence of dualism in the humans' relations with their peers: people need to get involved in something, as well as to stand on the side lines, according to their conformation needs, as well as to revolt; furthermore, they need to be part of something noteworthy, as well as being independent from the collectivity. This type of dualism of attitudes is capable of generating intrapersonal, interpersonal and group conflicts;

❖ The great responsibility of every manager "to push" the organization from the chaotic tendency – the individual's own influence -, towards performance; the leadership of the whole (organizational objectives and values), by the concentrated force of the divisions, becomes fundamental. Experience has demonstrated that in any organization, usually, the individual interests are paramount in comparison to the general interests. In this context, the human resources will be coordinated, in their activity, by personal interests.

The management's role is to minimize the gap between the individual interest and the organizational interests. Otherwise, the organizational conflict is inherent.

Regardless of the number of people that agree to the outlined objectives at the organizational level, they will have diverging opinions regarding the manner in which they are carried out; moreover, due to the fundamental characteristic itself of the human nature (individuality/difference), the individuals have different opinions. If we include to the aforementioned criteria the fact that people have different values and/or convictions, standards of behaviour, manners, priorities, personalities

and different levels of the sense of humour, the explanations for the interpersonal and group conflicts are easily identifiable.

Due to the inevitable character of conflicts, the outcome is that managing the human resources is one of the most important activities, and the management of conflict is considered by a greater number of specialists in the field, as being just as important as all of the other human resources management's functions.

In an individual opinion, the conflict is generated by the intentional requirement on behalf of an individual and/or a group in an effort to realize the objectives of another group. Given that the objectives of both sides are in many occasions, incompatible, the realization of the object by one of the sides makes its realization by the other side, impossible.

There are several points of view regarding the role that the conflicts have within the organizational life. On one hand, conflicts are abnormal dispositions within the activity, having a profound dysfunctional character.

On the other hand, conflicts are usual aspects of existence and evolution of business, and from a functional point of view, it has a positive result.

The classics of managerial science present conflict as a "bad" thing, determined by the lack of understanding among people and the profoundly poor interpersonal relations. The characteristics of the organizational sector, as the main guide of the human behaviour, are considered to be "guilty" for the presence of conflicts. In order to avoid the conflicting coordinates, the organizations will focus on developing a harmonious cooperation between the management and the employees. The organizations that practice this type of policy promote harmony, the family spirit and helping one another, are considered to be paternal organizations. In their framework, the united team will not accept unwanted interferences that might disturb the organization's life. In dealing with employee engagement, satisfaction and motivation, ship management has to improve one's own leadership and self -development skills. Such practices may include daily activities such as journal writing: creating to do lists leads individuals to much clearer actions. Keeping a record about what is to be done and need to be completed during the day ensures that no tasks are left unattended. Is an important way of involve employees, of managing time and planning some other activities.

Another concept, in opposition to the traditional one, called behaviour driven, accepts the existence of conflict as an inevitable, and even a desirable fact. According to this concept the presence of conflict is not caused by the organizational sector, instead it is caused by different personal interests, purposes and/or objectives. It is not beneficial accepting conflict, when the purpose is to follow one's personal interests to fulfil unproductive purposes. However, in the absence of conflicts, apathy might occur, immobility and the organizations' inability to adapt to the challenges of change.

Conflicts are inevitable. In this regard, a recent study carried out by The American Management Association points out that "…..The managers spend approximately 20% of their time with conflicts and

consider that the ability to negotiate has become very important in the last 10 years".

In the management of conflict, the capability to solve conflicting situations is considered to be at the same level and sometimes even more important than planning, communicating, motivating and decision taking. Among the potentially organizational conflict generating sources, are the following: misunderstandings, inadequate communication, different values, and personality dissimilarities, etc. Managing conflicts in a place of diversity as maritime industry is, could be consider a challenge.

The managers are confronted on a daily basis with internal as well as external conflicts. What causes these conflicts? The researchers have discovered six conflict generating areas, as follows: managerial authority; the belief and system of values utilized; proposed purposes.

In my opinion, aside from the above mentioned causes, we can include as being potentially conflict generating causes within the organizations, the following: the inadequate responsibility of employees; the noninvolvement or different participation of the employees in adopting decisions, the absence of the managerial support, rising standards and the level of performances, rapid technological changes, different managerial styles, organizational environment, age difference and prejudice.

The processing model, elaborated by Pondy, starts from the premise that the only way to understand a conflict is to identify it as being a dynamic process, rather than stable or static.

The latent conflict is determined by the consequences of certain anterior conflicting episodes. Among them, we can mention the following: the lack of resources, the aspiration for having a lot more autonomy, the differences between the personal objectives and the organization's objectives. The external environment itself, influences the latent conflict;

The comprehended conflict emerges simultaneously with the awareness of existence of certain latent conditions. The divergent objectives and/or the purposes do not determine conflict as long as it is not obvious. Conflict is maintained in a latent state, the ones involved consider it insignificant. It transforms into a perceptible conflict only when we direct our attention towards it. Therefore, there can be present a great number of conflicts, more than we can manage, and as such, the comprehended conflict does not necessarily have to become a perceptible conflict.

The manifested conflict it is expressed through behavior, the most frequent reactions being, apathy, dramatic attitude, open hostility, and/or aggressiveness. Using the mechanisms that they possess, the managers can anticipate and take measures before the conflicts are manifested openly. There are a few theoretical conflict models. Thomas considers that the conflict models describe either the process, or the structure of a certain conflicting situation.

If a conflict has been resolved, the involved sides can move towards cooperation; if it hasn't been resolved the conflict will increase its intensity, encompassing parts or problems that haven't been, implicated, initially.

In order to solve conflicting situations, we can outline as a starting point a few basic criteria, in establishing a conflicts' pattern: the essence of conflicts, the subjects involved in the conflict, the position taken by the actors involved, the degree of intensity, shape, duration, evolution and the effects generated by the conflicts, respectively.

Special attention must be provided to the asymmetries within the organizations. A flawed developed union life, the centralism of the human resources policies, are the causes for asymmetrical, power struggle conflicts, which unfortunately the employer-employee rapport will end in a win –lose situation with the triumph of the employees, they are part of a special status group.

The position taken by the actors involved in the conflict allows the symmetrical and asymmetrical differentiation of conflicts. In this context, the conflicts frequently arise among the sides that have a different predominance, such as the majority and the minority, a legitimate government and a rebel group, an owner and its employees, etc.

These types of conflicts are asymmetrical, and their genesis is not found in the typical problems or aspects that might divide the sides, it is found in the structure that constitutes the sides. It seems that no structure given by the role and/or relations cannot be changed, without the emergence of a conflict. In the asymmetrical conflicts the structure is constituted in such a manner, that "the big fish always gulps the smaller fish". The only solution is to change the structure; however this is not always in the interest of the "big fish". As such, there are no win-win results, and the third party can only join forces with the "smaller fish", in order to reach a solution. If this doesn't take place, the "big fishes" will try to maintain their power and keep under control the "smaller fishes".

Depending on the degree of intensity, the conflicting states can be manifested through discomfort, incidents, misunderstanding, tensions and crisis. The discomfort is the intuitive feeling that things are not normal, even though the conflicting state cannot be precisely defined. The incident is a nuisance over time and is the basis of more intense conflicts, and that is why they are not forgotten. An incident can be just a simple problem, but when it is misunderstood, it can escalate in tension. Misunderstanding is a form of conflict caused by erroneous perceptions, by the lack of connection among the sides and/or inadequate communication. Finally, tension and crisis are two extreme forms of conflict – people "go overboard" and let themselves be dominated by feeling.

2.2 Employee and labour relations in maritime industry

The human behaviours are governed by two main systems: a reward and penalty system. Our behaviours that are followed by positive results tend to develop. Opposite that, the behaviours that are followed by negative results tend to diminish. The research in the field of neurosciences and psychology has allowed establishing the biological basis of the reward system and the identification in the brain of certain nervous structures around the hypothalamus, called "the center of pleasure". According to Patrick Legeron [4, p.56, Apud

Routtenberg, "The reward system of the brain", Scientific American, 1978, 239, pp. 154-164)) in the case of the animal's experience it is well known that a rat will learn not only to press a handle, but continues to regularly do it if it gets, what psychologists call "an incentive". This incentive might turn into a more consistent reward (food reward), but it can be obtained by stimulating the rat's electric centre of pleasure as well. Once more, in animals, a diminishing or even the suppression of certain behaviours by employing "punishment procedures": the rat receives an electric shock every time it moves on the other side of the cage. It will avoid moving fast in that direction.

What is usually neglected is the fact that the rewards extremely activate the intense emotions such as, pleasure (with reward) and fear, aggressiveness, conflicting states (with punishment) and it determines motivation. In the work field it can be noticed a higher rise of the unpleasant consequences, what we in general might call frustrations. The frustrations, are less and less rewarded, and constitute permanent sources of organizational conflicts.

Material frustrations and psychological frustrations can be distinguished, because the rat feeds itself basically with "material incentives", with pieces of meat, the human being needs (according to the theories regarding the human needs), recognition, attention and/or affection just the same. The two aspects – material and psychological, are essential for the proper function and emotional balance.

The native organizations where the material motivations are inadequate, especially in the public sector, not only do they not provide the human resources' emotional stability but are conflict generators as well. The material motivations can be intrinsic and/or extrinsic. The intrinsic motivation is the one that commences from the direct relation between the task and worker and usually is self-applied [3, p.152]. Extrinsic motivation is the one that commences from the task's external work environment, and is almost invariably applied by the managerial system. The obvious fundamentals for the human needs are the material motivations (extrinsic). The specialists consider that the third millennium wages can in most positive cases satisfy our escalading needs. Why do people work? In great part is to earn money. Therefore, this fact, even though it seems ordinary, it confirms the fact that today's material needs are greater: advertisements' pressure, a consumer society, the ideology of to have and to be, everything is orchestrated in such a manner that it is not possible not to have the latest phone and the latest computer software. "There is no wage increase, and that diminishes the enthusiasm. We are required to have more and more qualifications, to study computers, English…….but the salary doesn't change. It should be that the relations be different, the *I give to myself; you give me" type"*. Affective gratitude is an aspect; however, it is incomparable to the financial aspect…"[Legeron,op.cit.]. It is obvious that a human resource that thinks in this manner will generate conflicts in their rapport with the other employees, especially with the higher ranked employees, responsible with the evaluation of the professional performance and

establishing work motivation. For the native public management, the evaluation graphs that lack objectivity, egalitarian, egalitarianism motivation, based not on the performances of the employees, but according to the seniority criteria, don't do anything else except to perpetuate the conflicting conditions.

After the people were asked to do their jobs well – that is the natural thing to do, invariably even the efficiency evaluation generates frustrations and/or conflicting conditions – after they've been asked to surpass themselves and tend to do more, at this moment we are witnessing the emergence of a new tendency, initiated by the management, for the sole purpose of managing conflicts. Today, it is asked of the individual to be more affectively involved in his/her work: it is desired that he/she love their work, to get a sense of satisfaction out of it and to dedicate themselves, body and soul.

Successful performance of the employees requires more than possession of certain skills. New employees have to be familiarized with the environment through orientation, their introduction to their job and organization as a whole.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the above, it is clear that the role of human resources has changed over the years. In the past, strategies were designed based only on a company's needs, developing procedures and safety standards by assuming that their personnel were essentially alike.

With the understanding that individuals are unique, having different capabilities, skills, knowledge, just as they have different aspiration levels and attitudes towards work, strategies can now be formulated in such a way as to take advantage of the company's personnel core competencies.

Human resource managers in shipping no longer view employees as dispensable individuals who can be replaced by other applicants in an instant. Instead, they invest in their development and continuous training, taking into consideration their individual characteristics.

However, the biggest challenge in human resources management as applied in shipping is not just to recognize these individual characteristics and skills, but to create a successfully mix of people who will be able to carry out their collective duties successfully, both on board a ship and in a department of the ship management company-and make these teams work together in synergy.

As the 2010 Manila Amendments to the STCW stress, management, leadership and teamwork are much sought after qualities, to promote not only safety after and security on board but also effectiveness, efficiency, motivation and self- respect to professionals and overall benefits for the shipping management company. As shipping is such an international business, human resources management have to include talent management, executive and leadership development, performance management, compensation and labour relations [5]. Developing a global mind-set in human resources in shipping means effectively evaluating the global competitive environment and its impact in

managing people: effective locate, attract, engage and retain competent employees, both on shore and on board with a view to achieve the company's strategic objectives and goals.

4. REFERENCES

[1] DEEP, S., SUSSMAN, L., *The secret in succeed: make inteligent actions!,* Polimark Edition, 1996

[2]HALL,R.,*Organizations. Structures, Processes and Outcomes*, Prentice-Hall International.Inc., 1996
[3]JOHNS, G., *Organizational behaviour*, Economics Edition, 2001
[4] LEGERON, P., *How to avoid stress*, Economics Edition, 2004
[5]JACKSON, M.,R., *Human resource managemen*t, 13-th Edition, South Western Cengage Learning