Communication & Leadership
Communication
The Importance of Communication

• Important part of work life consists of interaction
• Effectiveness of communication is therefore central!
• Still, communication often is a major problem.
• New challenges arouse from information technology & multicultural society.
The Communication Process

• Transmission of information
• Exchange of meaning
• Consists of
  – Coding
  – Decoding
• Factors complicating it
  – Perceptual filters
  – Noise
• Important: Feedback
A Model of the Communication Process

Coding

transmitter

Perceptual filters

Context

Channel

message

feedback

Perceptual filters

decoding

receiver

Context
Barriers & Facilitators

• Barriers
  – Power differences
  – Gender differences
  – Physical surroundings
  – Language
  – Cultural diversity

• Facilitators
  – Face to face
  – Reality checks
  – Right time & place
  – The ‘you´ attitude
Language As Signal for Power

• High power indicators
  – Positive talk
  – Give credit
  – Accept responsibility
  – Decisive speaking
  – Tell the truth

• Low power indicators
  – Qualifiers
  – Irritators
  – Hesitations
  – Excessive questions
Non-verbal Communication

• Definition: Process of coding meaning through behaviors which do not involve the use of words. (H & B)

• Dimensions
  – Eye behaviour
  – Facial expressions
  – Posture
  – Limb movements
  – Tone & pitch of voice
  – Distance
  – Dress
  – Time
  – Space
Non-Verbal Communication

• “Paralanguage”
  – Rate of speech
  – Pitch & loudness of voice

• “Proxemics”
  – Distance between people
  – Culturally determined!

• Inconsistency between verbal & non-verbal message

• Context is important!
Differences in Communication

- Gender differences
  - Different communication styles
  - Men emphasize status, women play it down
  - Men exude confidence, women play it down
  - Men tend to be more direct
  - Women listen, men take control
  - ... 
  - Effects in organizations?

- Cultural differences
  - Norms about word use
  - Different tones of speech
  - High- vs. Low-context
  - ... 
  - Effects in organizations?
High- Versus Low- Context Cultures

• High-context cultures:
  – people rely on social & non-verbal cues
  – Establish relationships first
  – Value personal relations
  – Agreements based on trust
  – Slow, ritualistic negotiations

• Low-context cultures:
  – people focus on written & spoken word
  – Get down to business first
  – Value expertise & performance
  – Agreement based on legal contract
  – Fast & efficient negotiations
Organizational Communication

• Often a problem in organizations
• “Signalling” systems
  – Reward, sanction, appraisal & promotion policies
  – Rules & vocabularies
• Organization mission statements etc.
• Mechanisms
  – Meetings & Seminars
  – In-house newspapers & notice boards
  – E-mail….
  – Open door policies
  – Quality circles
  – Attitude surveys
Formal & Informal Communication

• Formal communication
  – Following the organization chart
  – Downward communication
  – Upward communication
  – Horizontal communication

• Informal communication
  – Behind the organizational chart
  – Snowball effect
  – Grapevine
  – Rumors
Leadership
Leadership

• Definition: The process of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement

• Five approaches to the study of leadership
  – Trait spotting
  – Style counseling
  – Context fitting
  – New leadership
  – Dispersing the role
Common-sense classifications of leadership behavior

• authoritarian vs. cooperative, or authoritarian vs. democratic
• directive vs. laissez-faire, or directive vs. participative/delegating

→ In most common-sense classifications, the degree of participation and the use or abuse of power takes centerstage
Trait Spotting

- Long held assumption: Personality traits of good leaders could be identified (“great-man theory”; elite theory of leadership)
  - Then possible to select right people for leadership positions…
- Typical list of qualities
  - Drive for responsibility
  - Focus on completing task
  - Vigour & persistence
  - Self-confidence
  - Tolerance for frustration….
  - Interpersonal and social competence; emotional intelligence
  - Charisma

- Problems
  - Vague!!
Empirical results on the relation between leadership success and personality features

Correlations between personality features and leadership success:

- Conscientiousness: weak correlation
- Emotional stability: weak correlation
- Openness: weak correlation
- Extraversion: no correlation
- Agreeableness: no correlation

→ Do weak correlations suffice to draw meaningful conclusions?
Personality theories of leadership: Evaluation and further development

Personality theories of leadership are not wrong but do not suffice for a comprehensive picture of the relation between leadership and success.

→ Dependence of leadership success on behavior and situative variables
Gender Differences

• Until the 1980th, usually men seen as leaders

• Glass ceiling

• Female leadership style?
Style Counseling

- Attention switch from selecting leaders with ‘good’ personality traits to training & developing leaders in ‘good’ behaviors.

- Two dimensions of leadership-behavior:
  - Employee-centred behaviour
  - Job-centred behaviour

- Or…
  - Consideration
  - Initiating structure
Two dimensions of leadership: Consideration and Initiation Structure

• Consideration
  • General consideration and respect for subordinates
  • Openness, approachability, readiness to two-sided communication
  • Taking care and support of all subordinates in an individual manner

• Initiating Structure
  • Structuration, definition and clarification of ends and means
  • Aktivation and performance motivation
  • Control and supervision

• A supervisor can simultaneously score high on both dimensions
Four Leadership Styles Derived From the Ohio State Studies

- Low Structure, High Consideration: Less emphasis is placed on structuring employees tasks while the leader concentrates on satisfying employee needs and wants.
- High Structure, High Consideration: The leader provides a lot of guidance about how tasks can be completed while being highly considerate of employee needs and wants.
- Low Structure, Low Consideration: The leader fails to provide necessary structure and demonstrates little consideration for employee needs and wants.
- High Structure, Low Consideration: Primarily emphasis is placed on structuring employee tasks while the leader demonstrates little consideration for employee needs and wants.
Context Fitting

• Not one leadership-style for all situations!
• Whether a manager should be democratic or autocratic depends on
  – Features of the task structure
    • Degree of complexity
    • Number of alternatives
    • Degree of information uncertainty
  – Traits of the subordinates
    • Type of motivation
    • Degree of qualification
  – Features of the unit
    • Size
    • Trust
    • Extent of cohesion or conflict

➢ Contingency theory of leadership
Hersey and Blanchard’s situational leadership theory

Central factor:
**Follower readiness (to perform the particular task)**

Defined as:
- Sufficient formal qualification
- On-the-job expertise
- Ability to set oneself high but achievable goals
- Willingness to take responsibility for the task
Hersey and Blanchard’s basic model

- The leadership style should vary according to the follower’s readiness on how to perform a task
- Without the situative variable there would be no correlation between leadership style and success
Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Theory

Leader Behavior

Task Behavior

Follower Readiness

Leader Behavior

- Participating (S3)  
  Share ideas and facilitate in decision making

- Selling (S2)  
  Explain decisions and provide opportunity for clarification

- Delegating (S4)  
  Turn over responsibility for decisions and implementation

- Telling (S1)  
  Provide specific instructions and closely supervise performance

Follower Readiness

- High  
  Follower-Directed (R4)

- Moderate  
  Follower-Directed (R3)

- Low  
  Leader-Directed (R1)
Evaluation of Hersey and Blanchard’s model

• Benefits:
  – Offers basic and intuitive model for situation-dependent leadership
  – Allows for diagnosis of leadership with LEAD (Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description) and thus for leadership training

• Drawbacks:
  – Narrowing of situative variables to follower readiness
  – Adaptability of leadership behavior is questionable ("Tell me about follower readiness and I adjust my leadership style accordingly")
Situational Leadership

• Most important messages:
  – Flexibility!
  – Most effective leadership style depends on context

• However:
  – Considerate, participative, democratic style often better
    • In line with social/political trends
    • Knowledge of employees important!
**New leadership**

**Transactional leadership**
- Motivation by means of rationality: structuring tasks, coordinating activities, providing incentives
- Leader does not convey certainty but emphasizes the provisional character of decisions and dispassionately compares targets and results
- Subordinates’ readiness to make sacrifices is limited to their expectation of goal accomplishment
- Mutual criticism and rational debate are possible and desired
- Rational comparison of possibilities

**Charismatic leadership**
- Motivation by means of emotiveness: vision, identification, projection of feelings
- Leader convinces by personality; role model not only for behavior and goals but also for values and morality
- Leader conveys certainty, operates on the basis of visions
- Subordinates’ readiness to make sacrifices is based on common goals and visions and particular social orders
- Criticism and rational debate are considered undesirable
- Narcissist self concept of the leader
Charisma as personal trait, social relation or attribution

• **Charisma as a personal trait:**
  – Often mentioned: eyes, voice, rhetorical capacities, energy, persistence, empathy
  – Widely shared assumption: charisma cannot be learned
  – Problem: different charismatic leaders have different personal traits
  – There are positive and negative historical examples

• **Charisma as social relation:**
  – Subordinates as disciples rather than co-workers
  – Strategies to increase dependence: demand sacrifices; group pressure
  – Promise of salvation; convey a feeling of power
  – Often an important condition: personal or social crisis

• **Charismatic leadership as attribution, triggered by:**
  – Vision; disruption of status quo
  – Taking personal risks → trust
  – Responsiveness to needs of subordinates
  – Entrepreneurial behavior
Positive and negative effects of charismatic leadership

• Possible benefits:
  – May trigger additional efforts and initiative
  – Provides orientation in times of change or crisis
  – Increases the possibility of achieving change

• Possible drawbacks:
  – Questioning impossible → Impossibility of revisions
  – Homogenization of thinking and values
  – Dependence of success on individual persons

→ Charismatic leadership can have different degrees;
→ Leaders who are equipped with charisma may still lead in a transactional way (structuring tasks; allocating resources; incentives)
→ Combination of transactional and transformational leadership is possible