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COMMUNICATION, MANAGERIAL STYLE AND SUCCESS*

Bernard Bass
SUNY--Binghamton

Rudi Klauss
Syracuse University

Robert McGowan
Syracuse University

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Communication audits completed by subordinates were negatively correlated in general with overachievement of salary by 69 military air officers but positively related for 29 social welfare professionals. Among 159 managers, communication audits completed by peers were negatively related to overachieved salaries.

ABSTRACT

Seventy-one subordinates described the managerial styles of their 28 superiors using a 72-item behavioral rating. They also described their communication styles and credibility using the Communication Audit. Only the negotiative style was independent of communication patterns. Correlations ranged from .64 for delegation and careful transmission, and .65 for consultation and two-way communication, to -.09 between negotiation and attentive listening. The directive leader was seen as dynamic, frank; consultation, participation and delegation all were highly positively related to most of the measures of communication style and credibility. Self-ratings generated no such relationships. Rather, the negotiative leader saw himself highly negative on most communication variables. Other self-rated leadership styles were independent of self-rated communication patterns.

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COMMUNICATION, MANAGERIAL STYLE AND SUCCESS

Communication is of paramount importance to managers. Many have commented about the overlapping elements in communication behavior and leadership. Leadership is influence. Influence requires effective communication. Leadership requires effective communication. An intensive study of nine senior executives over a four-week period, noted that they spent approximately 80 percent of their time talking with others, (Carlson, 1951). Likewise, another detailed study of four departmental-level managers, found that more than 80 percent of their time was spent in conversation. Similar results were reported by Stewart (1967), Lawler, Porter and Tannenbaum (1968) and Mintzberg (1968).

However, these studies reveal very little about <u>specific managerial behaviors</u> which contribute to effective communication. There has been some research in the fields of mass communication, psycholinguistics, attitude change and small group behavior relevant to interpersonal processes, but little has been done to examine the elements of the communication process in organizational relationships and the immediate managerial work environment, although some laboratory research has been completed using artificially created groups (often with college students as subjects), or with groups having brief life spans (for example, duration of an experiment).

As a consequence, there is a surprising dearth of research, field or laboratory, on the linkages between leadership and commun-

ication behavior, although the overlap seems obvious. Little has been done to describe the specific ways that particular communication styles relate to particular differences in leadership styles although conceptually various leadership styles have been defined in terms of communication behaviors. Thus, the directive style of leadership is partially defined in terms of one-way rather than two-way communicating. Attentive listening is one characteristic of a good consulting style by a leader.

In this report, we will first look at how communication and leader behavior are intertwined. From empirical results, we will attempt to specify the communication styles that tend to hang together with different leadership styles. Second, we will examine the extent to which a manager's communication style contributes to his or her success as a manager measured by a salary grade attained beyond prediction.

COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR AND LEADERSHIP

In this section, we will present results we obtained in examining how communication patterns of focal persons relate to their leadership or managerial style.

Measuring Leadership Style

Based on a series of questionnaire surveys of subordinates who described the behavior of the superiors, Bass, Valenzi and Farrow (1975) used factored scores on 72 items of leader behavior to generate five factors: direction, negotiation, consultation,

participation and delegation. The stylisitic factors were described as follows:

Direction: The directive manager tells his subordinates what to do and how to do it. He initiates actions. He tells subordinates what is expected of them. He sets deadlines for the completion of work by his subordinates. He specifies definite standards of performance expected from his subordinates. He rules firmly and maintains uniform ways of doing things. He schedules what work his subordinates will do and tells them to follow standard rules and regulations. He sees to it that subordinates are working to capacity and reassigns tasks to balance the workload.

Negotiation: The negotiative manager does personal favors for those who work for him. He is opportunistic and changes his behavior to fit the occasion. He promises rewards if subordinates follow his opinions. He times the release of information for when it will do him the most good. He makes political alliances with superiors and subordinates. He maintains social distance: remains aloof, detached, and uninvolved with subordinates. He bends rules to get the job done. He encourages subordinates to compete with each other. He "sells" his decisions to subordinates.

Consultation: The decisions the consultative leader makes reflect the fact that he has discussed matters with his subordinates before he decides. He does not make final decisions unless he hears first what his subordinates think about the matter. He makes the final decisions but only after obtaining his subordinates' opinions. Before he makes up his mind, he explains the problem to his subordinates to get their opinions. He does not act on important matters before first hearing subordinates' ideas. He talks things over first with subordinates, then decides what action to take.

Participation: The participative leader and his subordinates analyze problems to reach consensual decisions. His subordinates have as much responsibility for final decisions as he does. Decisions are made by the group, not by him alone. Decisions that affect the work group are made in joint decision making conferences between himself and his subordinates. His subordinates participate as equals in decision making.

Delegation: He gives suggestions but leaves group members free to follow their own courses. He permits subordinates to make their own decisions. Subordinates decide what to do and how to do it after he indicates that a problem exists. He leaves matters in the hands of his subordinates.

The authors noted that direction and negotiation were empirically

correlated. Both were aspects of initiation of structure. Consultation, participation and negotiation were also intercorrelated as elements of consideration. Nevertheless, response allocation analyses showed that the five factors were conceptually independent. Delegation is very different than consultation, although the same managers tend to do both, or to do neither.

As can be seen, much of each factor involves different ways of communicating with subordinates so our results, when communication audit scores were correlated with these five factor scores, were not unexpected. Rather, they confirmed the extent that much of leader behavior is covered by communication style.

Communication Styles, Credibility and Consequences

Klauss (1976) developed a set of variables which characterize a manager's interpersonal communication style. Six factors were derived from a factor analysis of a 73-item questionnaire completed by a sample of 397 managers in a large industrial organization. A role clarity measure was extracted from the work of Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970), while three credibility measures come from the factor analytic work of Berlo, Lemert and Mertz (1969) as well as Falcione (1974). Four outcome variables were obtained from research reported by Bass and Valenzi (1974).

The thirteen scales which could be scored when a 63-item questionnaire was completed by subordinate colleagues of the focal person, were as follows:

Communication Styles

Careful Transmitter: careful in organizing one's thoughts and

choosing appropriate words when communicating with others.

Open, Two-Way Communicator: encouraging, using a style of open, free flow of two-way communications.

Frank: frank levelling with others, self-assured in one's communication with others.

Attentive Listener: attentive in listening to others.

Brief and Concise: does not drift from topic to topic or use too many words.

Informal: natural, relaxed, informal style of communicating.

Credibility

Trustworthy: congenial, fair, kind and just in dealings with others.

Informative: knowledgeable, experienced, authoritative and skilled in communicating with others.

Dynamic: forceful, active, energetic and not hesitant or timid in communicating with others.

Consequences

Role Clarity: colleagues know what they are expected to do on their job and colleagues know what to expect if they do their job as expected.

Effectiveness: evaluation of the effectiveness of the work unit containing the focal person and his colleagues.

Role Satisfactions: overall satisfaction of the focal person's colleagues with their respective assignments.

Satisfaction With Each Other: satisfaction of the focal person's colleagues with the focal person.

Comparable scales were obtained from completion of similar questionnaires by the focal persons.

Sample

Necessary data for analysis was obtained from 71 subordinates of 28 superiors as the focal persons. The focal persons were all

supervisors in a variety of organisational settings, all of whom were enrolled in a graduate management course where the questionnaires were distributed. The 71 subordinates also completed the Management Styles Survey (Bass, 1976 which yielded five factor scores about the leader behavior of the focal persons as seen by their subordinates. Self-evaluations were also obtained from the 28 superiors about their communication and leader behavior.

Results

Table 1 shows the correlations for 71 subordinates describing the leader and the communication behavior of their superiors, the 28 focal persons. All subordinates describing the same focal person were grouped and the mean communication leader behavior obtained for each person was the basis for the correlations reported in Table 1. Table 2 shows how the 28 focal persons described themselves on corresponding questionnaires.

Table 1 answers the question, when subordinates describe their superiors' leader behavior, are they also to some extent describing their superiors' communication behavior? Table 2 answers the question, when focal persons describe how they think they lead are they at the same time describing how they communicate? As can be seen, clearly distinct patterns emerge.

Table 1 shows strong associations between being seen by subordinates as consultative, participative or delegative, i.e. considerate, and higher scores on all six communication styles as well as trustworthiness and informativeness. Consultation correlates significantly with dynamism, but participation and delegation do not.

Being seen as directive by subordinates was less strongly associated with communication style. It was significantly correlated with scores for careful transmission, two-way communication, frankness, informativeness and dynamism; but not with scores as a careful listener, brevity, informality, and trustworthiness. Negotiative leader behavior failed to correlate consistently with any communication scores. Perhaps this should have been expected. Negotiative behavior is both empirically and conceptually the hardest to discriminate because of its very subtleties. Not everyone can easily discern when a focal person is timing the release of information, bending rules, doing personal favors for some people, or selling a program for political reasons rather than on its merits.

The obtained relations between leadership and outcome variables were highly consistent with what has been found in larger samples. When subordinates' do the evaluating, consultative, participative and delegative bosses are most satisfying and effective. Directiveness is also a positive virtue, but not to the same degree, although it can be seen in Table 1 that directiveness also contributed to role clarity almost to the same extent as consultation, participation and delegation. Negotiative, manipulative behavior is seen by subordinates not to contribute to satisfaction and effectiveness at all nor does it help role clarity.

But what do the focal persons themselves see? First, as noted in Table 2, overall they see much less linkage between their leadership and communication styles. Only those focal persons who describe

themselves as highly negotiative and manipulative see also that they do this at the expense of satisfying communications such as carefully transmitting and listening, being informal, trustworthy or dynamic. Those who score themselves low in negotiative behavior see themselves as being more careful and attentive, informal, trustworthy and dynamic.

By being more directive or consultative, focal persons see themselves as also contributing to greater role clarity.

To sum up, for subordinates, considerate leader behavior, as expected, strongly relates to satisfactory communications. Directiveness has its limitations. Negotiative behavior is irrelevant in the eyes of subordinates. But the focal persons themselves see that if they are negotiative, they also are much less likely to communicate with attention, care and trustworthiness.

COMMUNICATION STYLE AND SUCCESS AS A MANAGER

If promotion is based on merit, particularly interpersonal competence, we should expect successful managers to be seen by their colleagues as more credible, open and two-way, trustworthy, informative, as well as effective in transmitting and listening. On the other hand, if promotion is based on favorably manipulating one's superiors, then most colleagues are likely to see such rapidly rising managers as lower in most of these regards. Several empirical investigations have shown that the more rapidly promoted managers, the accelerates, are likely to be more pragmatic rather than idealistic or moralistic

(England and Weber, 1972; Bass and Eldridge, 1973· Bass and Burger, et al, 1979). One might expect this to be reflected in the Communication Audit in scores for careful transmitting and listening. That is, as pragmatists, successful focal persons would be more likely to expend the effort to transmit and listen carefully when the occasion warranted. An idealist would be expected to be more concerned about this in all his or her interchanges.

Defining and Measuring Success as a Manager

One approach to measuring success as a manager has been to regard higher level managers as more successful than lower-level managers. Promotion to higher levels or number of promotions earned is seen as an index of managerial success. Or, one may choose to contrast cross-sectional samples of managers and non-managers. Managers are defined as successful; non-managers are not successful. Thus Bray, Campbell and Grant (1974) compared employees who started out together in terms of whether subsequently they succeeded in attaining middle management jobs.

Managerial success is frequently measured by ratings of their performance, usually by their superiors (Stogdill, 1974).

Managerial success has also been measured in terms of rate of advancement up the executive ladder. A younger person at higher management levels or with a higher salary, has risen faster at an accelerated rate. An older person at lower management levels or with a lower salary has risen more slowly or at a decelerated pace (Bass

and Eldridge, 1973). Level and salary tend to correlate highly. For Esso Europe managers, Laurent (1968) found a correlation of .82. England (1974) as well as Laurent (1968), looked at managers' salary holding constant non-achievement factors likely to influence salary such as seniority and function. They both derived an index for each manager based on the discrepancy between his actual salary and the salary forecast by his particular seniority, function, age and so forth. A manager was therefore seen as more successful, the more his actual salary was less than predicted. Thus, in an unpublished study using this procedure, Valenzi found it possible to optimize and cross-validate prediction of salary with the following equation:

Predicted Salary = 5527.86 + 4690.74 Profit/Non-profit - 2356.60 Sex + 2647.30 Starting Salary + 461.77 Years of Service + 428.27 Total Persons in Organization

That is, managers' salaries were expected to be higher if they worked for a profit making rather than a not-for-profit organization, if they were male, not female, if they began with higher starting salaries, if they had more seniority and were members of larger organizations. Further, Valenzi found that although subordinates of the managers perceived negotiative, manipulative leadership of them by their managers to result in ineffective work unit performance ($r = -.25$), contrarily the more negotiative the managers, the more they were likely to earn salaries in excess of what would be expected for managers of their organization type (profit or non-profit), sex, starting salary, years of service and size of organization. No other leader-

ship style was associated with such excess salaries. To the degree that such compensation reflects how the managers' superiors' value them, superiors' see greater effectiveness in managers who are manipulative; the subordinates of the managers see otherwise.

Given these results as well as the earlier observations about the extent accelerated managers are likely to be pragmatic rather than idealistic, we expected to obtain lower scores among our accelerated managers in openness and trustworthiness, even though we saw such style and credibility contributing to satisfaction and effectiveness.

Samples

Data were collected from 29 social welfare professionals as well as from 159 industrial managers and 69 military air officers.

Predicted Salary Grade

The following variables were entered into a step-wise regression with focal person's salary as the dependent variable: Age, sex, education, years of service, total number of persons in the organization, department population, number in work group, number reporting to focal, industrial (0) or government (1) organization, and focal person's starting salary. The optimal prediction equation resulting from the regressions is as follows:

Predicted Salary Grade = 8.88 + .56 starting grade level + 1.24 years of service + .041 department size* - .93 sex** + .472 educational level***

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*Actual number of people
**2 = Female; 1 = Male
***14 possible levels

A predicted salary grade was then generated for all focal managers and the measure was compared with their actual salary. The discrepancy was then computed for each focal manager by subtracting predicted salary from actual salary.

Focal persons were seen as more successful to the extent their actual salary was higher than predicted by the structural equation. Or, they were seen as less successful to the degree their actual salary was less than predicted.

Results

Table 3 shows the results obtained for the three samples. For the 69 military air officers as focal persons, a highly consistent pattern of negative correlations were found between colleagues' ratings of communication adequacy and overachievement in salary grade. But correlations were only statistically significant ($p<.05$) in general for subordinates' results but not so for peers and superiors.

For the 159 industrial managers, where significant relations emerged, they were negative. But this time, it was the peers whose evaluations of focal person correlated significantly with overachieved salary grade.

Hardly any statistically significant results were obtained for the 29 social welfare professionals because of the small sample size, although here more adequate communications by focal persons according to their colleagues tended to enhance overachievement of the focal person particularly when evaluators were peers or superiors of the

focal person.

No simple pattern or directionality emerged for the three samples although one could discern that among military air officers, good communication styles tended to relate negatively to success; among social welfare professionals, the trend was toward a positive association. Relations seem situation-specific with the military providing more advancement for the tight-lipped and social service for the credible and loquacious with private industry somewhere between.

TABLE 1

RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNICATION STYLES AND MANAGEMENT STYLES
AS SEEN BY 71 SUBORDINATES OF 28 FOCAL PERSONS

	Directive	Negotiative	Consultative	Participative	Delegative	Mean	S.D.
COMMUNICATION STYLE							
Careful Transmission	*.37*	.08	*.63*	*.59*	*.64*	5.4	1.9
Two-Way Communication	*.35*	.14	*.65*	*.61*	*.57*	5.1	2.0
Frank	*.40*	-.02	*.59*	*.52*	*.45*	5.8	2.0
Attentive Listening	.21	-.09	*.55*	*.53*	*.59*	6.2	1.8
Brief and Concise	.19	.00	*.40*	*.51*	*.50*	6.7	1.8
Informal	.18	-.01	*.53*	*.55*	*.54*	6.0	2.2
CREDIBILITY							
Trustworthy	.18	-0.5	*.58*	*.55*	*.59*	6.2	1.8
Informative	*.37*	-.08	*.59*	*.56*	*.59*	6.2	2.0
Dynamism	*.15*	-.05	*.38*	.27	.16	6.8	1.4
CONSEQUENCES							
Role Clarity	*.36*	-.02	*.37*	*.40*	*.43*	6.8	1.5
Satisfaction with Supervision	*.34*	.00	*.62*	*.63*	*.63*	5.3	2.2
Role Satisfaction	.21	.11	.25	.27	.30	5.0	1.7
Work Unit Effectiveness	*.31*	.06	*.59*	*.59*	*.56*	4.3	1.6
MEAN	7.8	4.0	6.8	5.2	7.4		
S.D.	2.8	2.2	3.4	3.4	3.4		

r shown in italics when $p < .01$

TABLE 2

RELATIONS BETWEEN SELF-APPRAISED COMMUNICATION STYLES AND MANAGEMENT STYLES OF 28 FOCAL PERSONS

	Directive	Negotiative	Consultative	Participative	Delegative	Mean	S.D.
COMMUNICATION STYLE							
Careful Transmission	.09	*-.38*	.04	-.09	-.09	5.0	1.3
Two-Way Communication	.13	-.26	.26	.16	.09	5.1	.9
Frank	.13	-.16	.04	.01	-.04	4.9	1.3
Attentive Listening	-.01	*-.44*	.00	-.09	-.05	6.1	1.1
Brief and Concise	.09	-.23	-.08	-.08	.07	6.7	1.2
Informal	-.13	*-.43*	-.07	-.10	-.10	5.5	1.4
CREDIBILITY							
Trustworthy	-.08	*-.32*	.12	.07	-.01	6.4	.9
Informative	.05	-.19	.10	.17	-.02	6.2	1.2
Dynamism	.00	*-.30*	.05	-.06	-.11	6.1	1.3
CONSEQUENCES							
Role Clarity	*.30*	-.13	*.39*	.24	.10	6.2	1.0
Satisfaction with Supervision	-.06	-.23	.12	.15	.12	5.4	1.2
Role Satisfaction	.13	-.09	.11	.14	.14	4.9	2.2
Work Unit Effectiveness	-.07	-.11	-.01	.15	.13	4.7	1.3
MEAN	5.8	4.2	5.6	4.6	7.4		
S.D.	3.4	1.6	3.8	2.6	2.6		

r shown in italics when $p < .05$

TABLE 3

CORRELATION OF COLLEAGUE RATINGS OF FOCAL PERSONS
WITH THEIR MANAGERIAL SUCCESS

	SOCIAL WELFARE PROF. (N=29)			INDUSTRIAL MANAGERS (N=159)			MILITARY AIR OFFICERS (K=69)		
RATERS	/Subordinates/	/Peers/	/Superiors/	/Subordinates/	/Peers/	/Superiors/	/Subordinates/	/Peers/	/Superiors/
COMMUNICATION STYLE									
Careful Presentation	.10	.29	.14	.05	-.17*	.08	-.32*	-.09	-.10
Two-Way Communicator	.09	.38*	.04	.05	-.16*	.05	-.34*	-.22	-.15
Frank	.18	.35	.30	.06	-.11	.00	-.29*	-.22	-.13
Attentive Listener	.14	.29	.20	.06	-.09	.01	-.28*	-.16	-.01
Brief	.19	.29	.25	.01	-.17*	.03	-.27*	-.11	-.19
Informal	.10	.23	.30	.07	-.18*	.02	-.27*	-.14	-.18
CREDIBILITY									
Trustworthy	.04	.19	.14	.09	-.11	-.06	-.26*	-.14	-.17
Informative	.19	.28	.26	.05	-.17*	-.05	-.23*	-.14	-.14
Dynamic	.20	.27	.27	.03	-.21**	.06	-.15	-.11	-.13
CONSEQUENCES									
Satisfactory Relation	.12	.27	.21	.00	-.19*	.02	-.30*	-.13	-.14
Role Satisfaction	.17	.18	.06	.04	-.10	.07	-.18	-.09	-.18
Effective Relation	.15	.33	.18	.00	-.22**	.02	-.22	-.12	-.08
Role Clarity	.14	.34	--	.05	-.14	-.10	-.27*	-.12	-.17

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

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