

BUSINESSMAN' BEHAVIOUR DURING PRE-NEGOTIATION PHASE

Ramona Bacter -Vasilica *, Camelia Ioana Chebeleu **

* University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St., 410048 Oradea, Romania,
e-mail:ramonabacter@yahoo.com

** University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St., 410048 Oradea, Romania,
e-mail: chebeleuioanacamelia@yahoo.com

Abstract

To communicate is first of all not about to inform, but to inquire about the mood of the customer, while setting-up a dialogue able to create consensus of the parties involved.

In order for this dialogue to be viable and effective, it is absolutely necessary to overcome a series of "filters" that the businessman can and should identify most accurately.

Key words: negotiation, behaviour, businessman, client/customer, organization

INTRODUCTION

The clear and well defined by the businessman request is the better chances of being well received by the client.

The visit to a client can be prepared only based on a well-established plan ("Guidelines") after which the businessman will learn everything s/he wants to know from his/her client.

Meeting with the client, regardless of circumstances, requires a good behaviour, subject - as already stated – to very clear and precise principles and rules.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Communication is an essential component of any activity, a mindset and a tool.

It is the process of transmitting information, opinions, views, feelings, skills, abilities, either from or from one individual to another, or from one social group to another.

Communication is also a process in which people share each other ideas, information and feelings, as it is a feature of human beings.

All human activities can not be conceived outside the communication process. Therefore one can state that the communication work is an essential activity for human beings. Everything communicates from and for the human being as communication has become nowadays a universal and all-inclusive concept.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In order to communicate there has to be a dialogue first. For this dialogue to be viable and effective, it is absolutely necessary to overcome a series of “filters” that the businessman can and should identify most accurately.

Within our discussion topics, the term “filter” addresses any psycho-physiological state of the client that can prevent the latter to:

- Accept dialogue;
- Perceive what is communicated to him/her;
- Prepare an appropriate response to the aim pursued by the businessman.

These “filters” above mentioned encountered in the communication relations between the businessman and client can be categorized as follows:

I. Physiological Filters

1. Exhaustion – it may be due to factors such as:
 - Time of the meeting;
 - Duration of the meeting with the client;
 - The intensity of the work meeting;
2. Displeasure caused by the discomfort of the meeting venue with the client; in this respect it is advisable to avoid areas such as:
 - Unpleasant venues;
 - Noisy places;
 - Venues under heated (during winter) or over heated (during summer);
3. Low hearing capacity of the other party, especially in the case of elderly;
4. Olfactory stress, created especially by strong “heavy” perfume or aftershave;
5. Difficulty to see, read and understand an image. For this reason, any diagrams, sketches or drawings which are showed clients should not be of the highest quality, easily legible and suggestive.

II. Psychological filters:

Demotivating the other party regarding the matter under discussion is an important and most powerful psychological “filter”. Conversely, it may be noted that often a person motivated by the matter discussed is capable of supporting fatigue, noise, smoke, uncomfortable venue etc .;

Disinterest for party, caused by hierarchical, social, intellectual differences, etc.;

Displeasure may find its roots in:

- Some psycho-socio-economic “stress” or even existing political tension persisting within the organization;
- Special family issues;

- Health condition;

Sense of belonging to different social and / or political classes. This can be “unveiled” by:

- Clothing/style;
- Verbal expressions used;
- Images used in conversation;

Emotion - a psychological “filter” faced frequently and which has to be overcome quickly without generating any kind of “complex”;

The language used (“inner dictionary”), which is required to be tailored to fit each party, denoting high versatility and psycho-socio-cultural adaptability.

Prejudice - another “filter” faced quite frequently; this filter, like emotion, has to be overcome rapidly;

Business background and experience, and the “life” practical experience.

Referring to business field, the customer as every individual has his/her own representation of reality, based on what s/he seen, experienced and felt until the time of the meeting. Understanding mechanism passes generally through the following intellectual activities:

- Decomposing;
- Associating;
- Comparing;
- Differentiating;
- Sorting.

For example, we may find that we are helped when the other party uses a formulation such as: "So, it is like that ... which means that ...", thus saving us from making intellectual effort necessary to make the association and comparison. Moreover this it is a proof of the other party's experience in business.

Memory is a decisive psychological “filter” to have success in business. That is why it is advisable not to "unveil" ever to any business partner your limited memory storage capacity (sometimes, useless things information!), using notes, etc. Studies show that an individual remembers from one day to another:

- 10% of what s/he read;
- 20% of what s/he saw;
- 30% of what s/he saw and heard (film, multi-media presentation etc.);
- 50% of what s/he saw and heard in a meeting (gathering);
- 70% of what s/he said;
- 80% of what s/he said, doing something in relation to what s/he said and which involves him/her.

All the “filters” afore mentioned can and should be overcome through collaboration with the client, creating opportunities to be with him/her (visits in the company, working together to a presentation, watching together films of professional interest, a business lunch or dinner, etc.).

To survey a market is about to know how to open the market, which is equivalent to make the customer, interested to take action with the businessman. Each meeting with the client is, in itself, a sale, and within each visit paid to the client, the businessman should show a number of behavioural attitudes, such as:

1. Throughout the preparation phase of the dialogue with the customer:
 - Offer, from the very beginning, your business card;
 - Do not accept to “hold on a short leash”;
 - Be confident, calm, trustworthy and accurate;
 - Be simple and straightforward;
 - In any context, do not forget to have a warm smile;
2. During the visit:
 - Show an “assertive” attitude as low as possible. Influence consists mainly in unveiling and not in imposing something to somebody, and this implies patience and perseverance;
 - To know how to prove your competence. First, by quickly overcoming the psycho-physiological “filters” and then proving a very good knowledge of the field of business concerned and knowing what and how to sell. Pay attention! When a customer says about a businessman: “It is a good trader!” this statement is not necessarily a compliment. Increasingly more, such label is “cast an evil eye” by the customers, the latter showing fears about the business agent (i.e. the businessman is either cunning and/ or provide products of questionable quality)

Therefore someone’s proficiency is proved, firstly, by the quality of human relationships set up during direct contact with the customer.

- It is important to know how to be balanced in all four following situations:
 - When getting in direct contact with the customer; this is the situation creating the prerequisites for communication. It is about the observation period and the introduction of meeting’ participants and objectives;
 - Getting knowledge on the customer, finding about the latter needs, desires and interests;
 - Persuading the customer. Once you have notified the needs, desires and interests of the client, and observing the expression rules, you have to persuade the other party to work with you (this is a proof of projective behaviour);

- Drawing the conclusions of the arrangements made, reflected by your participation in the decision making together with the client.

Apart from the considerations above mentioned, the meeting with the client involves other elements of communication.

Thus, to communicate is not about just to know and inquire about the customer mood, but also is about knowing how to express yourself and listen, and to inspire your interlocutor.

In terms of expression, we present below ten major issues to be addressed by the “mechanics” of expression:

1. The volume must be adapted to the distance that separates us from the other party, and to eventual environmental noise;
2. Speaking flow should be lowered and moderate which proves our attention paid to the other party;
3. Articulation. Many people do not know how to articulate words. That is why it is necessary to speak very clearly (in this sense, the example of the British diction is relevant), thus avoiding any unpleasant situation i.e. we are asked us to repeat words or phrase;
4. Inflection. We need to “bloom” our presentation. It is imperative that our questions, statements, suggestions etc. be delivered with different shades suitable to intended purpose;
5. Intonation should reveal a dynamic, suggestive and internalized tone, to show enthusiasm, firmness, certainty, etc., causing the other party to perceive our feelings and intentions;
6. Focus. It is necessary to know how to emphasize words we want to provide a certain meaning to the statements we make (idea novelty, benefits, etc.);
7. Pace. A presentation can become rapidly tedious and boring if there is no change in voice volume, but especially in the words flow. The focus from the other party must be constantly renewed and the pace must be changed, depending on the interests pursued in the dialogue;
8. Mimics and gestures accompany naturally the speech and there are an extremely important aid to persuade the interlocutor to understand us; at the same time, mimics and gestures are an eloquent proof of our expression skills in the dialogue with the customer;
9. The look is the most powerful “vector” of communication. It nuances the focus attention paid to the other party and the strength of the message’ intent, while also enhancing the responsiveness of the interlocutor. In fact, there are many

situations in which parties involved in the dialogue “exchange looks of intelligence”;

10. Speech pauses are absolutely indispensable to an effective communication. Pauses exploit what has been said, “give weight” and credibility, provided they are accompanied by a relevant look from the speaker to his/her interlocutor(s). When someone speaks without being “sure of him/herself”, s/he is afraid of pauses, allowing the caller to counteract and even to “block” the speaker.

Moreover to communicate is about learning to listen. We can listen more or less actively. When someone hears, this can be noticed; so it can be noticed when someone pretends to listen. In order to reveal the extent to which we are listened by the other party, we can make use of the following test (the “Carl Pogas test”): If you are engaged in a “argument” with someone you know well, do not express your point of view in relation to each party’s reasons, until you have re-stated his/her ideas and feelings and obtained his/her consent to the rewording. You will find very effective results if you manage to persevere, instead of returning, each time, "brutally" to your view by expressions such as: “Yes, but ...!”

Finally, communication means knowing how to stimulate, how to provide incentives. In this sense, the businessman needs to know, at any time, to take the lead, “re-launching” the dialogue as for each aim there are some different forms of expression.

CONCLUSIONS

Many people believe that they are conversation aces because they are talking a lot. This is wrong!

In fact, a person who is expert in conversation must listen as much as s/he speaks or even more. The real strength of such a person lies in his/her ability to draw the others into discussion. All these are part of the definition of verbal communication which is one of the most effective training tools. In short, the art of business conversation is to know what to say and when. It also includes the ability to understand when to listen.

Conversation is an excellent rhetoric school where we could better get acquainted with “the art of speech” than within a circle of well educated and cultivated people. Both listening carefully and trying to use an elevated language, while analyzing critically, is the best way to enrich your vocabulary and broaden your possibilities of expression. Every day we meet people who are unable to complete a thought, an idea. Since they are incapable of finding the right words, they leave their phrases unfinished; often their stories are incomprehensible.

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