

B.A.(Prog) II sem

AECC-English

Grapevine Communication (Informal Business Communication)

Grapevine is an informal channel of business communication. It is called so because it stretches throughout the organization in all directions irrespective of the authority levels. Man, as we know is a social animal. Despite existence of formal channels in an organization, the informal channels tend to develop when he interacts with other people in organization. It exists more at lower levels of organization.

Grapevine generally develops due to various reasons. One of them is that when an organization is facing recession, the employees sense uncertainty. Also, at times employees do not have self-confidence due to which they form unions. Sometimes the managers show preferential treatment and favour some employees giving a segregated feeling to other employees. Thus, when employees sense a need to exchange their views, they go for grapevine network as they cannot use the formal channel of communication in that case. Generally during breaks in cafeteria, the subordinates talk about their superior's attitude and behaviour and exchange views with their peers. They discuss rumours about promotion and transfer of other employees. Thus, grapevine spreads like fire and it is not easy to trace the cause of such communication at times.

Examples of Grapevine Network of Communication

Suppose the profit amount of a company is known. Rumour is spread that this much profit is there and on that basis bonus is declared.

CEO may be in relation to the Production Manager. They may have friendly relations with each other.

Pros and Cons of Grapevine Communication

Advantages of Grapevine Communication

Grapevine channels carry information rapidly. As soon as an employee gets to know some confidential information, he becomes inquisitive and passes the details then to his closest friend who in turn passes it to other. Thus, it spreads hastily.

The managers get to know the reactions of their subordinates on their policies. Thus, the feedback obtained is quick compared to formal channel of communication.

The grapevine creates a sense of unity among the employees who share and discuss their views with each other. Thus, grapevine helps in developing group cohesiveness.

The grapevine serves as an emotional supportive value.

The grapevine is a supplement in those cases where formal communication does not work.

Disadvantages of Grapevine Communication

The grapevine carries partial information at times as it is more based on rumours. Thus, it does not clearly depict the complete state of affairs.

The grapevine is not trustworthy always as it does not follow official path of communication and is spread more by gossips and unconfirmed report.

The productivity of employees may be hampered as they spend more time talking rather than working.

The grapevine leads to making hostility against the executives.

The grapevine may hamper the goodwill of the organization as it may carry false negative information about the

high-level people of the organization.

A smart manager should take care of all the disadvantages of the grapevine and try to minimize them. At the same time, he should make best possible use of advantages of grapevine.