

# COMPETENT LEADERSHIP: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN GOOD COMMUNICATION, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNICATION

**K. S. Giridharan**

Assistant Professor, National Institute for Technical Teachers Training and Research (NIITTTR),  
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

**Abstract :-** According to business leaders and other senior professionals of our age, greater attention should be placed on the nitty-gritty of business. When it comes to choosing a manager, strong communication skills are regarded as the most important. An successful manager must guarantee persuasion, accountability, deliberate association, establishing and maintaining a value system, and providing support and encouragement to his staff. All of this may be accomplished by a manager via good leadership, solid planning, monitoring, and communication. As a result of these variables, The significance of perfect and accurate communication cannot be overstated. It is a manager's communication abilities that encourage and inspire colleagues to work hard in order to accomplish team objectives as well as corporate goals. According to previous research, every day managers spend 70 to 90 percent of their time at work interacting with their teams and others. A leader's ability to lead successfully is enhanced through good communication. So, based on a review of prior work by numerous writers over the last decade, the author has attempted to determine how communication affects leadership. What are the main things managers should bear in mind while communicating with their teams, and how can communication be improved to make leadership more effective?

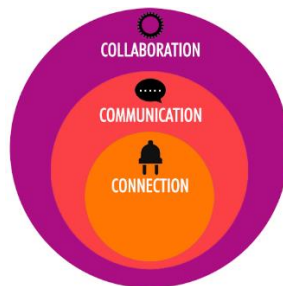
**Keywords:** Effective communication, leadership styles, trust, obstacles, and principles.

## Introduction

Effective and precise communication is a critical element in developing as an efficient and effective leader or manager. Managers must be excellent and persuasive communicators in order to attain professional success. Managers and their teams must learn how to communicate effectively since this will not only help teams finish their tasks successfully, but will also allow companies to achieve success and development (Lee Froschheiser). Many academics define a leader as someone who can take control, guide, encourage, or excite others. They have a desire to persuade people and persuade them to follow the objectives or principles that they have established. They are results-oriented, therefore they are well-trained and skilled in managing tough to difficult circumstances, and they assist to improve the outputs of teams who work with him. A leader may be anybody who has a charge-taking mentality. He may be the Prime Minister of any country or a CEO of any company. These individuals have a lot of leadership skills, but they can't lead

if they can't communicate well. They may communicate what they have and what they expect from others via communication. As a result, good communication is what allows leaders to lead effectively (Frese et al. 2003, Deborah J. Barrett, 2006). Good communication skills aid in the development of greater understanding and beliefs among individuals, inspiring them to follow the ideas and ideals instilled in them by their leader. A manager who lacks excellent communication skills will fail to accomplish the objectives that he and his company have set for themselves, making him an unproductive leader. A manager's potential may be increased by communicating more effectively with his team and colleagues, and he will be able to get work done by members of his team. Good leaders realise that good communication is not a one-way street; rather, there are two essential elements that complete the communication process: speaking and listening with understanding. They understand that they cannot continue this process unless they are properly heard and understood by their team members. To make this process go as smoothly as possible, a successful manager has well-planned goals in mind that he expects to accomplish after communicating. To achieve the communication leader's goals, picture the receiver's viewpoint, feelings, and knowledge level and plan action to assist communication so that others comprehend the message wishes to convey. He persuades the audience and connects the well-planned communications to the goals and objectives to be accomplished via communication. One of the most important characteristics of a successful leader is the ability to ask for confirmation or comprehension of the message in an indirect manner. When he receives a message, he keeps all of his doors open in order to decipher the primary concept. Even when he receives unfavourable criticism, he does not lose heart and instead views it as a chance to learn new things. He is constantly trying to grasp the weak spots and evaluate the use of communication. In the event of a misunderstanding, taking corrective action to remedy the error is equally critical and must be done by managers or leaders. As a result, in order to position oneself as a great and successful leader, one must be an effective persuasive communicator and master effectively the art of exceptional communication, which will help the manager and his team achieve new levels of quality leadership. Ethos is also an essential component of successful leadership. It is essential for a leader to be aware of moral ideals. According to a leadership study, trust is a factor that every person wants to have before eagerly following anybody in any circumstance, whether it is a battlefield or a conference room, and they want to be certain that the leader they are going to follow is honest and ethical (James Kouzes and Barry Posner, 1993). A leader must be able to communicate his vision with them through engaging with them in order to build this trust element. As a result, good communication is an important component of successful leadership.

**Communication is a critical factor in determining a leader's destiny:**



**Fig. 1 : Core Components of a Leader**

Communication is the most important aspect of effective leadership (Towler 2003). A leader is one of the workers who has outstanding skill set and has the potential to come forward to take control and coach those who lack experience and skill set, attempts to instil skills by encouraging them, and assists them in reaching their individual, team, and organisational goals. To be a successful leader, one must be an excellent communicator. Great leaders are always seen to be first-rate communicators, to have a clear set of principles, and to believe in promoting and instilling those values in others. Because of this, their teams respect and look up to them as a leader. Being a good communicator does not imply being a good talker. There is a significant difference between the two; the emphasis on gaining more knowledge distinguishes excellent communicators from good talkers, who lack knowledge and become confused when interacting with others, whereas great communicators speak confidently and never become confused due to the knowledge they possess. They have the capacity to connect with people's interests and aspirations while expressing their views. They are conscious that if they fail to connect with the audience, they may not be able to communicate their ideas to them, and the goal of communication would be lost. The greatest communicators always have the distinct characteristic of calmly listening to what others are saying. This makes them excellent observers, allowing them to read a person's or group's thoughts by evaluating attitudes, behaviour, activities, ideals, and fears, and allowing them to adapt their messages based on the circumstances. The greatest leaders or managers are those who communicate effectively to motivate and excite their employees. They guarantee that team members work hard, are disciplined, and have a feeling of responsibility. They have a strong and clear set of working principles and believe in incorporating these into their teams; as a result, they are highly valued and followed by their team members (Lee Froschheiser). Leadership communication occurs when a leader inspires his team, organisation, or individuals around him by properly expressing his ideas and goals, making them efficient enough to execute the whole given job easily. It has been noticed that all managers or leaders spend the majority of their time talking with one another while working and spend 70 to 90 percent of their time every day in group or team interactions (Mintzberg, 1973; Eccles & Nohria, 1991). With the development of new communication technologies such as mobile phones, e-mail, messaging, social networks, and so on, this proportion has increased significantly. This high proportion of time spent speaking by managers emphasises the necessity of excellent communication skills for leaders seeking to advance in their positions of leadership. Many studies have also shown that good communication is what propels a person from a lower level to a position of leadership. Indeed, it has been shown that individuals who are excellent communicators, competent of making important decisions, and capable of getting others' job done are more often suggested for leadership positions in a company (Bowman, Jones, Peterson, Gronouski, & Mahoney, 1964). Good communication skills aid in the creation of an environment conducive to outstanding comprehension of what is being conveyed and inspire colleagues to blindly follow their leader. As a result, being an expert in leadership communication is a must-do for managers who want to achieve greatness and exceptional development in their professional careers. A leader should ensure that communication is constant and that both informal and formal methods are used appropriately (Bill Back). When communicating, it is beneficial to utilise a mix of formal and informal methods. Informal communication aids in obtaining more accurate and consistent assessments in order to report problems more quickly. Informal contact at breakfast meetings and roundtable discussions has always shown to be beneficial and useful for discussing and

finding answers to different problems such as trust and credibility, while formal methods need formal approaches.

### Communication in Leadership

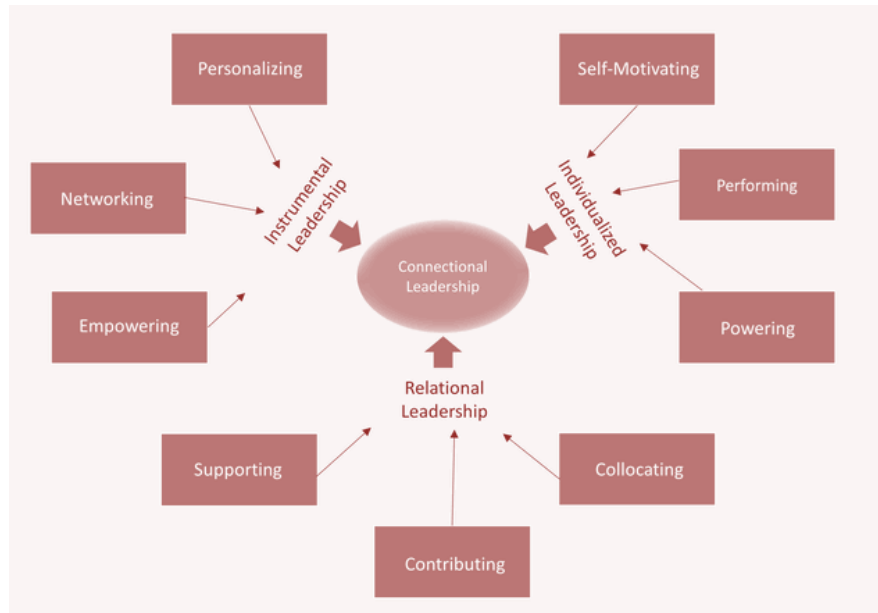


Fig.2 Communication in Leadership Model

Leadership communication is described as motivating and encouraging a person or a group by utilising outstanding communication skills to provide information in a methodical and relevant manner. Leadership communication is a complicated process that begins with establishing a communication strategy, then moves on to writing accurately and speaking effectively to manage challenging circumstances. There are three main elements to leadership communication: core, managerial, and corporate. With a growth in a leader's portfolio, there is a greater need to improve communication skills in order to manage a broad horizon and become much more successful in all conceivable circumstances. As a result, as the degree of leadership rises, so does the complexity. Core communication elements (approach, writing, and speaking) are personal abilities that must be developed in order to lead and manage larger groups or teams. Expressive cultural understandings, patient listening, team management and team meetings, training facilities, and mentorship are abilities that assist in managing large groups and are managerial elements of leadership communication. Corporate communication skills are necessary at much higher levels of leadership, and there is a requirement to engage with an external sphere. The abilities that are most needed are: maintaining employee relations, communication through change and crises, media associations, and image development. The most difficult task for a company these days is gaining the confidence of its workers, business partners, and consumers. Organizations with leaders that are skilled enough to communicate responsively and often via properly designed and devoted communication strategies assist to inspire not only workers, but also partners and customers to have

confidence in the company. The issue now is, why is it necessary for a leader to foster trust among stakeholders? The answer to this question is that leaders are those who are followed by a large number of people because they trust them. They do not follow a leader they cannot rely on (Diane Bean). Trust is a powerful weapon that may enhance dependability, honesty, and offer you an edge in times of uncertainty. Trust cannot be created; rather, it must be acquired or earned. It is simple for excellent and efficient leaders to gain trust because they understand the value and significance of establishing and maintaining trust. Leaders must make every effort, with the assistance of their teams, to persuade business partners to have confidence in the organization's leadership. Communications has an important part in establishing trust through creating an atmosphere that enables leaders to lead effectively, encouraging workers to work, and attaining the final objective (Jodi Macpherson). It becomes very difficult for a leader to motivate, engage, and retain their most talented team members if the leader does not believe their communications (Kaufman). Employees will be most pleased and motivated if they have faith in their boss and are fully informed about what is going on around them. By sharing critical information with workers, executives can foster a culture of trust and easily establish relationships with employees and other business channels, allowing companies to expand more quickly. Communication management, finding the appropriate networks, constructive discussion about what more needs to be done, and communication feedback are all examples of trust-building actions. Trust is important because it is the trust of the people that has the power to transform a huge into a minor and a major into a minor. As a result, it is critical for an organisational leader to ensure that the individuals connected with them are trustworthy.

Influence of leadership styles on communication:





### **Fig. 3 Effective Leadership Communication**

As we already know, communication has a significant influence on successful leadership, and the same is true for leadership. Different leadership styles can have an impact on the communication process. There is a back-and-forth relationship between the two. Benita Zulch (2014) defines formalised formalised formalised formalised formalised formalised formalised formalised formalised formal The following are the leadership styles that have an impact on communication:

Style based on Situation:

Leadership style is concerned with the practise and use of various leadership styles in various circumstances based on the needs of the audience and personal leadership characteristics. Every circumstance affects communication because certain situations need direct and rigorous communication while others require the leader to use indirect methods of communication. This may sometimes make communication more successful, but it can also lead to misunderstanding.

#### **Leadership style that is goal-oriented:**

Every leader has a vision or objective in mind for himself and his team. This vision or set of goals is in harmony with the goals and objectives of the company. Leaders must convey their vision and objectives to their teams in order to inspire them to accomplish them efficiently. He communicates in such a manner that others can see what he is asking from them. The primary characteristics of this approach are team involvement, good listening, and clear and timely communication. This leadership style ensures that communication is successful.

#### **Leadership style that is directive**

In this leadership style, the leader assists his teams in meeting their own work objectives and team goals by advising them on the best techniques and pointing them in the correct path. He functions as a director, guiding and enabling his team to pursue the route that will take them to their objectives more simply and precisely through communicating effectively.

#### **People-centered or employee-centered:**

According to this, there are two kinds of team members: active and lethargic. Employees in the active group are self-motivated and passionate about working hard to complete the duties assigned to them. Another group is those that need consistent inspiration and support to carry out their responsibilities. In this case, the leadership style is people-centric, and the leader must have frequent contact and communication with these workers in order to complete the job. The leader must devise tactics that are tailored to the needs of the workers in order to keep them engaged in their job. Communication is an essential component of this leadership style.

#### **Leadership style based on intellectual**

**Level:**

It is considered that a leader must adapt his leadership style while keeping the workers' intellectual level and maturity in mind. Maturity here does not relate to sensibility or age, but rather to work stability, the capacity to manage difficult situations, the capability to achieve a particular goal, and so on. Effective leaders strive to maintain a healthy balance by changing their leadership style, which has an impact on communication.

### **Leadership style based on behaviour**

This leadership style distinguishes between two fundamental leadership styles: work-oriented leadership and individual-oriented leadership. The mix of these is governed by achievement, inspiration, readiness and aptitude to accept responsibility, learnings, and information. This leadership style is not dependent on so many factors, but rather on the circumstance, where and why it must be utilised. As a result of this approach, associations must pay close attention throughout conversation in order for engagement to be effective.

### **Leadership that is action-oriented**

This leadership style suggests that the leader prioritise three major responsibilities: assignment, group, and individual. A leader must focus on the task, the team working on that assignment, and the specific problems of the team members in order to achieve deadlines by concentrating on each at various times. The primary goal of the team is to complete the job, and the leader must maintain the team's concentration in order to accomplish the goals. It is critical for a leader to maintain and improve the balance between the requirements of the tasks, team, and people through communicating with them on a frequent and effective basis.

### **Principles of how communication enhances leadership abilities**

Communication was formerly thought to be a soft talent with little effect on companies. Individual communication abilities were never a significant criteria for employment. However, the idea has shifted; communication now has a significant effect on business. It is believed that good communication by leaders encourages workers to remain motivated and execute their responsibilities effectively (Diana Clement, 2008). A well-planned communication strategy is required for effective communication. The leader's communication must be consistent with his actions and should be two-way. To minimise the direct impact of negative news, it must be shared face-to-face in an efficient way. The incorrect and untimely exchange of information or communication is the underlying cause of many issues. A key leadership skill is effective communication management. Here are some communication concepts to help you become a great leader:

- A leader must be self-assured while speaking with others. People must trust their leaders' messages. Lack of faith in communication may make team members feel uneasy and uninterested in their job. Confidence enables a team to collaborate in order to accomplish desired results.
- True leaders must constantly express the rules clearly to their teams and must follow the rules that they want others to follow. They must also signal indirectly to their teams that they are capable of doing what they ask from them. He must set a good example for his team. A strong leader must be enthusiastic and self-motivated when speaking. No one in the team can relate to a leader who is

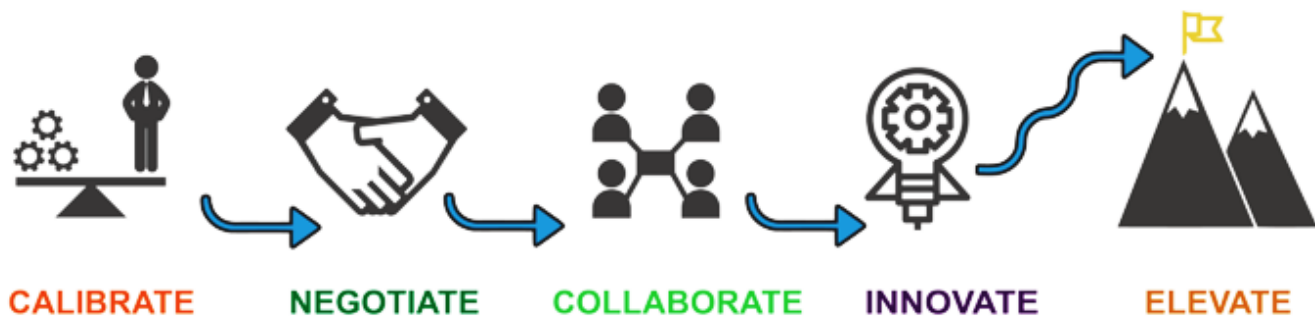
sceptical, pessimistic, or distant. Only extremely active and self-motivated leaders are regarded as successful leaders because they have a great deal of ability to inspire and improve the morale of their people.

- Great leaders must be consistent and trustworthy while communicating. When they engage with their teams, they must demonstrate value, elegance, and consistency, but they may also change according on the listeners. They must improve their personality as a trustworthy communicator in order to build trust among his team and different business channels. As leaders, rapid changes in attitude are not seen as superior to quality.
- If team members are unsure about the information given throughout the communication process, a good leader must always be approachable and without any barriers. He should be easily accessible to his team as well as other outlets. Inaccessibility leads to a leader's failure and incompetence.
- To be successful, a leader must have a clear-thinking process. There must be clarity in selecting communication methods, channels, and approaches while keeping the listeners' intellectual level and comprehension in mind. He must be very skilled in managing complex issues and will be able to simplify them in order for his team to comprehend and execute exceptionally effectively.
- Leaders must communicate clearly and concisely, and they must respect the opinions, ideas, and feelings of others. A great leader must respect various cultures, knowledge, education, moral beliefs, varied demographics, and communication styles.
- A clear communication system is essential for a leader to create. There should be no room for any grapevine to grow. There will be no secret between the leader and the team unless it is very sensitive.
- A leader must be attentive and steady while talking with his team since, in tough situations, the team relies on the leader's excellent communication for stability and solutions.
- Strong leaders must be thorough communicators who strive to bridge differences in a constructive and practical manner.
- A leader must also place an emphasis on successful listening rather than just on good speaking, since hearing patiently is just as important as speaking well.
- A strong leader should constantly focus on communicating with teams rather than just providing information with them, since communication may inspire views, methods, and actions, while knowledge simply informs.
- Communicating without fear is essential for a leader; he should speak without fear of making mistakes or faults. If a leader makes mistakes, he should confess them honestly in order to earn the trust and respect of his team members.
- A leader must exercise caution while communicating with his team, since the incorrect message may result in conflict and disagreement. The message should be concise, precise, and well-written.
- A leader must communicate with an open mind and constantly accept comments and ideas for improving his communication approach and learning.
- A leader must replace his ego with understanding since ego stifles learning and reduces appreciating inclinations, which may lead to a slew of issues among team members.



- A leader must be conscious of what he is saying to his team. The communicator must choose a message that is clear and concise. To prevent misunderstandings, a leader must be well-versed in the topic under discussion.
- Because a leader may not have time to engage with all team members personally, he must learn to connect with people even when they are in groups. He should address the group in such a way that it seems as though he is speaking exclusively to each person.
- Not only are the aforementioned concepts stated, but there are many more that demonstrate that leadership communication is about motivating people to accomplish great things.
- A leader must be skilled at telling tales and utilising anecdotes when communicating in order to influence the understandings and actions of linked groups.
- A competent leader must repeat the message many times until the last member of the group understands what it means. The repetition of a message or information during communication helps to improve productivity since everyone understands the notion or concept.
- A leader must be familiar with various communication tools and channels, including as face-to-face meetings, video conferences, telephone conferences, emails, and so on, in order to stay in contact with all of his colleagues and inspire them on a regular basis.
- An successful leader must constantly promote the use of feedback systems in order to enhance the working environment. Feedback will assist in overcoming limitations and correcting any mistakes that may have occurred.

Obstacles to successful leadership communication include:



**Fig. 4: 5 Challenges to Leadership Effectiveness**

Communication simply refers to the transmission of information or a message from one person to another or to a group. Whereas good leadership communication entails conveying messages while keeping the recipient's comprehension and capacity in mind, as well as ensuring that the receiver will be able to determine the precise meaning of the message or information given to him. When communicating, an effective leader must guarantee that there is no possibility of misinterpretation or misunderstanding. However, based on prior research, it is not realistic for a leader to make every communication successful since numerous obstacles such as noise, disruption, differing comprehension levels, and diverse cultural backgrounds make communication difficult. Although all effective leaders strive to keep the listener's

point of view in mind when communicating in a group, it may be challenging to get everyone to grasp precisely what a leader intends to convey. The issue in communication comes from interruptions or obstacles in the transmission, which may be caused by either the leader or the receiver. Some of the obstacles that impede excellent and efficient communication are as follows:

- ⊕ A leader's ability to communicate successfully with his team is limited by a lack of preparation and purpose prior to speaking with others.
- ⊕ Even if a leader plans ahead of time before speaking, failing to consider the characteristics of the audience will render the communication process unsuccessful.
- ⊕ A leader's selection of unsuitable tools and methods for communicating with the team acts as a barrier and lowers the degree of precise comprehension of the communication done.
- ⊕ One of the most significant obstacles to successful leader communication is the use of the incorrect language as a communication channel.
- ⊕ Another element that contributes to poor leader communication is a lack of confidence in one another.
- ⊕ Miscommunication results from incorrect assumptions about the listener, such as disregarding their emotions and sensitivities.
- ⊕ Use signals, postures, and gestures that do not support the words you are communicating with.
- ⊕ Ignoring feedback when communicating is another obstacle.
- ⊕ Lack of self-confidence, values, bravery, and knowledge also prevents successful communication.
- ⊕ A leader's inability to communicate effectively is also caused by a lack of key leadership characteristics.
- ⊕ The inability to adjust to change is another significant impediment.

These are some of the obstacles that impede effective communication and influence a leader's leadership communication skills. To overcome these obstacles, individuals must acquire fundamental abilities.

### **Limitations**

The primary ideas given in this article have emphasised general knowledge and comprehension of fundamental leaders communication, however there are some limitations, such as additional material that should be examined and connected to this study. However, owing to time constraints and the difficulty to get access to libraries and portals, it was impossible to gather all materials. The information gathered may not be adequate to describe the ideas in a wider sense. Due to copyright problems, there was a delay in obtaining permission to referee some of the finest articles. To produce a strong conceptual paper and build a better conceptual model, future study should gather additional data and resources relevant to leadership communication.

### **Conclusion**

As mentioned in the introduction, many studies and investigations have been conducted with the goal of determining how communication and leadership are linked to one another. Why are great communication skills needed to effectively manage a team at work or an organisation? How do various leadership styles influence communication? What are the characteristics that make a leader an excellent communicator? In

conclusion, we can say that good communication and leadership, when combined, result in effective leadership communication. A leader cannot become a successful leader unless he is a great communicator and uses this skill to get others to join him. He must be knowledgeable and capable of communicating his information to others at work. Must be able to inspire a team to accomplish what seems to others to be unachievable. Communication makes a leader successful because it fosters greater team understanding. These understandings instil confidence in workers in the leader and in each other's ability to work together, which reinforces friendly relationships among team members and produces a great work environment. They are inspired and eager to work more harder when they are working in such a wonderful, healthy, happy, and friendly atmosphere. Because of their commitment to their job, they are able to meet their goals more rapidly, and their productivity rises as a result. Figure 1 depicts the author's conceptual model of successful leadership communication based on this finding. Another school of thought holds that various leadership styles have an effect on communication. Diverse communication styles have an effect on leadership, and different leadership has an affect on communication (Benita Zulch, 2014). The effect of communication changes with a change in style. In certain styles, such as when a leader is dealing with a difficult or crucial issue, he must be a bit harsh and his leadership style will become authoritative, but he must maintain control over his communication or it will become a miscommunication or an ineffective one. In another case, if someone needs to deal with a group of individuals who have various work attitudes and styles, he should be more people-centric and communicate in such a manner that he can communicate at individual levels even when dealing with a group. Finally, we can conclude that communication and leadership are inextricably connected and cannot be done separately.

However, there is no such answer or clarification to these issues since ideas differ from person to person and each individual has his or her own perspective of what is going on around them.

#### References:

- [1] Anthony, L., (2004). "Effective Communication & Leadership". [Online]. Available:
- [2] <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/effective-communication-leadership-5090.html>
- [3] Alexander, M., (2015). "Communication Skills of Effective Project Leaders". [Online]. Available:
- [4] <http://www.cio.com/article/2882199/project-management/11-communication-skills-of-effective-project-leaders.html>.
- [5] Aon, (2015). "Ten Principles for Leadership Communication". [Online]. Available:
- [6] [http://www.aon.com/human-capital-consulting/thoughtleadership/leadership/article\\_leadership\\_communication.jsp](http://www.aon.com/human-capital-consulting/thoughtleadership/leadership/article_leadership_communication.jsp).
- [7] Beslin, R., Reddin, C., (2004). "How leaders can communicate to build trust". [Online]. Available:
- [8] <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/how-leaders-can-communicate-to-build-trust/>.
- [9] Caraballo, M., (2013). "5 Principles of Effective Leadership Communication". [Online]. Available:
- [10] <http://vingapp.com/5-principles-of-effective-leadership-communication/>
- [11] Clement, D., (2008). "Communication and leadership". [Online]. Available:
- [12] <http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Managing-your-school/Guides-for-managing-your-school/Effective-communications>
- [13] Deborah, J., (2006). "Leadership Communication: A Communication Approach for Senior-Level Managers". [Online]. Available:

- [14] <https://scholarship.rice.edu/bitstream/handle/1911/27037/Leadership+Communication++A+Communication+Approach+for+Senior-Level+Managers+-+Barrett.pdf?sequence=2>
- [15] Duncan, K., (2009). "Leadership and Communication Improving leadership and communication Skills for Municipal Managers and Supervisors". Municipal Management Program, pp: 1-22. [Online]. Available: <http://www.amcto.com/imis15/Documents/Kevin%20Duncan%20-%20Leadership%20and%20Communication.pdf>
- [16] Froschheiser, L.,(ND). "Communication: The most important key to leadership success". [Online]. Available: <http://www.reliableplant.com/Read/12675/communication-most-important-key-to-leadership-succes>.
- [17] Grossman, D.,(2011). "Leadership Communication Principles That Work". [Online]. Available: <http://www.yourthoughtpartner.com/blog/bid/47211/Leadership-Communication-Principles-That-Work>
- [18] Murray, K., (2012). "12 Principles of Leadership Communication". [Online]. Available: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140708155025-80900892-12-principles-of-leadership-communication>
- [19] Schepici, K., (2012). "HR Strategy and Systems, Leadership Development, Organizational Development". [Online]. Available: <http://mylinkage.com/blog/the-8-principles-for-communicating-as-a-leader/>
- [20] Zulch, B. (2014). "Leadership communication in project management". Proceedings 27th IPMA World Congress on Social and behavioral Science 2014, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. [Online]. Available: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814021120>.