



جامعة الجميع الذكية  
EVERYONE'S SMART UNIVERSITY

## Everyone's Smart University

### Project (Spring 2021)

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## Project Leadership

## **STRATEGIES ON IMPROVING COMMUNICATION IN A PROJECT: Implementation of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) in Healthcare**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background information**

In the context of a project, Florea & Duica (2017) define communication as the exchange of communication, in an effective and efficient manner, from one point of the project to the other. Effective communication is one of the most important pillars upon which the success of a project is anchored. If the communication is effective, better project management is achieved. Divya (2017) opines that communication provides regular updates on the project, notifies on its status and reports its performance capacity. In addition, communication keeps away conflicts and confusion from disrupting the smooth implementation of the project as all people involved in the project are understand and are aligned to same goals.

#### **Problem statement**

Our healthcare organization in KSA is determined to implement the use of the Electronic Health Records and train the employees on how to use them. The success of this venture is going to rely heavily on the communication strategies that the project managers are going to employ to implement this project. In fact, statistics state that project managers spend 90% of their time communicating (Forman, et al., 2005). This shows how central communication is in a project. This research therefore seeks to investigate effective communication strategies that can be employed to ensure the success of this project and different ways through which this communication can be improved.

## Objectives

- To determine key communication strategies between leaders and employees in a healthcare organization in KSA
- To determine key ways of improving communication between leaders and employees in a healthcare organization in KSA

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are different communication strategies between leaders and employees in a healthcare. The main communication strategies are:

**Linear communication strategy:** this communication strategy employs a one way communication model. According to Kirschbaum (2012) the message in this strategy of communication flows in a straight line from the leaders of the healthcare facility to the employees. The employees have no chance to make a feedback to the received information. Their role is reduced to receiving and acting on the information.

**Transactional communication strategy:** Suojanen et al. (2018) opines that this model of communication regards the leaders and the employees in a healthcare facility as communicators. They are both accorded an equal chance to play a role in the communication. Feedback are offered a chance in this strategy of communication.

**Interactive communication strategy:** in this model of communication, just like the transactional communication, the employees and the leaders are actively involved in communication (Kirschbaum, 2012). The difference is that in interactive communication strategy the employees and the leaders interact as they exchange views and ideas. It creates a sort of forum where the two categories of communicators interact officially. This strategy best applies when communication is done through modern media communications such as social media.

**Helical of Communication strategy:** in this communication model, the flow of communication begins slowly and within the small circle of the leaders in the healthcare (Dickmann et al., 2015). This information then flows to the next level of management widening the circle within which the information is shared. The process continues

slowly, expanding the boundaries within which it is held until it reaches the wide pool of employees.

**Westley and MacLean's Communication Strategy:** This model emphasizes that communication is initiated when a person responds to some stimulators from the environment (Divya, 2017). The employees and the leaders in the healthcare respond to the environmental stimulators subjectively and based on their object of orientation.

There are different ways of improving communication between the employees and the leaders in the healthcare. Such ways include:

**Reduce one-way communication:** one-way communication from the leaders to the employees may lead to missing out on valuable information from the employees and kill their participation morale (Divya, 2017).

**Encourage employees to share information about themselves:** Suojanen et al. (2018) avers that when employees share information about themselves with their co-workers, the flow of information improve while innovation and creativity are enhanced.

**Engage in team building:** Team building encourages communication away from the official settings. This eases the tension between the employees and the leaders enabling a free and smooth flow of information (Suojanen et al., 2018).

**Employ technology:** the use of technological devices and platforms such as cellphones and the social media makes communication easier, cheaper, less tense and more interactive (Wickersham et al., 2018).

**Conduct regular one on one meetings:** according to Daniels et al. (2011). this offers the employees and leaders a chance to meet face to face and communicate in a free and candid manner. All other communication will be easy to comprehend if the initial one on one meeting was effective.

## METHODOLOGY

Primary data was collected from 50 respondents who had been sampled from employees and leaders of this healthcare facilities. They were interviewed using a well-structured questionnaire. Notably, the questionnaire had two section. One section dealt with the efficiency of each communication strategy while the other section dealt with how communication in the healthcare can be improved. Consequently, data was analyzed descriptively, the responses rated and presented in narratives and tables.

## RESULTS

### Communication Strategies

From the various types' communication strategies reviewed, respondents were of the opinion that Interactive communication strategy and Transactional communication strategy were the most influential communication strategies (table 1)

**Table 1:** Communication Strategies

| No | Communication strategies                      | Rating |
|----|-----------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1  | Interactive communication strategy            | 4.1    |
| 2  | Transactional communication strategy          | 4.0    |
| 3  | Westley and MacLean's Communication Strategy: | 3.3    |
| 4  | Helical of Communication strategy             | 2.9    |

|   |                               |     |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|
| 5 | Linear communication strategy | 2.7 |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|

### Improving Communication Strategies

From the various types' improving communication strategies reviewed, respondents were on the opinion that reducing one-way communication and employing technology were the most important (table 2)

**Table 1:** Improvement Strategies

| No | strategies                               | Rating |
|----|------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1  | Reducing one-way communication           | 4.1    |
| 2  | Engage in team building                  | 3.0    |
| 3  | Conduct regular one on one meetings      | 2.7    |
| 4  | Employing technology                     | 4.1    |
| 5  | Encourage employees to share information | 3.3    |

### Conclusion

Communication in the course of project management refers to the exchange of information, efficiently and effectively, between the different points and players in the project. It is an important part in a project because it reduces confusion, provides updates and monitors the performance in the project. There are different communications strategies that the healthcare organization in KSA can use. They are, according to order of preference; interactive, transactional and Westley and MacLean's communication strategies. Others are Helical and linear Communication strategies. To

improve on their communication strategies, the healthcare organization in KSA can reduce one-way communication, employ technology and encourage employees to share information. In addition the organization can engage in team building and encourage employees to share information.

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