Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani

II Sem 2016-17

BITS F112 Technical Report Writing

MidSem Test (Open Book) Regular

Marks: 50 Time: 90 Min Date: 08.03.17

Q.1. Given below is a Case Study of an organizational communication context. Read through and answer the question that follows: **(25M)**

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| Though the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster had a lot of different causes, including low temperature, failure of the O-Rings, O-ring erosion, the pressure from the military, Congress, media, etc., communication also played an important role in it. Engineers and Administrators were two sets of people working on the shuttle launch. Each had their specific role, expertise and expectations from each other. The engineers had their own technical language that a normal person would not understand. The engineers had their doubts about the O-rings working properly. The O-rings are tested and examined after each use, and they had found erosion problems. NASA’s management was warned of this possible problem but they did nothing. The engineers were not certain that the O-rings were going to work correctly and efficiently enough to have a successful launch. Managers did not see this as a major problem. They were concerned about not delaying the launch any longer and were also feeling a lot of pressure to launch it as soon as possible. The problem with the managers and engineers was that the engineers were on-the-job workers; they were involved with creating and perfecting the shuttle. The managers didn’t really know what was going on with the shuttle; they didn’t know how it worked. This caused the managers to muffle the opinions of the engineers. A memo was also written to communicate the same thing to higher ups in the hierarchy, but it never reached its intended destination. Morton-Thiokol was the maker of the O-ring seals that failed to properly work during the launch. The engineers at Morton-Thiokol knew that the O-rings did not work well in cold temperature. Although they did tell NASA that the O-rings could fail to work properly under these conditions, Morton-Thiokol did not do so in a persuasive manner. Morton-Thiokol should have made sure that their concerns were heard and acknowledged by NASA. Morton-Thiokol was simply afraid to make such a big deal, and they didn’t want to admit that they had made a faulty part or that it might fail. NASA was also to blame. In a memo from Roger Boisjoly, Senior Manager to the Vice President of engineering, Mr. Boisjoly expressed his concerns about the NASA managers’ understanding the seriousness of the O-Ring erosion problem. The engineers passed this information along to the management, but again they did not continue to pass it up the ladder. |

**Referring to the case study, critically analyze your observations on communication effectiveness in terms of i) Process, ii) Flow and iii) Language and Information Sharing in approximately 100 words for each of the three categories.**

Q.2. Read the following case and answer the questions given below: **(25M)**

Mr. Rakesh Srihari took over the General Manager’s position of a very large printing house recently. On the second day of his duty he noticed that numbers of printing orders were lying unattended for quite a long period. Even the quality of printing did not match the basic minimum standard. He also found that staffs were transferred to different departments quite frequently. To understand the problem, he called the office superintendent of the purchasing department and asked him to provide the purchasing list of last five years and also to give him the current status of all equipment present. Based on the information provided, he found that most of the costly equipment purchased in last 5 years were missing and many equipment in use were not functioning properly due to lack of proper maintenance, though Annual Maintenance Contracts were available for all the new purchases.

1. Based on your understanding of purpose and importance of writing reports, identify the problems and state what could have been done to avoid such problems. (15M)
2. Mention the types and sub types of reports which could have saved the industry from the present crisis. Justify your answer. (10M)