Principles of Communication & Conflict Management

- iDEA Lab Learning Event -

Developing project management skills for open innovation and entrepreneurship

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Fostering students' entrepreneurship and open innovation in university-industry collaboration
Rationale: Why study …

... Principles of Communication & Conflict Management in the context of open innovation and entrepreneurship?

Short brainstorming exercise (15 min):

CHECK IN:
Think about how the topic of this session is relevant for your professional practice and write it down on a Post-it

After that everybody is asked to read aloud their opinion/reasoning and stick it to the wall.
Rationale: Why study ...

... Principles of Communication & Conflict Management in the context of open innovation and entrepreneurship?

Communication and interpersonal conflicts
- have a huge impact on the success or failure of a project and on its individual activities (or any other action).
- But are often underestimated and not considered consciously

Open Innovation & entrepreneurship/ Discussing new ideas with a variety of potential partners/stakeholders
- Brings high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity
- requires a high level of trust between partners
- requires in-depth knowledge of communication patterns and measures to prevent conflict in order for collaborations to be successful.
Communication & Conflict Management:

**Overview**

Basic characteristics of communication
Levels of communication
Influencing factors of communication
Nonverbal Communication
The four sides of communication
Preparing conversations
Reasoning for the ears of others
Question types
Active listening
You- and I-messages
Expressing criticism constructively
Dealing with criticism
Power Talking

**Discussion**
Communication & Conflict Management: Overview

Basics
Defining conflicts
Levels of conflict
Conflict types
Backgrounds of conflicts: personality styles
Conflict resolution methods
Escalation levels of conflicts
Addressing conflicts constructively
Conflict styles
The Harvard Concept
Conducting conflict resolution dialogs
Discussion
Basic characteristics of communication

- You cannot **not** communicate
- Communication is always also **non verbal**
- In conversation we usually experience our own behaviour as **reaction** on the behaviour of others
Influencing factors of communication
(Albert Mehrabian, “Silent Messages”)

**Body**: 55%
- Eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions, Appearance

**Voice**: 38%
- Voice (breathing), speech (intonation, articulation, volume, speech rate, pauses)

**Content**: 7%
- The matter, goal, structure of the argumentation, involving oneself and others, language
Non verbal Communication ...

- has a very big impact
- is ambiguous
- can only be interpreted in context
- is dependent on culture
- is only partially controlled
- expresses emotions
- influences feelings
- provides information on the quality/kind of relationships
Basic emotions and how to detect them

**Happiness**
- Pushed up cheeks
- Movement from muscle that orbits the eye

**Sadness**
- Losing focus in eyes
- Slight pulling down of lip corners

**Fear**
- Eyebrows raised and pulled together
- Raised upper eyelids
- Tensed lower eyelids
- Lips slightly stretched horizontally back to ears

**Surprise**
- Looks for only one second.
- Eyebrows raised
- Eyes widened
- Mouth open

**Disgust**
- Nose wrinkling
- Upper lip raised

**Contempt**
- Lip corner tightened and raised on only one side of face

**Anger**
- Eyebrows down and together
- Eyes glare
- Narrowing of the lips

Some hints:

- **Become aware** of how your body language is perceived by others.
- **Do not over-interpret** the signals of others. Misinterpretations often are the cause for conflicts. If in doubt, ask!
The four sides of Communication
“The Message Square”, F. Schulz von Thun
The four sides of Communication

“The Message Square”, F. Schulz von Thun

**Situation**
- Meeting with several agenda items, typically 1½ hours. TOP 4 is probably controversial. At the start of the meeting one participant says: "I have an important meeting in one hour."

**Content level:**
- “In an hour I have to go.”

**Self-revelation level:**
- “I am pressed for time, I fear lengthy discussions, I wish a speedy meeting.”

**Relationship level:**
- “Please conform to my plans.”

**Appeal level:**
- “No long debate on agenda item 4!”
The four sides of Communication

Exercise/group task (20 min)

1. We now bring a new example from another professional context.
2. Get together in small groups and do the following exercise: (next slide)
The four sides of Communication

Exercise/group task (20 min)

**Situation:** you are a university representative and you are in a meeting with representatives of the labour market and the student council of the university to discuss the mission/vision of the iDEAlabs at your university and next steps to establish the iDEAlabs.

During the meeting you mention that you would like to draft and sign a partnership agreement including the discussed content with all representatives after the meeting.

1. Your request: „After our meeting I would like to put this in a Partnership Agreement.“
2. Imagine different reactions to this request on all four communication levels (see slide before)
3. How do you need to (re-)formulate your request in order to ensure maximum understanding of your message (how to reach all four ears)?
Preparing conversations

- What issues would I like to address? In which order?
- What arguments, reasons, examples do I have?

- How do I experience the situation?
  - What are my feelings and my needs?
  - What of these do I want to express/share?

- What is my (maximum / minimum) goal?
- What wishes, what demands do I have?

- How does the other one see the situation?
  - How can I create a positive climate?
  - How can I express criticism without hurting?
Structures for Reasoning

**Speech to convince (3-sentence-method)**
- situation (this is the situation)
- target (this is where we want to be/go to)
- measure (this is how we get there)

**Expressing an opinion:**
- get started (introduction)
- opinion
- reasoning
- conclusions
- appeal

**Dealing with a problem**
- get started (introduction)
- announce the problem
- show alternatives
- evaluate alternatives
- ask for a decision

**Building a bridge to your own view by reflecting on the previously raised view**
- on the one hand...
- on the other hand...
- therefore ...
Different kinds of questions

The one who is asking the questions, is leading.

Open question:

Impact:
- Getting information
- Establish contact
- Understanding the context/background

When?
- mostly at the beginning

Closed question:
- yes/no - answers

Impact:
- Establishing obligations
- Keeping the conversation short
- Finalising the conversation

When?
- Mostly at the end
Active Listening

Listen
- Eye contact
- "Mhm“, „yes“
- Nodding

Understand
- Check if understood correctly
- Repeat in own words
- Summarize

Understand feelings
- Express feelings verbally
- Empathize with the other
- Notice/become aware of wishes of others
active listening

- A poses his/her argument
  B repeats the argument in his/her own words
  A confirms to or corrects B
- B poses his/her argument
  A repeats the argument in his/her own words
  B confirms to or corrects B
- A poses another argument
Dealing with Criticism

*The “Johari-Window”*

Aspects of my behaviour that …

I am aware of. I am not aware of.

Feedback as opportunity to reduce the „blind spot“

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Person</th>
<th>Blind spot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private person</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others are aware of.

Others are not aware of.
“You” and “I” messages

“You“-message:

› is like pointing a finger

Examples:

- You should try to...
- You always do...
- Why do you not...

Effect:

- Reluctance, objection
- Justification, guilt
- Hurt, anger

“I“-message:

› reflects our own perception

Examples:

- I am angry/hurt because...
- I noticed, that...
- I wish, that...

Effect:

- Empathy
- Reflectiveness
- Willingness to solve the situation/problem

Avoid “NO”-formulations, be clear and positive!
**Team Exercise**

*Phrasing powerfully*

1. Form small teams of two persons.
2. Formulate “I-messages” based on positive criticism.

- In a first step describe the is-situation and in a second step describe a possible solution.
- Avoid negative formulations (no-messages), be clear and precise and positive.

Re-formulate:
Example A: „Isn’t it obvious – I am busy!“
Example B: „Are you still not done?“
Most important topics and conclusions

- The content only represents a minor component in conversations
- The received message is a creation of the receiver
- In order to communicate effectively, formulate your words for the ear of the listener, listen actively yourself and use power talk

With regard to you your communication pattern, what would you like to...

- ... keep?
- ... do less of?
- ... do more of?

What else would you like to say/contribute?
Communication & Conflict Management:

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Discussion
What is a conflict?
(according to Thomas, 2002)

Origin of the term

- From Latin „confligere“: „to conflict“ or „engage in battle“

A social conflict is...

- ...an interaction – i.e. the parties involved are engaged/related to each other, are dependent from each other,
- ...where there are differences (in opinion) between the two parties,
- ...and where at least one of the parties experiences an emotional impact. (according to Glasl)
Levels of conflicts

Factual level
- Numbers
- Data
- Facts

Emotional/relational level
- emotions
- needs
- aspirations
- interpretations
- attitudes
- values

visible
conscious

invisible
unconscious
Types of conflicts

Social conflict: between people

Incongruity in thinking, feeling, wishing und doing of people or groups, which is experienced by at least one of the parties as impacting (negatively) on least on one of the parties

Conflict types are strongly interrelated!

Internal conflict:

Within a person, stemming from conflicting/contradictory feelings within this person

Structural conflict:

As consequence of structure/organisation of unit
Typical conflicts in the context of open innovation and entrepreneurship: *Short brainstorming exercise* (15 min):

CHECK IN:
Think of one typical conflicts in the context of open innovation and entrepreneurship (from your experience, what you heard or hypothetical) and write them down on a Post-it

After that everybody is asked to read aloud their opinion/reasoning and allocate it to the most fitting conflict types on the wall.
Typical conflicts in the context of open innovation and entrepreneurship: *Examples*

- **Social conflict: between people**
  - Role conflicts: former friends and fellow students turn to business colleagues
  - IP conflicts: Intellectual property issues not clarified, lack of trust

- **Internal conflict**
- **Structural conflict**
Backgrounds of conflicts: Personality types
The Riemann-Thomann-model

**Close-ness**
- interpersonal skills
- friendliness
- empathy
- conflict prevention

**Distance**
- objectivity
- autonomy
- Cool aloofness

**Continuity**
- order
- structure
- conscientiousness

**Change**
- creativity
- flexibility
- liveliness
- non-commitment
Short Exercise: Personality types

- Where do you see yourself in this model?
- Think of another person with whom you have conflicts or find it difficult to work with.
- Where would you position this person?
- What do you notice?

**Continuity**
- order
- structure
- conscientiousness

**Close-ness**
- interpersonal skills
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- objectivity
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**Change**
- creativity
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Conflict escalation levels

1. hardening of the situation
2. debate
3. deeds instead of words
4. coalition
5. losing face
6. ultimatum
7. hit the other/strike
8. destroy the system of the other
9. sinking together

Joint solutions are possible:
Win-Win-solutions

Solutions are possible with a neutral moderator:

Often Win-Lose-solutions

Solutions with external influence:

Often only Lose-Lose-solutions
Constructively addressing conflicts:

Describe point of view
- e.g. “I have noticed that …“

Describe impact
- e.g. “For me this means that …“

Name feelings
- e.g. “I feel …“

Ask how the other person views the situation
- e.g. “What is your view on this?“

Draw conclusions
- e.g. “What could a solution possibly look like?“ “I would wish that …“
Conflict styles
(according to Thomas, 2002)
The Harvard concept: 
Hard in the matter, soft to the person

1. Separate person and matter
2. Focus on interests, not on positions
3. Collect and consider many possible solutions
4. Make mutually beneficial decisions

A Matter B

Position Position

Emotion Emotion

Interest Interest

→ Win-Win← solution
Conducting conflict resolution dialogs

**Preparation**
- Clarify your own feelings, wishes and aims
- Try to image what the other person thinks/feels like etc.
- Prepare an appropriate framework/setting for the conversation

**Entry**
- Establish contact
- State the reason and aim for the conversation
- Clarify the agenda (schedule/method)

**Resolution**
- Explain the conflict in a positive manner
- Listen to the other person
- Lead a slow talk, have a slow conversation

**Solutions**
- Express your feelings and needs
- Select ideas for solutions
- Come to agreements

**Completion**
- Ask if everything has been discussed
- Reflect on the conversation
- Find positive final words
Summing up

Most important topics and conclusions

- Address all „4 Ears“
- Use I-messages instead of you-messages
- Listen actively
- Consider different personality types
- Look for win together solutions
- Focus on interests, not on positions

With regards to you pattern to manage conflicts what would you like to…

- … keep?
- … do less of?
- … do more of?

What else would you like to say/contribute?
Thank you for your interest and participation!

Questions?

Comments?

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