

Internal communication and its magical effect

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Introduction:

Communication is a critical determinant of individual, team, and organizational performance. It helps in the exchange of information and in knowledge exchange and creation. Communication enables us to establish knowledge management units which help by creating an atmosphere where the members of the group will in good, positive communication.

Internal and external communication frequencies are linked to team performance. Open communication helps us in creating an environment with mutual trust which will further help staff to willingly engage themselves in desirable organizational behaviours. Many believe that social interactions facilitate resource exchanges among employees and business units which can lead to the generation of new ideas and enhanced organizational performances.

In the view of the above, in Kanpur Zoo we have undertaken a small experiment involving all tiers of the organization and have experienced the magical effect of internal communication. The experiment and results are narrated below:

Pheasantary in Kanpur zoo - glorious past

In the past the Kanpur zoo bred pheasants very successfully noted in statistics below.

1995-96: 16 pheasants, 1996-97: 20 pheasants, 1997-98: 25 pheasants, 1998-99: 29 pheasants, 2002-03: 8 pheasants, 2003-04: 4 pheasants, and in 2005-06: 6 pheasants were born in Kanpur Zoo.

The indefatigable role of Kanpur Zoo in breeding different kinds of pheasants is evident from the following Table wherein its breeding record is compared with some selected zoos of India.

Problem identified

After looking at our glorious past in successfully breeding various pheasants in Kanpur zoological park, it was decided to study why now we were unable to breed the pheasants like in past.

For it a team of people was selected. While selecting the team care was taken that all members had sufficient knowledge of handling of birds. The team consisted of the author, Zoo Vet Dr. U.C. Srivatsava, Shri Ayodya Prasad, Forest Ranger, Shri Rampal, Wildlife Guard, Shri Jhagru, keeper of the aviary (State award winning keeper), Shri. Vinod, Sweeper (another State awardee).

After a series of in-house discussions we concluded:

- Rat populations in enclosures of Aviary damaging pheasants
- Live insect food (crucial to nutrition) lacking
- Insufficient privacy
- Insufficient calcium in grit esp. during spring
- Insufficient facilities for sand bathing/ mud bathing
- Dosage of deworming medicine insufficient due to current practice of mixing it in water

Selected Pheasants in Selected Zoos: 1995-96 to 2004-05										
Zoo	KZP		LZP		NZP, Delhi		NZP, HYD		Darjeeling	
	Total Birth	Total Death	Total Birth	Total Death	Total Birth	Total Death	Total Birth	Total Death	Total Birth	Total Death
IKP	32	7			9	5	0	2	5	8
LAP	17	13	0	3	0	2	0	1	48	19
NKP	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RNP	2	6	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1
SP	52	34	1	3	29	8	11	1	21	12
Phea										
Reev	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Golden	2	2	1	0	0	2	0	2	9	1
Green	0	0	7	6	2	1	0	0	0	1
Monal					0	0	0	0	0	1
Copper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Grey pc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5
Edward	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total	109	65	9	14	41	20	11	09	91	56

Key

KZP: Kanpur Zoo
 NZP-HYD: Nehru Zoo
 PNZP: Darjeeling
 LZP: Lucknow Zoo
 NZP: Delhi

IKP: Indian Kaleej
 LAP: Lady Amherst
 NKP: Nepalese
 RNP: Ring Necked
 SP: Silver Pheasant

Source: www.cza.nic.in

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Once the problems were identified another team of volunteers was formed, consisting of Mr. Vinod, Sweeper, Mr. Tara, Masson, and Mr. Rampal Wildlife Guard for implementing the decisions taken by the team. Before exactly starting our work, the course of action was discussed with Mr. Rajat Bhargav of Meerut, an expert on Birds.

Measures adopted

1. Controlling Rats - The problem

It is important to keep vermin out of the aviary. A thriving rat and mouse colony in the aviary will double the food bill, foul the food which they don't eat, spread diseases, disturb the nesting birds, may even eat the eggs and the young ones.

With the current weekly practice of draining the floor and killing the rats by physical means we were able to control the vermin temporarily, but the muddy floor looked dirty creating a wrong impression. It was decided to look for a better, cheaper and more viable solution keeping in view of meager financial resources available with us.

Some of the measures discussed

Most of these pests gain access into aviaries at the ground level or below. There are several methods to prevent them such as:

- a time-honoured way of discouraging them is to dig a trench about a foot deep all around the base of the enclosure and fill this with cement or bricks to just above the ground level, building the aviary on this foundation
- or, to bury the wire netting of the sides of the flight cage, right down into the trench turning it outwards at the bottom and then fill in the trench with earth,
- or to lay concrete for the entire floor
- or covering the entire floor with wire-netting

All of these proved to be very costly and we did not have budget to cover the costs.

So we decided to go for following cheaper and most viable alternative which was to dig up the earth to 3 foot, then cover over floor with rubble including pieces of broken glass. Over that, a layer of bricks were laid with their edges cemented. Above this brick layer, considering the clayey nature of the soil, sand was added to soil at a ratio of 40:60, so that the earth would not get compacted and hence rats won't get an opportunity for burrowing.

Costs: The Zoo spent an amount of Rs. 34,194 on 12 enclosures of the total carpet area of 195.36 sq. mts., which was a pittance compared to the costs involved for adopting any of the other measures.

The next nearest cheapest solution would have cost the zoo about Rs. 6,00,000.

2. Live Insect Food

Even though most of the birds are seed eaters and live for many years without insect food, their health is benefited and their plumage will greatly be improved with addition of live insects into their food especially during breeding season. To provide insects, logs infested with termites were arranged in the enclosures by the staff, which gave a naturalistic look to the enclosure in addition to providing live insect food to the pheasants.

Another measure adopted was unloading termite infested earth, gunny bags, etc in the enclosures.

Costs: No Cost to the Zoo

3. Grit

Grit is essential for seed eating birds. Because the birds don't have teeth for grinding the seeds, they have to swallow their food in whole or in lumps broken up by their beaks. Hard corn, seeds and nuts need breaking up before they can be properly digested so the bird swallows grit and stores it in gizzard. Seeds having been softened by the juices of crop, pass into the gizzard where its muscular action grinds them up with the grit.

In Kanpur zoo, we started using more of crushed oyster shell, cuttle-fish bone, and limestone with grit, as these are capable of being dissolved in the bird's digestive processes and absorb into the system. They are a valuable source of lime needed for bone and feather formation especially at the breeding season when eggs are being formed and young have to be fed. Cuttle-bones are fixed in the wire mesh and birds will nibble them when they please

Costs: Only a few hundred rupees.

4. Bathing

Bathing is essential to good feather condition and without it plumage lacks that gloss and finish, a hallmark for well-kept birds. Bathing induces preening and this in turn keeps the feathers in good condition. So, we provided dust baths for our pheasants in dry spots, like corners of the shelter, which gets sun, as they like to dust-bathe in a patch of sunshine. A mixture of sand, ashes, and dry soil makes a good dust bath.

Costs: None

5. Privacy

Pheasants are pugnacious birds, especially the cocks in spring. Hence there must be some form of screening along the wire partitions, or there will be a constant fighting through the netting. Therefore for controlling fighting we purchased *Sirki* (a kind of mat) from the market, colored them with three different colours (in order to give good look) and fixed them along the wire partitions

Costs : Rs. 1,320 for 12 enclosures
Each piece of screening material (3 ft x 4 ft) cost Rs. 15; 7 pieces were used per enclosure at a cost of Rs. 105 plus Rs. 5 for wire binding.

Pheasants require a little shelter; a few bushes look nice and give daytime shelter. Shelters were prepared by using the locally available materials by our staff. A positive sign is that for the first time Golden and Kaleej Pheasants became broody even in the zoo setting.

Costs: None to the zoo

In the Red Jungle Fowl Aviary, Mr. Vinod constructed a three-tiered mud structure. This structure has 10 partitions and the birds started using them for brooding their eggs. By now 9 chicks of Red Jungle Fowl were brooded here for the first time. Otherwise we were dependent on country fowls for brooding Red Jungle Fowls.

6. Control of deaths due to parasitic infections, shock etc.

In the past in Kanpur zoo deaths among pheasants were due to problems related to egg-binding (when hens are unable to pass the egg. It is associated with soft-shelled eggs), parasitic infections, shock etc. In order to minimize the death rate from the above mentioned problems we started adding more of cuttle-bone, ground oyster shells etc and giving deworming medicine regularly. Deaths due to shock do not occur now as the enclosures are now fully free from rats etc.

Costs involved: None to the zoo

7. Results

The whole-hearted efforts resulted in the birth of 11 Silver Pheasants, 2 Golden Pheasants, 17 Ring Necked Pheasants, and 5 Kaleej Pheasants. Among these, the lone pair of Ring Necked Pheasants after a gap of 13 years blessed us by giving us fertilized eggs from which 17 chicks were hatched; similarly ever-elusive Golden pheasants greeted our efforts by giving a hatching of two chicks. The lone pair of Indian Kaleej pheasant made us proud by helping us to breed this endangered species in the zoo.

The results are even more gratifying considering the fact that we could achieve them from a mere pair each of Indian Kaleej Pheasants, Golden Pheasants and that of Ring Necked Pheasants, and from 2 pairs of Silver Pheasants. From these a total of 35 different pheasants were born.

8. After care

It is very much essential to look after the chicks so that mortality rate among them will be a bare minimum. For this, a team of dedicated staff was constituted for helping Veterinary Doctor U.C. Srivatsava. The team comprised of Mr. Vinod, Mr. Masicharan, Mr. Pratap, Mr. U.S. Dwiwedi, Mr. Sahab Lal and Mr. Rampal, due to their constant vigil and due care all of our chicks are hale and healthy.

9. Cost-Benefit Analysis

From a situation where the zoo once brooded about 20+ pheasants every year, then came a

situation where the numbers dwindled down to 2-3 per year to a situation which challenged us to get back to the past success. This effort culminated in the Zoo breaking all of its own past records and the National records also.

Cost:

• On making the enclosures rat proof	Rs. 34194
• On providing Privacy	Rs. 1320
• On providing live insect food	Rs. None
• On providing Calcium to grit	Rs. 500
• On providing sand baths	Rs. None
• On measures for control of deaths	Rs. None
• On broody hens	Rs. 2100
• On vaccination, minerals, vitamins etc. to the chicks	Rs. 500
• Other misc. expenses	Rs. 2286
Total amount spent	Rs. 40,000

Benefits: With these works the zoo is able to benefit:

(A) Tangible benefits

The value of the tangible benefits: **Infinite**

(B) Intangible benefits

- State and National recognition to the zoo for its efforts
- an opportunity for the zoo management open its internal communication channels with the lower staff
- a sense of great satisfaction amongst the whole staff
- active involvement of the staff
- helped us to increase innovation skills
- the support process helped the Director to make better decisions
- this treasure of acquired knowledge will help us in increasing pheasant numbers next year
- Now the staff is approaching the zoo management voluntarily for doing something helpful for their animals. With their active association we are going to take up other groups of animals like Swamp Deer, Manipuri Deer etc in near future.

Thus the Cost basis ratio is 1: infinite

