

## **Technical Communication – Unit 1**

### **Assignment 4**

**Q.1 Explain formal flows / channels of communication?**

**Q.2 Explain informal flows / channels of communication?**

**Q. 3. Differentiate between Formal & Informal Flows / Channels of Communication.**

**Q.1 Explain formal flows / channels of communication?**

#### **Formal communication:**

The communication in which the flow of information takes a predefined channel is termed as Formal Communication. The communication follows a hierarchical chain of command which is established by the organization itself. In general, this type of communication is used exclusively at the workplace, and the employees are bound to follow it while performing their duties. The other name for formal communication is official communication. Formal flow of communication takes place through following four channels:

1. Downward Communication
2. Upward Communication
3. Horizontal or lateral communication (Peer)
4. Diagonal or Cross-wise Communication

#### **1. Downward Communication**

Downward communication refers to the communication from the higher level in managerial hierarchy to the lower ones. It is a communication from decision makers to the workers. It is a communication from seniors to their subordinate employees.

The main function of downward communication is providing direction and control. It involves the transfer of information, instruction, advice, feedback and ideas to the subordinate staff. It increases staff awareness and facilitates implementation of:

- New policies
- Guidelines
- Decisions
- Evaluations
- Appraisal of the performance of the employees.

Downward flow of communication is essential for the functioning of any organization.

#### **Examples of Downward Communication:**

A communication from General Manager of a company to the branch managers is an example of downward communication.

Other examples of downward communication include-

Annual Confidential reports  
Performance appraisals  
Notices  
Project feed back  
Announcements of company policies  
Official instructions and so on...

**Forms of downward communication may include-**

Notes  
Notices  
Memos  
Telephone conversations  
Voice mails  
Emails  
Face to face conversations

Too much down ward communication may lead to reaction from subordinates and can hamper better employee - employer relationship.

**2. Upward Communication:**

This type of communication refers to-

- Communication from subordinates to superiors.
- Communication from employees to management.
- Communication from workers to decision makers.

Since upward communication involves the transfer of – information, request and feedback from subordinates to their seniors, it promotes better working relationships within an organization by giving the subordinate staff opportunities to share their views and ideas with their supervisors. It facilitates employee involvement in the decision making process.

Nevertheless, in any organization there has to be a balance between downward and upward communication channels.

**Examples of Upward Communication:**

A business report from the branch manager of a company to the managing director of the company is an example of upward communication.

Other examples of upward communication include –

- Business proposals
- Suggestion box
- Exit interviews
- Grievance redressal committees and so forth....

**3. Horizontal or lateral communication (Peer)**

It takes place between professional peer groups or people working on the same level of hierarchy.

It is the communication among workers at the same level.

The main objectives of horizontal communication are –

- Developing teamwork and Promoting group coordination within an organization.

Horizontal communication is less formal and structured than both downward and upward communication and may be carried out through –

- Informal discussions
- Management gossip
- Telephone calls
- Teleconferencing
- Memos
- Routine meetings and so on....

#### **4. Diagonal or Cross-wise Communication**

It is the product of modern changes in information technology and management. It is basically a response to market needs that demand speed and efficiency.

Diagonal communication flows in all directions. As the diagonal channel occurs between people who do not have to follow rigid norms of communication protocol.

### **Q.2 Explain informal flows / channels of communication?**

#### **Informal communication:**

On the contrary, Informal communication refers to the form of communication which does not follow any pre-defined channel for the transmission of information. This type of communication moves freely in all directions, and thus, it is very quick and rapid. In any organization, this type of communication is very natural as people interact with each other about their professional life, personal life, and other matters. The other name for informal communication is grapevine.

Example: Sharing of feelings, casual discussion, gossips, etc.

#### **Informal Channel of Communication: Grapevine**

#### **What do you mean by Grapevine?**

In the context of an organization's communication network grapevine may be described as, "An informal system of information flow, like the far stretching branches of a grapevine, this system is very complex, uncontrollable and unpredictable.

'It feeds on rumour and gossip'.

A clever professional / manager knows how to use it for the betterment of the organization.

It is not unorganized communication, which happens automatically without any instructions or efforts by the authorities.

Informal Communication also known as Grapevine takes place during:

- Tea time gossips
- Casual gatherings
- Lunch time meetings.

Grapevine may be helpful in :

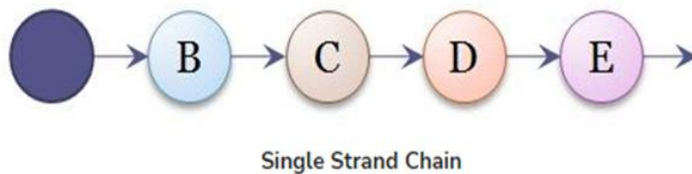
- Positive Group building.
- As a safety valve for pent up emotions.
- Building up organizational solidarity and harmony.

**Grapevine (Informal communication) takes place through following channels:**

1. Single Strand Chain
2. Cluster Chain
3. Probability Chain
4. Gossip Chain

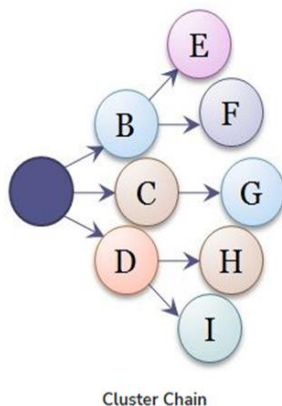
### 1. Single Strand Chain:

The communication in which one person tell something to another, who shares it with some other person and the process goes on.



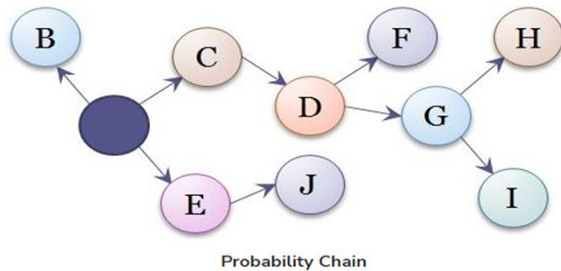
### 2. Cluster Chain:

The communication in which one person tells something to some of its most trusted people, and then they share it with their trustworthy friends and the communication continues.



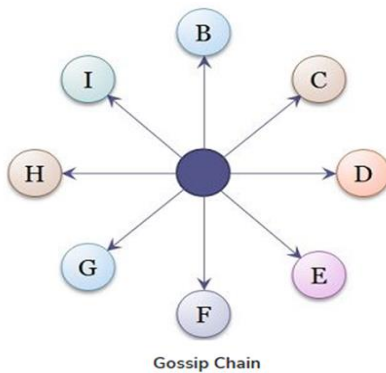
### 3. Probability Chain:

The communication happens when a person randomly chooses some persons to pass on some information which is of little interest but not important. Those people further share the information with other people and information flow continues.



### 4. Gossip Chain:

The communication starts when a person tells something to a group of people, and then they pass on the information to some more people and in this way the information is passed on to everyone.



### Q. 3. Differentiate between Formal & Informal Flows / Channels of Communication.

Sl. No.	Attribute	Formal Communication	Informal Communication
1	Definition	A type of verbal communication in which the interchange of information is done through the pre-defined channels is known as formal communication.	A type of verbal communication in which the interchange of information does not follow any channels i.e. the communication stretches in all directions.

2	Another Name	Formal communication is also known by the name of official communication	Informal Communication is also known by the name of grapevine.
3	Secrecy	Full secrecy is maintained	Maintenance of secrecy is not possible
4	Form	Formal communication is written	Informal communication is oral
5	Speed	Formal communication is time-consuming	Informal communication is rapid and quick.
6	Reliability	Formal communication is more reliable	Informal communication is less reliable
7	Origin	Formal communication is designed by the organization	Informal communication starts itself due to the urge of 'human to talk'
8	Evidence	Documentary evidence is always available	supporting documents are not available
9	Information Flow	Only through predefined channel	Can move freely