

Lecture 1:

Professional Communication in a Digital, Social & Mobile World



INTRODUCTION

Communication

- the process of planning, creating, delivering, and interpreting messages
- the most important ability in the workplace

This Lecture helps you understand:

- Why studying business communication is important
- Why being a business communicator is challenging
- What characteristics you should be able to demonstrate after completing this course to be a successful business communicator
- Use of technology in communication

Business Communication: Why and What

Study Questions:

1.1 Why should I study business communication?

1.2 Why is business communication challenging?

1.3 What characteristics do successful business communicators share?

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Communication is Important to Your Career

- Your career will give you the opportunity to communicate, collaborate and share ideas with many people, both inside and outside your organization
- You may be an employee, executive, consultant or freelancer to a company
- You may become an entrepreneur
- In all these roles, communication skills may be the single most important skill you possess

Effective business communicators have a competitive edge ...

Being an effective communicator helps you stand out in the workplace

Some facts

- Most job ads specifically cite communication skills as a requirement
- One third of companies surveyed by Society for Human Resource Management say their employees do not write well enough
- The top complaint of companies surveyed by Graduate Management Admission Council is graduates' poor communication skills

Good communication skills will contribute to your success

- Communication skills will make you a valuable employee
 - Good internal communication can directly affect employee satisfaction and a company's financial success
 - Good external communication via **social media**—web-based applications designed to promote social interaction—improves employee satisfaction and expands market outreach
- Communication skills can improve your salary
- Good communication skills can have a positive impact on your life outside of work

Business Communication: Why and What

Study Questions:

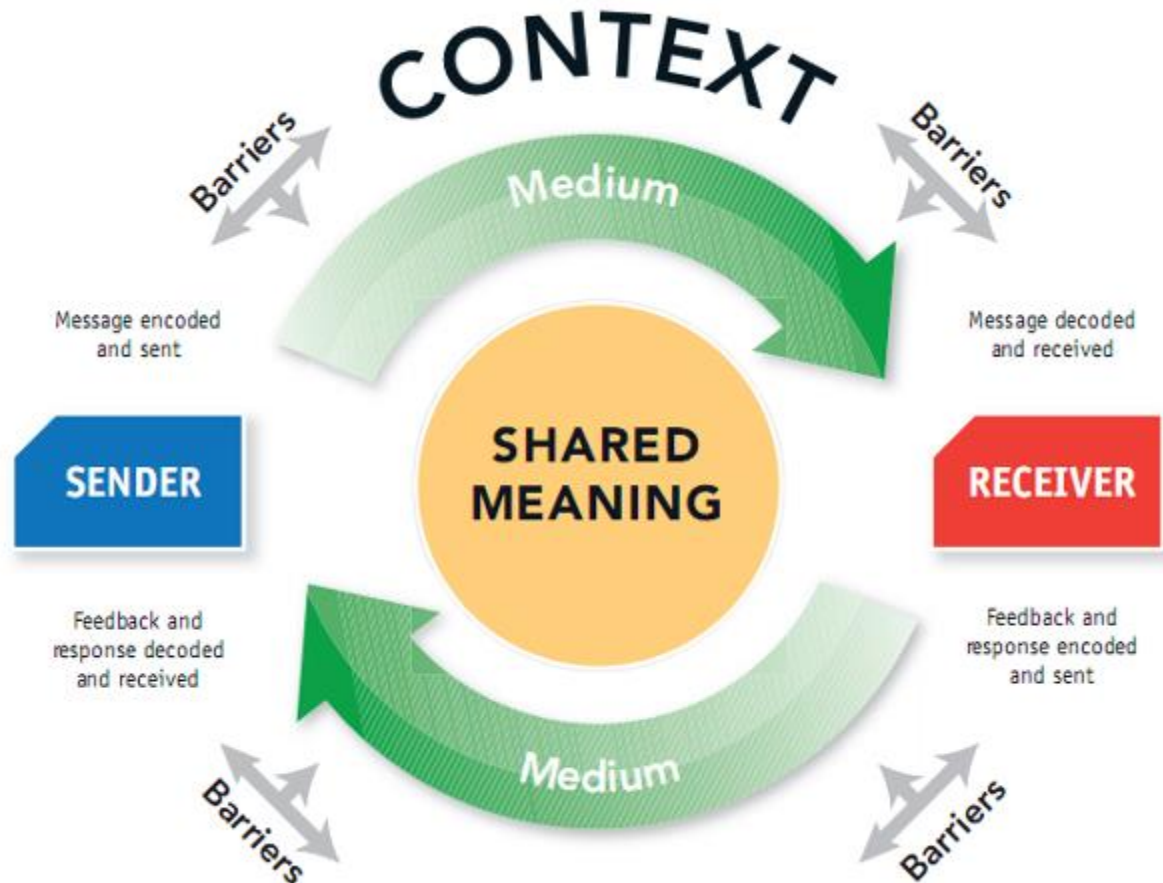
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Even basic communication is complex

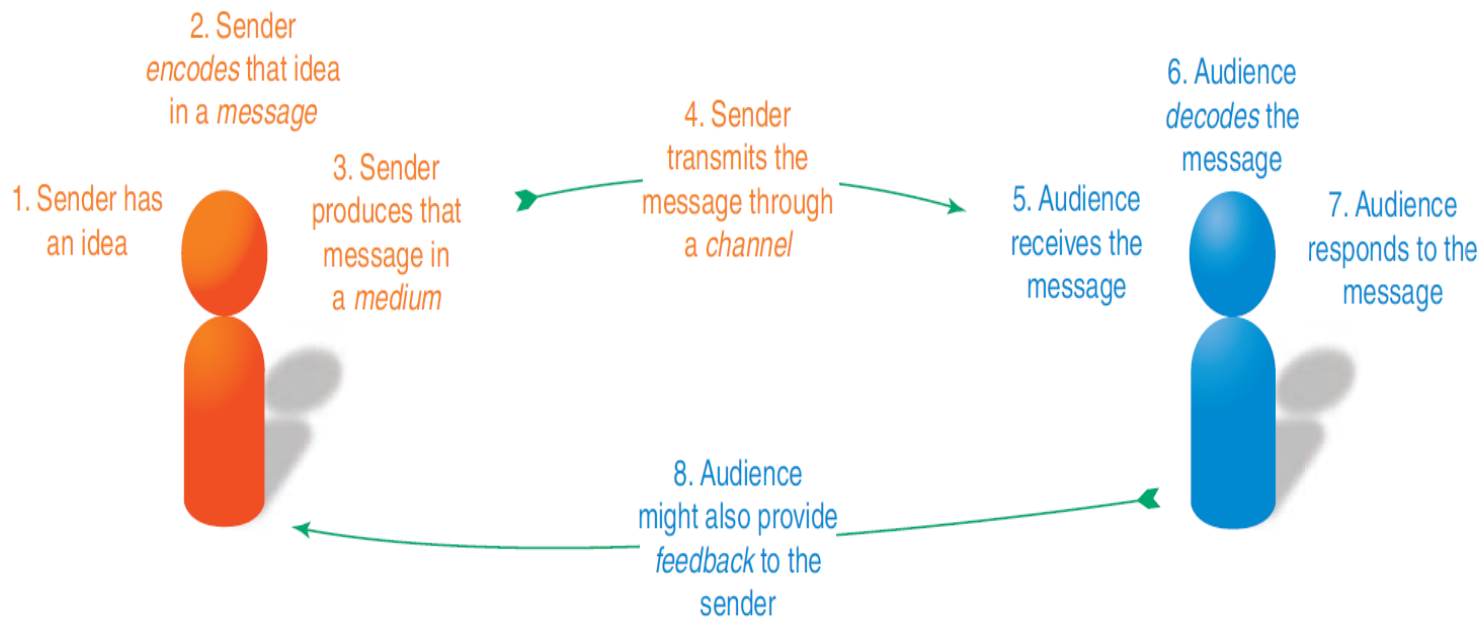
The transactional model of communication illustrates how communication works and why sometimes it doesn't



How does communication work?

1. Sender **encodes** a message
 - Puts a message into words, images, or actions
2. Sender selects a **medium**
 - Chooses a channel to transmit the message, such as a face-to-face conversation, a telephone conversation, a letter, or an email message
3. Receiver **decodes** the message
 - Interprets the words and actions of a message and attaches meaning to them
 - A **barrier** is any obstacle that gets in the way of effective communication
4. Receiver encodes feedback and selects a medium
 - Decides how to respond to message: comment, question, silence?
5. Sender and receiver communicate back and forth
 - Continue to follow this process until they reach an understanding

The Basic Communication Model / The Basic Communication Process



Barriers and context add to the complexity

Barriers

- **Physiological**
 - Receiver's physical state
- **Psychological**
 - Receiver's attitudes toward message or sender
- **Semantic**
 - Language that is ambiguous or difficult to understand
- **Language**
 - Language differences between senders and receivers
- **Mixed messages**
 - Conflicts between verbal and nonverbal communication

Context

- Circumstances influencing purpose, medium choice, and interpretation

Multiple audiences pose additional challenges



When communication involves multiple people, they all:

- encode and decode messages differently
- have different contexts, backgrounds, concerns, and agendas

Business Communication: Why and What

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The best business communicators are...

Strategic

- Purposeful
- Audience-oriented
- Persuasive

Professional

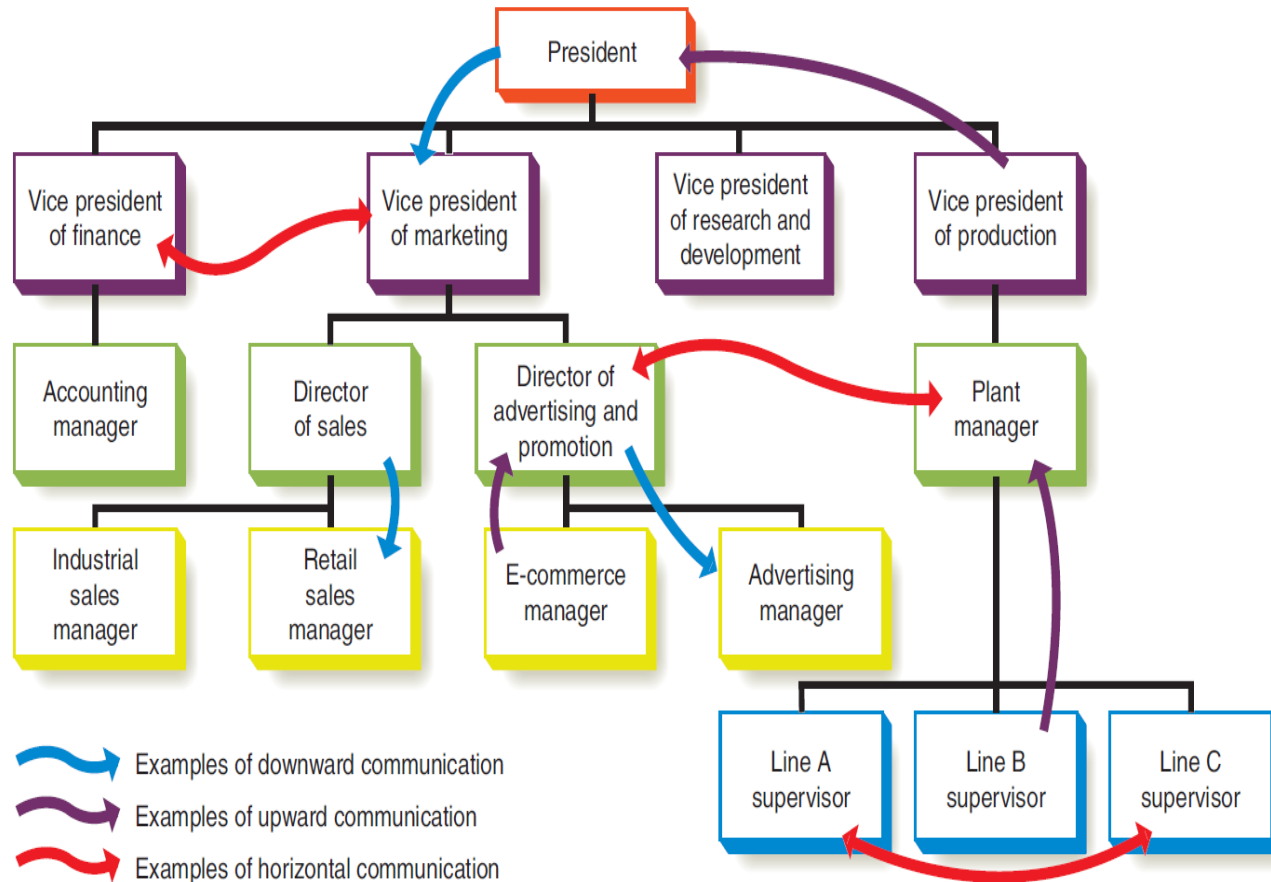
- Appropriate to the situation
- Clear and concise
- Ethical

Adaptable

- Current with technology
- Able to work with many cultures
- Collaborative

Communicating in an Organizational Context

Formal Communication Network



Strategic communicators are strategic

They plan what and how to communicate to ensure that the message achieves its purpose



Strategic communicators are purposeful

- **Being purposeful means**
 - having a specific and intended outcome in mind
 - designing your communication to achieve that outcome

See Class Participation 1 for an illustration of two emails:
which one will more likely achieve the intended purpose?

Strategic communicators are audience-oriented

- **Being audience-oriented means...**
 - Targeting the communication to a specific audience
 - Analyzing and actively listening to the audience to understand what they need and want
 - Composing the message to address audience concerns, questions, and needs
 - Making the message easy for the audience to understand

Strategic communicators are persuasive

- **Being persuasive means** influencing your audience to agree with your point of view, recommendation, or request

Effective communicators are professional

They project a business-like image by being appropriate, clear and concise, and ethical



Professional communicators are appropriate to the situation

Professionalism in writing and speaking requires etiquette and respect without being overly formal



See Class Participation 1 for

- an ineffective email projecting an immature, unprofessional image and
- an effective email projecting a professional image

Professional communicators are clear and concise

■ Clarity

the quality of being unambiguous and easy to understand

■ Conciseness

using no more words than necessary for a message to accomplish its purpose

INEFFECTIVE

Hi, Ahmad. This is Don. The meeting yesterday went on for two hours after you left, and there was a lot of discussion about the new pricing system and how it will affect our sales and marketing campaign. No one could really agree about what the impact will be, which isn't surprising since we didn't have your charts to review, and we never agree about anything right away, so we decided to hold another meeting on Friday, which you are welcome to come to but you don't really have to. But what we do need from you are the sales projections for the four regions, which you never got a chance to present yesterday. Can you get those to Mary by Friday morning? Also, if you don't plan to come and there's anything else you want us to discuss, let me know.

EFFECTIVE

Hi, Ahmad. This is Don. I'm sorry we didn't have a chance to discuss your sales projections at the meeting yesterday. We've scheduled a new meeting to discuss them at 2 PM on Friday. Could you let me know if you are available to attend? If not, please get the sales projections to Mary by noon on Friday so she can distribute them at the meeting. Thanks.

Professional communicators are ethical

- **Ethics**—a set of principles that guide decision making and leading someone to do the right thing

Committing to Ethical Communication

- Includes All Relevant Information
- Is True in Every Sense
- Is Not Deceptive in Any Way



Committing to Unethical Communication

- Plagiarizing
- Omitting Essential Information
- Selective Misquoting
- Misrepresenting Numbers
- Distorting Visuals
- Failing to Respect Privacy or Security

Professional communicators are adaptable

a·dapt·a·ble: *adj.* – capable of adapting (of becoming or being made suitable) to a particular situation or use; “to succeed one must be adaptable”



Adaptable communicators are current with technology

- As technology options and challenges change, business communicators must continually address three issues:
 - What is the best technology for the task?
 - How can I use technology to enable more effective communication?

Adaptable communicators are able to work with other cultures

Culture—the learned and shared patterns in a society

People of different cultures, age, and gender may approach business and communication in different ways



Adaptable communicators are collaborative

Collaboration

Working together to achieve a common goal





The Mobile Revolution



The Rise of Mobile Communication as a Platform

- Globally, more than 80 percent of Internet users access the web with a mobile device
- Mobile has become the primary communication tool for many business professionals
- A majority of executives under age 40 use mobile as their main communication tool

The Rise of Mobile Communication as a Platform

- Email and web browsing rank first and second as the most common non-voice uses of smartphones
- More email messages are now opened on mobile devices than on PCs
- Roughly half of U.S. consumers use a mobile device exclusively for their online search needs

How Mobile Technologies are Changing Business Communication

- Constant Connectivity
- Small Mobile Displays
- Mobile Users are Multitasking
- Changes in Traditional Grammar
- Sensory and Cognitive Extensions of User
- Security and Privacy Concerns
- Enhanced Productivity and Collaboration
- Business-specific Applications
- Accelerated Decision-making and Problem-solving
- Greater Engagement with Audience



Keeping Technology in Perspective

Technology Pros

Useful Tool

Enhances Communication
Process

Assists in Accomplishment
of Tasks

Technology Cons

Can't Think for You

Can't Fill in Skills Gaps

Not a Replacement for
Communication




Using Technological Tools Productively

- Train Staff to Use Tools Wisely, Especially Social Media
- Focus on Business-Related Uses
 - Engaging with Customers
 - Sending Marketing and Promotional Messages
- Ensure You Are Using Tools Legally

IN SUMMARY...

- Effective business communicators have a competitive edge in the workplace
- Business communication is complex; barriers, context, and multiple audiences add to its complexity
- Successful business communicators are strategic, professional, and adaptable
- The goal of this book and course is to teach you the skills and insight you will need to make good business communication decisions



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