

MUT NOTES

Unit code: PSY/CU/CO/BC/01/6 Unit Title: Communication Skills Competency

1.0 Introduction to Communication

1.0.1 Definition

Communication (from the Latin word “communis” which means to make common or to share) is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages or information. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more persons. It can also be defined as any act by which one person gives to or receives information from another person about that person’s needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge or affective state. It is the process by which meaning is exchanged between individuals or an individual and a group through a common system of symbols, signs and behavior.

1.0.2 Why study Communication

- It helps us in understanding ourselves and our insight of others.
- It helps to improve our self-worth/image and leads to more positive feelings of ourselves.
- It can increase our knowledge about human relationships and about communication in different situations.
- It can teach us important life-skills like problem solving, decision making, public speaking etc. All these are important in academic and career development.
- It helps us succeed professionally. The ability to listen and analyze messages is considered an essential professional skill. Employers regard highly written, oral and other communication competencies.
- Poor communication may lead to misunderstanding, frustration, being ignored by others, unsuccessful careers, among many other negative consequences.

1.0.3 Modes of Communication

The type of communication is usually distinguished by:

- a. The number of people involved in the communication process.
- b. The channel or medium used in the communication process.
- c. The direction of the flow in which it occurs.

1.0.3.1 Communication categorized by number of people involved

1) Interpersonal Communication involves exchanging meaning between at least two people in a situation that allows mutual opportunities for both speaking and listening. It occurs when we communicate on a one to one basis, usually in an informal, unstructured setting. It is the creating and sharing of meaning between persons who are in a relationship. It helps us to share information, solve problems, resolve conflicts, understand ourselves and others and establish relationships with others. It is divided into:

- a) **Dyadic communication:** this is an exchange of information between two people. It includes informal conversation e.g. between two friends etc. as well as formal conversation e.g. interviews etc.
- b) **Small group communication:** this is an exchange of information among a relatively small number of people ideally 3 - 10 who share a common purpose e.g. making a decision, solving a problem etc. Each member of the group has a chance to interact with other members. Because it is made of several senders/receivers, the communication process is more complicated than in personal communication. There are more chances for confusion.

2) Public communication: Involves one person communicating to a large number of people. The sender/receiver sends a message to an audience. The speaker delivers a highly structured message. The message is transmitted from one person to a number of individuals who are listening e.g. lecture classes, political rallies, group meetings and religious services. It has the following characteristics:

- a) It's more highly structured than the other types. It demands much detailed planning and preparation by the speaker.
- b) It requires a more formal use of language and a more formal delivery style than other types. The public speaker must use language precisely and speak clearly in order to be heard

throughout the audience. He/she must also not have too many physical distractions e.g. too much makeup, jewelry, caps etc.

Public communication is presented for the purposes of informing, persuading, and entertaining. Can also be used to introduce, to pay tribute, to accept and to welcome.

3) Mass and Mediated Communication: Mass communication generally means that someone is communicating with a large number of people e.g. radio, television, newspapers, books, magazines, internet, movies etc. There is very little interaction between the sender and the receiver. Mediated communication is that which is transmitted by some kind of mechanistic means e.g. radio, television, internet etc. It may be one on one e.g telephone, skype.

1.0.3.2 Communication categorized by direction of flow

Communication creates links between people for different functions or purposes.

If some links are missing, broken or not aligned properly, the communication becomes wobbly and may eventually break. The following are communication situations that represent a different flow of communication:

1. **Upward communication** - This is communicating with people who rank above you, such as your boss or instructor.
2. **Lateral or horizontal communication** - This is communicating with people who are at the same rank or level as you - your co-workers or classmates.
3. **Downward communication** - This is communicating with people who rank below you, such as the people you manage at work.
4. **Internal communication** - This is a communication situation that takes place in a company or an organization. Internal communication is the transmission of information between and among persons within a business or organization. It is used to accomplish company goals and objectives. For example, managers communicating deadlines on assignments or employees seeking promotions.
5. **External communication** - This is the transfer of information to and from people outside the company or organization. The goal is to persuade the recipients to respond favorably to company needs. For example, a job advert tries to attract qualified personnel to fill a certain position.

6. **Cross-cultural communication** - This refers to communicating, either in writing, verbally or non-verbally, with people who are from a culture different from your own. This calls for an understanding and respect of cultural differences and being adaptable.
7. **Grapevine communication** - This refers to informal communication within a company/organization, where information spread bypasses the formal communication structure. It spreads in random ways, irrespective of the authority levels.

NOTE: The direction your communication flows at any given time will influence how you communicate - the words you use and the method you choose.

1.0.3.3 Communication categorized by channel or medium used

- 1) Verbal communication – relies on the oral – auditory signal for communication.
- 2) Non – verbal communication – use of signals that do not primarily rely on language or verbalized message for communication to take place.
- 3) Written communication – use of visual symbols representing language, on a surface that is read by receivers.
- 4) Graphic communication – involves the visual representation of facts ideas and objects e.g graphs, charts, cartoons, models etc.

1) Non – verbal communication

Non-verbal communication includes all behaviors that communicate messages that have social meanings. It includes tone of voice, facial expressions, posture, gestures and appearance. It supplements words and adds emphasis to the meaning of a word. Unfortunately, it can also change the intended meaning of a message or make it confusing and unclear.

Non- verbal communication occurs unconsciously and follows no planned sequence. It lacks formal structure. Non-verbal actions occur in response to what happens during the conversation. The only rules that govern non-verbal communication are those which determine whether behavior is appropriate or permissible. Eg. When children are learning manners, they are being taught appropriate behavior for public places.

Types of Non-Verbal Communication

1. Body language (Kinesics)-This is movement of various parts of the body. It includes the following:

a. Facial Expressions

- Eyebrows and forehead – raising the eyebrows expresses surprise or even fear. A furrowed brow suggests tension, worry or deep thought. Sweating expresses nervousness or great effort.
- Eyes show what is in the soul. Staring can express coldness; wide-eyed can express wonder or fright; rapid blinking can express nervousness or insecurity. Some people wear dark glasses even indoors because they do not want their eyes to be seen.
- Mouth – a smile shows that you are happy and interested in others. A frown expresses sadness, anger etc.

b. Posture – Your posture may reflect on your credibility as a speaker. You should avoid slouching, shifting from one foot to another or drooping your head. Stand straight as stooped shoulders indicate you are bearing burdens. Unless you are disabled, do not sit while delivering a speech.

c. Gestures – Your hands should help to emphasize or reinforce your verbal message. Crossed arms means you want to be left alone; arms on the hips or arms clasped behind you shows self-assurance. Body builders walk around with their chests thrust out.

2. Clothing: This gives a strong and immediate impression of its wearer. People can tell your age, social economic status, education level etc. by the way you dress. This also includes use of personal adornments such as jewelry, make-up, hairstyles etc. We naturally respond more positively to people whom we perceive to be well-dressed than to those whose dressing we deem or find unacceptable. Also communicates the function e.g formal wear, casual, wedding etc. Uniform identifies the wearer with a particular organization. Eg. The police

3. Paralanguage or Voice: This refers to the way you say the words that you speak. Elements of paralanguage are pitch, volume, rate and articulation. **Pitch** is the highness or lowness of the voice. It can determine whether a voice sounds pleasant or unpleasant. We associate low-pitched voices with strength and maturity; and high-pitched voices with helplessness, tenseness and

nervousness. **Volume** is the degree of loudness. Some people are too soft while others are too loud. A loud voice is fine if it's appropriate to the speakers' purpose. **Rate** is the speed at which we speak. When you speak at a faster rate, you are seen to be more competent. You can use pauses or silence (the absence of paralinguistic and verbal cues) to emphasize the key ideas. It can also allow you time to organize your thoughts. It can also be used just before you say something important. It can also reveal shyness – when a person cannot keep a conversation going or maybe one has nothing to say. Sometimes when one is nervous, you tend to speak too fast. **Articulation** is the enunciation of sounds. You should learn to articulate each word distinctly to ensure that your audience can determine each word that you are saying. E.g. Avoid slurring – wanna instead of want to, gonna instead of going to etc.

4. Space or distance: The study of space and distance is also called **proxemics**. It is how we use the space around us. The amount of space and distance we keep between ourselves and other people depends on the type of encounter and the nature of our relationship e.g. we tend to keep far away from strangers and very near the people that we relate with. Even with these, it is different e.g. the space you keep from your father is different from the space you keep from your girl/boyfriend. There are four distance zones: intimate where people are in direct contact with each other, personal which is close enough to see the other persons' reaction but far enough not to encroach on intimate distance, social which we observe when you do not know the other person very well, public which is typically used for public speaking.

5. Colors: Color affects us emotionally and physiologically e.g. red tends to excite the nervous system. When people look at red for a long time, their blood pressure and heartbeat increase; on the other hand, dark blue has the opposite effect and the blood pressure and heartbeat decrease and people become calmer.

6. Time: Your use or misuse of time says a lot about you. Some people are always late for appointments or early. Also, certain activities should be allocated at certain times e.g. it is acceptable to call a friend at 2 a.m. but not someone you do not know very well. In some cultures, time is money. In others, there is never any hurry.

Principles of Non-Verbal Communication:

1. **Culturally determined.** Much of our nonverbal behavior is passed on to us by our parents and others with whom we associate. Through the process of growing up in a particular society, we adopt the traits and mannerisms of our cultural group. Eg. Greetings are different in different cultures. In most cultures, non-verbal behavior of males differs from that of females e.g sitting posture.
2. **Largely subconscious.** Eg when you have a cold but still think you can go to work, then a co-worker sees you and tells you that you are sick before you say it. Often we do not recognize our non-verbal behavior eg. You stand further away from those you do not like.
3. May **conflict** with verbal messages. This is because its deeply rooted and unconscious.
4. Shows our **real** feelings and attitudes. Eg. Happiness, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, interest etc

Functions of Non-Verbal Communication:

1. Complement a verbal message by adding to its meaning. It emphasizes or punctuates our spoken words e.g. when a speaker says one and holds up or shows one finger. Or when you tell someone 'am really sorry' and complement with a hug or a pat on the shoulder.
2. Regulate verbal behavior – in most cases when we want to stop another person from interrupting us when we are talking or to show we have finished. Or to show a conversation is over, we stand up, or leave the room etc.
3. Substituting for verbal behavior – this happens when it is impossible to speak e.g. controllers at airports use hand signals to guide planes since the noise levels are too high for spoken communication; friends communicate using looks when they want to communicate something behind someone's back. Your child waves at you as you leave the house.
4. Accent verbal messages e.g. trying to keep a child quiet, one can put a finger to the lips and say, 'Shush'. The teachers voice is strong and firm when she tells the class that its time for

an examination. A teenager will lean forward when trying to persuade her parents to buy her a new dress.

5. Deceiving – we purposely mislead others by using non-verbal means to create false impressions e.g. we try to appear calm when we are really nervous or upset and we pretend or act surprised or happy when we are feeling the opposite.

Characteristics of Non-Verbal Communication:

It occurs constantly. When another person is present, you have to communicate. Whether you make eye contact, smile, frown, or try to totally ignore the other person, you are communicating something. Sometimes what is said is less important than what is not said. We can tell a lot about people on the basis of their facial expression, appearance, clothing, and willingness to make eye contact, body movements and posture.

It depends on context. The context in which non-verbal communication occurs plays a very important role in its interpretation e.g. direct eye contact with a stranger can mean something entirely different from direct eye contact with a close friend. When you communicate, your non-verbal and verbal cues usually supplement and support each other e.g. when you talk to a friend, your non-verbal cues can tell your friends how much you value them and how comfortable you feel with them. However, misunderstandings can occur because of non-verbal communication e.g. when you don't understand the context of the message e.g. when a boy winks at a girl and they are related (context 2).

Is more believable than verbal communication. This is because non-verbal messages are more difficult to control than verbal messages because they are more representative of our emotions e.g. if I ask you what's wrong, the tone of your voice and the way you answer will be sending me a signal so even if you tell me, 'Nothing', and something is wrong, i will not believe you. Verbal communication is more conscious; it involves more processing of thoughts and impulses into words. Although non-verbal messages can be conscious and deliberate, they are often unintentional and subconsciously generated. When we are upset, hurt or angry, it is difficult for us to control our voices, facial expressions and other body movements.

It is a primary means of expression. We can often detect other people's feelings of frustration, anger, sadness, resentment, or anxiety without their actually saying anything.

It is related to culture. Rules that govern the management of behavior differ from one culture to another. However, non-verbal communication is similar since human beings around the world share common biological and social functions. Cultures formulate rules that dictate when, how and with what consequences non-verbal expressions are exhibited e.g. thumbs-up means okay.

It is ambiguous. Non-verbal messages can have more than one meaning e.g. crying can express pain or joy or sadness/grief. Yawning can express boredom/fatigue. This can therefore cause a lot of confusion and one needs to be careful to avoid serious misunderstanding.

Medium of Communication

- 1) Verbal communication – relies on the oral – auditory signal for communication.
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Effective communication

Effective communication involves overcoming these barriers and conveying a clear and concise message.

Some of the Common Barriers to Effective Communication:

- The use of jargon. Over-complicated, unfamiliar and/or technical terms.
- Emotional barriers and taboos. Some people may find it difficult to express their emotions and some topics may be completely 'off-limits' or taboo. Taboo or difficult topics may include, but are not limited to, politics, religion, disabilities (mental and physical), sexuality and sex, racism and any opinion that may be seen as unpopular.
- Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver. These could include differences in perception and viewpoint.

- Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.
- Physical barriers to non-verbal communication. Not being able to see the non-verbal cues, gestures, posture and general body language can make communication less effective. Phone calls, text messages and other communication methods that rely on technology are often less effective than face-to-face communication.
- Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents.
- Expectations and prejudices which may lead to false assumptions or stereotyping. People often hear what they expect to hear rather than what is actually said and jump to incorrect conclusions.
- Cultural differences. The norms of social interaction vary greatly in different cultures, as do the way in which emotions are expressed. For example, the concept of personal space varies between cultures and between different social settings.

A Categorisation of Barriers to Communication

Language Barriers

Language and linguistic ability may act as a barrier to communication.

However, even when communicating in the same language, the terminology used in a message may act as a barrier if it is not fully understood by the receiver(s). For example, a message that includes a lot of specialist jargon and abbreviations will not be understood by a receiver who is not familiar with the terminology used. Regional colloquialisms and expressions may be misinterpreted or even considered offensive.

Psychological Barriers

The psychological state of the communicators will influence how the message is sent, received and perceived. For example, if someone is stressed they may be preoccupied by personal concerns and not as receptive to the message as if they were not stressed.

Stress management is an important personal skill that affects our interpersonal relationships.

Anger is another example of a psychological barrier to communication. When we are angry it is easy to say things that we may later regret, and also to misinterpret what others are saying.

More generally people with low self-esteem may be less assertive and therefore may not feel comfortable communicating - they may feel shy or embarrassed about saying how they really feel, or read unintended negative sub-texts in messages they hear.

Physiological Barriers

Physiological barriers to communication may result from the receiver's physical state. For example, a receiver with reduced hearing may not fully grasp the content of a spoken conversation especially if there is significant background noise.

Physical Barriers

An example of a physical barrier to communication is geographic distance between the sender and receiver(s). Communication is generally easier over shorter distances as more communication channels are available and less technology is required. The ideal communication is face-to-face. Although modern technology often helps to reduce the impact of physical barriers, the advantages and disadvantages of each communication channel should be understood so that an appropriate channel can be used to overcome the physical barriers.

Systematic Barriers

Systematic barriers to communication may exist in structures and organisations where there are inefficient or inappropriate information systems and communication channels, or where there is a lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities for communication. In such organisations, people may be unclear of their role in the communication process and therefore not know what is expected of them.

Attitudinal Barriers

Attitudinal barriers are behaviours or perceptions that prevent people from communicating effectively. Attitudinal barriers to communication may result from personality conflicts, poor management, resistance to change or a lack of motivation. To be an effective receiver of messages you should attempt to overcome your own attitudinal barriers to help ensure more effective communication.

A skilled communicator must be aware of these barriers and try to reduce their impact by continually checking understanding and by offering appropriate feedback.

Flow of Communication

Categories

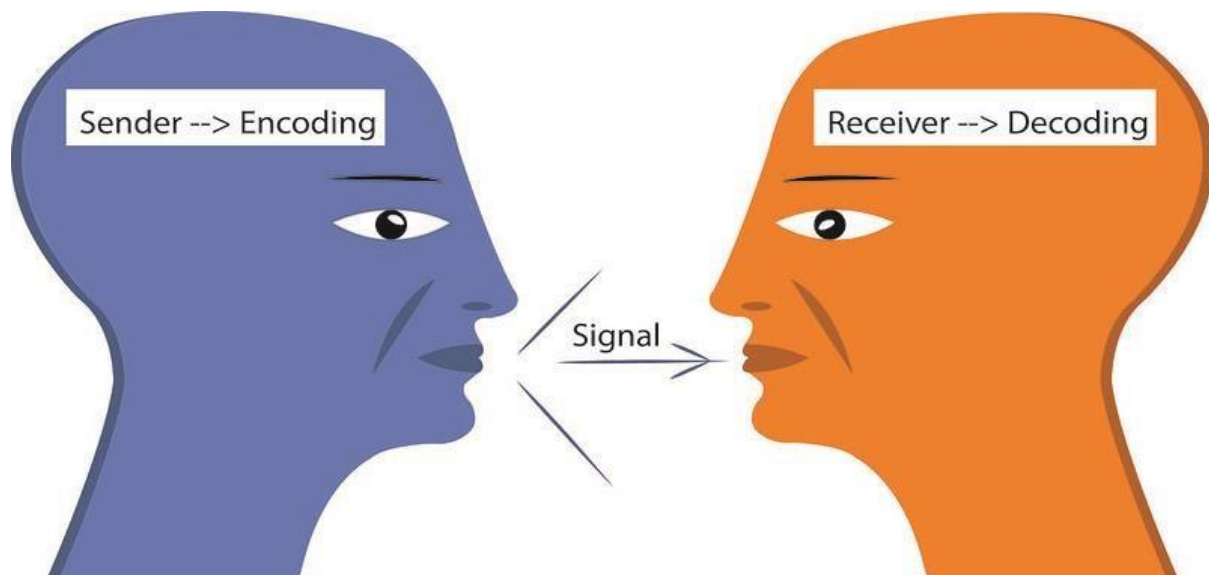
There are three main categories of models of communication. These include: ***Linear***, ***Interactional*** and ***transactional***. In this section, we shall define and give examples of each category.

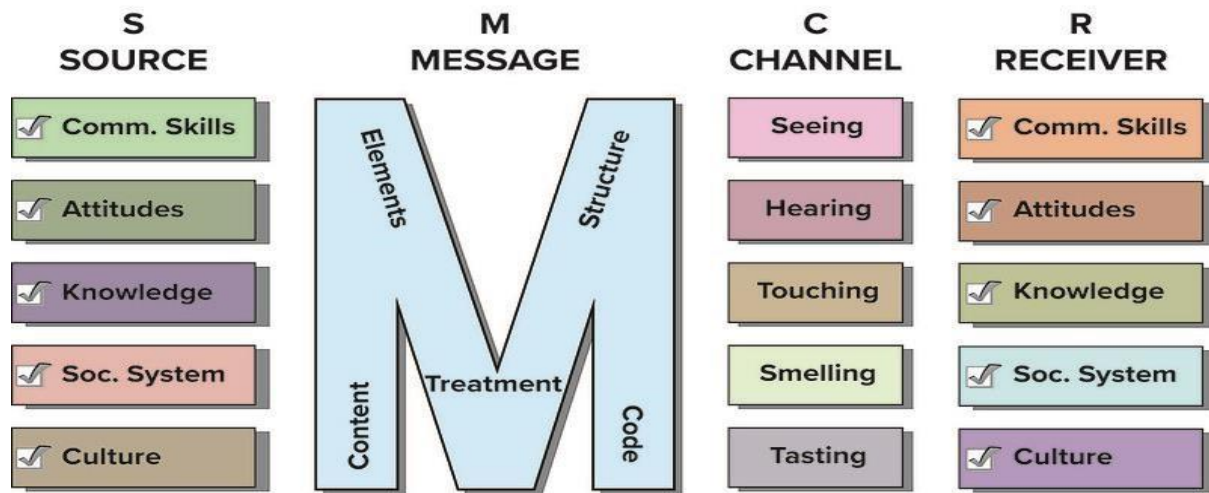
1. Linear model

This refers to a one-way transmission a message from the speaker through a medium to a recipient without immediate feedback.

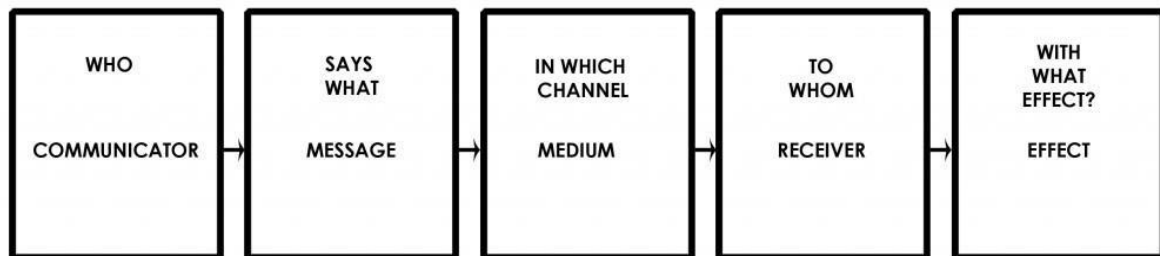
This interpersonal communication is usually one dimensional

There are several models that belong to the linear category. These include: Lasswell, Shannon- Weaver

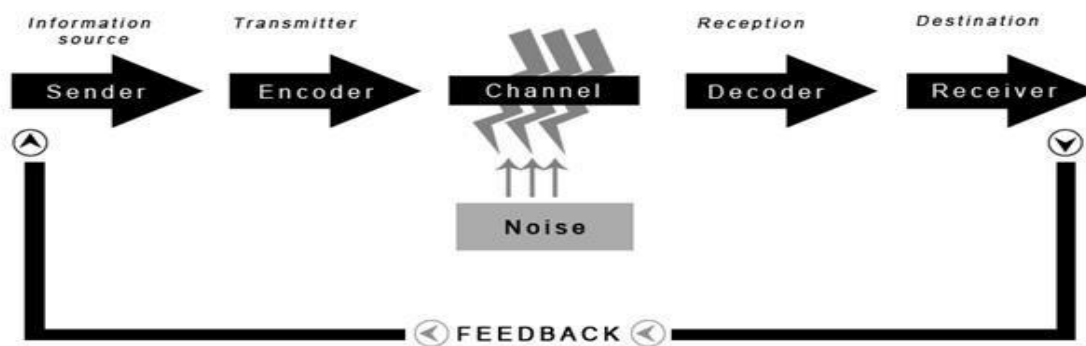




Lasswell - 1948



SHANNON – WEAVER (1948)



SHANNON-WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Aimed at improving technical communication

➤ Sender

- Originator
- Source

➤ Encoder

- (transmitter – Cables/telepohne/satellite)

➤ Noise

External

➤ Decoder

- Reception of signals,
- Converts them to messages

➤ Receiver

- Conerts binary signal to message
- Based on decoded message and may send feedback to sender

2. Interactional model

This category refers to transmission of a message from a sender to a recipient accompanied by feedback from recipient to the sender.

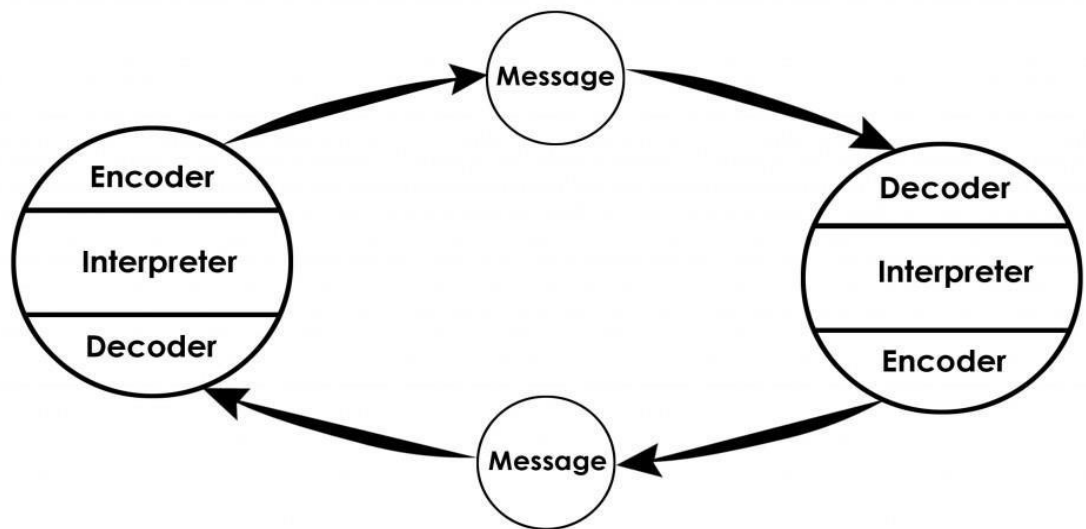
Each takes turns to communicate with the other. The participants alternate positions as sender and receiver.

There is a heightened focus on feedback

There are some common models such as Osgood Schramm and Watzlawick-Beavin-Jackson

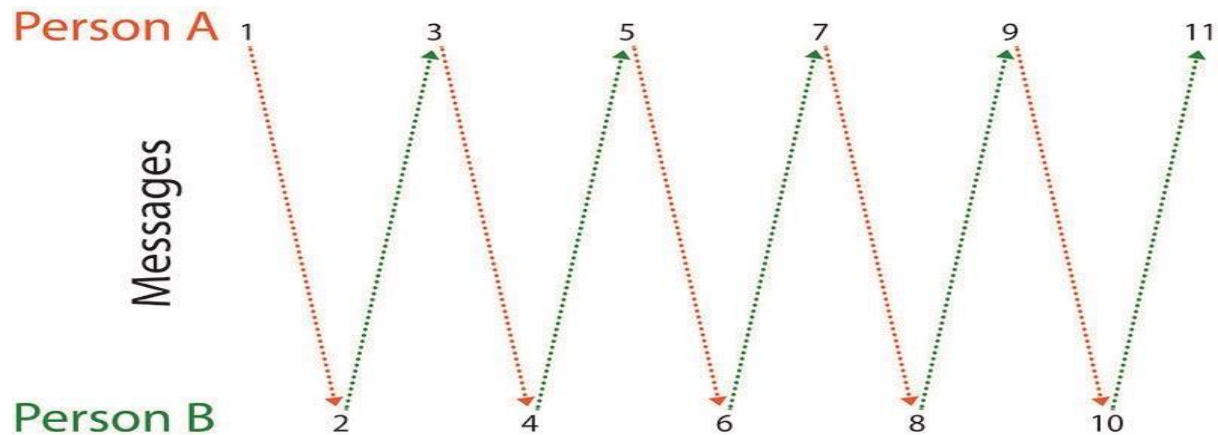
OSGOOD SCHRAMM (1954)

□



- Circular, can go in both directions
- Reciprocal and equal (sender/receiver)
- Message based on interpretation
- Considers semantic sociocultural values that can affect interpretation of the message.
- Feedback is cyclical
- Active participants in the interpretation of messages

Watzlawick-Beavin-Jackson Model (1967)



- Communication is a continuous process
- Every message has a content and relationship dimension
- Every communication has a stimulus/response
- Both communicators have similar roles
- Communication continues until one member stops transmitting messages

3. Transactional model

The third category is the transactional model

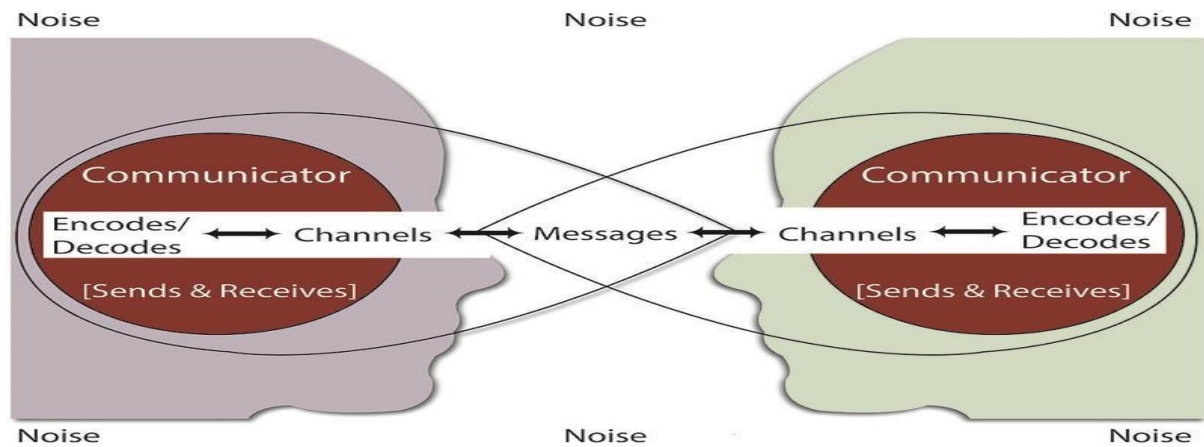
In essence, it symbolizes an interpersonal conversation, dialogue that encompasses continuity in transmission of messages and consistent feedback.

There is a simultaneous transmission of messages.

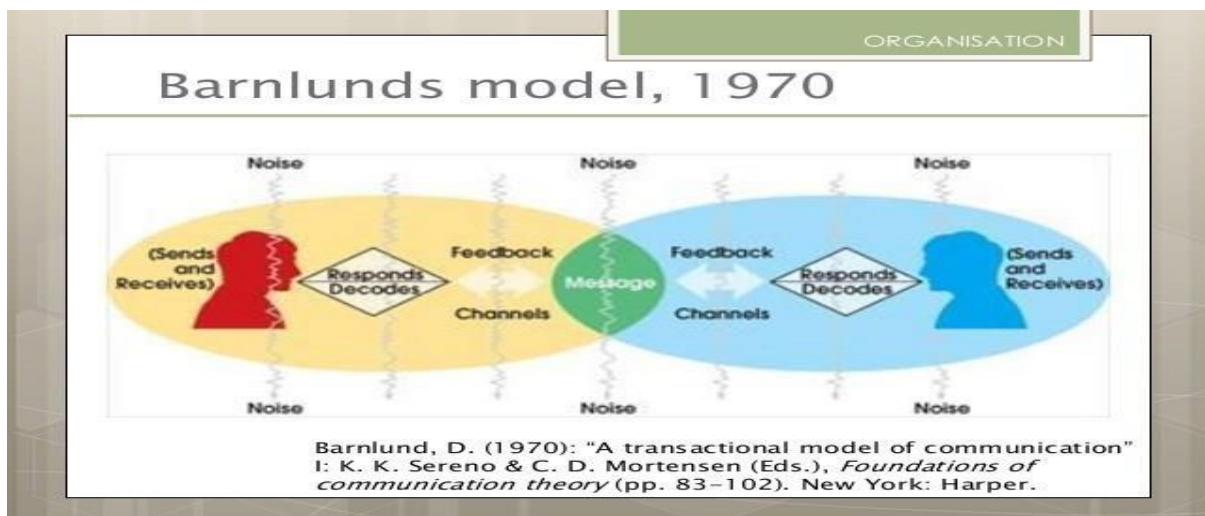
Both the sender and receiver are involved in the process of transmitting messages.

There are models such as the Barnlund's Transactional model.

Transactional Model of Communication



Barnlund's Transactional Model - 1970



- There is reduction of pre-medicated messages
- There is a multi-layered feedback system
- Non-verbal gestures are equally important
- There is a flurry of messages

Cues

Communication through a signal, expression. These may be categorized into three. Public, private and behavioral

Public -

physical/environment

Private - The senses

Behavioral - Verbal/non verbal

Sources of Information

- Books.
- Encyclopedias.
- Magazines.
- Databases.
- Newspapers.
- Library Catalog.
- Internet.

Organizational Policies

What are Policies and Procedures?

Policies and procedures go hand-in-hand but are not interchangeable.

A **policy** is a set of general guidelines that outline the organization's plan for tackling an issue. Policies communicate the connection between the organization's vision and values and its day-to-day operations.

A **procedure** explains a specific action plan for carrying out a policy. Procedures tell employees how to deal with a situation and when.

Using policies and procedures together gives employees a well-rounded view of their workplace. They know the type of culture that the organization is striving for, what behavior is expected of them and how to achieve both of these.

The Importance of Policies and Procedures

Regardless of your organization's size, developing formal policies and procedures can make it run much more smoothly and efficiently. They communicate the values and vision of the organization, ensuring employees understand exactly what is expected of them in certain situations.

Because both individual and team responsibilities are clearly documented, there is no need for trial-and-error or micromanaging. Upon reading the workplace policies and procedures, employees should clearly understand how to approach their jobs.

Formal policies and procedures save time and stress when handling HR issues. The absence of written policies results in unnecessary time and effort spent trying to agree on a course of action. With strict guidelines already in place, employees simply have to follow the procedures and managers just have to enforce the policies.

Implementing these documents also improves the way an organization looks from the outside. Formal policies and procedures help to ensure your company complies with relevant regulations. They also demonstrate that organizations are efficient, professional and stable. This can lead to stronger business relationships and a better public reputation.

How to Develop Policies and Procedures in the Workplace

When creating a policy or procedure for your workplace, start by reviewing the mission statement, vision and values. According to the New South Wales Government Industrial Relations, "a workplace policy should:

- set out the aim of the policy
- explain why the policy was developed
- list who the policy applies to

- set out what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior
- set out the consequences of not complying with the policy
- provide a date when the policy was developed or updated”

Once you implement your policies and procedures, the next step is to inform and train employees on them. You can’t expect employees to follow guidelines if they aren’t aware of them. Be sure to schedule regular refresher training sessions, too, to keep employees on track.

Employees may be more likely to embrace rules when they understand their purpose and that they are not meant to be a form of control or punishment. For this reason, keep a positive attitude during training sessions and leave plenty of time for employee questions.

Policies and procedures should not be written once and left alone for decades. Reviewing these documents regularly and updating them when necessary is key to their success. In addition to an annual review, consider updating them when you:

- adopt new equipment, software, etc.
- see an increase in accidents or failures on-site
- experience increased customer complaints
- have a feeling of general confusion or increased staff questions regarding day-to-day operations
- see inconsistency in employee job performance
- feel increased stress levels across the office

Types of Policies and Procedures Every Workplace Needs

Organizations need policies and procedures for a wide range of HR topics. Below are some of the subjects you should consider creating guidelines for.

Policies and Procedures for Attendance

Absenteeism costs wages for the employee who doesn't show up, wages for a replacement worker, and delays and disruptions to the whole organization. That's why you need to write (and consistently apply) attendance policies.

These documents can include guidelines on tardiness, vacation time, sick leave, appointments and paid volunteer hours. You can also include the amount of notice required before booking time off. Take your corporate culture into consideration when developing these rules.

Policies and Procedures for Employee Conduct

This is a broad topic and may require multiple, separate policies. Including guidelines on drugs and alcohol use, smoking, performance management and discipline helps employees know what is and is not acceptable behaviour at work.

Policies and Procedures for Use of Company Property

The number of ways employees can misuse company property is never-ending. "Renting out the company's equipment to third parties, intentionally producing scrap product that is actually being sold by the employee, taking vehicles for recreation, hosting their own websites on company servers, even directing other employees to perform tasks that unknowingly benefit the ghost business" are just a few examples of risks your organization could face, according to ASG Investigations.

Employees have to use company property in order to do their jobs. Depending on your industry, this could include electronics, medical equipment, vehicles, tools and uniforms. Include guidelines on how to care for company property, as well as how much (if any) and what types of personal use are permitted using company property.

Policies and Procedures for Harassment and Discrimination

With rules in place, you can prevent these incidents and protect both your company and your employees.

Harassment and discrimination affect the entire workplace culture. Keep employees safe and treat them fairly by developing policies and procedures that prohibit behaviors such as:

- sexual harassment
- bullying
- verbal and physical harassment
- stalking
- hiring discrimination
- workplace discrimination

Include information on how to report harassment and discrimination and explain that the company will not retaliate for reporting.

Policies and Procedures for Internet and Social Media Use

Make employees aware that any internet use at work is not private. Urge employees to limit personal internet use and ensure everything they do online in the workplace is legal, ethical and appropriate (and explain what these mean). Add guidelines about what is and is not appropriate to post on social media regarding your organization as well.

Policies and Procedures for Health and Safety

Without strong health and safety policies that are actually enforced, your employees and your organization are at risk.

Protecting employees' safety and well-being should be every organization's top priority. When writing your health and safety policies, include information about how to deal with illness or injury at work, equipment safety guidelines and how to report a health or safety concern. Also include procedures to follow in the event of a fire or natural disaster.

Policies and Procedures for Expenses

If your employees travel or purchase things for work, having an expense reimbursement policy in place is essential. Explain what types of expenses are acceptable for reimbursement (airfare class, transportation, meals, etc.). Include procedures on how to submit a reimbursement claim.

Policies and Procedures for Remote Work

With a desire for more flexibility in location and hours, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies and employees are choosing to work remotely at least some of the time. If you allow employees to work from home, you need two main policies to ensure the set-up is safe and runs smoothly.

First, a general remote work policy should describe who can work remotely and how often. What hours do remote workers need to be available? What communication standards must they meet? Will you provide necessary work equipment or reimburse employees for their purchases?

In addition, include health and safety procedures for remote work in either your remote work policy or your regular health and safety policy. These should address how you'll handle potential ergonomic issues, environment-caused injuries and illnesses, mental health, and fire and weather emergencies.

Why You Need to Enforce Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are helpful for making your workplace run more efficiently, but they are only effective if you enforce them. Enforcement of the guidelines guarantees your organization's operational procedures and decision-making processes are uniform and consistent across cases.

When you don't enforce your procedures, you put your organization at risk. If an employee or external person comes forward with an allegation against your company, having formal policies and procedures in place strengthens your case.

For example, say someone sues your organization for hiring discrimination, claiming that they were not given a job they interviewed for because they have a disability. Having an anti-discrimination policy in place is a strong piece of evidence in your defense.

Or, say that you refuse to reimburse a first-class plane ticket an employee bought to get to a conference. Pointing out that first-class airfare is not eligible for expense reimbursement and having proof of this in your policy protects your organization from legal actions and reputation damage.

Without formal policies and procedures, your organization may not be reaching its potential. Developing and enforcing policies that reflect your workplace's values make it a better environment for all employees.

Written and Electronic Communication

Guidelines for Electronic Communication

1. Access issues.

A considerable amount of routine committee communication can be handled electronically if all members have convenient access to email. Before and/or during the Midwinter meeting, committee chairs should gather the following information:

- Preferred email addresses of all members.
- Software information: i.e., word processing programs in use, capability for "attachments," etc.
- How often members check their email.

If one or more members do NOT have convenient access to email, it will be necessary to use alternate means of communication so that no one member is excluded from full participation in committee business.

2. Protocols.

2.1. All committee business should be clearly identifiable on the subject line; i.e., cat.com. conference or massmedia.2000 program.

2.2. If messages require a response, the sender should indicate a response deadline. All members should acknowledge receipt of the message to the sender, whether or not they have a substantive response.

2.3. If the message requests discussion of an issue, each respondent should reply to all members of the committee.

2.4. Committee members are expected to participate in electronic discussions, just as they would participate in discussions at conference meetings.

2.5. The chair should copy the priority consultant on all relevant correspondence.

3. Record-keeping

3.1. Routine correspondence between conferences does not need to be saved. The chair should keep a record of any decisions made, however, and report to ALSC headquarters with the appropriate conference report.

3.2. Where appropriate, committees may establish an electronic archive for their records.

4. Privacy and confidentiality issues.

4.1. Committees with "sensitive" business such as awards, should be aware of the increased possibility of inadvertent leaks with electronic communications media. Committee members should decide what kinds of information it is safe to transmit electronically and limit their communications accordingly.

4.2. Personal information about individuals (addresses, phone numbers, etc.) should not be posted on websites unless they are protected from general public access by secure passwords.

5. Use of electronic discussion lists.

5.1. Committees are encouraged to use the ALSC electronic discussion list to communicate with membership at large about their activities and to generate discussion about relevant issues. Agendas should be posted 4 weeks in advance of conference.

5.2. Committees with the capability of establishing electronic discussion lists may choose to conduct their committee business through a dedicated discussion list.

5.3. The ALSC electronic discussion list should not be used for the transmittal of routine information intended for members of a particular committee.

6. Virtual committees.

6.1. ALSC may determine that some committees can conduct their business entirely online and designate these as virtual committees.

6.2. All members of virtual committees must have convenient access to email.

6.3. It is recommended that the chair of virtual committees attend midwinter and annual conference in order to participate in the division leadership meeting and to conduct other business.

6.4. It is particularly important that all members of virtual committees participate fully in electronic discussion of committee business.

6.5. In order to facilitate input from members at large about committee business, virtual committees are required to announce their electronic agendas on ALA Connect well in advance of decision deadlines and solicit comments from the membership.

7. Virtual participation on traditional committees.

7.1. The ALSC vice-president/president-elect, president, or a committee chair may determine that one or more members of an appropriate committee may be designated virtual members. Virtual members participate in all business of the committee but are not required to attend conference meetings.

7.2. It is recommended that no more and 25 % of any committee be virtual members.

7.3. Care should be taken that virtual committee members are allowed to participate in all business of the committee, including discussions and voting. It is recommended that each virtual member be paired with a buddy who attends conferences and takes responsibility for ensuring the virtual member's inclusion. In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange electronic or telephone communication during conference in order to gather input or votes from the virtual member.

Report Writing

(a) Reports

- A report is a systematic, well organized document which defines a problem, and analyses it.
- Reports are written following research or study on a currently trending topic.
- There are short and long reports.
- A report has sections, and sub sections
- There are elements found in both the short and the long reports. They include:
 - Heading
 - Introduction. Here we include things such as:
 - (i) Date
 - (ii) Officer to whom the report is presented
 - (iii) Committee members (if done as a group)
 - (iv) Terms of reference. This is where we write the objective of the study.
 - Methods of data collection. How the information was gathered is discussed here. The different methods of collecting data are use of:
 - (i) Questionnaires
 - (ii) Observation
 - (iii) Interviews
 - Findings. State what you learned.
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations. State how the findings can help improve the situation.

➤ Reports are always:

- Accurate;
- Concise;
- Clear; and
- Well structured.

Sample Report

REPORT ON WHY MOST GIRLS AT NAIVASHA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

Introduction

The principal asked a group of students to find out the reasons why there is high drop out among girls at Naivasha School. The committee included:

1. Njagi Cool
2. Kimotho Macha
3. Jane Kilonzo

The study started on 3rd February and ended on 10th of the same month.

Procedure

The group used different methods to gather the information. The following are the methods used collect data:

(a) Questionnaire

About five students, among them three girls were issued with questionnaires that they filled with ease. At first they were not ready to do so but when they were assured a token, they were more willing to respond. They took approximately ten minutes each to provide response to the questions and prompts.

(b) Interviews

One of the committee members, Kimotho Macha, was appointed to lead in interviewing two students. The two students gave several reasons for the high drop out. One of them even

wanted to have been included in the committee. The interviews were conducted at the school quadrangle.

(c) Observation

One week was enough for the committee members to study the other students. It was noted, in the way they talk in small groups, why they drop out. In fact one of the female students left the school before the actual day of submitting this report.

Findings

It was found out that:

- (a) Since most girls are idle during the weekends, they yield to pressure from the fellow students who push them into leaving the school. While at home, majority fail to get admission in other schools.
- (b) Some of the students are not satisfied with the quality of the meals cooked . They feel they don't match the amount of money they pay.
- (c) Add other two

Conclusions

The committee concluded that:

- (a) Some of the girls do not know how to make use of their free time.
- (b) Some of the students value food more than education services offered at the school.

Recommendations

- (a) The students should be guided on how to benefit from their free time.
- (b) The quality of meals should be improved or at least provide alternative diet to those not satisfied.

Report compiled by: Amos Ngotho

Signature:

Position: FORM 2 STUDENT

Exercise

It has been noted that students at Kinya High abuse drugs. The deputy principal calls you one day and asks you to form a committee to investigate the causes of drug abuse at your school.

Write the report to contain:

- (i) Introduction
- (ii) Three methods of data collection
- (iii) Four findings
- (iv) Four conclusions
- (v) Four recommendations.

Work Place etiquette

Work etiquette is a standard that controls social behavior expectations in the workplace. It covers a wide range of aspects among employees. Some of these include body language, behavior, technology use, and communication.

Basically, it is about how you conduct yourself around coworkers, potential business partners, and customers. It boils down to treating others with respect, to be aware of everyone present and to be polite overall.

Etiquette makes your work easier with and more pleasant for your fellow colleagues. When someone interrupts you while talking, arrives late for a meeting, or snatches your food from the fridge in the standard room, you begin to wonder how an individual could be so disrespectful. All of this stuff is nothing but **workplace etiquette violations**.

There is no universal agreement to standard workplace etiquette. It all depends on the office personality. However, specific proper workplace etiquette rules apply to almost every business.

And if you want to promote a **professional and civilized environment** for yourself and your coworkers, it is essential to adopt the etiquette rules as early as possible. Here are the top 8 workplace etiquette tips that everyone should follow.

Download our FREE Guide to Rewards & Recognition

Some Workplace Etiquette Rules Everyone Should Follow.

1. Be Respectful To Your Coworkers

All of your colleagues deserve respect, even though they are not always respectful towards you. It's essential to learn to acknowledge other people's religious views, political opinions, and sexual preference. You don't have to agree with them all the time, but maintaining respect is proper etiquette.

Sharing work space with others means you'll inevitably engage in conversations. It is more common in **open office structures**. Please take it in turns, talking without having to interrupt. Encourage each person to complete a thought and engage in discussion.

Also, as workplaces generally keep busy, so you must honor the schedules of your colleagues. Before starting a conversation, make sure that they have the time or want to talk at that moment.

Again, when you've been requested a meeting, make sure you reach on time or better, arrive early. Also, resisting your personal calls during a meeting is a smart idea. It shows you care for them, and that they can count on you.

Do not indulge in rumors about other staff or the business in the office. Keep a safe distance between the professional and personal life of yourself and others too. When you're on personal time, hanging out with colleagues, talk of something light and positive rather than office gossip.

2. Maintain Virtual Office Etiquette

Virtual meetings have become a part of our daily work routine. It is a whole another story compared to in-person meetings. Here are six simple things that you need to follow to maintain the perfect virtual workplace etiquette.

- Take a few minutes to get appropriately dressed and brush your hair before starting your day. That's the first step to be productive while working remotely.

- When you join a virtual team meeting, speak up when you are asked to. Do not keep silent, but make sure not to interrupt when someone else is talking.
- Use attentive body language if you're using your webcam. Sit up straight, don't make weird gestures, and don't let your eyes wander too far.
- Mute your microphone when you are not talking as it will help avoid noises.
- Make sure your work setup is professional. A messy room a background, a screaming child or a barking dog can be distracting.
- Consider having a snack before or after a virtual meeting.
- Make proper eye contact in the camera.

3. Stay Accountable

Workers should hold responsibility for their feelings, words, and behavior, especially when they have made a mistake. This personal accountability is closely related to honesty and integrity and is a vital element in workplace etiquette. **Accountability** speaks about your character, keeps your reputation high, and builds better **workplace relationships**.

4. Know What To Wear To Work

In modern workplaces, appearance is often combined with performance, and it plays a crucial role in business success.

Your professional image has exceptional value in the corporate setting. Not only does a professional outfit give you more confidence, but it also helps boost your growth and instills brand loyalty.

Having a dress code demonstrates employee equality. However, many companies do not have it, but you should still try to get smartly dressed.

If you're unsure what dress code will suit you, the best choice will be to pick a traditional business dress with colors like black, blue, grey, or white. Your clothes should be clean, ironed, and fit you perfectly. Avoid wearing fancy or too many accessories. If you follow a casual Fridays, do not go too casual because remember, it's just another workday.

5. Understand Teamwork

Proper business etiquette is essential to building and sustaining a team of employees who trust, love, and value each other. It is not a good practice not to hand in your part of a project or take a personal phone call during a team brainstorming session.

If one person does not do his portion of the job, the other members of the team are compelled to take the stress. And it may create resentment among coworkers and productivity losses, which will ultimately cost the company.

6. Make Friendlier Employee Onboarding

The warm and gracious welcoming of new members of your team would help you stand out. Shake hands, introduce yourself to the newcomer, organize a **team lunch**, or share a cake just as a welcome treat. Offer to answer any questions or queries and get the conversation going for at least the few initial weeks. It will help them to adjust quickly and give your professional reputation a boost.

7. Know When It's Your Treat

Lunch meetings help you to get to know a colleague or team better. The rule of thumb is that if you are inviting others for a business lunch, it is your treat. That is, the person offering the invitation should be footing the bill. Make no fuss about it.

8. Filter Your Speech

For obvious reasons, a workplace is a challenging, stressful environment. Each worker has different aspirations, attitudes, and personalities. However, they together towards one common goal with different working styles, and thus, clashes will happen.

One easy way that you can maintain a friendly and productive workplace is by measuring your words. Think before you speak. Respect others' perspectives, don't be offensive with hitting replies, and never make arguments personal. Don't forget to apologize in words, whenever required.

Ethical communication in workplace

What Is Ethical Communication?

Ethical communication is a type of communication that is predicated upon certain business values, such as being truthful, concise, and responsible with one's words and the resulting actions. As a set of principles, ethical communication understands that one's thoughts must be conveyed and expressed effectively and concisely, and that the resulting actions or consequences will [potentially] be based solely on how the message was communicated. Thus, ethical communication defines a framework or set of acceptable communication principles that align with an enterprise's overarching code of conduct or code of ethics.

Fundamentals Of Ethical Communication

Perhaps the main principle of ethical communication is *honesty*, as other factors stem from this core value of presenting information in the most reliable and factual way possible. Any attempt to mislead or present confusing information is not ethical communication. Additionally, the "honesty" principle of ethical communication is linked inexorably to other core principles – consistency and responsibility. This entails that information presented to different parties be consistent, and that short-term and long-term consequences of honest communication are to be accepted as one's responsibility.

Ethical communication also assumes that communicated information is always presented (and received by the listener) according to one's subjective perception, even if only in the most

minimal way, and thus the goal of ethical communication is to be as objective as possible when communicating with others and to ensure that every recipient receives the same message.

Openness and Transparency

Truthfulness & honesty is the most core principle of ethical communication. This means that speaking 99 percent of the truth in a matter – while leaving out one percent of the facts – is not ethical communication, as omitting any detail (intentionally) changes the way that a listener will perceive an event. Thus, being 100 percent open and transparent, and hiding nothing, is key in order for all business relationships – whether within a business between its members, or with business and their partners, or even customers – to succeed in the short term and long term.

Being honest is linked to one's personal and professional trustworthiness and integrity. In a perfect world, all members of an organization would have a positive reputation of honesty, such that listeners never doubt that what they are saying is 100 percent true. Within an organization – and between businesses – this type of honest communication can be the difference between a project being completed successfully or not. For instance, utilizing ethical communication, to be honest about the time and/or budget constraints during a board meeting with primary stakeholders can be the difference between the project meeting its goals, or failing due to misunderstandings and/or miscommunication. Thus, one of the primary goals of ethical communication is to prevent any misunderstandings or instances of miscommunication.

Consideration for Any Potential Roadblocks

When communicating with another party, truly ethical communication entails considering any potential factor that may influence how the recipient understands – or receives – the information that is being communicated. If there are any known roadblocks, then ethical communication principles dictate that the speaker/communicator utilize whatever means possible to mitigate or attenuate the roadblocks and ensure that the recipients of the information are able to fully understand what is being communicated.

Several examples are below where roadblocks may present themselves, resulting in the communicator needing to take steps to attenuate any potential instances of miscommunication:

Language Use

Obviously, ethical communication dictates that speakers utilize the language that listeners understand. It would make little sense to present a business presentation in English to a non-English speaking Chinese audience. Taking this example further, it would also be unethical to communicate the information mostly in Chinese, with a certain section in English, presenting only parts of the data to the Chinese audience.

Jargon

Every industry has its own jargon. When speaking to a layperson, it is ethical to speak with simple, easy-to-understand words, while avoiding the use of heavy jargon, resulting in portions of the presentation/communication being incomprehensible to a portion of the audience.

Language Fluency

Ethical communication takes into account the level of fluency as well as the language spoken by listeners so that recipients of the communication (whether it be spoken or written) are able to fully understand what is being communicated.

Accessibility to Technology

In this information and digital age, some take accessibility to advanced technology for granted. For instance, while smartphones are readily available, and translation apps are abundant, not everyone is able to access such applications or platforms. If a business wanted to present certain pieces of information to an audience while expecting the audience to translate it into their native language via an application, there may be confusion. Thus, the ability to access certain technology – and the know-how on how to use certain applications – may be a roadblock when it comes to ethically communicating to a particular audience.

Development of Relationship

The art of communication allows people to express themselves in order to develop relationships. In business, this can be an employee dealing with a manager, executives communicating with stakeholders, or managers talking with other business representatives. It is critical for there to be no confusion or misunderstandings when businesses try to develop relationships within

themselves and with other business entities or clients/customers. To accomplish this, ethical communication principles must be followed, ensuring that all parties can receive the consistent truth, and understand what needs to be done, and how it needs to be done.

Principles of Ethical Communication

There are a myriad of core principles associated with ethical communication, starting with the core value of honesty that all other values are connected to. However, it can be said that there is a value underlying honesty (with regard to ethical communication) and that is emotional intelligence/empathy as the precursor of all soft skills, which allows all personnel to be understood, and to effectively communicate with others. Emotional intelligence, within the framework of ethical communication, allows one to understand the needs of others, and meet those needs in the most efficient manner possible as if you were in their shoes.

1. Be Truthful And Honest

Being honest means communicating what is known to be true (only 100 percent the facts) to a listener, with no intent to deceive or present only parts of the truth. It also means being as objective as possible, that is, not tailoring the story based on what the speaker *wants* the listener to believe. Letting the listener take the data that is objectively presented and believe what they choose to believe is a core goal of ethical communication. Ethical communication should be based on accurate information and facts – in a word, *do not lie*.

2. Active Listening

Hearing someone and *listening* to them are two different things. In order for ethical communication to be effective, it is necessary for the recipient to pro-actively listen to the speaker, and to not just hear what they want to hear, or to hear only parts of the conversation. This also means asking questions when any point is not completely understood, for the sake of clarification.

3. Speak Non-Judgmentally

Ethically and concisely communicating means speaking in a non-judgmental manner with every recipient, negating unnecessary conflict, which typically creates a breakdown in communication

and causes misunderstandings. Unnecessary conflict is never good for any business, and such conflicts usually result from unethical communications, with judgmental, accusatory, and overly-critical comments often being the catalyst for such breakdowns in communication.

4. Speak From Your Own Experience

Bringing your personal experience into a dialogue with business listeners is important, providing backup for your arguments with something more tangible. Such a communication method (experiential communication) paints a complete picture for your audience and helps to prove your points so that the listeners have a better understanding of what is being said.

5. Consider the Receiver's Preferred Communication Channel

You risk losing an audience if you use a communication channel that is not preferred by your intended receiver. To effectively communicate with your listeners, use the most preferred communication channel, whether that be face-to-face, email, conference call, phone call, messenger app, etc. Also, when presenting data to a business audience, be aware of the preferred method of presentation for that business, whether it be graphs, slides, PowerPoint presentations, etc. Additionally, since body language is very important, it is often preferred to meet business clients face-to-face.

6. Strive To Understand

While it is important to be proactive in listening, it is important for listeners to also strive to fully understand what is being said before responding. While asking for clarification or confirmation of a point is fine, many times questions that listeners pose have already been answered. Listeners should think about what has been said before constructing a reply. Reading “in between the lines” is also an important skill that allows for understanding what *isn't* said, but was implicitly said or implied.

7. Avoid A Negative Tone

Ethically communicating assumes the speaker will avoid rudeness, be polite and professional, and have *tact*. The ethical communicator knows that it's not only important what you say, but how you say it. *Tone* is one of the most critical facets of communication. A listener may miss the

meaning altogether if the tone is wrong, which can lead to unnecessary confrontations that decrease business productivity.

Controlling one's tone goes along with self-control, a soft skill that allows one to know how they wish to reply to a terse business message (for instance) versus the most effective manner for replying. Essentially, keeping the tone positive or neutral is best, as the tone of a written message – or of one's voice – is always picked up by the receiver, and can alter how the message is received and/or understood.

Additionally, while it is acceptable to be honest and open, tact – and professional maturity – means knowing when it is inappropriate to speak up, and when it is crucial to. Tact also means knowing that being completely honest does not equate with being rude or negative – it is possible to be completely honest and open with one's thoughts and feelings while still remaining polite and respectful.

8. Do Not Interrupt Others

Allowing others to speak is important for the creation of a civil, effective working environment. Interrupting others results in misunderstandings and unnecessary conflicts and a breakdown in workplace communications, which only hinders corporate progress and creates problems. Interrupting others not only shows a lack of respect, but does not allow the listener to fully grasp what is being said, which often results in incorrect assumptions being made.

9. Respect Privacy And Confidentiality

Most businesses should include a clause in their code of ethics defining what is appropriate when it comes to honoring client and employee confidentiality and privacy. This can have a wide range of implications, including minimizing workplace gossip, and mitigating toxic conversations about the private lives of clients and/or personnel.

10. Accept Responsibility

As noted before, a core tenant within any ethical communication framework is taking responsibility for the actions that result from one's words, whether it be good or bad. This

includes both short term and long term consequences of one's communications. Owning one's words reinforces the importance of being conscientious about ethical communication.

Ethical Communication In An Organization

In business organizations, communicating concisely, ethically, and appropriately are all necessary so a business can operate effectively and efficiently. Operating according to a communication-based code of ethics is important for both small and large scale person-to-person conversations. For larger audiences it is often important for business members to employ additional values to their communication principles, such as:

- **Choosing the right place/time:** Speaking about a particular topic in a business often requires choosing the most pertinent and appropriate time and place in order for the message to be most effective. This requires knowing the recipients and having tact, along with utilizing strategy and planning.
- **Knowing one's Audience:** Certain audiences may prefer different verbiage or jargon, or may prefer one communication channel over another. Being an effective communicator means knowing your audience in order to communicate in the way that he/she will understand the best.

Business communication requires ethical values to form the foundation of all of its relationships, which ensures that all enterprise workflows, short term projects, and long term projects are effectively managed and carried out. Any lapse in efficient and ethical communication can result in misunderstandings, conflicts, delays with projects, and the creation of an ineffective working environment.

Active Listening

What Is Active Listening?

Active listening is a communication skill that involves going beyond simply hearing the words that another person speaks, but also seeking to understand the meaning and intent behind them. It requires being an active participant in the communication process.

Active listening techniques include:

- Being fully present in the conversation
- Noticing (and using) non-verbal cues
- Paraphrasing and reflecting back what has been said
- Withholding judgment and advice

In communication, active listening is important because it keeps you engaged with your conversation partner in a positive way. It also makes the other person feel heard and valued. This skill is the foundation of a successful conversation in any setting—whether at work, at home, or in social situations.

Active Listening Techniques

The word "active" implies that you are taking some type of action when listening to others. This involves the use of certain strategies or techniques. Here are seven active listening techniques to consider.

Be Fully Present

Active listening requires being fully present in the conversation. This enables you to concentrate on what is being said. Being present involves listening with all your senses (sight, sound, etc.) and giving your full attention to the speaker.

To use this active listening technique effectively, put away your cell phone, ignore distractions, avoid daydreaming, and shut down your internal dialogue. Place your focus on your conversation partner and let everything else slip away.

Pay Attention to Non-Verbal Cues

As much as 65% of a person's communication is unspoken. Paying attention to these nonverbal cues can tell you a lot about the person and what they are trying to say. If they talk fast, for instance, this could be a sign that they are nervous or anxious. If they talk slowly, they may be tired or trying to carefully choose their words.

During active listening, your non-verbal behaviors are just as important. To show the person you're truly tuned in, use open, non-threatening body language. This involves not folding your arms, smiling while listening, leaning in, and nodding at key junctures.

It can also be helpful to pay attention to your facial expressions when active listening so that you don't convey any type of negative response.

Keep Good Eye Contact

When engaged in active listening, making eye contact is especially important. This tells the other person that you are present and listening to what they say. It also shows that you aren't distracted by anything else around you.

At the same time, you don't want to use so much eye contact that the conversation feels weird. To keep this from happening, follow the 50/70 rule. This involves maintaining eye contact for 50% to 70% of the time spent listening, holding the contact for four to five seconds before briefly looking away.

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Asking "yes or no" questions often produce dead-end answers. This isn't helpful during active listening as it keeps the conversation from flowing. It also makes it difficult to truly listen to the other person because there isn't much you can gain from a short, non-descriptive response.

Instead, ask open-ended questions to show that you are interested in the conversation and the other person. Examples of open-ended questions you may use when active listening include:

- Can you tell me a bit more about that?
- What did you think about that?
- What do you think is the best path moving forward?
- How do you think you could have responded differently?

Reflect What You Hear

After the person has spoken, tell them what you heard. This active listening technique ensures that you've captured their thoughts, ideas, and/or emotions accurately. It also helps the other person feel validated and understood while keeping any potential miscommunications to a minimum.

One way to reflect what you've heard is to paraphrase. For example, you might say, "In other words, what you are saying is that you're frustrated" or "I'm hearing that you're frustrated about this situation." Summarize what you've heard and give the person the opportunity to say whether you've captured their meaning or intent.

If you'd like to better understand something the person has said, ask for clarification. But don't focus so much on insignificant details that you miss the big picture.

Be Patient

Patience is an important active listening technique because it allows the other person to speak without interruption. It also gives them the time to say what they are thinking without having you try to finish their sentences for them.

Being patient involves not trying to fill periods of silence with your own thoughts or stories. It also requires listening to understand, not to respond. That is, don't prepare a reply while the other person is still speaking. Also, don't change the subject too abruptly as this conveys boredom and impatience.

Withhold Judgment

Remaining neutral and non-judgmental in your responses enables the other person to feel comfortable with sharing their thoughts. It makes the conversation a safe zone where they can trust that they won't be shamed, criticized, blamed, or otherwise negatively received.

Ways to be less judgmental when listening include:

- Expressing empathy for the person or their situation
- Learning more about different people and cultures
- Practicing acceptance of others
- Recognizing when you may be judging the other person, then stopping those thoughts

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

In our previous topics, we defined communication as the means of conveying the message via written text, speech, (verbal) signals, visuals, or behaviour(non-verbal), Kobiruzzaman, M. M. (2021). In addition, it is also a process of exchanging opinions and imparting knowledge between speaker and audience through communication elements, Kobiruzzaman, M. M. (2021). By elements, we refer to the various interdependent components that constitute and regulate the entire communication process, the essence of our current study in this topic.

3.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE TOPIC

These include:

- Identify the keys elements of communication
- Explain the interdependence of these elements
- Identify the application of these concepts in everyday life

We shall study the following elements: *Sender, message, context, channel, interference/noise, Encoding, Decoding, Receiver, Feedback, Environment*

3.1.1. Sender

Person who sends the message to receiver.

Person who encodes the message

Person who imagines, creates message to receiver

Synonyms - encoder, initiator of procedure

Coveys message

Makes and uses symbols

Provides information to be shared

3.1.2. Message

In form of ideas, feelings, opinions, thoughts that sender wants to deliver to receiver

May convey through verbal cues (spoken, written) et nonverbal cues (facial, gestures, appearances, posture)

Refers to the meaning produced by the source to the intended receiver

Consists of the way you say it—in a speech, with your tone of voice, your body language, and your appearance—and in a report, with your writing style, punctuation, and the headings and formatting you choose.

Source: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/chapter/1-2-what-is-communication/>

3.1.3. Context

- *Circumstances surrounding a message*
- *Environment of communication in which interaction happens*
- *Could be historical, physical, psychological, social, chronological*
- *Portrays societal expectations from both recipient and sender, in regards to environmental cues that are emitted.*
- *Circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed (oxford dictionary)*
- *The degree to which the environment is formal or informal depends on the contextual expectations for communication held by the participants. (<https://pressbooks-dev.oer.hawaii.edu/cmchang/>)*

3.1.4. Channel

- *Way/tool of transmitting messages*
- *Medium of communication...conveying message from sender to receiver*
- *Different communication channels: face to face communication, mainstream media, social media, application of the 5 senses.*

3.1.5. Interference/Noise

Noise refers to the communication barrier or obstacles to effective communication. It is also known as communication noise or noise in communication. Noise is an unwanted element of the communication process that communicators always want to avoid during the interaction.

We can identify five types of noise in communication. They include

- *Physical*
- *Physiological (needs, personality...)*
- *Psychological (mental...emotional...)*
- *Semantic – (understanding meaning)*
- *Cultural –wrong understanding of another person's behaviour*

3.1.6. Encoding (for sender)

- *Transforming abstract opinions, subject ideas into symbols (words, pics, signs)*
- *Represent, indicate, opinions, statements and actions*

3.1.7. Decoding (for receiver)

- *Process of translating encoded symbol into an ordinary understandable language, or idea*
- *Receiver converting symbols into thoughts*
- *Get meaning*

3.1.8. Receiver

- *Receive/Understand/Accept/Use/Give feedback, intentionally or unintentionally*
- *Person to whom the message is targeted*
- *Audience of communication process*
- *Decodes meaning to perceive meaning*
- *Could be individual or in a group*
- *Degree of understanding may depend on:*
- *Knowledge of recipient/responsiveness to message/reliance of the encoder on the decoder*

3.1.9. Feedback

- *Response of receiver/audience*
- *Efficacy of analysis*
- *Shows sender how accurately the message was received*
- *Receiver can ask for clarification*

- *Positive/Negative, Immediate/Delayed, simple/complex*
- *Helps sender to confirm correct interpretation*
- *Could take different formats, such as Verbal/non verbal*
- *Examples of communication models in regards to feedback (cf to the next topic on Models of Communication)*
 - *Linear (Laswell)= no feedback, for example Shannon & Weaver (1948), Laswell (1948)*
 - *Interactional = with feedback, for example Osgood Schramm (1954) Watzlawick-Beavin-Jackson (1967)*
 - *Transactional = with feedback, for example Barnlund's Transactional Model (1970)*

3.1.10. Environment

“The environment is **the atmosphere, physical and psychological, where you send and receive messages**” (McLean, 2005). In essence, surroundings, people, animals, technology, can all influence your communication.

The environment is the space where you send and receive messages.

The environment can also include factors like formal dress, that may indicate whether a discussion is open and caring or more professional and formal.

The choice to text is influenced by the environment.