

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

We face many problems in our business and personal lives because of miscommunication. This miscommunication is caused by certain factors. These factors are called barriers in communication. Several communication barriers exist between sender and receiver, and they may be responsible for a message not being understood correctly.

Following are some barriers which result in communication failure:

1. Semantic Barriers

Semantic refers to the use of symbols or words which we use to communicate our message. It includes:

- a. **Bypassing:** The problem of bypassing refers to the symbols or words that carry different meaning to different people. When the sender and the receiver of the message attribute different meanings to the same words, the problem of bypassing occurs.
- b. **Denotation:** Denotation is the dictionary meaning of a word without indicating its positive and negative qualities. Most people agree on denotative meaning. The words like car, house, water, etc. have denotative words. The sender and the receiver must have the same denotative meanings in their minds, otherwise miscommunication may occur.
- c. **Connotation:** It is an implication of the word different from the usual dictionary meaning, which arouses qualitative judgement and personal reaction. The word house is denotative. Mansion, villa, home, cottage, firetrap and shack are connotative. The word student is denotative; bookworm, scholar, dropout, gunner are

connotative. Miscommunication occurs when the sender and receiver don not have the same understanding of connotations.

2. Physical Barriers (Noise, Distance, etc)

Physical barriers include apparent environmental factors such as noise, distance, distraction and interferences which obstruct smooth flow of communication. For example, the noise of other people or moving traffic, distance between the sender and the receiver, interference, etc. prove barriers in communication.

3. Organisational Barriers

Organisational barriers include filtering of information (sender's purposely changing of information in order to be received favourably by the receiver), colouring of information, diversion of information and status consciousness.

4. Technical or Mechanical Barriers

Technical or mechanical barriers occur in the mechanism of communication process. A crackle on the phone, illegible handwriting, poor printing and defective microphone are the examples of technical barriers which obstruct the smooth flow of communication.

5. Perception of Reality

Every person's sensory perceptions (ability to see, hear, taste, touch and smell) are different as well as limited. And every person's mental filter is also unique. Some people have **frozen evaluation** also called **stereotyping**. It means static and faulty impression. This leads to miscommunication.

6. Slanting

Slanting or slanted statements also cause miscommunication. It means to include biased or prejudiced statement in presenting facts.

7. Closed Minds

Some people have rigid views on certain subjects. They do not acknowledge facts. Their rigidity and closed minds hinder effective communication.

8. Sender's Credibility

Sender's credibility also affects the process of communication. People do not react favourably to a sender who lacks credibility.

9. Non-verbal Signals or Clues

Non verbal signals often referred to as 'body language' (facial expressions, gestures, movement, eye contact and nodding the head) are sometimes misunderstood by the receiver. The absence of these signals also proves to be a barrier in the way of effective communication.

Apart from the barriers to communication discussed above, there are many other barriers. These barriers can be using difficult language, poor listening, and biased relationships. Barriers to communication affect the process of sending and receiving a message. Barriers change a message and cause miscommunication. We can overcome these barriers by applying communication principles