

UNIT 01

COMMUNICATION AS A SKILL : TYPES OF COMMUNICATION , BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION , NEED FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication is the life blood of social as well as corporate world. We exist because we communicate. Even our silence communicates a lot. Communication is derived from the Latin word communis which means to share. Briefly communication can be defined as, the act of transmitting and receiving information.

DEFINITION:

1. According to **Keith Davis** - Communication is a process of passing information and understanding one person to another.

2. According to **W.H. Newman** — Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinion or emotions by two or more persons.

COMMUNICATION CYCLE

COMMUNICATION CYCLE

Communication is the process of information between individual and organizations. In every communication situation there are two parties a sender and a receiver. Sender transmits a message, he expects a response. The observation of receiver's response is called feedback. The whole process involves in a cyclic manner. This cycle is called Communication Cycle.

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION CYCLE

- **SENDER** - Who sends message to receiver.
- **MESSAGE** - Verbal or non-verbal information, feeling or emotions.
- **CHANNEL** - The medium through which message is sent to the receiver.
- **RECEIVER** - One who receives message from sender.
- **FEEDBACK** - The receiver's response or non-response to the message.
- **BRAIN DRAIN** - It is the misunderstanding of message at any level of communication cycle.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication has been defined as a process. The process gets started as soon as we decide to convey a fact, an idea, an emotion or an opinion to others. The transmission of the sender's idea to the receiver & the receiver's feedback or reaction



to the sender constitute the communication cycle.

STEPS TO COMMUNICATION PROCESS

- **SENDER:** Sender is the person who intends to make contact with the objective of passing the message to other person.
- **MESSAGE:** It is the subject matter of the communication which is intended to be passed to the receiver from the sender. The message may be in the form of suggestions, orders, idea, opinions, views, feelings.
- **ENCODING:** Since the subject-matter of communication is abstract & intangible, its transmission requires the use of certain symbols such as words, pictures, gesture. This process of converting the message in to communication symbols in known as encoding.
- **CHANNEL:** The message encoded into symbols is transmitted by the sender through a channel like written form, personal contact, phone call etc.
- **RECEIVER:** Receiver is the person to whom the symbols are transmitted.
- **DECODING:** Decoding is the reverse of encoding. The receiver receives the subject matter of communication in the form of communication, symbols, in which the sender has encoded his messages. The receiver decodes these symbols into message.
- **FEEDBACK:** It is necessary to ensure that the receiver has received the message & understood it in the same sense as the sender intended. While giving feedback the receiver assumes the role of the sender & the sender becomes the receiver.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a two-way process of exchanging ideas or information. Communication has some goals to achieve and that is called objective of communication. Its main objective are:

- **Information-** The most important objective of communication is the exchange of information with others. The employees are informed about the goals, policies and rules. Meetings, telephones, notices, handbook, bulletins are used to convey necessary information to the employees. External sources or outsiders are informed about products, policies, contribution to social responsibilities etc.
- **(ii) Orders-** An order is a direction to do something. An order is enforceable because the superior has got power to use sanctions against a subordinate who refuses to carry out an order or do so in an appropriate manner. Orders may be oral or written. Sometimes it becomes necessary to give written



orders so that they may not be overrule.

- **iii) Education-** Business firms train their employees for greater productivity and educate consumers about the quality and uses of products. Consumers and general public are also educated.
- **(iv) Advice-** The managers often give advice to their colleagues and subordinates on both personal and official matters. Advice involves personal opinion of the advisor and so may be subjective (biased). The purpose of offering is to influence the behaviour of the other party. Advice comes from an expert.
- **(v) Counseling-** It is factual and objective (without any bias). The managers provide counseling to their subordinates when they are under difficulty or stress. For example, an employee is having some family problems and is not able to do his job properly. In such a situation, psychological counseling can help in modifying the behaviour of the employee under stress and in overcoming his problems. It also helps in molding employees behavior favorably. It will lead to better industrial relations and go a long way towards achieving greater acceptance of new ideas. It will also reduce workers resistance to change.
- **(vi) Persuasion-** it means making efforts to change or influence the behaviour and attitude of others. When employees have to be convinced of the need for greater efforts, when goods have to be sold despite competition, when dues have to be collected from an unwilling customer- all these situation call for persuasive efforts.
- **(vii) Suggestion-** The person who offers suggestion may or may not be an expert. A suggestion is usually welcome because accepting a suggestion is a persons discretion. Suggestion from employees to management (that is upward) are encouraged in modern organizations. Suggestion boxes are placed at some convenient place in the office or the factory.
- **(viii) Motivation-** It is the process of inducing people to work hard for achieving organizational goals. Joint consultation, praise for outstanding efforts, awarding incentives, certificates etc. help to improve motivation.
- **(ix) Raising Morale-** Free flow of communication helps to release pent up emotions and provide a feeling of reassurance to the staff.
- **(x) Warning** — It involves informing about the unpleasant and unfavorable



consequences, if certain course of action is not changed. Certain course of action may be negligence, misbehaving with others. The purpose is to ask the employee to abide by the rules and regulations and work with dedication and discipline. Thus, we find communication as the tool of a well established, a cultured society.

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION (7 CS OF COMMUNICATION)

An effective communication is essential in achieving an overall goals of an organization. It occurs only when the sender obtains his intended results from the receiver. In a good communication, comprehending is the goal that is achieved. For making a communication effective the following principles of communication should be considered which are as follows :

- **Principle of Clarity :** The message to be communicated should be clear, simple and easy to understand. Clarity of thought is the soul of communication. Selection of words to be used in communication should be made properly so that the words do not have dual meaning. Jargon and clichés should be avoided so as to make the communication effective.
- **Principle of Completeness :** The message should be complete with respect to thought as well as content. Incomplete content messages create confusion in the mind of the receiver and forced to seek clarification from the sender. To ensure completeness, all questions must be answered and relevant facts must be provided.
- **Principle of Conciseness :** Ruskin Bond conveys Say all you have to say in the fewest possible words. It should not contain irrelevant words and contents. Irrelevant details, repetition of the same ideas and words should be avoided and the message should be properly organized.
- **Principle of Courteousness :** Courtesy means a friendly and helpful behaviour towards others. Congenial and healthy communication helps to make the communication effective. We should communicate with a friendly and compassionate and avoid sarcastic nature in our words. Harsh and rude language must be avoided so as to communicate effectively.
- **Principle of Correctness :** We should not transmit any message unless we are sure about the accuracy and authenticity. The message to be communicated should be correct in spelling, grammar, format, contents, information etc. Delayed and outdated messages cause loss of time and money. It is often referred as *information delayed is information denied*.
- **Principle of Consistency :** The communication should be consistent with the



plans , policies , programme and objectives of the enterprise . Above all the communication should also be consistent . Inconsistency in communication may reduce the effectiveness of communication and remains unreliable too.

- **Principle of Candidness** : The message to be communicated must be candid that is it must be straight forward and frank .One should not beat about the bush while communicating which may amount to active concealment.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANISATION

DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION:

Downward communication flows from a superior to a subordinate. Orders, Individual Instruction, Policy Statements, Job-Sheets, Circulars etc., fall under downward communication.

The main objective is –

- To give specific directives about the job being entrusted to a subordinate.
- To explain policies and organization procedures.
- to apprise the subordinate of their performance.
- To give the subordinates information about the rationale of their job.

Limitations:

- **Delay:** the lines of communication here being very long, transmitting informations to the lowest worker is a time-consuming process.
- **Loss of information:** Unless the communication is fully written, it is not transmitted entirely. A part of it is, almost certain to be lost.
- **Distortion:** In long lines of communication information is not only lost but also distorted. When a piece of information passes from one individual to another, it loses a little of its authenticity.

UPWARD COMMUNICATION:

If the managers transmit the information down the line of authority, then they also have to receive information from levels below them.

Limitations:

- Employees are reluctant to express themselves.
- Employees fear that their criticism may be interpreted as a sign of their personal weakness.
- There is greater possibility to distortion in upward communication, because superiors lose their cool if they are confronted with criticism or unpleasant facts. Hence information is suitably edited and distorted before passing on.
- Sometimes, workers become too bold and bypass their just superiors. Here the bypassed superiors feel insulated and relation strain & work suffers.

HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION

Communication between departments or people on the same level of an organization may be termed as horizontal communication/lateral communication.



Horizontal communication is most effectively carried on through oral means. Face-to-face exchange of view or a brief conversation over telephone is very convenient for horizontal communication. Periodical meetings among the department heads are also used for oral communication. Among written means, letters, memos and reports are most frequently used.

CONSENSUS:

The concept of consensus is quite familiar in the political sphere. Here, unanimously a group of people arrive at a common conclusion/decision. Consensus does not imply unanimity, for perfect unanimity is just impossible. Unanimous decisions helps to project a good image of the organization. The process of consensus involves consultation. The views of a number of people are listened carefully and the one on which large number of people agree is accepted.

INFORMAT TYPES OF COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANIZATION

GRAPEVINE

Apart from the formal channels of communication there operates in every organization an informal channels of communication, called the grapevine. It follows no set lines, nor any definite rules, but spreads like the grapevine, in any direction, anywhere and very fast.

Here the people at different levels talk to each others regarding appointments, promotions or even domestic affairs. Information on most of these matters is supposed to be secret, but somebody or the other whispers it to other persons ears & thus the secret is known to everybody.

According to Prof. Keith Davis, Grapevine is classified into four basic types: Single strand, Gossip, Probability & Cluster on the basis of its pattern of movement.

TYPES OF GRAPEVINE

According to Prof. Keith Davis, "the informal channel of communication is classified

into four basic types: Single strand, Gossip, Probability & Cluster".

ssSINGLE STRAND - The single strand chain involves the passing of information through a long line of person to the ultimate recipient. A tells B, who tells C, who tells D, and so on, till the information has reached most of the persons concerned.

GOSSIP - In the gossip chain, A actively seeks and tell everyone. The chain is just like the wheel where A isat the center and information passes along the the spokes of the wheel to others stationed on the rim.

PROBABILITY - The probability chain is a random process in which A transmits the information to others in accordance with the laws of probability and then these others still others in a similar manner. This chain may also b called random.



CLUSTER CHAIN — In the cluster chain, A tells selected persons who may in turn relay the information to other selected individuals. Most of the informal communication follow this chain.

IMPORTANCE OF GRAPEVINE:

- Safety Valve: It acts as a safety valve for the pent-up emotions of the subordinates.
- Promotes organizational solidarity.
- If properly used, it may raise the morale of the workers.
- Supplement to other channels.
- Quick Transmission
- Feedback: The grapevine provides feedback to the management.

Demerits of Grapevine:

- Distortion: One of the major drawbacks of this channel is that it may spread baseless and distorted news which may prove harmful to the employees.
- Incomplete Information: The information through grapevine is usually incomplete, hence there are more chances of misunderstanding & misinterpretation.
- Damaging Swiftness: The swiftness with which the grapevine transmits information may be damaging.

To use the grapevine effectively, the managers should adopt these measures :

- keep an eye on the rumor-mongers, and keep them well informed. so that harmful rumours do not reach the employees
- It should be used primarily for feedback.
- The management should immediately use the official channel to contradict the rumours promptly.
- To involve the workers in the decision making process, hence, the rumour mongers will be frustrated.

Grapevine is the only informal channel in an organisation that is independent of the constraints of rules and directions and brings forward both beneficial and disastrous results.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Communication is the process of transmitting information. A lack of understanding about what really transpires in a communication exchange is a major barrier to good communication. Miscommunication can originate at three levels: At the level of the transmitter, of the medium and of the receiver.



1.WRONG CHOICE OF MEDIUM:

While properly chosen medium can add to the effectiveness of a communication, an unsuitable medium can act as a barrier. So each communication must be transmitted through an appropriate medium.

2.PHYSICAL BARRIERS:

(a)Noise: Noise is quite often a barrier to communication. Noise here can be loud noise of machines, blaring, physical interferences like illegible handwriting smudged copies, poor telephone connections etc.

(b)Time & distance: Time & distance act as a barrier to the smooth flow of communication. Use of telephones along with computer technology has made communication very fast & has overcome the space barrier. However mechanical breakdown render these facilities ineffective. Here, the distance between the receiver & transmitter becomes a might barrier. There is also a kind of communication gap between person working in different shifts. Faulty seating arrangement in a room can also become a barrier in effective communication.

3.SEMANTIC BARRIERS:

Any barriers due to language result in semantic problem i.e. different meaning being given to same word by different person is called semantic barrier.

(a)Interpretation of words:If the receiver of message does not assign the same meaning to a word as the transmitter had intended.This causes a miscommunication or barrier to communication.

(b)bypassed instruction:Bypassing is said to have occurred if the sender and receiver of the message attribute different meanings to the same word or use different word for the same meaning.

4.DIFFERENT COMPREHENSION TO REALITY

The reality of an object, a person or an event is different to different people. Reality is not a fixed concept; it is complex, infinite and continually changing. Besides, each human being has limited sensory perceptions & a unique mental filter. No two persons perceive reality in identical manner. This may sometimes lead to miscommunication.

(a)Abstracting: It is defined as a process of focusing attention on some details & omitting others. This poses a great barrier to communication, for details which look important to one persons may look insignificant to others. We dont make allowances for these difference & misunderstanding arises.

(b)Slanting: It is giving a particular bias to reality. It is in a way similar to allness. Here we know only a part & are ignorant of the rest, but we think that we know the whole. To overcome this, we should try to be objective in our observations & assessments, & try to avoid the mistake of judging the whole by what might be only a fraction.



(c)Inferring: It means coming at a decision from observation. Hence a wrong inference can be a barrier to communication. So while drawing inferences, we should distinguish between facts & assumption & make sure that our inferences are based on verifiable facts.

5.SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

(a)Attitudes & Opinions: Personal attitudes & opinions often act as barrier to effective communication. If an information disagrees with our views, we dont accept it & react unfavourably. e.g. A change in policy of an organization proves advantageous to an employee, he welcome it, if not, he consider it a whim of the director.

(b)Emotion: Emotional state of mind plays an important role in the act of communication. if the sender is perplexed, worried, excited, afraid, nervous, his thinking will be blurred or he will not be able to organize his message properly. It is extremely important that emotions are not allowed to impede the smooth flow of communication.

(c)Closed mind: A person with a closed mind is very difficult to communicate with. He is a man with deeply ingrained prejudices. He is not prepared to reconsider his opinions. Such a persons is not open to conviction & persuasion.

(d)Status consciousness: It exists in every organization and is one of the major barriers to communication. subordinates are afraid to communicate upward any unpleasant information. They are either too conscious of their status or are afraid. Status conscious superior think that consulting their juniors would be compromising their dignity.

(e)Source of communication: If the receiver has a suspicion or prejudices about the source of communication, there is likely to be barrier to communication. People tend to react according to their attitude to the source of facts than to the facts themselves.

(f)Inattentiveness: People often become inattentive while receiving a message, particularly if the message contains a new idea, for the adult human mind usually resists change. It also threatens security and stability.

(g)Faulty transmission: A message is never communicated from one person to another wholly or entirely. This is true to the case of oral messages. In the process of translation, interpretation, simplification etc. a part of the message gets lost or distorted.

(h)Poor retention: Poor retention of communication also acts as a barrier. Studies show that employees retain only about 50% of the information communicated to them. The rest is lost. Poor retention may lead to imperfect responses, which further hampers the communication process. Oral messages in particular are lost due to poor human retention.

(i)Unsolicited communication: This communication has to face stronger barriers



than solicited communication. We are unresponsive if the communication is unsolicited.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Any communication that fulfills the need of sender and receiver and a positive feedback is arrived at is known as effective communication. Its importance in day to day life.

ESSENTIAL OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

An effective communication system is one which achieves its objectives. The ultimate objective of communication is to bring desired behaviour. The various elements of communication are *clarity, adequacy, timing* and *integrity*.

- **Clarity:** The communication process must ensure clarity of communication, avoiding unnecessary seeking and clarifications. Thus the communications must be expressed in a language and transmitted in a way that will be comprehended by the receiver.
- **Adequacy:** The process of communication must ensure that all the message needed by various individuals in an organization for effective discharge of duties must flow up to them and further that this flow must be adequate.
- **Timing:** The utility of any message is affected by its timeliness. Thus the process of communication should not only ensure that the message reaches the receivers, but should also ensure that it reaches him when required.
- **Integrity:** Effective communication is not an end in itself, rather it is a means to get some ends. The immediate objective is to get response, but the ultimate objective may be to get change in response from the receiver. Thus communication to be effective should be persuasive and convincing.

STEPS FOR MAKING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE

- **Clarity in idea:** The communicator should be sure and clear about what he wants to communicate.
- **Purpose of communication:** Every communication has some purpose, the basic purpose being to get some response.
- **Empathy in communication:** Empathy in communication means being sensitive towards the receiver's needs, feelings, and perceptions, i.e. projecting oneself into the view point of the other person. This way much of the misunderstanding is avoided.
- **Two-way communication:** Communication is a two-way traffic and this must be realized in communication. It involves a continuous dialogue between sender and receiver.
- **Appropriate language:** The subject matter of communication is transmitted by encoding in the form of words, gestures etc. i.e. the language used should be



understandable by the receiver.

- Supporting words with action: It is said that "action speaks louder than words". While communicating the sender might use actions to emphasize a point. This enhances understanding.
- Credibility in communication: One aspect of communication is credibility and believability. A subordinate follows an order, if the superior demonstrate competence through his ability/worth. Thus maintains trust and credibility.
- Good. Listening: A communicator must be a good listener too. By this he is not only giving a chance for others to speak but also gathers useful information for further communication.

