

UNIT-1 Communication Barriers

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Definition / meaning

US\$26,041 - cumulative cost per worker per year due to productivity losses caused by communication barriers

What?

"Anything that prevents the smooth dissemination (sending) or comprehension (receiving) of a message, either at the sender's end or at the receiver's end, is a barrier to communication"

Shalini Varma, 2015

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Factors causing barriers

I. Intra-personal communication barriers

- Factors present within a person - act as barrier as problem faced while receiving and sending messages
- Person in closed and conservative environment - cannot express well
- Person discriminated against since childhood or at workplace - will be judgmental or selective perception

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Categories of Intra-personal

1. Physiological
2. Psychological
3. Perceptual
4. Attitudinal
5. Emotional

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1. Physiological barriers

- **Physical limitations** - memory, concentration, mental sharpness,
- **Functioning of sensory organs** like eyes, ears etc- physical/medical or psychological reasons

2. Psychological barriers

1. **False assumptions** - assuming the receiver understood
2. **Over confidence and apathy** - *Overconfidence* - *pansophist* - I -know-everything - unwilling to learn - blocks ideas - *Apathy* - not showing interest or emotions
3. **Fear and defensiveness** - fear may break communication - mumble or block info. due to fear - *Defensiveness* - *effect* may not allow others to speak - cause melodrama - cause more misunderstanding

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3. Perceptual barriers

- Perceptions create mental blocks
- What messages we select or screen out
- See world and issues from own perception - don't consider other's view
- Hear or interpret message as we want them to - seek favorable - ignoring unfavorable

4. Attitudinal barriers

Actual behaviour based on perceptions - reflects in attitude built over a period of time due to socio-economic or cultural bringing up

If message matches with belief - accepted, if not rejected

Causes:

1. Egocentrism - 'My opinion/ideas more valuable'
2. Judgmental attitude - message that judges others without use of facts

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5. Emotional Barriers

- Emotional state determines ability to communicate
- Stress - people don't understand when under stress
- perplexed, nervous, worried, excited, afraid - won't organize message well
- E.g. a person with high EI will take the warning of a supervisor seriously and act on it.
- A person with low EI may disagree, argue, or ignore the warning - thus get into trouble.

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II. Inter-personal barriers

I. Sender-centric communication barriers

1. **Lack of interest** - talking about topic with less or no clarity - no interest
2. **Lack of preparation** - result - incorrect audience analysis, lack of information
3. **Over-qualification or under-qualification** - too much details or superficial information - Ph.D teaching 1st graders - PG qualified teaching Ph.D students

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4. **Time deficit** - lack of time to prepare or disseminate information - barrier

5. Lack of language competency

1. **Grammar** - male client as 'she' (semantic errors)
2. **Etymology** - too difficult or technical for the receiver
3. **Syntactical** - incorrect sentence construction - 'Let's eat Grandpa'. or 'Let's eat, Grandpa'
4. **Non-verbal** - "I have deep regard for you, sir. I genuinely apologize for the late submission of the sales report" - chewing gum with hands in the pocket - conflict between verbal and non-verbal
5. **Delivery mode** - too fast or too slow oral delivery - or illegible writing - not use language to suit audience

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12. Incorrect selection of communication channel

- personal message (face-to-face), long instructions (written)
- Decision about appropriate media - as per
- Time (*printed letter for longer time*)
- Type of message (*confidential or otherwise - telephone or face-to-face*)
- Cost (*sending 400 page written printed report or emailing it*)
- Intended audience (*workers - speech or verbal meeting, executives - pdf*)

2. Receiver-centric communication barriers

1. Poor listening

- low or no interest

2. Paucity of relevant information

- related to the topic

3. Inattentiveness

- internal or external distractions

4. Time deficit

- not devoting enough time to listen

5. Information overload

- reduced concentration - low ability to understand and retain - key information goes missing

6. Lack of language competency

- Interpretation of words* - may not assign same meaning as sender - *assured or essayed*
- Denotations and connotations* - clearly denotes a thing without adding any negative or positive quality like *table*. Words with favourable and non-favourable connotation - *cheap, poor*. Some words are verb and noun - *file, scroll*. These cause confusion

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3. Environmental barriers

- Physical barriers** - too cold/hot office, noise, new technology, smelly env., dark, not ventilated, inappropriate or inadequate seating arrangement, poor lighting
- Technological barriers** - technical glitches, text messages

4. Other barriers

- Organizational barriers** - inefficient information system; lack of supervision or training; role ambiguity; no chain of command; Status consciousness - boss and subordinate - one feels superior and other - inferior; too many transfer stations
- Chronomatic barriers** - time taken - different time zones,
- Gender barriers** - socio-cultural barriers among men and women
- Cultural barriers** - people of different religions, caste may not mingle and communicate

Solutions

- Gain knowledge about background of audience - culture, education level, etc
- Select words carefully - as per language skills
- Explain unfamiliar words
- Be non-judgmental - don't generalize, don't draw inferences - don't assume
- Clarify (yours and others) or seek feedback
- Be consistent with the message
- Avoid too many transfer stations
- Do not communicate when emotionally disturbed
- Use appropriate non-verbal cues
- Keep formal orders and instructions in written form
- Take advantage of 360 evaluation
- Respect a person's desire to not communicate
- Ensure you follow the ethics of communication - maintain confidentiality
- Be a good listener
- Be an attentive reader

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PAC

PAC as communication style

- Break in communication** - cause of unhappiness, lack of productivity, dissatisfaction, demotivation - at workplace
- What can be done?** - identify the area of problem - PAC concept under transactional analysis theory helps to do that
- Transactional analysis was developed by Eric Berne in late 1950's - part of Psychiatry
- Study of social interactions or transactions** - involves three ego state - Parent - Adult - Child - ego states are state of mind - way of thinking, feeling, and behaving - when two persons communicate - communication is affected by their ego states - effective or conflict

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- "Any indication (speech, gestures or other nonverbal cues) that acknowledges the presence of another person is called a **transactional stimulus**. All transactions are initiated via the use of a transactional stimulus.
- When two individuals encounter each other and the receiver reacts in a manner related to the transactional stimulus, that individual has performed a **transactional response**. The key to successful person-to-person communication generally lies in identifying which ego state (in the speaker) initiated the transactional stimulus and which ego state (in the receiver) provided the transactional response." (GoodTherapy, 2016:)

Three types of Egos – communication styles

P PARENT
= Controlling

Authoritative style assuming control or superior knowledge

A ADULT
= Rational

Respectful style that allows different perspectives (without judgement). This style is rational and unemotional; useful for discussions, and co-operative planning

C CHILD
= Rebellious or Obedient

Impulsive style of communication. It is spontaneous and can be irresponsible

Source: <https://www.rcsaustralia.com.au/pac-communication-model/>

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Parent Ego

- Behaviours, thoughts and feelings copied from our parents, or other parental figures – stern body language, usage of "I told you", "Don't do this", "I'll take care of you"
- There are two principal parent ego states:
- **Nurturing**: more positive and pleasant qualities of what parents and society do for a person.
- **Critical**: corrective behaviour of real parents and the prohibitive messages of society.

Adult

- Objectivity and understanding of reality
- Understanding of the feelings of others
- We keep our parent and child in check through this.
- Reflected in logical and self controlled language – "maybe", "possibly"
- E.g. I see that Suzie's house was burnt down. Mom was right—I should not play with matches.
- Berne believes - easiest and simplest transactions occur between Adult ego states

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Child

- Individuals behave, feel and think how they did as a child or replayed from childhood.
- E.g. person who receives a poor evaluation at work may respond by looking at the floor, or crying, or getting angry.
- 'FELT' ego state.
- The child ego state has two main parts:
- **Adapted**: human response which has some negativity in it, some resistance, some reaction and some deeper hostility.
- **Free**: playful and spontaneous part of human behaviour, from infancy to an old age.

Three schemes of transaction

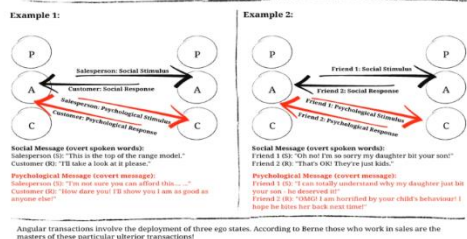
- **Complementary transaction** – when stimulus and response parallel – what the speaker intends and the receiver responds – both parent ego or both adult ego or parent and child ego – Boss: "Never give up!". Junior: "Yes sir. I'll try"
- **Crossed**: Boss: "Never give up!". Junior: "Its easy said than done" – egos have crossed as it was not intended that way
- **Ulterior** – transaction at two levels – social and psychological – e.g. extra attention - a good morning and a pat on the back by the boss

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Ulterior

Transactional Analysis: Ulterior Transactions: Angular



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Examples of Parent Ego state

- **(Case Study One)**
- Bob was the leader of his group of friends and it was he who always set the time that they should meet, where they should go and what they 'should do'. He often shook his finger at his friends reprovingly. People in his circle of friends eventually got fed up of him and many left the group.
- **(Case Study Two)**
- Mary and Joan were good friends and they went everywhere together. When Joan's mother died it was Mary who looked after her and often put her arm around Joan saying such words as 'Don't worry about things. I will help you with all your work; I love you a lot you know'.

Adult Ego state

- James decided to go and see his aunt who lived in the next town – as he had never left his town before, he had to get his map out to work out how he would get there – this he did successfully and he got to his aunt's house at the time he said he would. Thus we can see that James used his adult ego state to work out logically, given the facts, how to solve a given problem.

Child Ego State

- **(Case Study One)**
- When John's mother died when he was three years old, he was too young to really understand what had happened, he just felt hurt that his mother had gone away. When he was fifteen years of age, John had a hard time trusting women – he often complained that women left him and let him down a lot when he most needed them. Other people felt that women were really good to him and helped him a lot.
- **(Case Study Two)**
- Fiona, when a small girl, could get her father to do anything she really wanted. Indeed as she grew up she was very good at managing to get men to do what she wanted. Later, she was fired from several jobs by her bosses who said they felt she was manipulating them.
- **(Case Study Three)**
- As a child, Freda's parents argued a lot and her major method of defense was to withdraw and spend a lot of time alone going for long walks. At eighteen she got sacked from many jobs for daydreaming and fantasizing. In her personal life, she would withdraw mentally if her friends argued with her. They got fed up with her.

What to do

- Adopt the **adult style** of communication at workplace – rational, reasonable
- Adopt an **open body position** rather than crossed arms (often read as defensive), or hands in pockets (often read as superior or dismissive).
- **open-ended questions** to create a friendly environment- gives respondent chance to give full answer, rather than just 'yes' or 'no'. Questions starting with 'How', 'When', 'Where' and 'Who' rather than 'why'.
- **E.g.**
- How would you go about that?
- When would be the best time to start?
- What is the most important change that we could make?
- Where are the books that I could collect to start reading about the new system?
- **Councilors help** deal with issues that are deep rooted- cause of child Ego