**2. COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

**Channels of communication**

**Definition**

A **communication channel** is a means through which a message is sent and received. In other words, it's the method of communication used.

**Factors to consider when choosing a communication channel**

1. **Time**

The amount of time the message will take to reach the recipient is very important, especially if it‘s something of urgency. This will mean that the message has to be relayed in the shortest time span possible so that an appropriate action can take place.

1. **Cost**

Many people prefer using a means that is not only reliable, but pocket friendly as well. This will ensure that they are able to maintain communication at all times without having to strain too much financially.

1. **Confidentiality**

Some messages are very sensitive and are meant for the eyes of the recipient only. This means that the sender has to select a means of communication that conforms with confidentiality, so the message is not relayed to third parties.

1. **Complexity**

The channel used should ensure that the recipient will be able to read and understand the message clearly. This means that they should factor the complexity of the message in selecting the appropriate channel.

1. **Distance**

The distance the message is supposed to travel and the conditions it should arrive in should also be considered. This is why many people prefer using electronic mail compared to postal mail. **vi. Reliability**

**vii. Confidentiality of the message**

**Types of communication channels**

**1. Face-to-Face**

Face-to-face is still the preferred communication channel if clarity of message is of primary importance.

**Advantages**

* Face to face communication allows you to interact with the listener in a back-and-forth discussion.
* It also allows you to utilize nonverbal gestures, facial expressions and personal charisma to enhance the message.
* Fast feedback.

**Disadvantages**

* A drawback is the potential that a conflict could become more heated or emotional in a face-to-face channel.
* Tension or stress is also more likely if you have personal conflict with the other person.
* No permanent record. Not admissible in court. Cannot be used as evidence.
* .Frequent interruptions.

**2. Telephone**

Landlines or mobile telephones are useful communication tools in businesses where distance and travel prevent face-to-face conversation.

**Advantages**

* The telephone still allows immediate interaction between two parties in the communication.
* Mobile phones also expand your ability to communicate with distant workers or offices.

**Disadvantages**

* There is lack of nonverbal or facial expressions. This can inhibit the ability to interpret the context or emotion of a message sender.
* The phone is also less personal than a face-to-face meeting.
* No permanent record except in where there is the recording of the conversation.  Prone to disturbances such as static which hinder audibility.

**3. E-mail**

This is the use of computer hardware and associated software to transmit electronic mail over a network.

**Advantages**

* E-mail is a vital communication channel in geographically dispersed companies.
* E-mail allows for more flexible response times. You can send a message one day and receive a response in a few hours or the next day. It allows for conversation that isn't timepressured, but can serve for fast turnaround times.
* It also allows for the inclusion of files, such as documents or images.
* Permanent record.
* Prior planning before prior.

**Disadvantages**

* E-mail is less personal than either face-to-face or phone.
* Lack of instant clarifications.
* Feedback can be slow.

1. **Letters, memos, e-mail, notices, reports e.t.**c (Written communication)

Written communication expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing and organized manner. Some of the various forms of written communication that are used internally for business operations include memos, reports, e-mail, letter, bulletins, job descriptions, employee manuals.

1. TV and Radio (Adv & disadv- assignment)

**Advantages of written communication** (letters, memos, e-mail, notices, reports e.t.c.) **Permanent record:** The documents of written communication act as a permanent record.

When it is needed, important information can be easily collected from the preserved documents. The documents of [**written communication** a](http://thebusinesscommunication.com/what-is-written-communication/)re easy to preserve. Oral and non-verbal communication cannot be preserved.

* **Precise and explicit**. Written communication presents the information more accurately and clearly. Written communication is clear and straight forward.
* **Used as a reference:** If it is needed, written communication can be used for future reference.
* **Delegation of authority:** Written communication can help the authority to delegate the power and authority to the subordinate. It is quite impossible to delegate power without a written document.
* **Longevity:** Written document can be preserved for a long time easily.

**Disadvantages of written communication** (letters, memos, e-mail, notices, reports e.t.c.) **Expensive:** Written communication is comparatively expensive. It costs are huge in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in writing/typing and delivering letters.  **Time consuming:** Written communication takes time to communicate with others. It is a time consuming media. It costs the valuable time of both the writer and the reader.

* **Useless for illiterate person:** If the messages receiver is illiterate, understanding written communication is quite impossible.
* **Difficult to maintain secrecy:** It Secrecy is not always possible to maintain through written communication.
* **Delay in response:** It takes much time to get a response from the message receiver; prompt response is not possible in case of written communication like it is possible in oral communication.
* **Not personal**

**Stages in the communication process/ The communication cycle/ Basic concepts of transmission and receipt of information/ Communication Cycle**

Information-- Sender (Encodes) ---Channel/ medium/ message----------- receiver (Decodes)

Feedback

**Information**- Here the sender defines the information to be sent, by thinking about the aim of the communication and the content to be conveyed.

Encoding- This is the encoding process of putting the information into the form which is most suitable both to the receiver and to the aim. In most cases, encoding involves putting ideas into words. Sometimes, however, it will be best to encode an idea in a picture, or even in a gesture.

Encoding is a process through which the message is symbolized.

Transmission- This is the actual transfer of information, by means of a medium and channel. Receiver- At this point the receiver takes in the message for example by reading a letter, listening to a speech or looking at a TV programme.

Decoding- The receiver interprets the message given in order to obtain his/ her own idea of the information it conveys. Decoding is the process in which the message is translated and meaning is generated out of it.

Feedback- This is the feedback stage. This is the receiver‘s response to the sender‘s message. The responses can be both verbal and non-verbal. It is an important factor in the communication process because it helps the sender to know whether the message has been understood or not.

**Meaning** is the significance that the sender (speaker/ writer/ designer) and the receiver each attach to a message, and shared meaning occurs when the receiver‘s interpretation of the message is similar to what the speaker thought, felt, and intended.