

AEN 105: COMMUNICATION SKILLS





## THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATON

### Definition of communication

#### Benjamin Franklin

Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment. Welcome to the communication skills course. You need to first understand the meaning of communication. There are several definitions of communication. The following are from the free dictionary .

Communication is:

1. The act of communicating; transmission.
  - a. The exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, signals, writing, or behavior.
  - b. Interpersonal rapport.
2. Communications (used with a sing. or pl. verb)
  - a. The art and technique of using words effectively to impart information or ideas.
  - b. The field of study concerned with the transmission of information by various means, such as print or broadcasting.
  - c. Any of various professions involved with the transmission of information, such as advertising, broadcasting, or journalism.
3. Something communicated; a message.
4. Communications A means of communicating, especially:
  - a. A system, such as mail, telephone, or television, for sending and receiving messages.
  - b. A network of routes for sending messages and transporting troops and supplies.
5. Communications; the technology employed in transmitting messages.
6. Biology The transfer of information from one molecule, cell, or organism to another, as by chemical or electrical signals or by behaviors.



From the above definitions, it is evidently clear that communication entails a message being sent from a sender to a receiver through some channel. This makes it a process since it entails requisite steps through which this message must go, and a common understanding being created between the sender and the receiver.

### **The elements of communication**

Communication process involves a sender who encodes some message, then sends it through a channel to a receiver, who then decodes the message and gives a feedback. This is the ideal situation. However, in the process of sending the message, there are

impediments caused by several factors. These interfere with the smooth flow and interpretation of the message. These are technically called noise.

### **The process of communication**

The communication process: Understanding the communications cycle  
Communication has been defined as a process. Below is an illustration of the cyclical nature of the process.

**Sender and encoding.** Communication starts with a sender and a receiver. The sender formulates ideas into a message intended to draw out a response from the receiver. This stage is called encoding: the sender puts the message into a format that the receiver can recognize and understand. In other words, the sender encodes the message using language, words, pictures, actions, symbols, and events that are meaningful to the receiver. In interpersonal communications, the message can take the form of written, verbal, and nonverbal communication. In marketing, the encoded message can take also the form of brand messages, advertisements, press releases, signage, and sales scripts.

### **Media/ channel.**

The sender sends the encoded message through a media channel to the receiver. In interpersonal communications, common media channels include face-to-face, telephone, letter, and email. In group/mass communication the media include television, newspapers, radio, internet etc.



The channel directly affects the quality of communication between sender and receiver. Researchers L. Daft and R.H. Lengel found that channels differ in their capacity to convey information; in other words, some channels are more effective than others. Daft and Lengel found that some channels are “rich” in that they have the ability to support

multiple cues simultaneously, facilitate rapid feedback, and are very personal. Their research identified the face-to-face channel as the “richest” because it provides for the maximum amount of information to be transmitted during a communication event. In other words, face-to-face communication provides multiple information cues (words, postures, facial expressions, gestures, intonations), immediate feedback (verbal and non-verbal), and the personal touch. On the other end of the scale, they found impersonal communication channels, like written reports, memos, and email to be the least rich. Their study therefore highlights on the importance of understanding how choosing the right media channel — or combination of channels — can enhance communication results.

**Receiver and decoding.** The receiver is primarily the person for whom the message is meant but is also anyone who is exposed to a message.

**Noise.** Unfortunately, the information sent is not necessarily the information received. All communication takes place in environments containing distractions that hinder successful communications. This “noise” can severely hinder successful communication if not addressed and minimized. In interpersonal communications, common sources of noise include other conversations, ringing telephones, blasting boom boxes, traffic, and crying children. Non-verbal and environmental elements can also contribute to physical noise. For example, the layout of an office, flashing fluorescents, hand gestures, and vocal intonations can add to or detract from successful interpersonal communication.

**Feedback.** The manner and degree to which a receiver responds to the message is called feedback. Feedback is an essential step for transitioning from a one-way communication to a two-way approach that can strengthen the connection between sender and receiver.

By soliciting and properly decoding feedback, a sender can understand



whether and how the message was received, and to what degree it was effective. This allows the sender an opportunity to adjust the message to better match the receiver's needs.

### **Activity**

Reflect on how changing the channel of communication while other elements remain constant can impact on the interpretation of a message. For example, while in the bedroom, late in the night, you choose to get up and write down to your partner that you love her/him, as opposed to turning and whispering the same- this follows a fine party the previous evening.

### **Resources cited**

Daft, L. and Lengel, R. H. (1996). "Organizational Information Requirements, Media Richness, and Structural Design." *Managerial Science*. May 1996. pp.

554-

Managing the communication cycle

72[http://www.elliemae.com/newsletter/february2006/sub\\_communication.htm](http://www.elliemae.com/newsletter/february2006/sub_communication.htm)  
|

-