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CHAPTER

1

Principles of Communication

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LEARNINGS

- After reading this chapter you should be able to:
 - Compare and the process of communication
 - Understand the role played by each component in the process
 - Pick up cues and signals to detect the communication in a desired field
 - Use appropriate channels of communication
 - Evaluate your place in the communication network

KEYWORDS

Communication, Channels/Medium, Cues, and Signals, Communication Network, Encoding, Diagonal Communication, Feedback, Horizontal Communication, Message, Oral Communication, Receiver, and Processes of Communication, Receiver/Decoder, Sender, Encoder/Speaker, Transmission, and the communication system, Verbal Communication, Vertical Communication, Written Communication.

INTRODUCTION

What is communication? Communication, derived from the Latin word *communis* means "to share, ideas, concepts, feelings and emotions". The science of communication is almost as old as man. From time immemorial, there has been a felt need to share or to communicate. As a result, different vehicles/channels were identified and subsequently improvised for the purpose of transmission of ideas and concepts. What is the importance of communication? Why should it be studied? Why should the vehicles/channels be analysed and examined?

The importance of communication can be gauged by the fact that we are communicating in some form or the other almost every moment of our lives. Whether we are walking, talking, playing, sitting, or even sleeping, a message is being formulated and transmitted. Man, in the generalist sense, is a social animal, and is constantly interacting with other individuals. Hence, it is essential to understand the art of communication and apply or modify it in a suitable manner. The ability to communicate is much more than a composition of certain physical attributes, vocal chords, and articulators. It is the ability to symbolise or to understand concepts in terms of images or symbols which facilitates communication. In other words, communication is much more than an understanding of the spoken or written language. It is a composite of symbols, gestures, and illustrations that accompany either the spoken or the written word.

DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION

"The older I grow, the more I listen to people who don't talk much."
—Germain G. Gilen

Communication is a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of ideas towards a mutually accepted direction or goal. For this process to materialise, it is essential that the basic elements of communication be identified. These elements are:

1. Sender/Encoder/Speaker
2. Receiver/Decoder/Listener
3. Message
4. Medium
5. Feedback



Sender/Encoder/Speaker

The person who initiates the communication process is normally referred to as the **sender**. From a personal data bank the sender selects ideas, el/does and finally transmits them to the receiver. The entire burden of communication then rests upon the sender or encoder. The choice of images and words, and the combination of the two is what compels the receiver to listen carefully.

In this process a number of factors come into play, primary among them being an understanding of the recipients and their needs. If the message can be formulated in accordance with the expectations of the receiver, the level of acceptance is higher.



In a situation such as this, a good strategy to be adopted is to expand the purview of the proposal and make it *company specific*. The result can be highlighted and spelt out in terms of increase in sales. If sufficient preparation has been done, the message too will be formulated in a manner conducive to the interests of the HRD manager.

Receiver/Decoder/Listener

The listener is now faced with the task of decoding the message.

This process is carried on in relation to the work environment and the value perceived in terms of the work situation. If the receiver views a similarity in the goal of the sender there is high receptivity. The decoding of the message is done in almost entirely the same terms as was intended by the sender. In the example cited above, as soon as the HRD manager realises that the proposal of the consultant is going to result in tangible benefits, there is high receptivity and interest in the communication is reinforced.



Message

Message is the encoded idea transmitted by the sender. The formulation of the message is very important, for an incorrect patterning can turn the receiver hostile or make him/her lose interest.

At this stage the sender has to be extremely cautious. What is the order in which ideas should be presented? Suppose there are four points to make.

Should the sender (a) move in the stereotyped manner of presenting them in a sequence or (b) be innovative and proceed in a creative way? Probability is high that in case (a) there may be some monotony and in case (b) a wrong spot may be touched. How then should the message be formulated and transmitted? The ordering, as stated earlier, should be based on the requirements of the listener so that its significance is immediately grasped. As soon as the receiver finds a link between personal goals and the codified message, there is interest generated and responses are as per expectations. In such a situation, we can affirmatively state that the message has created the desired impact.

Medium

Another important element of communication is the medium or channel. It can be oral, written or non-verbal. Prior to the composition of the message, the medium/channel should be decided. Each medium follows its own set of rules and regulations. For example, in oral communication one can afford to be a little informal, but when using the written mode, all rules of communication need to be observed. It must be remembered that anything in writing is a document that would be filed for records or circulated to all concerned.

Feedback

Feedback is the most important component of communication. Effective communication takes place only when there is a feedback. The errors and flaws that abound in business situations are a result of lack of feedback.

Report on his team have been working on Advance Traffic Management System (ATMS) of the state government for the past three months. It had been decided that after three months there would be a review meeting of the ATMS project in the head office. The review meeting is to be held in the head office where Rajat and his team will present their project agenda and discuss the progress so far. They are worried about the review as the feedback they might get from General Manager (GM) reviewing the project can help them to improve their project. As good and the current working approach needs further improvement. He also makes some sweeping personal remarks that the entire team members Moreover, they are all confused about the latest feedback of the meeting presented by them and feel that the GM's comments may be mistaken and only adding for the confusion. They begin to feel that their current approach needs improvement would to help them identify shortcomings in the approach they feel that they don't deserve to be punished and in a few minutes, misinterpreted and demotivated.

If feedback is solicited on all occasions, errors in communication can be minimised or even completely done away with.

Warning! Fallacious statements or erroneous conclusions are made because of lack of confirmation through feedback and discrepancy between the message encoded and decoded.

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION



"What is the shortest word in the English language that contains the letters: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z? Answer: feedback. Don't forget that feedback is one of the essential elements of good communication." —Anonymous

The sender, according to his or her ideas, behaviour pattern and intention, selects a message, encodes it, and transmits it to the receiver through a medium—be it oral, verbal or non-verbal. The receiver decodes the message and gives an internal response to the perceived message. It is noteworthy that the response is not in relation to the actual content, but rather to the "perceived content" of the original message. This completes the first phase of the communication process. It is interesting to note that words in themselves have no meaning. It is the perception of a particular word and the intention behind it that assigns a meaning to the encoded message. Variations in perception of the same word between the sender and the receiver often give rise to misunderstanding and difference in communication.

In the second phase, the receiver formulates the message, encodes and transmits it to the original sender-now-turned-receiver. This stage is referred to as *providing feedback*, and is most crucial. Unless there is feedback—be it in the verbal or the non-verbal form, we cannot say that effective communication has taken place. If the feedback is in tune with the original intent of the sender, communication proceeds without a hitch. However, there can be instances when the receiver does not agree with the message of the sender. This does not mean that there is breakdown of communication. We can, in such instances, state that effective communication is stalled for the time being. It can resume after clarifications are sought in subsequent discussions.

For the process of communication to be effective, there should be a well-defined goal in the mind of the sender. Harmony between the goals of the two communicators makes for good and easy progression of ideas and concepts.

"Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after."
—Anne Morrow

Whatever be the initial situation, the sender necessarily needs to adhere to the following stages:

1. Create awareness in the mind of the receiver on the topic.
2. Propose point of view with clarity and preciseness so as to eliminate possibilities of confusion.
3. Enable smooth flow of discussion through observance of communication strategies.
4. Reinforce or correct ideas in the mind of the receiver concerning the goal of communication.
5. Achieve the goal of communication.

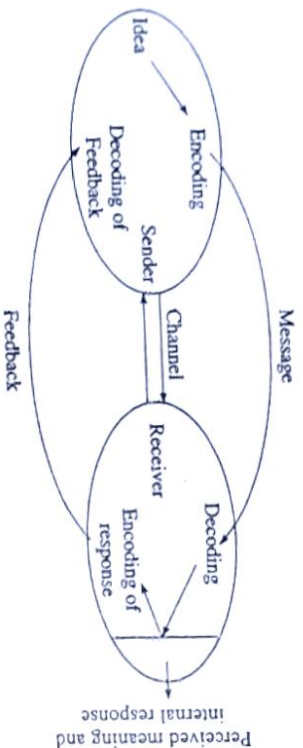


Exhibit 1.1 Model of communication.

At the time of transmission and reception of message, all our five senses play an important role in grasping the intent. The sense that is predominantly active at a particular stage helps in a higher degree of absorption. For example, in the course of the communication, if the visual sense at a particular moment is highly active, we respond only to the visual cues.

TURN-TAKING SYSTEM

TOPIC

OBJECTIVES

Understanding the process of turn-taking
Identifying the cues and signals
Facilitating the process of communication

"A conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. That's why there are so few good conversations: due to scarcity, two intelligent talkers seldom meet."
—Truman Capote

Ethnomethodologists have identified different organisational features in a piece of conversation. Seven such aspects have been identified. The first is

The first rule states that: A turn-taking system allocates turns to the speaker in the following manner:

1. The first speaker selects the one to talk next (by asking questions, tag questions, etc.) or
2. The speaker who self-selects continues speaking for a whole turn

The entire process of communication hinges on this rule. The sender has to chalk out strategies by which the receiver is led to agree to the underlying goal. For this, many strategies need to be planned, e.g. transmitting visual signs or cues that prompt a receiver to pick up the thread and begin communication or fill in the gaps or conclude. These signals form an essential part of the entire process. Together with identification of these signals, there should also be an accurate interpretation and response. A wrong step or a move at an incorrect moment can abruptly bring communication to a close.



Bhaskar makes an unwarranted statement which does not speak very highly either of Jacob or himself. Abhishek is sensitive and has picked up the cues and signals being emitted to him. He has also realised that the turn has perforce been allocated to him. In this instance, we gather that Abhishek does not wish to displease Bhaskar for some reason. Without reacting to Bhaskar's statement, Abhishek has responded with a chuckle and changed the subject.

Abhishek could have responded in a similar vein with an additional sarcastic remark. Or he could have reacted to Bhaskar's statement and defended Jacob. A number of factors come into play when a statement of this kind is made and communication still carries on: the relationship between Abhishek and Bhaskar, the urgency to get on with higher goal issues, and a desire on the part of Abhishek to not displease Bhaskar.

Identification of the cues and signals helps in turning the discussion in the desired direction. Hence, it becomes imperative that the turn-taking system be thoroughly understood so that the sender can juxtapose comments and suggestions at the right moment and steer the communication along goal-oriented channels.

Note: It is the speaker/sender who is primarily responsible for effective communication.

TOPIC OBJECTIVES

Aims and Objectives

George Howard Shaw

Suppose the loss is by sending someone to the subordinate to complete a separate project in a separate organization, without duplicating intelligence. The subordinate completes all components of the task, as per the perceived difficulty and the capability. However, the end result is a miserable failure because the manager's completion does not match with the expectations of the boss. A lot of time has been wasted as a result of miscommunication on the part of the two members of the same organization. In the worst case, they will now be spent on rectifying the error. The end result may be the next instance of the amount of time used in completing the particular task is multiplied. It would be very naive when we decide the amount of time has been taken.



Two junior managers going up the ladder of success possess almost the same academic qualifications and almost similar personality traits. Only one of them would be able to make it to the Managing Director's chair. Who would it be?

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Principles of Government 2019-2020

TOPIC

OBJECTIVES

NEUROTIC

CONTRASTED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HORIZONTAL, VERTICAL AND DIAGONAL NETWORKS

—Sydney J. Harris

1. Internal
2. External

Formal communication

Informal communication

The channels of communication may be as follows:

- ## Vertical communication

Upward and
downward

possible to have a direct interface on all occasions, especially when the number of people working is high. Messages traverse or penetrate down with the help of a go-between or an opinion leader. In such situations, probability is high that the message may get distorted as it travels from one person to another.



The intent of the original message keeps changing as it travels from one person to another with the addition or deletion of words. If the hearing from this game was translated into the organisational set-up, it will be seen that messages similarly get distorted when they travel upward or downward. Distortion of original message can be avoided when information that travels is not fragmented and the number of people who pass the information is reduced. Further, efforts can be made to ensure that there is one-to-one communication within the departments. The heads of the various departments can form a close link and share information. Besides, distortions can be minimised with the usage of the electronic media and e-mails.

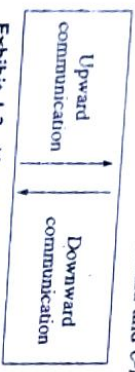


Exhibit 1.2 Vertical communication.

Lateral/Horizontal communication



Interaction with peers or colleagues is referred to as *lateral/horizontal communication*. This can prove to be the most effective form of communication, as peers are not hindered by "chain-of-command" techniques. The volume of horizontal communication that a company enjoys will be contingent upon the interdependence of various departments. In fact, if work is done keeping the functioning of various sections in mind, communication gets richer and more comprehensive. Without lateral communication, once again, there cannot be fruitful progression at the organisational level. In such situations, there will be lack of coordination and cooperation and many frustrated attempts will be made to conjoin activities of one department with another. Further, it can also result in duplication of work and messed up employee relationships.



Exhibit 1.3 Lateral communication.

Diagonal communication

In an organisation, communication does not necessarily traverse along stipulated path. While vertical and lateral forms for transmission of message are important, there is yet another mode to be taken cognizance of, that is, the *diagonal*. In this type of communication, there is no direct path for information transmittal either planned or chalked out. It can, at certain stages, take on the upward path, then a lateral direction and, finally, move downward, or it can even skip certain stages.

This channel proves to be very effective as hierarchies are done away with and communication flows irrespective of position or status. It also helps in building relationships and binding ties between the superior and the subordinate. In fact, in many countries managers are being trained to move in the midst of employees at work to remove the fear of status and position. This channel can, however, give rise to gossip, grapevine and rumour. As no one is directly responsible for the flow of information, no one is willing to take responsibility. Only a prudent manager, in the midst of rumours and gossip, can sieve through the information, decipher the intent of the sender and arrive at a definite conclusion.

This channel can, however, prove to be slightly problematic for the managers who wish to control flow of information. They may feel threatened that their controlling authority is under surveillance. But this is a temporary phase and, with constant and mature interaction, can be rectified.

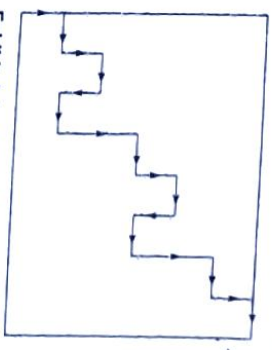


Exhibit 1.4 Diagonal communication.

Warning! Use the lateral and diagonal mode of communication selectively.

External Communication

Communication is an *ongoing process*. It does not only take place with people within the organisation but with people outside the organisation as well. If a company has to survive in the competitive environment, it also has to adopt the latter form of communication. The image of the company is dependent on the relationship that it maintains with people outside. External communication can take on a number of forms:

1. Advertising
2. Media interaction
3. Public relations
4. Presentations
5. Negotiations
6. Mails
7. Telegrams
8. Letters

External communication can again be oral or written. The first three forms of communication mentioned above, viz. advertising, media interaction, and public relations, fall mainly within the domain of corporate communications.



Establishing good relations, negotiating or conducting a deal, interacting with clients, issuing tenders, soliciting proposals, sending letters are all part of external communication. This is a difficult task as interaction takes place and varies between a host of people belonging to different disciplines, with different personalities and expectations. As communication proceeds with external customers, almost all skills needed for adept communication have to be brought to the fore to avoid any embarrassment or lapse in performance.

While communicating at the internal level, an individual can, on a few occasions, be slightly lax. The same would not hold true if communication was for the external stakeholders. As individuals are representatives of the companies, they need to be cautious while interacting with external stakeholders for there is a need to protect the image of the organisation and create a positive impression with a long-lasting impact.

Note: The rigour with which communication is carried out may be different for an external as opposed to internal context.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

"The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate." —Joseph Priestly

We can categorise communication under three heads: oral, non-verbal, and written.

1. Oral communication
 - (a) Words
 - (b) Articulation
2. Non-verbal communication
 - (a) Body language
 - (b) Signs and symbols
 - (c) Territory/Zone



1. Written communication
 - (a) Reports
 - (b) Illustrations
 - (c) Memos
 - (d) Telegrams
 - (e) Facsimiles (FAX)
 - (f) E-mails
 - (g) Tenders
 - (h) Others

Oral Communication

Anything emanating from the mouth is referred to as oral. Within this component will fall words and the manner in which they are pronounced.



More important than the words is paralinguage or voice articulation. The listener pays more attention to voice modulations than the spoken words. It has been found that the listener pays heed to the verbal content only seven per cent of the time, 38 per cent of the time there is a focus on voice articulation and modulation, and 55 per cent of the time the attention centers around body language or body sport. If all these three components are in harmony, the listener has no problem in grasping the import of the message. If there is some dichotomy between the two, it creates conflict in the mind of the listener and there is higher belief in the interpreted message derived from voice modulation and the body language than words.

The manager of a cable company writes the house of a newly joined actor a letter. The letter is about to go out for a party. Then, she puts the manager in the house. She realizes that she cannot leave without offering her superior her own view. She is happy. The conflict in her mind is resolved in the difference between her words, which are full of typical welcoming phrase, and her tone which lacks the same warmth.

In oral communication, words should be very carefully chosen. Words both denote and connote a meaning. The former would almost be the literal translation of the word, something like a dictionary meaning. The latter would be the implied meaning. Whenever there is difference between the two, it can lead to what we refer to as a "sarcastic remark". This is also evidenced in tone and voice modulations.



A business executive, plunged in heavy work, is disturbed by a friend who drops in without an appointment. The executive makes a statement of the following nature: "I am delighted to see you, with an edge to the voice. Although this statement is clear, the sheer denoting how happy she is to meet the friend. However, the underlying connotation too is evident: "Did you have to drop in at this moment?"

It is the intention of the sender behind the words or the communication that are more important. These are also supported by the non-verbal communication. **Warning!** Your tone and expression will give the intended communication of your message away.

Non-verbal Communication



Non-verbal communication is an integral part of us and helps in communicating effectively. The way an individual posture, his/her own self, holds hands, tilt head, all transmit volumes about the individual. As discussed in the section on oral communication, a receiver observes non-verbal communication 55 per cent of the time, which is much more than listening merely to the words and the voice articulation. Lack of emphasis in this area is due to paucity of material and lack of expertise. However, the 'feel' for an understanding of body language is present in all, e.g., a novice cannot figure out exact correlates for a particular body sport, but is able to generate an impression and feeling about an individual that he/she believes more readily than words. Let us take an example:



Every time there is some talk of body language, perforce we are driven into the domain of proxemics: understanding the relationship between two people through their observance and respect of each other's zone or territory. As communication is a two-way process, the distance maintained between the two interactants displays the relationship shared by them. Each individual is surrounded by four zones or territories: the intimate, personal, and social and public zone. Depending on the relationship enjoyed with the other participant, entry into the intimate is permitted, e.g. if the receiver is an acquaintance, entry into the intimate zone of the sender is prohibited. In case of accidental entry in the intimate zone, there will be a sudden moving back on the part of the other participant, as a non-verbal signal, which screams: Stay away!

The clothes that an individual wears, the accessories on the self—all communicate a message. Have we ever wondered why is it that we always change before going to our workplace? Why do we have a different set of clothes for office and for home? The primary reason is that even through our dress code we are transmitting a message.

The typical use of non-verbal and self-communication is in the workplace by an example.



In this example, there was no deliberate attempt on our part as an expert to segregate the various components of communication and analyse the client. It was an involuntary exercise but one that helped us in judging an individual of capabilities and competencies.

Note: Our self-presentation also communicates a message.

Written Communication



Written communication takes on a number of forms. The writer has to be extra cautious at the time of formulating a message, if it is of a formal nature. Whatever is written is in black and white is used mostly for documentation of information or circulation to all concerned. Therefore, there are very few chances of the writer trying to shift stand and take a different position. There could, as in oral communication, be errors in understanding of the script, but the chances should be minimal for clarity is to be ascertained.

Written communication is the most formal of all types of communication. It is also bound by the dictates of the organisation. Many companies have their typical manner of functioning and sending written messages. They are accusomed to a set pattern, and any deviation from the norm can create a disturbance in the normal functioning of the company. Further, with the progression of technology, written communication has widened its horizon to encompass electronic means of communicating messages. E-mail is an excellent example of this. Transmitting of written messages within the company or outside can be done easily and in a short span of time.

Warning! Since written forms of communication are also used for purposes of documentation, the writer must formulate his message with care.