Communication

Communication is the process of transformation of information from one person to another. It is a process of exchanging opinions ideas, feelings, information, views and other between or among two or more people. Communication skill means conveying the message to others and understanding the message from others. From business perspective, communication is a bridge for passing information between the management, employees and other stakeholders.

**Process of communication**

1. **Source or sender:** the first step in the communication process is source or sender. The source is also called communicator. Communication begins when someone has some idea, information, view, feeling to transmit. The communicator may be a person, group or an organization. When the communicator intends to communicate to somebody, communicator prepares the message
2. **Encoding:** the idea or feeling the sender has to be translated into some language or symbols. This process is called encoding. The sender must choose appropriate words, symbols, pictures etc to express his/her idea. While selecting the symbols, the sender has to pay attention about the receiver understanding the message.
3. **Message or medium:** the medium is the pathway for transmission of the message. Some medium must be selected. This channel is chosen by the sender. They can be formal or informal. Examples are face to face, email, letters, telephone etc.
4. **Decoding by the receiver:** the receiver assigns some meaning to the symbol transmitted by the source, so the receiver interprets the message and the process is known as decoding. It is not an easy task because words have different meaning for different people. Due to this problem, communication breaks down frequently.
5. **Feedback:** this is the final phase. Feedback is the reaction of the receiver. It confirms both the receipt of message and also the fact whether the receiver has understood it as intended by the sender.
6. **Noise:** it is interference with the normal flow of information. It disturbs the communication system. No matter how well designed is the communication system; if noise exists the message received is different from message sent.

**Barriers to effective communication**

1. **Physical barriers:** Internal structure of the organization and layout of office machines and equipments creates physical barriers in communication
2. **Distance:** Communication is found obstructed by the physical distance between the sender and receiver.
3. **Noise:** It is from external sources and affects the communication process. Noise negatively affects the accuracy
4. **Physical arrangement**: – the physical arrangement of organizational sources like men, money, material and machine obstruct the communication process.
5. **Semantic barriers:** The use of difficult languages, words, figures, symbols create semantic barriers.
6. **Language:** Some words have multiple meanings. Meaning intended by the sender can be quite different from the meaning understood by the receiver. Long and complex sentences also create problem in communication process.
7. **Jargons:** Technical words or unfamiliar professional terms creates barriers to communication.
8. **Organizational barriers:** It is an outcome of the organizational goals, structure, culture and regulations.
9. **Poor planning:** It refers to the designing, encoding, channel selection and conflicting signals in the organization.
10. **Structure complexities**:- difficult organizational structure barrier for free flow of information.
11. **Status differences:** Superiors tend to ignore or not pay attention to subordinates feedback.
12. **Organizational distance:** Hierarchical distance creates communication barriers. Greater the distance between the sender and receiver the greater the chance of ineffective communication.
13. **Information overload:** If superior provides too much information to the subordinate in short period receiver suffers from information overload which creates barriers to effective communication.
14. **Timing:** Delay in communication or choosing an inappropriate time by the sender or receiver makes communication ineffective.
15. **Psychological barriers**

The barriers to effective communication created from the lack of interest of the people from and/or for whom the communication is meant. People do not pay attention to the communication which are not interesting to them and which do not fulfill their want.

1. **Perception**: it is the process of receiving and interpreting the information by the receiver. People receive things differently for a various number of reasons.
2. **Filtering**: Communicator sometimes filters the negative information to make it more favorable to the receiver. In this process, knowingly or unknowingly some valuable information may be disrupted.
3. **Mistrust: S**uperior provides information or message to the subordinates according to their own views, not trusting their i.e. subordinate’s maturity level.
4. **Emotions:** Emotions like anger, hate, mistrust, jealousy etc. also create barriers to effective communication.
5. **Defensiveness:** If the receiver interprets the message as a warning or threat, the actual purpose of the message is defeated.

**Steps to make Communication Effective**

The following steps may be taken to minimize barriers to communication and making it more effective:

* 1. **Clarity and completeness:** In order to communicate effectively, it is very essential to know the ‘audience’ for whom the message is meant. The message to be conveyed must be absolutely clear in the mind of the communicator because if the communicator himself does not understand an idea, he can never express it to someone. The message should be adequate and appropriate to the purpose of communication. The purpose of communication, itself, should be clearly defined.
  2. **Proper language:** To avoid semantic barriers, the message should be expressed in simple, brief and clear language. The words or symbols selected for conveying the message must be appropriate to the reference and understanding of the receiver.
  3. **Sound organization structure:** To make communication effective, the organizational structure must be sound and appropriate to the needs of the organization. Attempt must be made to shorten the distances to be travelled for conveying information.
  4. **Orientation of employees:** The employees should be oriented to understand the objectives, rules, policies, authority relationships and operations of enterprise. It will help to understand each other, minimize conflicts and distortion of messages.
  5. **Empathic listening and avoiding premature evaluation:** To communicate effectively, one should be a good listener. Superiors should develop the habit of patient listening and avoid premature evaluation of communication from their subordinates. This will encourage free flow of upward communication.
  6. **Motivation and mutual confidence:** The message to be communicated should be so designed as to motivate the receiver to influence his behavior to take the desired action. A sense of mutual trust and confidence must be generated to promote free flow of information.
  7. **Consistent behavior:** To avoid credibility gap. management must ensure that their actions and deeds are in accordance with their communication.
  8. **Use of grapevine:** Grapevine or the informal channels of communication help to improve managerial decisions and make communication more effective. Thus, formal channels of communication must be supplemented with the use of grapevine.
  9. **Feedback:** Communication is not complete unless the response or reaction of the receiver of the message is obtained by the communicator. The effectiveness of communication can be judged from the feedback. Therefore, feedback must be encouraged and analyzed.
  10. **Gestures and tone:** The way one says something is also very important along with the message. Gestures such as a twinkle of an eye, a smile or a handshake, etc. sometimes convey more meaning than spoken words. Thus, one should have appropriate facial expression, tone, gestures and mood etc. to make communication effective.