

1.1 What is Communication?

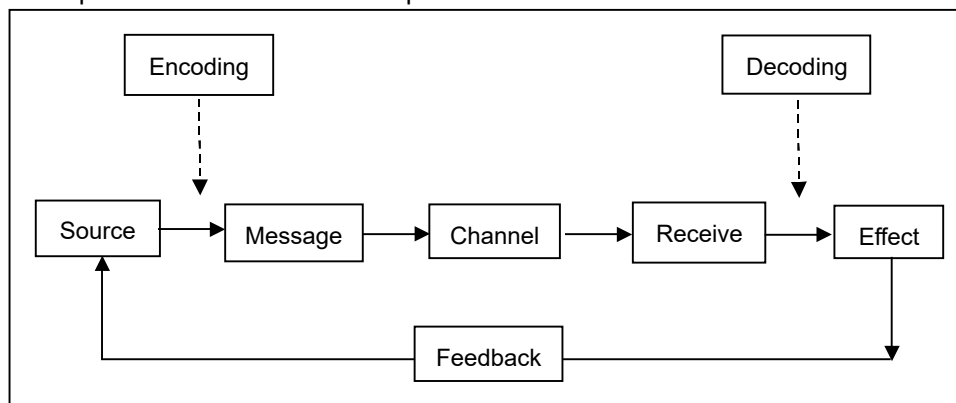
According to Merriam Webster, communication is a process by which there is a meaningful exchange of information through exchange of thoughts, messages, speech, visuals, signals, or writing, between two or more living beings. This exchange can be through a common system of speech, symbols, signs, or behaviour!

We cannot dispute the fact that we need to communicate. We need to communicate efficiently and effectively to function as civilized human beings.

“Communication is a process of sharing information with another person in such a way that he or she understands what you are saying.” – Dr. H. Norman Writing

Communication is a tool with which we exercise our influence on others, bring out changes in our and others' attitudes, motivate the people around us and establish and maintain relationships with them. Communication makes a major part of our active life and is a social activity. This social activity is pursued verbally through speech, reading and writing or non-verbally through body language.

The main components of communication process are as follows:



1. **Context:** Every message, irrespective of the type, begins with a context. Communication is affected by the context in which it takes place. This context may be physical, social, chronological or cultural. Every communication proceeds with context. The sender chooses the message to communicate within a context. Context is a very broad field that consists different aspects.

One aspect is country, culture and organization. Every organization, culture and country communicates information in their own way.

2. **External stimulus:** The sources of external stimulus includes; meeting, letter, memo, telephone call, fax, note, email and even a casual conversation. This external stimuli motivates you to respond and this response may be oral or written.
3. **Internal stimuli:** It includes your opinion, attitude, likes, dislikes, emotions, experience, education and confidence. All these have multifaceted influence on the way you communicate your ideas.

As a sender you can communicate the ideas effectively by considering all aspects of context mentioned above.

4. **Sender:** Sender (or encoder) is a person who sends the message. A sender makes use of a combination of symbols, words, graphs and pictures understandable by the receiver, to best convey the message in order to achieve the desired response. The views, background, approach, skills, competencies, and knowledge of the sender have a great impact on the message. The verbal and non verbal symbols chosen are essential in ascertaining interpretation of the message by the recipient in the same terms as intended by the sender.

5. **Message:** Message is the information that is exchanged between the sender and the receiver. The first task is to decide the following:

- ◆ What you want to communicate
- ◆ What would be the content of your message
- ◆ What are the main points of your message ◆ What other information to include.

The central idea of the message must be clear. While writing the message, the sender should keep in mind all the aspects of context and the receiver. The sender must ensure that the main objective of the message is clear. Messages can be intentional and unintentional, by the sender.

6. **Medium:** It is the channel through which the message is exchanged and/or transmitted between the sender and the receiver. The choice of appropriate medium of communication is essential for making the message effective and correctly interpreted by the recipient. Hence, the sender must choose an appropriate medium for transmitting the message. Else, the message might not be conveyed to the recipients.

The choice of communication medium varies depending upon the features of communication:

- ◆ It depends on the nature and type of your message.
- ◆ It is also influenced by the relationship between the sender and the receiver.

The oral medium, is effective when your message is urgent, personal or when immediate feedback is desired. Written medium is preferred, when your message is technical and needs to be documented.

7. **Recipient:** Recipient (or decoder) is a person to whom the message is sent. The degree to which the decoder understands the message is dependent upon various factors such as:

- ◆ The reliance of encoder on decoder
- ◆ Knowledge of recipient
- ◆ Responsiveness of recipient to the message

8. **Feedback:** Feedback is the main component of the communication process as it permits the sender to analyze the efficacy of the message. It helps the sender in confirming the correct interpretation of message by the decoder. Feedback completes the loop of communication. Feedback may be verbal (through words) or non-verbal (in form of smiles, sighs, etc.). It may also be take in written form---memos, reports, feedback forms, etc.

1.2 Why is Communication Important?

Communication is important in all walks of life because we live and work with people. Communicating the intended message clearly and effectively is an important skill. Improving your communication skills is an art that comes with regular practice. As we all know, practice makes a man perfect. No matter how intelligent you are, good and positive communication is the only skill that will help you to succeed in life. It is also the key factor in deciding the chances of success in relationships—professionally and personally. So, ensure to make wise and polite use of your words when talking to people.

In the information age, we send, receive, and process huge numbers of messages every day. It could be via different medium—face-to-face, email, phone, text message, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, etc. Effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It is also about understanding the emotion behind the information, the reason for transmitting the information, ensuring that the receiver will not be confused and will receive the correct information.

Effective communication can improve personal and professional relationships by:

- (a) Increasing your capacity to recognize and understand your own emotions and those of the person you are communicating with.
- (b) Combining a set of skills including nonverbal communication, attentive listening, and the ability to manage stress at the moment of communication.
- (c) Enabling you to communicate even negative or difficult messages without creating conflict or destroying trust.
- (d) Deepening your connections with the person or people you are communicating with.
- (e) Improving interaction, decision-making, and problem solving.

Effective communication is really both an art and a science. You as, a sender need to focus on two things while communicating:

- ◆ Ensure that the intended meaning is totally retained and nothing is lost, so that the communicated message is received clearly and precisely by the receiver.
- ◆ Be sensitive in the way you phrase and package the message. This is to ensure that the relationships are kept affable.

1.3 Principles of Communication

Lack of effective communication creates misunderstanding and commotion. So, it is important to follow certain principles to ensure effective communication. They are as follows:

- (a) **Clarity:** It means the communicator should use such a language which is easy to understand. The message must be understood by the receiver. The words used should be simple and unambiguous. The language should not create any confusion or misunderstanding. Language is the medium of communication; hence it should be clear and understandable.
- (b) **Adequacy and Consistency:** The communicator must carefully take into account that the information to be communicated should be complete and adequate in all respect. Inadequate and incomplete message creates confusion and delays the action to be taken. The adequate information must be consistent with the organizational objectives, plans, policies and

procedures. The message which is inconsistent may play havoc and distort the corporate interests.

- (c) **Integration:** It states that the efforts taken by the educational institutions, or organisation should be integrated towards achievement of the objectives through communication. The very aim of communication is to achieve the set target. The communication should aim at coordinating the activities of the people to attain the common goals.
- (d) **Economy:** In a corporate set up, unnecessary use of communication system can add to the cost. You must use the system of communication efficiently, in a timely manner and when it is necessary.
- (e) **Feedback:** The purpose of communication will be defeated if feedback is not taken from the receiver. The confirmation of the receipt of the message in its right perspective from its receiver fulfills the object of communication. The feedback is essential only in case of written communication and messages sent through messengers. In case of oral type of communication, we receive the feedback immediately.
- (f) **Need for Communication Network:** The route through which the communication passes from sender or communicator to its receiver or communicate refers to communication network. For effective communication this network is essential. The managerial effectiveness will also depend upon the availability of adequate network.
- (g) **Attention:** The message communicated must draw the attention of the receiver and ensure action from that person in the right perspective. For example, an efficient, sincere and prompt manager will succeed in drawing the attention of his subordinates to what he is conveying.

It is the psychology of the human nature that they watch their seniors or superiors closely and respond to their orders or instructions. Adhering to the above principles shall make communication effective, minimize the human-relations problems and increase the overall efficiency.

1.4 Advantages of Effective Communication

In the era of globalisation, we cannot ignore the strategic importance of communication. By learning these effective communication skills, you can connect with your friends, parents, colleagues, spouse, and/or co-workers better. We have to take a stock of ineffective and effective communication characteristics.

Effective communication skills does the following:

1. **Build lasting relationships:** Everyone knows at least one person who has had some of the same friends for decades. Research shows that it's not only *what* a person says that keeps these relationships intact, but the *way* you say it.

Research states that the way you communicate something determines lifelong relationships. According to the research, non-verbal cues such as tone, pitch and intensity during arguments makes or breaks a relationship. They concluded that the couples that had controlled vocal acoustics were more likely to stay together. Any relationship—whether marriage or friendship—will fare better if you speak in kinder and more understanding ways.

2. **Be approachable:** Effective communication is a vital tool in building and maintaining your relationship. It makes others feel comfortable with approaching you any time they need or want to talk about anything that might be bothering them. When you are approachable, people respect and understand you. People are likely to have a more open and healthy relationship if they are approachable. Many married couples live together but they cannot approach each other because the relationship lacks the comfort level that allows for certain subjects to be discussed.

3. **Breeds trust:** Effective communication helps in building trust and respect. When you trust someone, you are able to rely on them and confide in them. When meeting in person, it is easier to pick out the body language and other visual cues of communication. It helps people to better understand each other and the message that is being conveyed.

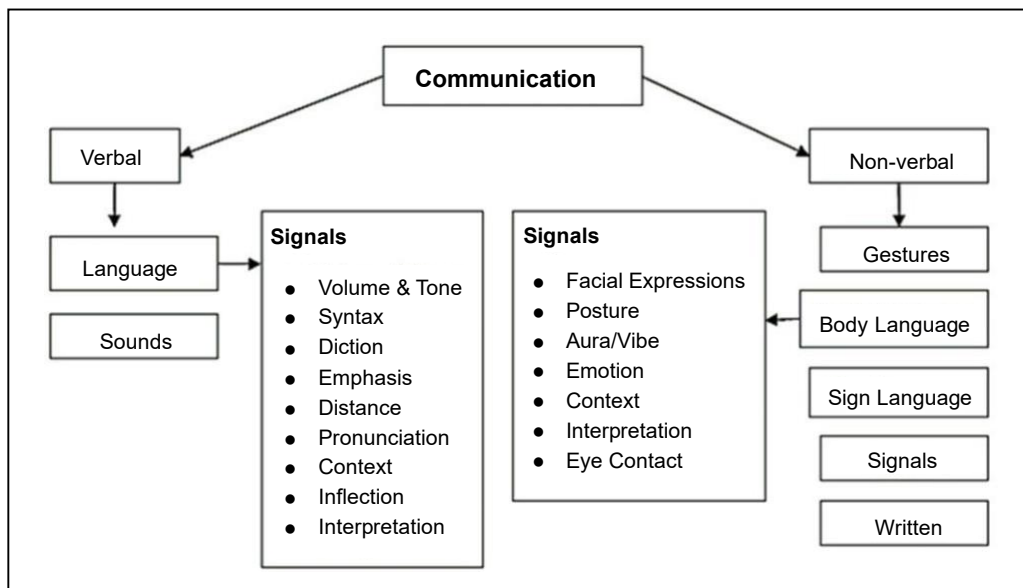
A study asked students to collaborate on a project. One group communicated only in person. The other only through technological means with less-visual cues. The group that met face-to-face, showed the most trust and effective cooperation.

4. **Creates positivity:** Open communication creates positive environments where creative ideas, problem solving, affection, and caring can flourish. It helps you better understand a person or situation thus enabling you to resolve differences. It also enhance your ability to make a positive and lasting impression on peers, superiors, and on all those with whom you come into contact. Positive interactions with others ultimately feel supportive and effective.

1.5 Types of Communication

In a general context, all communication can be divided into two broad categories: *formal* and *informal*. Each of these can be further dived into three forms of communication:

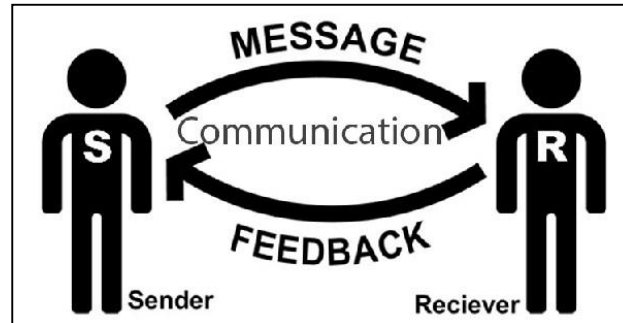
1. Written: in which you read their meaning
2. Verbal
3. Non-verbal



1.5.1 Verbal Communication

In this type of communication, you listen to a person to understand what they are saying and comprehend the meaning. It implies communication through mouth. It includes individuals conversing with each other, be it direct conversation or telephonic conversation. Speeches, presentations, discussions are all forms of oral communication. Verbal communication takes place in real time.

Verbal/oral communication is recommended when a direct interaction is required. Face-to-face communication (meetings, lectures, conferences, interviews, etc.) is significant to build a rapport and trust.



Advantages of Verbal Communication

- ◆ There is high level of understanding and transparency in oral communication as it is interpersonal.
- ◆ There is no element of rigidity in oral communication. There is flexibility for allowing changes in the decisions previously taken.
- ◆ The feedback is spontaneous in case of oral communication. Thus, decisions can be made quickly without any delay.
- ◆ It is not only time saving, but it also saves upon money and efforts.
- ◆ It is best in case of problem resolution. The conflicts, disputes and many issues/differences can be put to an end by talking them over.
- ◆ Oral communication is an essential for teamwork and group energy.
- ◆ It promotes a receptive and encouraging morale among organizational employees.
- ◆ It can be best used to transfer private and confidential information/matter.

Limitations of Verbal Communication

- ◆ Relying only on verbal communication may not be sufficient as business communication is formal and very organized.
- ◆ It is less authentic than written communication as they are informal and not as organized as written communication.
- ◆ Though it is time-saving in daily interactions, but in case of meetings, long speeches consume lot of time and are unproductive at times.
- ◆ They are not easy to maintain and thus they are unsteady.
- ◆ There may be misunderstandings as the information is not complete and may lack essentials.

- ◆ It requires attentiveness and great receptivity on part of the receivers/audience.
- ◆ Verbal communication (such as speeches) is not frequently used as legal records except in investigation work.

1.5.2 Written Communication

In contrast to verbal communications, written business communications are printed messages. It has great significance in today's business world. It is an innovative activity of the mind. Written communication is the most important and the most effective of any mode of business communication.

Written communication does not happen in real time. It can be constructed over a longer period of time. Written communication is often asynchronous, that is it occurs at different times. This means that, the sender can write a message that the receiver can read at any time, unlike a verbal conversation that happens at a real time.

Written communication is the most important and the most effective of any mode of business communication. Some of the various forms of written communications that are used internally for business operations include:

- ◆ Memos
- ◆ Reports
- ◆ Bulletins
- ◆ Job descriptions
- ◆ Employee manuals
- ◆ E-mails
- ◆ Instant messages

Examples of written communications generally used with clients or other businesses include:

- ◆ E-mail
- ◆ Internet websites
- ◆ Letters
- ◆ Proposals
- ◆ Telegrams
- ◆ Faxes
- ◆ Postcards ◆ Contracts
- ◆ Advertisements
- ◆ Brochures
- ◆ News releases

They may be handwritten, printed on paper, or appear on the screen. A written communication can be one-to-one (read by one person) or one-to-many (read by many people) communication. Conference calls and speeches one-to-many communications. E-mails may have only one recipient or many.

Disadvantages of Written Communication

- ◆ Written communication costs in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in writing/typing and delivering letters.
- ◆ If the receivers of the written message are separated by distance and if they need to clear their doubts, the response is not spontaneous.
- ◆ Written communication is time-consuming as the feedback is not immediate. The encoding and sending of message takes time.
- ◆ Effective written communication requires great skills and competencies in language and vocabulary use. Poor writing skills and quality, have a negative impact on the organization's reputation.

1.5.3 Non-verbal

Nonverbal communication as the name suggested does not have any verbal or spoken words for communication. In this type of communication, you observe a person and infer the meaning. It involves the nonverbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by the source (speaker). It involves sending and receiving messages through gestures, actions, facial expressions, body language, clothing, and other aspects of your physical appearance, that, when seen, communicate something.

What you say is a vital part of any communication. But what you *don't say* is even more important. Research also shows that 55% of communication comes from nonverbal cues like facial expressions, body stance, and tone of voice. According to one study, people comprehend only 7% of a message based on the sender's actual words. 38% is based on paralanguage (the tone, pace, and volume of speech), and 55% is based on *non-verbal cues* (body language). So, non-verbal communication is very important.

Some factors that help in nonverbal communication are:

1. **Culture:** Different cultures have different gestures, postures and different body movement that have different meaning attached to it. Even simple things like using hands to point, wave, or count differ. For example, in the US people usually point with the index finger. In Japan and in India, it is considered rude. Instead people point with an entire hand.
2. **Body language:** Believe it or not, postures and body language speaks a lot—it easily conveys your feelings and attitudes and shows if you are interested or disinterested in what is being said. For example, a speaker who leans forward appears to be very interested rather than the one who slouches.
3. **Facial expressions:** It plays a major role in nonverbal communication as people can read your expression and make out what you are thinking and feeling. A person with good expressions can communicate better than the one who is expressionless.