

# The Process of Managerial Communication

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## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson you will learn about the managerial communication process. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

## 1. Introduction to the Communication Process

We will distinguish between communication between two individuals and communication amongst several individuals (groups) and communication outside the organization. We will show that managers spend a majority of their time in communication with others. We will examine the reasons for communication and discuss the basic model of interpersonal communication, the types of interpersonal communication, and major influences on the communication process. We will also discuss how organizational reputation is defined by communication with stakeholders.

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## 2. Interpersonal Communication

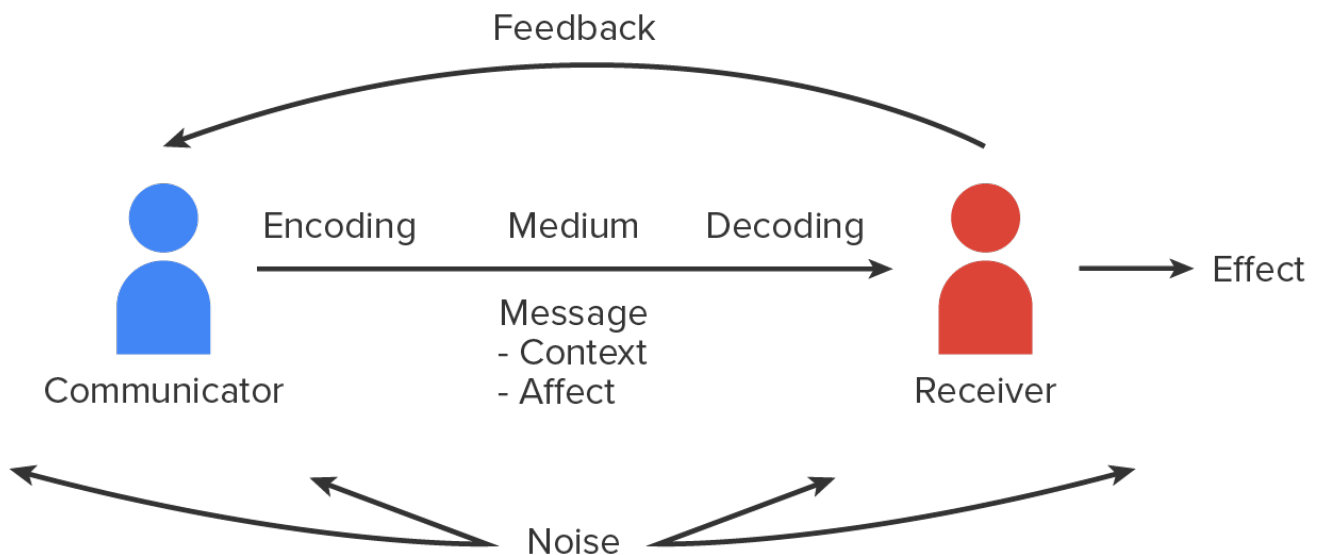
Interpersonal communication is an important part of being an effective manager:

- It influences the opinions, attitude, motivation, and behaviors of others.
- It expresses our feelings, emotions, and intentions to others.
- It is the vehicle for providing, receiving, and exchanging information regarding events or issues that concern us.
- It reinforces the formal structure of the organization by such means as making use of formal channels of communication.

Interpersonal communication allows employees at all levels of an organization to interact with others, to secure desired results, to request or extend assistance, and to make use of and reinforce the formal design of the organization. These purposes serve not only the individuals involved, but the larger goal of improving the quality of organizational effectiveness.

The model that we present here is an oversimplification of what really happens in communication, but this model will be useful in creating a diagram to be used to discuss the topic. The following diagram illustrates a simple communication episode where a **communicator** encodes a message and a **receiver** decodes the

message (Shannon & Weaver, 1948).



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### Communicator

The individual, group, or organization that needs or wants to share information with another individual, group, or organization.

##### Receiver

The individual, group, or organization for which information is intended.

## 2a. Encoding and Decoding

Two important aspects of this model are **encoding** and **decoding**. Encoding is the process by which individuals initiating the communication translate their ideas into a systematic set of symbols (language), either written or spoken. Encoding is influenced by the sender's previous experiences with the topic or issue, her emotional state at the time of the message, the importance of the message, and the people involved. Decoding is the process by which the recipient of the message interprets it. The receiver attaches meaning to the message and tries to uncover its underlying intent. Decoding is also influenced by the receiver's previous experiences and frame of reference at the time of receiving the message.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### Encoding

Translating a message into symbols or language that a receiver can understand.

##### Decoding

Interpreting and understanding and making sense of a message.

## 2b. Feedback

Several types of feedback can occur after a message is sent from the communicator to the receiver. Feedback can be viewed as the last step in completing a communication episode and may take several forms, such as a verbal response, a nod of the head, a response asking for more information, or no response at all. As with the initial message, the response also involves encoding, medium, and decoding.

There are three basic types of feedback that occur in communication (Quinn et al., 2015). These are informational, corrective, and reinforcing. In informational feedback, the receiver provides non-evaluative information to the communicator. An example is the level of inventory at the end of the month. In corrective

feedback, the receiver responds by challenging the original message. The receiver might respond that it is not their responsibility to monitor inventory. In reinforcing feedback, the receiver communicated that they have clearly received the message and its intentions. For instance, the grade that you receive on a term paper (either positive or negative) is reinforcing feedback on your term paper (your original communication).

## 2c. Noise

There are, however, a variety of ways that the intended message can get distorted. Factors that distort message clarity are **noise**. Noise can occur at any point along the model shown in the diagram above, including the decoding process.



### REFLECT

1. Describe the communication process.
2. Why is feedback a critical part of the communication process?



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Noise

Anything that interferes with the communication process.



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you covered an **introduction to the communication process**, distinguishing the different types of communication, the reasons for communication, and major influences on the communication process. You learned that **interpersonal communication** is an important part of being an effective manager, allowing employees at all levels to interact with others, to secure desired results, to request or extend assistance, and to make use of and reinforce the formal design of the organization. You also explored the basic model of communication, which involves a communicator **encoding** a message and a receiver **decoding** the message. You learned that there are three basic types of **feedback** that can occur after a message is sent from the communicator to the receiver—informational, corrective, and reinforcing—and that the intended message can get distorted by **noise**.

Best of luck in your learning!

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## REFERENCES

Quinn, R. E., Faerman, S. R., Thompson, M. P., McGrath, M. R., & Bright, D. S. (2015). *Becoming a master manager* (6th ed.). Wiley.

Shannon, C. & Weaver, W. (1948). *The mathematical theory of communication*. University of Illinois Press.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Communicator

The individual, group, or organization that needs or wants to share information with another individual, group, or organization.

**Decoding**

Interpreting and understanding and making sense of a message.

**Encoding**

Translating a message into symbols or language that a receiver can understand.

**Noise**

Anything that interferes with the communication process.

**Receiver**

The individual, group, or organization for which information is intended.