

CORPORATE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

MODULE 1

COMMUNICATION

Is an essential component of every organization since it aids in the achievement of key objectives through information sharing between staff members and those outside the company.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Is a type of communication that aims to share information between employees and external parties in order to assist a business in achieving a key objective. It involves the creation, exchange, listening to, and comprehension of communications amongst various groups of people using both written and vocal formats. The manner in which employees interact and do business is crucial to the success of the organization in the marketplace. Business communication might take place internally, amongst coworkers, or externally, between businesses or consumers.

This internal and external communication can happen through verbal or non-verbal communication methods. Often these internal and external forms of communication come with barriers, which can prevent the receiver from understanding the information sent by the sender.

Here are some key points about the concept of communication in a business context:

MEANING OF COMMUNICATION

The root of the word "communication" in Latin is "communicate," which means to share or to make common. At the centre of our study of communication is the relationship that involves interaction between participants.

The first key word in this definition is **process**. **A process is a dynamic activity that is hard to describe because it changes** (Pearson & Nelson, 2000). Imagine you are alone in your kitchen thinking. Someone you know (let say is your mother) enters the kitchen and you talk briefly. What has changed? Now, imagine that your mother is joined by someone else, someone you haven't met before—and this stranger listens intently as you speak, almost as if you were

giving a speech. What has changed? Your perspective might change, and you might watch your words more closely. The feedback or response from your mother and the stranger (who are, in essence, your audience) may cause you to reevaluate what you are saying. When we interact, all these factors—and many more—influence the process of communication.

The second key word is **understanding**: “To understand is to perceive, to interpret, and to relate our perception and interpretation to what we already know.” (McLean, 2003) If a friend tells you a story about falling off a bike, what image comes to mind? Now your friend points out the window and you see a motorcycle lying on the ground. Understanding the words and the concepts or objects they refer to is an important part of the communication process.

Next comes the word **sharing**. **Sharing means doing something together with one or more people**. You may share a joint activity, as when you share in compiling a report. In communication, sharing occurs when you convey **thoughts, feelings, ideas, or insights to others**. You can also share with yourself (a process called intrapersonal communication) when you bring ideas to consciousness, ponder how you feel about something, or figure out the solution to a problem and have a classic “Aha!” moment when something becomes clear.

Finally, meaning is **what we share through communication**. The word “bike” represents both a bicycle and a short name for a motorcycle. By looking at the context the word is used in and by asking questions, we can discover the shared meaning of the word and understand the message.

HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION

A Brief History of Communication

(i) Communication in Ancient Times

The first means of communication was, of course, **the human voice** but about 3,200 BC writing was invented in Iraq and Egypt. It was invented about 1,500 BC in China. Other civilizations in central America like the Mayans also invented systems of writing. The next big step was the invention of the alphabet in what is now Israel and Lebanon about 1,600 BC. In the Ancient World many civilizations including Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Rome, and China had efficient **postal systems to deliver messages** to parts of their empires **using relays of horses**. In the Ancient World, people wrote on papyrus or parchment. However, the Chinese invented paper in about 200 BC. The knowledge of how to make paper passed to the Arabs and in the Middle Ages, it reached Europe.

(ii) Communication 1500-1800

The next major improvement in communication was the invention of printing. The Chinese invented printing with blocks in the 6th century AD but the first known printed book was the Diamond Sutra of 686. In Europe, in the mid-15th century, Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press, which made books much cheaper and allowed newspapers to be invented. William Caxton introduced the printing press into England in 1476. The first newspapers were printed in the 17th century. The first newspaper in England was printed in 1641. (However, the word newspaper was not recorded until 1670). The first successful daily newspaper in Britain was printed in 1702. Meanwhile, European monarchs set up postal services to carry their messages. In France Louis XI founded one in 1477 and in England Henry VIII created the Royal Mail in 1512. In 1635 to raise money Charles I allowed private citizens to send messages by Royal Mail, for a fee. Meanwhile, the pencil was invented in 1564.

(iii) Communication in the 19th Century

Communication became far more efficient in the 19th century. In the early 19th century, the recipient of a letter had to pay the postage, not the sender. Then in 1840, Rowland Hill invented the Penny Post. From then on, the sender of the letter paid. Cheap mail made it much easier for people to keep in touch with loved ones who lived a long way off. In 1874 the Universal Postal Union was formed to coordinate postal services in different countries.

The first post boxes were installed in Paris in 1653. By the 19th century, they were common across France and other countries introduced them. In the Channel Islands, the first post boxes were installed in 1852. In mainland Britain, the first post boxes were installed in 1853. In the USA Albert Potts patented a mailbox designed to fit on a lamppost in 1858. Free-standing mailboxes were introduced in 1894.

The telegraph was invented in 1837. A cable was laid across the Channel in 1850 and after 1866 it was possible to send messages across the Atlantic.

Meanwhile, the first fax machine was invented in 1843. A Scot, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. The first telephone exchange in Britain opened in 1879. The first telephone directory in London was published in 1880. The first telephone line from Paris to Brussels was established in 1887. The first line from London to Paris opened in 1891. The first transatlantic telephone line opened in 1927. In 1930 a telephone link from Britain to Australia was established.

More useful inventions were made in the 19th century. Ralph Wedgwood invented carbon paper in 1806. Bernard Lassimonne invented a pencil sharpener in 1828. Therry des Estwaux invented a better version in 1847. The first successful typewriter went on sale in 1874.

In 1829 Louis Braille invented an embossed typeface for the blind and in 1837 Isaac Pitman invented shorthand. The first successful rotary printing press was invented by Richard M Hoe in 1846.

(iv) Communication in the 20th Century

Communication continued to improve in the 20th century. In 1901 Marconi sent a **radio message** across the Atlantic. Radio broadcasting began in Britain in 1922 when the BBC was formed. By 1933 half the households in Britain had a radio. Following the 1972 Sound Broadcasting Act, independent radio stations were formed. In the 1990s new radio stations included Radio 5 Live (1990) and Classic FM (1991).

Television was invented in 1925 by John Logie Baird and the BBC began regular, high-definition broadcasting in 1936. TV was suspended in Britain during World War II but it began again in 1946. TV first became common in the 1950s. A lot of people bought a TV set to watch the coronation of Elizabeth II and a survey at the end of that year showed that about one-quarter of households had one. By 1959 about two-thirds of homes had a TV. By 1964 the figure had reached 90% and TV had become the main form of entertainment – at the expense of cinema, which declined in popularity.

At first, there was only one TV channel in Britain but between 1955 and 1957 the ITV companies began broadcasting. BBC2 began in 1964 and Channel 4 began in 1982. Channel 5 began in 1997. In Britain, BBC2 began broadcasting in color in 1967, BBC 1, and ITV followed in 1969. Satellite television began in Britain in 1989.

Meanwhile, commercial TV began in the USA in 1941. TV began in Australia in 1956 and in New Zealand in 1960. Meanwhile, in 1960 the first communications satellite, Echo was launched. The laser printer was invented by Gary Starkweather in 1969. Meanwhile in Britain telephones became common in people's homes in the 1970s. In 1969 only 40% of British households had a phone but by 1979 the figure had reached 69%. Martin Cooper invented the first handheld first cell phone in 1973. The first mobile phone call in Britain was made in 1985. The first commercial text was sent in 1992. Mobile phones became common in the 1990s. In Britain, smartphones were introduced in 1996.

(v) Communication in the 21st Century

In the early 21st century **the internet** became an important form of communication. **Today email has become one of the most popular methods of communication.** In the 2010s eBook readers became common.

FORMS/TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Forms of communication vary in terms of participants, channels used, and contexts. The five main forms of communication, all of which will be explored in much more detail, are intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication.

a) Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself using **internal vocalization or reflective thinking**. Like other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication is triggered by some internal or external stimulus. We may, for example, communicate with our self about what we want to eat due to the internal stimulus of hunger, or we may react intrapersonally to an event we witness. Unlike other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication takes place only inside our heads.

Intrapersonal communication serves several social functions.

- Internal vocalization
- Talking to ourselves
- Can help us achieve or maintain social adjustment. For example, a person may use self-talk to calm himself down in a stressful situation, or a shy person may remind herself to smile during a social event.
- Helps to build and maintain our self-concept. We form an understanding of who we are based on how other people communicate with us and how we process that communication intrapersonally. The shy person in the earlier example probably internalized shyness as a part of her self-concept because other people associated her communication behaviors with shyness and may have even labeled her “shy” before she had a firm grasp on what that meant.
- Sometimes we intrapersonally communicate for the fun of it. I’m sure we have all had the experience of laughing aloud because we thought of something funny.
- We also communicate intrapersonally to pass time. I bet there is a lot of intrapersonal communication going on in waiting rooms all over the world right now.

In both of these cases, **intrapersonal communication is usually unplanned and doesn’t include a clearly defined goal**. We can, however, engage in more intentional intrapersonal communication. In fact, deliberate self-reflection can help us become more competent communicators as we become more mindful of our own behaviors. For example, your internal voice may praise or scold you based on a thought or action. Of the forms of communication, intrapersonal communication has received the least amount of formal study. It is rare to find courses devoted to the topic, and it is generally separated from the remaining four types of communication. The main distinction is that intrapersonal communication is not created with the intention that another person will perceive it. In all the other levels, the fact that the communicator anticipates consumption of their message is very important.

b) Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is communication between people whose lives mutually influence one another. Interpersonal communication builds, maintains, and ends our relationships, and we spend more time engaged in interpersonal communication than the other forms of communication. Interpersonal communication occurs in various contexts and is addressed in subfields of study within communication studies such as intercultural communication, organizational communication, health communication, and computer-mediated communication. After all, interpersonal relationships exist in all those contexts.

- Interpersonal communication can be planned or unplanned, but since it is interactive, it is usually more structured and influenced by social expectations than intrapersonal communication.
- Interpersonal communication is also more goal oriented than intrapersonal communication and fulfills instrumental and relational needs. In terms of instrumental needs, the goal may be as minor as greeting someone to fulfill a morning ritual or as major as conveying your desire to be in a committed relationship with someone.
- Interpersonal communication meets relational needs by communicating the uniqueness of a specific relationship. Since this form of communication deals so directly with our personal relationships and is the most common form of communication, instances of miscommunication and communication conflict most frequently occur here.

c) Group Communication

Group communication is communication among three or more people interacting to achieve a shared goal. You have likely worked in groups in high school and college, and if you're like most students, you didn't enjoy it. Even though it can be frustrating, group work in an academic setting provides useful experience and preparation for group work in professional settings. Organizations have been moving toward more team-based work models, and whether we like it or not, groups are an integral part of people's lives. Group communication is more intentional and formal than interpersonal communication. Unlike interpersonal relationships, which are voluntary, individuals in a group are often assigned to their position within a group. Additionally, group communication is often task focused, meaning that members of the group work together for an explicit purpose or goal that affects each member of the group. Goal-oriented communication in interpersonal interactions usually relates to one person; for example, I may ask my friend to help me move this weekend. Goal-oriented communication at the group level usually focuses on a task assigned to the whole group; for example, a group of people may be tasked to figure out a plan for moving a business from one office to another.

You know from previous experience working in groups that having more communicators usually leads to more complicated interactions. Some of the challenges of group communication relate to task-oriented interactions, such as deciding who will complete each part of a larger project. But many challenges stem from interpersonal conflict or misunderstandings among group members. Since group members also communicate with and relate to each other interpersonally and may have preexisting relationships or develop them during the course of group interaction, elements of interpersonal communication occur within group communication too.

d) Public Communication

Public communication is a sender-focused form of communication in which one person is typically responsible for conveying information to an audience. Public speaking is something that many people fear, or at least don't enjoy. But, just like group communication, public speaking is an important part of our academic, professional, and civic lives. When compared to interpersonal and group communication, public communication is the most consistently intentional, formal, and goal-oriented form of communication we have discussed so far.

Public communication, at least in Western societies, is also more sender focused than interpersonal or group communication. It is precisely this formality and focus on the sender that makes many new and experienced public speakers anxious at the thought of facing an audience. One way to begin to manage anxiety toward public speaking is to begin to see connections between public speaking and other forms of communication with which we are more familiar and comfortable. Despite being formal, public speaking is very similar to the conversations that we have in our daily interactions. For example, although public speakers don't necessarily develop individual relationships with audience members, they still have the benefit of being face-to-face with them so they can receive verbal and nonverbal feedback.

e) Mass Communication

Public communication becomes mass communication when it is transmitted to many people through print or electronic media. Print media such as newspapers and magazines continue to be an important channel for mass communication, although they have suffered much in the past decade due in part to the rise of electronic media. Television, websites, blogs, and social media are mass communication channels that you probably engage with regularly. Radio, podcasts, and books are other examples of mass media. The technology required to send mass communication messages distinguishes it from the other forms of communication. A certain amount of intentionality goes into transmitting a mass communication message since it usually requires one or more extra steps to convey the message. This may involve pressing "Enter" to send a Facebook

message or involve an entire crew of camera people, sound engineers, and production assistants to produce a television show. Even though the messages must be intentionally transmitted through technology, the intentionality and goals of the person actually creating the message, such as the writer, television host, or talk show guest, vary greatly. The president's State of the Union address is a mass communication message that is very formal, goal oriented, and intentional, but a president's verbal gaffe during a news interview is not.

Mass communication differs from other forms of communication in terms of the personal connection between participants. Even though creating the illusion of a personal connection is often a goal of those who create mass communication messages, the relational aspect of interpersonal and group communication isn't inherent within this form of communication. Unlike interpersonal, group, and public communication, there is no immediate verbal and nonverbal feedback loop in mass communication. Of course, you could write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or send an e-mail to a television or radio broadcaster in response to a story, but the immediate feedback available in face-to-face interactions is not present. With new media technologies like Twitter, blogs, and Facebook, feedback is becoming more immediate. Individuals can now tweet directly "at" (@) someone and use hashtags (#) to direct feedback to mass communication sources. Many radio and television hosts and news organizations specifically invite feedback from viewers/listeners via social media and may even share the feedback on the air.

The technology to mass-produce and distribute communication messages brings with it the power for one voice or a series of voices to reach and affect many people. This power makes mass communication different from the other levels of communication. While there is potential for unethical communication at all the other levels, the potential consequences of unethical mass communication are important to consider. Communication scholars who focus on mass communication and media often take a critical approach in order to examine how media shapes our culture and who is included and excluded in various mediated messages.

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

In order to better understand the communication process, we can break it down into a series of eight essential components:

1. Source
2. Message
3. Channel
4. Receiver
5. Feedback

6. Environment
7. Context
8. Interference

Each of these eight components serves an integral function in the overall process. Let's explore them one by one.

Source

The source imagines, creates, and sends the message. In a public speaking situation, the source is the person giving the speech. He or she conveys the message by sharing new information with the audience. The speaker also conveys a message through his or her tone of voice, body language, and choice of clothing.

- The speaker begins by first determining the message—what to say and how to say it.
- The second step involves encoding the message by choosing just the right order or the perfect words to convey the intended meaning.
- The third step is to present or send the information to the receiver or audience.

Finally, by watching for the audience's reaction, the source perceives how well they received the message and responds with clarification or supporting information.

Message

"The message is the stimulus or meaning produced by the source for the receiver or audience." (McLean, 2005) When you plan to give a speech or write a report, your message may seem to be only the words you choose that will convey your meaning. But that is just the beginning. The words are brought together with grammar and organization. You may choose to save your most important point for last. The message also consists of the way you say it—in a speech, with your tone of voice, your body language, and your appearance—and in a report, with your writing style, punctuation, and the headings and formatting you choose. In addition, part of the message may be the environment or context you present it in and the noise that might make your message hard to hear or see.

Imagine, for example, that you are addressing a large audience of sales reps and are aware there is a World Series game tonight. Your audience might have a hard time settling down, but you may choose to open with, "I understand there is an important game tonight." In this way, by expressing verbally something that most people in your audience are aware of and interested in, you might grasp and focus their attention.

Channel

“The channel is the way in which a message or messages travel between source and receiver.” (McLean, 2005) For example, think of your television. How many channels do you have on your television? Each channel takes up some space, even in a digital world, in the cable or in the signal that brings the message of each channel to your home. Television combines an audio signal you hear with a visual signal you see. Together they convey the message to the receiver or audience. Turn off the volume on your television. Can you still understand what is happening? Many times you can, because the body language conveys part of the message of the show. Now turn up the volume but turn around so that you cannot see the television. You can still hear the dialogue and follow the story line.

Similarly, when you speak or write, you are using a channel to convey your message. Spoken channels include face-to-face conversations, speeches, telephone conversations and voice mail messages, radio, public address systems, and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP). Written channels include letters, memorandums, purchase orders, invoices, newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, e-mail, text messages, tweets, and so forth.

Receiver

“The receiver receives the message from the source, analyzing and interpreting the message in ways both intended and unintended by the source.” (McLean, 2005) To better understand this component, think of a receiver on a football team. The quarterback throws the football (message) to a receiver, who must see and interpret where to catch the ball. The quarterback may intend for the receiver to “catch” his message in one way, but the receiver may see things differently and miss the football (the intended meaning) altogether.

As a receiver you listen, see, touch, smell, and/or taste to receive a message. Your audience “sizes you up,” much as you might check them out long before you take the stage or open your mouth. The nonverbal responses of your listeners can serve as clues on how to adjust your opening. By imagining yourself in their place, you anticipate what you would look for if you were them. Just as a quarterback plan where the receiver will be in order to place the ball correctly, you too can recognize the interaction between source and receiver in a business communication context. All of this happens at the same time, illustrating why and how communication is always changing.

Feedback

When you respond to the source, intentionally or unintentionally, you are giving feedback. Feedback is composed of messages the receiver sends back to the source. Verbal or nonverbal, all these feedback signals allow the source to see how well, how accurately (or how poorly and inaccurately) the message was received. Feedback also provides an opportunity for the receiver or audience to ask for clarification, to agree or disagree, or to indicate that the source could make the message more interesting. As the amount of feedback increases, the accuracy of communication also increases (Leavitt & Mueller, 1951).

For example, suppose you are a sales manager participating in a conference call with four sales reps. As the source, you want to tell the reps to take advantage of the fact that it is World Series season to close sales on baseball-related sports gear. You state your message, but you hear no replies from your listeners. You might assume that this means they understood and agreed with you, but later in the month you might be disappointed to find that very few sales were made. If you followed up your message with a request for feedback (“Does this make sense? Do any of you have any questions?”) you might have an opportunity to clarify your message, and to find out whether any of the sales reps believed your suggestion would not work with their customers.

Environment

“The environment is the atmosphere, physical and psychological, where you send and receive messages.” (McLean, 2005) The environment can include the tables, chairs, lighting, and sound equipment that are in the room. The room itself is an example of the environment. The environment can also include factors like formal dress, that may indicate whether a discussion is open and caring or more professional and formal. People may be more likely to have an intimate conversation when they are physically close to each other, and less likely when they can only see each other from across the room. In that case, they may text each other, itself an intimate form of communication. The choice to text is influenced by the environment. As a speaker, your environment will impact and play a role in your speech. It’s always a good idea to go check out where you’ll be speaking before the day of the actual presentation.

Context

“The context of the communication interaction involves the setting, scene, and expectations of the individuals involved.” (McLean, 2005) A professional communication context may involve business suits (environmental cues) that directly or indirectly influence expectations of language and behavior among the participants.

A presentation or discussion does not take place as an isolated event. When you came to class, you came from somewhere. So did the person seated next to you, as did the instructor. The degree to which the environment is formal or informal depends on the contextual expectations for communication held by the participants. The person sitting next to you may be used to informal communication with instructors, but this particular instructor may be used to verbal and nonverbal displays of respect in the academic environment. You may be used to formal interactions with instructors as well, and find your classmate's question of "Hey Teacher, do we have homework today?" as rude and inconsiderate when they see it as normal. The nonverbal response from the instructor will certainly give you a clue about how they perceive the interaction, both the word choices and how they were said.

Context is all about what people expect from each other, and we often create those expectations out of environmental cues. Traditional gatherings like weddings or quinceañeras are often formal events. There is a time for quiet social greetings, a time for silence as the bride walks down the aisle, or the father may have the first dance with his daughter as she is transformed from a girl to womanhood in the eyes of her community. In either celebration there may come a time for rambunctious celebration and dancing. You may be called upon to give a toast, and the wedding or quinceañera context will influence your presentation, timing, and effectiveness.

In a business meeting, who speaks first? That probably has some relation to the position and role each person has outside the meeting. Context plays a very important role in communication, particularly across cultures.

Interference

Interference, also called noise, can come from any source. "Interference is anything that blocks or changes the source's intended meaning of the message." (McLean, 2005) For example, if you drove a car to work or school, chances are you were surrounded by noise. Car horns, billboards, or perhaps the radio in your car interrupted your thoughts, or your conversation with a passenger.

Psychological noise is what happens when your thoughts occupy your attention while you are hearing, or reading, a message. Imagine that it is 4:45 p.m. and your boss, who is at a meeting in another city, e-mails you asking for last month's sales figures, an analysis of current sales projections, and the sales figures from the same month for the past five years. You may open the e-mail, start to read, and think, "Great—no problem—I have those figures and that analysis right here in my computer." You fire off a reply with last month's sales figures and the current projections attached. Then, at five o'clock, you turn off your computer and go home. The next morning, your boss calls on the phone to tell you he was inconvenienced because you neglected to include the sales figures from the previous years. What was the problem? Interference: by thinking about how you

wanted to respond to your boss's message, you prevented yourself from reading attentively enough to understand the whole message.

Interference can come from other sources, too. Perhaps you are hungry, and your attention to your current situation interferes with your ability to listen. Maybe the office is hot and stuffy. If you were a member of an audience listening to an executive speech, how could this impact your ability to listen and participate?

Noise interferes with normal encoding and decoding of the message carried by the channel between source and receiver. Not all noise is bad, but noise interferes with the communication process. For example, your cell phone ringtone may be a welcome noise to you, but it may interrupt the communication process in class and bother your classmates.

COMMUNICATION MODELS

Models of communication simplify the process by providing a visual representation of the various aspects of a communication encounter. Some models explain communication in more detail than others, but even the most complex model still doesn't recreate what we experience in even a moment of a communication encounter.

Models still serve a valuable purpose for students of communication because they allow us to see specific concepts and steps within the process of communication, define communication, and apply communication concepts. The three models of communication we will discuss are the **transmission/Linear, interaction, and transaction models**.

Although these models of communication differ, they contain some common elements. The first two models we will discuss, the transmission model and the interaction model, include the following parts:

- Participants
- Messages
- Encoding
- Decoding
- Channels

In communication models, the participants are the **senders and/or receivers** of messages in a communication encounter. The message is the **verbal or nonverbal content** being conveyed from sender to receiver. For example, when you say "Hello!" to your friend, you are sending a message of greeting that will be received by your friend.

The internal cognitive process that allows participants to send, receive, and understand messages is the encoding and decoding process. Encoding **is the process of turning thoughts into communication**. As we will learn later, the level of conscious thought that goes into encoding messages varies. Decoding **is the process of turning communication into thoughts**. For example, you may realize you're hungry and encode the following message to send to your

roommate: “I’m hungry. Do you want to get pizza tonight?” As your roommate receives the message, they decode your communication and turn it back into thoughts in order to make meaning out of it. Of course, we don’t just communicate verbally—we have various options, or channels for communication. Encoded messages are sent through a channel, or a sensory route on which a message travels, to the receiver for decoding. While communication can be sent and received using **any sensory route (sight, smell, touch, taste, or sound), most communication occurs through visual (sight) and/or auditory (sound)** channels. If your roommate has headphones on and is engrossed in a video game, you may need to get their attention by waving your hands before you can ask them about dinner.

i) Linear model of communication

The linear or transmission model of communication, as shown in Figure 2.2.1, describes communication as a linear, one-way process in which a sender intentionally transmits a message to a receiver. This model focuses on the sender and message within a communication encounter. Although the receiver is included in the model, this role is viewed as more of a target or end point rather than part of an ongoing process. We are left to presume that the receiver either successfully receives and understands the message or does not. The scholars who designed this model extended on a linear model proposed by Aristotle centuries before that included a speaker, message, and hearer. They were also influenced by the advent and spread of new communication technologies of the time such as telegraphy and radio, and you can probably see these technical influences within the model (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). Think of how a radio message is sent from a person in the radio studio to you listening in your car. The sender is the radio announcer who encodes a verbal message that is transmitted by a radio tower through electromagnetic waves (the channel) and eventually reaches your (the receiver’s) ears via an antenna and speakers in order to be decoded. The radio announcer doesn’t really know if you receive their message or not, but if the equipment is working and the channel is free of static, then there is a good chance that the message was successfully received.

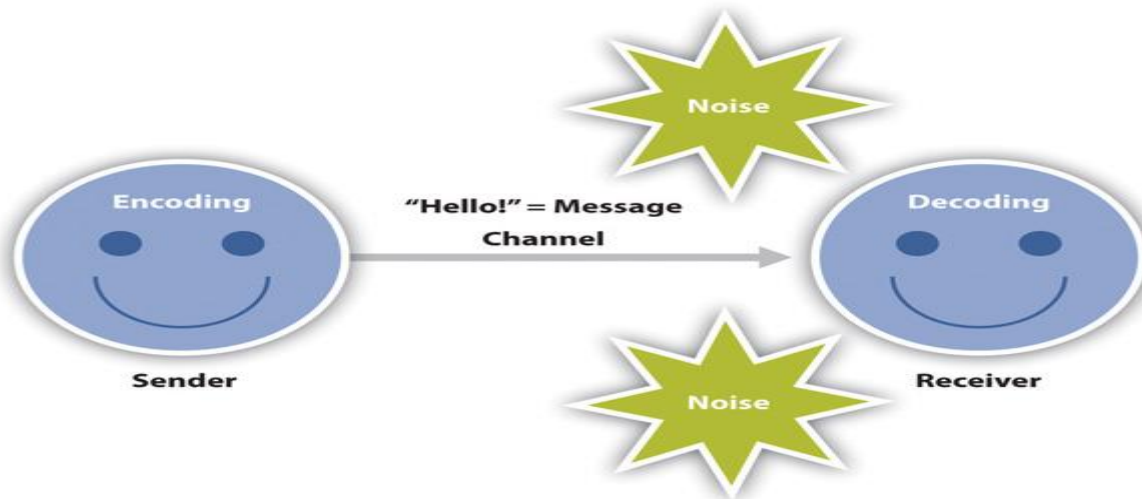


Figure 2.2.1 The linear model of communication

Although the transmission model may seem simple or even underdeveloped to us today, the creation of this model allowed scholars to examine the communication process in new ways, which eventually led to more complex models and theories of communication. Examples of Linear model of communication are:

1. Aristotle's communication model,
2. Laswell's communication model,
3. The Shannon-Weaver communication model, and
4. Berlo's S-M-C-R communication model.

ii) Interactive model of communication

The interactive or interaction model of communication, as shown in Figure 2.2.2, describes communication as a process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts (Schramm, 1997). Rather than illustrating communication as a linear, one-way process, the interactive model incorporates feedback, which makes communication a more interactive, two-way process. Feedback includes messages sent in response to other messages. For example, your instructor may respond to a point you raise during class discussion or you may point to the sofa when your roommate asks you where the remote control is. The inclusion of a feedback loop also leads to a more complex understanding of the roles of participants in a communication encounter. Rather than having one sender, one message, and one receiver, this model has two sender-receivers who exchange messages. Each participant alternates roles as sender and receiver in order to keep a communication

encounter going. Although this seems like a perceptible and deliberate process, we alternate between the roles of sender and receiver very quickly and often without conscious thought.

The interactive model is also less message focused and more interaction focused. While the linear model focused on how a message was transmitted and whether or not it was received, the interactive model is more concerned with the communication process itself. In fact, this model acknowledges that there are so many messages being sent at one time that many of them may not even be received. Some messages are also unintentionally sent. Therefore, communication isn't judged effective or ineffective in this model based on whether or not a single message was successfully transmitted and received.

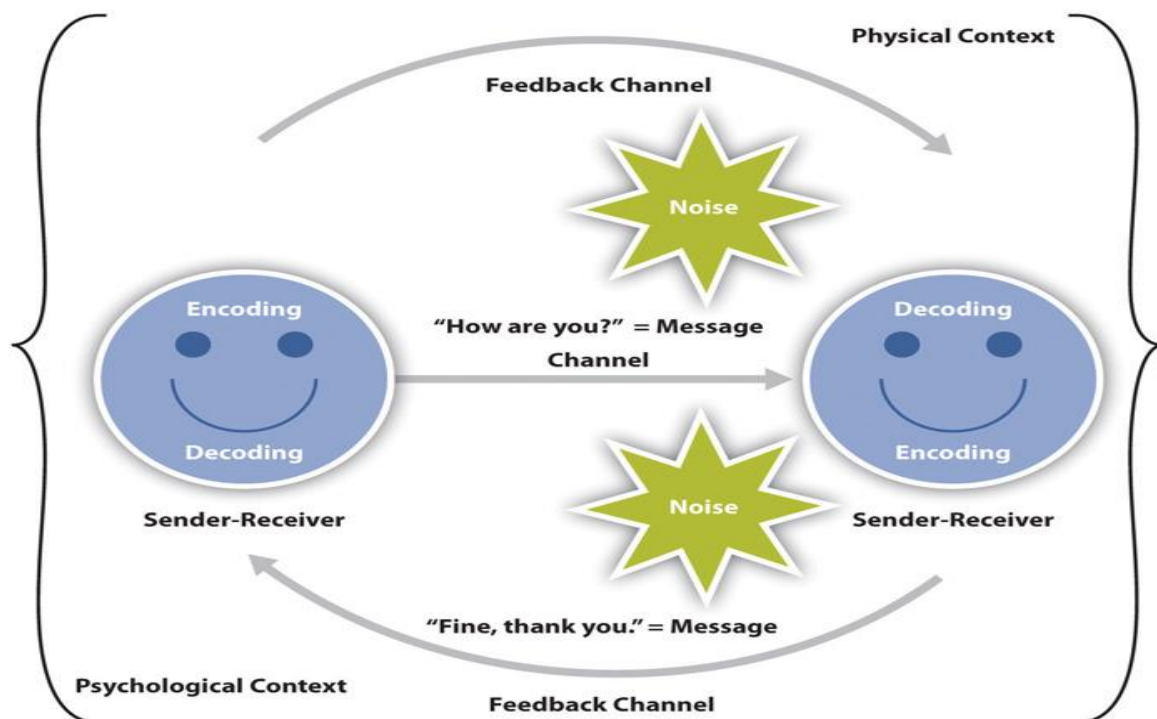


Figure 2.2.2 The interactive model of communication

The interactive model takes physical and psychological context into account. Physical context includes the environmental factors in a communication encounter. The size, layout, temperature, and lighting of a space influence our communication. Imagine the different physical contexts in which job interviews take place and how that may affect your communication. I have had job interviews over the phone, crowded around a table with eight interviewers, and sitting with few people around an extra-large conference table. I've also been walked around an office to unexpectedly interview one-on-one, in succession, with multiple members of a search committee over a period of three hours. Whether it's the size of the room or other environmental factors, it's important to consider the role that physical context plays in our communication. Psychological context includes the mental and emotional factors in a

communication encounter. Stress, anxiety, and emotions are just some examples of psychological influences that can affect our communication. Seemingly positive psychological states, like experiencing the emotion of love, can also affect communication. Feedback and context help make the interaction model a more useful illustration of the communication process, but the transaction model views communication as a powerful tool that shapes our realities beyond individual communication encounters. Examples of interactive model of communication are:

1. The Osgood-Schramm communication model, and
2. The Westley and Maclean communication model.

iii) Transaction model of communication

As the study of communication progressed, models expanded to account for more of the communication process. **Many scholars view communication as more than a process that is used to carry on conversations and convey meaning.** We don't send messages like computers, and we don't neatly alternate between the roles of sender and receiver as an interaction unfolds. We also can't consciously decide to stop communicating because communication is more than sending and receiving messages. The transaction model differs from the transmission and interaction models in significant ways, including the

- Conceptualization of communication
- The role of sender and receiver
- The role of context

The transaction model of communication describes communication as **a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts.** In this model, which is shown in Figure 2.2.3, we don't just **communicate to exchange messages; we communicate to create relationships, form intercultural alliances, shape our self-concepts, and engage with others in dialogue to create communities.**

The roles of sender and receiver in the transaction model of communication differ significantly from the other models. Instead of labeling participants as senders and receivers, the people in a communication encounter are referred to as communicators. Unlike the interactive model, which suggests that participants alternate positions as sender and receiver, **the transaction model suggests that we are simultaneously senders and receivers.** This is an important addition to the model because it allows us to understand how we are able to adapt our communication—for example, a verbal message—in the middle of sending it based on the communication we are simultaneously receiving from our communication partner.

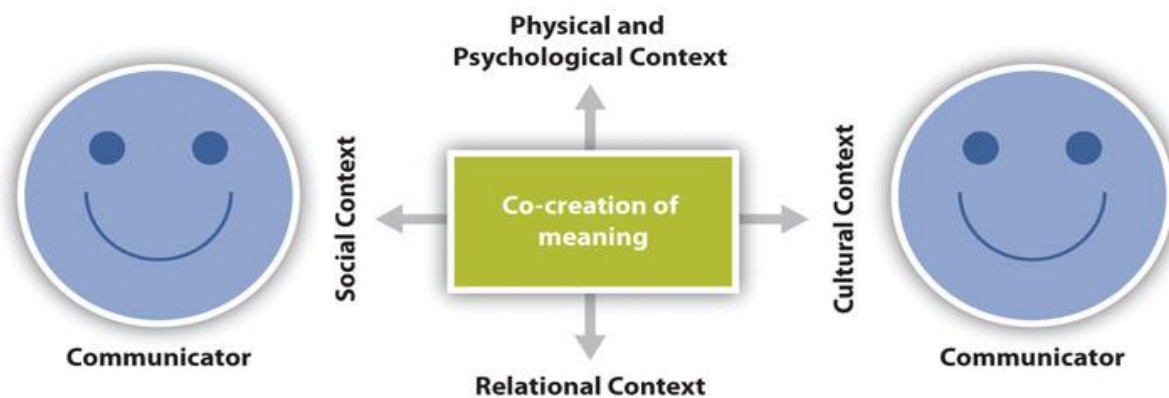


Figure 2.2.3 The transaction model of communication

The transaction model also includes a more complex understanding of context. The interaction model portrays context as physical and psychological influences that enhance or impede communication. While these contexts are important, they focus on message transmission and reception. Since the transaction model of communication views communication as a force that shapes our realities before and after specific interactions occur, it must account for contextual influences outside of a single interaction. To do this, the transaction model considers how social, relational, and cultural contexts frame and influence our communication encounters.

Social context refers to the stated rules or unstated norms that guide communication. Norms are social conventions that we pick up on through observation, practice, and trial and error. We may not even know we are breaking a social norm until we notice people looking at us strangely or someone corrects or teases us. Relational context includes the previous interpersonal history and type of relationship we have with a person. We communicate differently with someone we just met versus someone we've known for a long time. Initial interactions with people tend to be more highly scripted and governed by established norms and rules, but when we have an established relational context, we may be able to bend or break social norms and rules more easily.

Cultural context includes various aspects of identities such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, and ability. We all have multiple cultural identities that influence our communication. Some people, especially those with identities that have been historically marginalized, are regularly aware of how their cultural identities influence their communication and influence how others communicate with them. Conversely, people with identities that are dominant or in the majority may rarely, if ever, think about the role their cultural identities play in their communication. Cultural context is influenced by numerous aspects of our identities and is not limited to race or ethnicity. Examples of transaction model of communication are:

1. Barnlund's transactional communication model, and

2. Dance's Helical communication model.

FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

- Informing and Instructing
- Persuasion and Influence
- Decision Making
- Job Control
- Motivation
- Information Exchange
- Emotional Expression
- Problem Solving
- Building and Maintaining Relationships

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

- Improving organizational practices and reducing errors
- Helping employees and management interact to reach organizational goals
- Enhancing relationships with staff, customers, and stakeholders
- Persuading prospects, clients, and partners to complete transactions
- Motivating employees to work more efficiently
- Facilitating decision-making
- Building better teams
- Preventing misunderstandings and conflicts
- Improving customer service
- Reaching agreements
- Sending and fulfilling orders
- Successful selling
- Effective meetings
- Providing feedback to employees and customers
- Boosting company performance and increasing productivity
- Maintaining effective interdepartmental communications
- Improving employee engagement
- Meeting goals and achieving results

COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Communication networks refer to the directionality of the communication flow. Communication can flow in a variety of directions within the organization (internal communication) and can flow between the organization and its constituents (external communication).

I. Internal Communication Networks

Communication flows in many different directions within an organization. Internal information can flow in four directions in an organization: downward, upward, horizontally, and diagonally. The size, nature, and structure of the organization dictate which direction most of the information flows. In more established and traditional organizations, much of the communication flows in a vertical—downward and upward—direction. In informal firms, such as tech start-ups, information tends to flow horizontally and diagonally.

a. Downward Communication Network

Downward communication is when company leaders and managers share information with lower-level employees. Unless requested as part of the message, the senders don't usually expect (or particularly want) to get a response. An example may be an announcement of a new CEO or notice of a merger with a former competitor. Other forms of high-level downward communications include speeches, blogs, podcasts, and videos. The most common types of downward communication are everyday directives of department managers or line managers to employees. These can even be in the form of instruction manuals or company handbooks.

Downward communication delivers information that helps to update the workforce about key organizational changes, new goals, or strategies; provide performance feedback at the organizational level; coordinate initiatives; present an official policy (public relations); or improve worker morale or consumer relations.

b. Upward Communication Network

Information moving from lower-level employees to high-level employees is upward communication (also sometimes called vertical communication). For example, upward communication occurs when workers report to a supervisor or when team leaders report to a department manager. Items typically

communicated upward include progress reports, proposals for projects, budget estimates, grievances and complaints, suggestions for improvements, and schedule concerns. Sometimes a downward communication prompts an upward response, such as when a manager asks for a recommendation for a replacement part or an estimate of when a project will be completed.

An important goal of many managers today is to encourage spontaneous or voluntary upward communication from employees without the need to ask first. Some companies go so far as to organize contests and provide prizes for the most innovative and creative solutions and suggestions. Before employees feel comfortable making these kinds of suggestions, however, they must trust that management will recognize their contributions and not unintentionally undermine or ignore their efforts. Some organizations have even installed “whistleblower” hotlines that will let employees report dangerous, unethical, or illegal activities anonymously to avoid possible retaliation by higher-ups in the company.

c. Horizontal and Diagonal Communication Networks

Horizontal communication involves the exchange of information across departments at the same level in an organization (i.e., peer-to-peer communication). The purpose of most horizontal communication is to request support or coordinate activities. People at the same level in the organization can work together to work on problems or issues in an informal and as-needed basis. The manager of the production department can work with the purchasing manager to accelerate or delay the shipment of materials. The finance manager and inventory managers can be looped in so that the organization can achieve the maximum benefit from the coordination. Communications between two employees who report to the same manager is also an example of horizontal communication. Some problems with horizontal communication can arise if one manager is unwilling or unmotivated to share information, or sees efforts to work communally as threatening his position (territorial behaviour). In a case like that, the manager at the next level up will need to communicate downward to reinforce the company’s values of cooperation.

Diagonal communication is cross-functional communication between employees at different levels of the organization. For example, if the vice president of sales sends an e-mail to the vice president of manufacturing asking when a product will be available for shipping, this is an example of horizontal communication. But if a sales representative e-mails the vice president of marketing, then diagonal communication has occurred. Whenever

communication goes from one department to another department, the sender's manager should be made part of the loop. A manager may be put in an embarrassing position and appear incompetent if he isn't aware of everything happening in his department. Trust may be lost and careers damaged by not paying attention to key communication protocols. Diagonal communication is becoming more common in organizations with a flattened, matrix, or product-based structure.

Advantages Diagonal communication include:

- Building relationships between senior and lower-level employees from different parts of the organization.
- Encouraging an informal flow of information in the organization.
- Reducing the chance of a message being distorted by going through additional filters.
- Reducing the workloads of senior-level managers.

II. External Communication Networks

Examples of channels that carry external communication include press briefings, fact sheets, press kits, newsletters, magazines, brochures, news releases, annual reports, invoices and purchase orders.

Communication does not start and stop within the organization. **External communication focuses on audiences outside of the organization.** Examples of external communication include press releases about the organization, public relations information, advertisements about the organization's product. Senior management—with the help of specialized departments such as public relations or legal—almost always controls communications that relate to the public image or may affect its financial situation. First-level and middle-level management generally handle operational business communications such as purchasing, hiring, and marketing. When communicating outside the organization (regardless of the level), it is important for employees to behave professionally and not to make commitments outside of their scope of authority. External communication also includes interactions between employees of the organization and its customers.

Directions of Communication

Communication travels within an organization in three different directions, and often the channels of communication are prescribed by the direction in which the communication is flowing. Let's take a look at the three different directions and types of communication channels used.

i) Vertical Communication

Vertical communication can be broken down into two categories: **Downward communication** and **Upward communication**.

Downward Communication

Downward communication is from the higher-ups of the organization to employees lower in the organizational hierarchy, in a downward direction. It might be a message from the CEO and CFO to all of their subordinates, their subordinates, and so on. It might be a sticky note on your desk from your manager. Anything that travels from a higher-ranking member or group of the organization to a lower-ranking individual is considered downward organizational communication.

Downward communication might be used to communicate new organizational strategy, highlight tasks that need to be completed, or they could even be a team meeting run by the manager of that team. Appropriate channels for these kinds of communication are verbal exchanges, minutes and agendas of meetings, memos, emails, and even Intranet news stories.

Upward Communication

Upward communication flows upward from one group to another that is on a higher level on the organizational hierarchy. Often, this type of communication provides feedback to organizational leaders about current problems, or even progress on goals.

It's probably not surprising that "verbal exchanges" are less likely to be found as a common channel for this kind of communication. It's certainly fairly common between managers and their direct subordinates, but less common between a line worker and the CEO. However, communication is facilitated between the front lines and senior leadership all the time. Channels for upward communication include not only a town hall forum where employees could air grievances, but also reports of financial information, project reports, and more. This kind of communication keeps managers informed about company progress

and how employees feel, and it often provides managers with ideas for improvement.

ii) Horizontal Communication

When communication takes place between people at the same level of the organization, like between two departments or between two peers, it's called horizontal (or lateral) communication. Communication taking place between an organization and its vendors, suppliers, and clients can also be considered horizontal communication.

BARRIER TO PROPER COMMUNICATION

Barriers to proper communication can be classified into various types, including physical, psychological, semantic, and more. Here are some of the common barriers that can hinder effective communication:

Physical barriers

These are external factors that make it difficult for individuals to communicate effectively. Examples include:

- Noise
- Distance
- Poor lighting
- Technical issues in virtual communication

Psychological barriers

These barriers are related to the mental state of the sender or receiver, making it difficult to understand the information being conveyed. Examples include:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Prejudice
- Distrust

Semantic barriers

Also known as language barriers, these obstacles arise due to differences in language or improper communication between the sender and receiver. Examples include:

- Misinterpretation of words/symbols with different meanings
- Technical jargon
- Faulty translations

Organizational barriers

These barriers are related to the structure and culture of an organization, which can hinder effective communication. Examples include:

- Inefficient communication channels

- Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities
- Hierarchical structures

Cultural barriers

Differences in culture, values, and beliefs can create obstacles in communication. Examples include:

- Language differences
- Non-verbal communication variations
- Different communication styles

Physiological barriers

These barriers are related to the physical and mental well-being of individuals, which can affect their ability to communicate effectively. Examples include:

- Illness
- Hearing or vision impairments
- Memory loss

Personal barriers

These barriers are specific to individuals and can be influenced by their experiences, attitudes, and perceptions. Examples include:

- Lack of interest
- Inattention
- Resistance to change

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE WORK PLACE

1. Encourage & facilitate constant feedback

Providing constructive feedback is an important way for employees and employers alike to improve upon the way they operate and function in the workplace. By soliciting and encouraging feedback, the company sends a message that it's open to constructive criticism and values everyone's input and it helps everyone do their job better. All you need is a channel or medium to facilitate regular, helpful feedback.

2. Get clear on your culture

When we are talking about culture, we are referring on the following culture decks:

Company mission, Company values (and breakdowns of each), the kind of people you recruit and hire, what tools and styles of communication you use, your managing style and employee expectations and the company's challenges (and how it faces them).

Culture decks are useful because they are visual, easy to refer back to and (hopefully) enjoyable and easy to read.

3. Use visuals to communicate important ideas

Always Visual contents have done right in work places. Therefore, the company is advised to use visual materials to communicate with people in the work place because it will help them to have greater understanding of the message communicated. For example, when a company needs to convey a lot of information to employees, a dense literature is not going to have a desired effect in the minds of the people.

4. Post news & announcements on office displays

The bigger your company gets, the more difficult it is for news to reach everyone. Emails don't always get read.

An easier way to communicate with the whole team is by posting updates on your office displays. With TVs, you can share things like:

- Upcoming events
- New job openings
- Your favorite news feeds
- Your company's social media posts
- Your homepage or blog
- Photos of your products

5. Let your team know where the company stands

No matter what your company is selling, everyone on your team should be on the same page in terms of where you stand on your latest developments. That's where a product or project roadmap comes in handy. A roadmap is a great visual tool to help employees understand what still needs to be done before launching something new. A roadmap also provides context, showing each team member where their role fits in with the end goal, as well as a framework from which everyone can plan for the future of the product.

6. Allow employees to self-report

No one likes to be micromanaged, so allow your team to hold themselves accountable instead. Good employees want to get their work done and letting them check in at the end of every day or week is a much better solution than peering over your employees' shoulders (not that you would). You can do this with daily or weekly updates via email etc.

7. Regularly check in with every member of your team

Nothing beats face-to-face meetings when it comes to fostering effective communication in the workplace, which is why key members of your company's leadership should make regular check-ins a priority. Planned meetings for the sole purpose of checking in give employees a chance to bring up anything they might have been thinking about but haven't yet found the opportunity to talk about.

8. Have fun with your team

Employees who will be happy and will get along with one another will be the best employees. And therefore, will make for the most successful companies. Don't forget to take a break from the grind and bond with your team. After all, you spend eight (or 10 or 12!) hours with them every day. Some ways to inspire fun both in and outside of the office are:

- Team events (movie, bowling, rock climbing, etc.)
- Happy hours
- Free breakfasts
- Group volunteer outings
- Hobby-based clubs (like book clubs or sports leagues)
- Competitive cross-departmental teams