

# Barriers to Communication

## Content

- Barriers to Communication
- Communication issues at the work place
- Challenges in communicating across cultures

## Objective

**At the end of the session students will be able to**

- Identify various barriers to communication
- Recognize the challenges in communicating across cultures
- Discuss appropriate methods for overcoming communication barriers

## Communication Barriers

A Communication barrier is anything that prevents from receiving and understanding the message as intended by the sender.

**The barriers can be external, internal, or a combination of the two**



## Types of Communication Barriers

- Gender
- Cultural
- Psychological/Attitudinal
- Perception

Physical environment

Organizational

Semantic

## **Semantic Barrier**

Misunderstanding of words and symbols used in communication

Reasons:

- Misinterpretation of verbal expression
- Poor vocabulary
- Poor grammar and punctuation
- Redundancy
- Lack of common language



## **Physical Barriers**

An environmental and natural condition that acts as a barrier in Communication

Reasons:

- Noise
- Time
- Distance
- Age
- Work design
- Information flow

## **Socio-Psychological Barrier**

Incongruity in needs and feelings are the barriers to the effective and systematic communication between two individuals

Reasons:

- Attitudes and values
- Selective perception
- Inference
- Emotion
- Change resistance
- Information overload
- Cultural factors

## **Cultural Barrier**

Arises from misinterpretation and misunderstanding while communicating, mediating and negotiating among people from different culture

Reasons:

- Language
- Non-verbal gestures
- Space relationships
- Ethnicity
- Religious factors
- Social differences



## **Organizational Barrier**

It is the hindrance in the flow of information among the employees that might result in a commercial failure of an organization.

Reasons:

- Status
- One-way flow of communication
- Structure of the organization
- Organization rules and regulations

## **Interpersonal Barrier**

Stems from inappropriate transactions of words between two or more people

Reasons:

- Limited vocabulary
- Inconsistency of verbal and non-verbal messages
- Attitude
- Goal conflicts
- Poor health
- Emotional outburst

## **Gender Barrier**

The barrier arises from different ways of thinking and communicating among the genders

Reasons:

- Men: Communication tends to focus on the content discussion – verbal dimension, what is said
- Female: Communication tends to focus on relational discussion nonverbal cues, how it is said



## **Gender Stereotype**

Men	Female
Logical	Feeling
Power centric	Relationship centric
Competitive	Accommodating
Independent	Dependent
Provider	Nurturer

Stereotype: It is a widely held but fixed image or idea of a particular idea, person or thing

## **Communication Problems at the Work-place**

Good communication practice is the heart of every successful business. Without successful internal communication, work processes slow down or grind to a halt and customers are not served properly.

### **Misinterpretations & Assumptions**

- Poor listening skills
- Lack of factual communication

### **Lack of standards**

- Cultural barriers
- Mixing work and personal communication

### **Failure to disperse communication**

- Attitude
- Lack of follow through

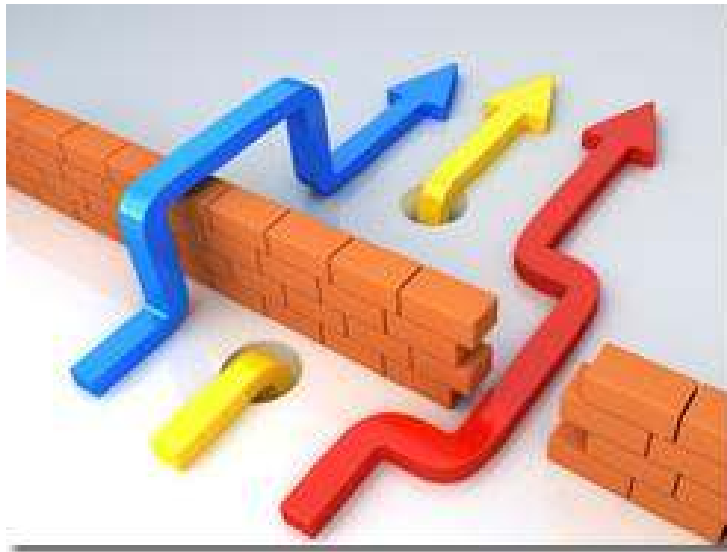
## **Aspects for Good Conversation Across Cultures**

- Slow down
- Avoid negative questions
- Be supportive
- Check meanings
- Avoid colloquial speech
- Watch the humor
- Maintain etiquette



## **Ways to Overcome Communication Barriers**

- Clear, concise, courteous and correct communication
- Good organization structure
- Empathetic listening
- Avoid judgement
- Good interpersonal relationship
- Seek and offer feedback
- Choice of right medium/channel
- Use of appropriate language



## **Summary**

- Developing good communication skills helps one develop better business relationships
- An organization has to establish communication standards in order to bring consistency in the work flow
- Aspects for good conversation across culture varies
- Organizations have to foster an open communication climate in order to grow
- A global employee needs to learn quickly and adapt to new culture

## **References**

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