**DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNICATION**

* According to Newman and Summer, “Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.”
* According to Keith Davis,” Communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.”

**1.3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNICATION**

* TWO-WAY PROCESS- Communication is essentially a two-way process. Information has not only to be sent but has also to be received and understood. This process is incomplete until the response is available. Feedback is an essential part of communication.
* CONTINUOUS PROCESS- Communication is a continuous process. When communication is absent, human activity ceases to exist.
* Communication is essential in all types of organisations and at all levels of management.
* The basic purpose of communication is to create mutual understanding by giving/seeking information, persuading/influencing others and eliciting actions.
* Communication consists not only of facts but ideas and emotions too.
* Organisational communication consists of a flow of messages through several networks. There are networks for problem-solving, work flow, information sharing and socialising.
* It takes two to complete communication. There should be a sender and a receiver.
* DYNAMIC PROCESS- Communication is a dynamic process. It incorporates the changing shape of the participants and the environment.
* GOAL ORIENTED PROCESS- Communication is a goal oriented process. Communication can be effective if the sender and receiver both are aware of the goal of communication and their goals complement each other.
* INTER-DISCIPLINARY SCIENCE- Communication is an inter-disciplinary science. Knowledge from several sciences is used in communication. Kinesics, psychology, sociology etc. have provided insights to make communication effective

**1.3.2 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION**

* LARGE SIZE OF ORGANISATIONS- Business firms have grown tremendously in scale of operations. A large business firm today employs thousands of people and has factories or offices in different parts of the world. The head office of the company must be in close touch with the branch offices. An efficient system of communication is required for this purpose.
* GROWING SPECIALISATION- Narrow division of work results in different activities being handled by different departments. Sound communication is essential for ensuring mutual cooperation and understanding between different departments.
* TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS- In order to upgrade or modernise technology, management must persuade employees to accept new technology. Regular training of staff becomes necessary to update their knowledge and to provide them the skills needed to apply new technology.
* CUT-THROAT COMPETITION- Liberalisation and globalisation have resulted in severe competition between public sector, private sector and foreign companies. Persuasive communication in the form of advertisements, personal contacts and publicity becomes essential to survive in the race of competition.
* GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONS- In some organisations employee unions are very strong and powerful. Management must consult union leaders on several matters. Regular exchange of information and ideas between managers and union officials helps to maintain healthy relations between them.
* THE HUMAN RELATIONS ASPECT- Effective communication between management and employees is necessary to develop mutual trust and confidence. Participation of employees in the decision making process and other means of communication help to develop among employees a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organisation.
* PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECT- Organisations serve society at large in various fields and aspects. Hence the importance of communication between them. Like many other aspects of management, social responsibility of business got recognition in the recent past and the managers came to be held responsible to various sections of society, specially the customers, government, suppliers and public. Communication between them and the organisation is necessary for putting the proper image of the whole business in perspective. Managers therefore, have to be good communicators with the society.
* PERSONAL ASSET- Communication skills are essential for success in every job. Managers are required to deliver speeches, write documents and conduct interviews. The ability to communicate effectively is equally essential for promotion in career.

**1.3.3 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION**

The objectives and functions of communication are inter-related. Communication could have many objectives depending upon the group and context. Communication within the family, in a classroom, in a theatre, in a war field, in a seminar and in the boardroom has different objectives. The objectives are defined depending upon the group and the purpose to be achieved.

Let us now look at the objectives of communication in business organisations. It is a process common to every business, whatever be its primary function. Any business organisation is driven by profit motive. This implies that the organisation would like to ensure that its objectives are achieved with the optimum utilisation of resources like time, money and effort. The communication system that is put in place within the organisation should ,therefore, address and meet these objectives.

* TO GIVE AND RECEIVE INFORMATION- In today’s world, information is power. Communication brings power through information. People within the organisation have to be kept informed about the organisational goals, objectives, procedures, processes, systems, plans, priorities and strategies. Equally important is the objective of ensuring effective external communication- with customers, prospects, competitors, suppliers and the public, about products, services, plans, events and achievements.
* TO PROVIDE ADVICE- Advice may be given on personal or official matters. The need for expert advice has increased with the growing complexity of business. Advice is most effective when given through face-to-face contact. It should be given in a confidential and informal manner with the purpose of helping the employee improve his performance.
* TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING- Counselling is an organised and specialised activity requiring professional expertise and an objective approach. When an employee is facing some personal or family problems, his morale and efficiency tend to decline. Therefore, professionally managed firms often employ psychologists, doctors etc. to help employees overcome maladjustment, emotional and other problems.
* TO IMPART EDUCATION AND TRAINING- Education involves formal communication over a long period so as to widen knowledge and skills. Education and training of workers and executives is necessary to keep them aware of new developments, to improve their efficiency and potential and for orientation of new employees. Lectures, case studies, seminars, study tours and audio visual aids are used for training.
* TO ISSUE ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS- Order involves assignment of task while instruction specifies the way the task is to be performed. An order must arouse an active and willing response. An instruction should state the situation with which it deals, the need for the instruction and the action required.
* TO RECEIVE SUGGESTIONS- Employees and customers are a useful source of new ideas for business as they are in direct touch with operations and procedures of a firm. Executives should set aside their ego and should have an open mind towards constructive suggestion from their subordinates.
* TO PERSUADE PEOPLE- Managers try to persuade employees to put in their best efforts. Sales persons persuade customers to buy products and services. Persuasion becomes all the more necessary to convince employees that changes are needed in existing rules, procedures, technology, working and service conditions in the organisation.
* TO ISSUE WARNING AND NOTICE- Warning is a forceful form of communication because it carries with it a sense of urgency. A written warning is known as a memo. The purpose of warning should be to improve behavior rather than to punish or humiliate the person.
* TO IMPROVE MORALE- Morale reflects the mental health of people. High morale is necessary to improve efficiency and performance. Communication about the policies and programs of the organisaton helps to improve the attitudes and morale of employees.
* TO IMPROVE DISCIPLINE- Rules and regulations are made known to employees through written and oral communication. Suggestions from employees help managers to make necessary changes in disciplinary rules and procedures.

**1.3.4 PROCESS OR ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION**

* Communication is a process that involves certain distinct steps. In its simpler form, it relates to stimulus and response. The stimulus arises from the communicator and the receiver responds. Communication is not complete till the message conveyed by the sender is properly understood by the receiver. Any communication process should necessarily have three elements- sender, receiver and the message.
* **SENDER** -The process of communication begins when the sender feels the need to communicate and the idea generates in his mind. Sender is the source of the message and wants to transmit it for some purpose. The sender must identify, analyse and sequentially arrange the ideas before transmitting them to the receiver.
* **MESSAGE** - A message means what is being communicated. It may be verbal (spoken or written) or non-verbal (e.g.. Appearance, body language, silence etc.). Message is the heart of communication.
* **ENCODING-** The sender puts his ideas or facts into words, symbols, pictures or gestures which the other person can understand. This part of the communication process is called ENCODING. It also involves the choice of appropriate media so that the idea is translated into a message that can be transmitted to others.
* **CHANNEL /MEDIUM-** Channel connects the sender with the receiver. In oral and visual communication, the message may be transmitted instantaneously. But in written messages there is a time gap between dispatch and receipt of the message.
* **RECEIVER** - The person or group to whom the message is directed is known as receiver. The receiver represents the destination of the message.
* **DECODING** - The receiver translates the words and symbols used in the message into idea and interprets it to obtain its meaning. This is called DECODING and it is opposite of encoding. The message should be accurately reproduced in the receiver’s mind.
* **FEEDBACK** - After deriving meaning, the receiver reacts or responds to the message. He sends back his response to the sender. This return flow of communication is called feedback. The process of communication is incomplete until the sender receives the feedback.
* **NOISE** -Communication fails when the message received is not identical to the message that is sent. Several factors could interfere with the exchange of messages. “Noise” refers to all these factors that disrupt the communication and could be classified under the following types:
* **PHYSICAL NOISE-** Distracting sounds, poor acoustics or just information overload could interfere with the listening process.
* **PHYSIOLOGICAL NOISE-** Hearing or other disabilities, fatigue or physical illness could come in the way of both speaking and listening.
* **PSYCHOLOGICAL NOISE** - Sometimes emotions within the sender or receiver such as preoccupations, hostility, fear or lack of interest could interfere with the speaking or listening process.

**1.3.5 SEVEN C’s OF COMMUNICATION**

The increasing specialisation and the expansion and complexity of today’s businesses have brought about a revolution in the system of communication. The businessman who wants to survive in the competition has to develop his communicating skills. He must know how to communicate with the help of new and speedy technical devices of communication.

The management executives spend most of their time in direct or indirect form of communication. The efficiency of a manager depends on his skills and effectiveness of communicating with others. He has to communicate with other traders and dealers for purchase and sale. He has to communicate with his superiors in order to decide the objectives and directives.

He has to communicate with his subordinates in order to get their cooperation and improve the productivity. He has to deal with banks, transport agencies, government officials, legal advisors, insurance companies, experts, customers etc.. An effective communication is the key of sure success in the modern world of commerce.

* **CLARITY**

The principle of clarity implies both clarity of thought and clarity of expression. Clarity of thought means the communicator must be fully clear in his mind about what he wants to communicate (the message), why he wants to communicate (the objective of communication), to whom he wants to communicate (the receiver), when he wants to communicate (the timing) and how he should communicate (the most suitable media). Once the idea is clear in the sender’s mind, it must be expressed in clear and simple language.

* **COMPLETENESS**

Every communication must be complete and adequate. Incomplete messages keep the receiver guessing, create misunderstanding and delay actions. Every person should, therefore, be provided with all the required facts and figures. For example, when the factory supervisor instructs workers to produce, he must specify the exact size, shape, quality and cost of the product. Any assumptions behind the message should also be clarified. Only a complete message can be an effective message.

* **CONCISENESS**

Brevity is the soul of good communication. Therefore, we should use only relevant details in our message. Brevity saves time of both the sender and the receiver of the message. More words do not lead to clarity, rather they obscure the meaning and tire the reader. Avoid irrelevant words and repetition. Organise your message well by using simple words and short sentences.

* **CONSIDERATION**

In order to communicate effectively, think and look from the receiver’s angle (YOU- ATTITUDE). The sender should adopt a humane approach and understand the emotions and sentiments of the receiver. He should understand the focus and needs of the receiver.

* **CORRECTNESS**

You should not transmit any message unless you are absolutely convinced of its accuracy and authenticity. If employees forward incorrect information to managers, decisions based on such information may be wrong. Similarly, transmission of incorrect information to outsiders may spoil relations and reputation. Give correct facts and send your message in the correct style.

* **COURTESY**

Courtesy means a friendly and helpful behaviour towards others. Polite manners facilitate communications. The following guidelines should be observed to ensure courtesy:

* Thank generously for a favour. When someone does a favour to you, acknowledge it promptly and thank the person generously for being kind to you.
* Apologise for a mistake. If you have committed a mistake, express your regrets promptly and sincerely.

1. Answer all letters promptly. In case you need time to send a full reply, acknowledge the letter you have received.

* **CONCENTRATION**

While sending and receiving a message, you must pay full attention. While transmitting information, attention is necessary to ensure that all the relevant details are included in correct and clear manner and that the message is fully understood and no point is missed. In the absence of full attention, misunderstanding and confusion arise. These result in miscommunication and inefficiency. Active listening is also essential for success in communication.

**4S of Communication**

* **SHORT**
* **SIMPLE**
* **STRENGTH**
* **SINCERITY**

**1.3.6 DIMENSIONS OF COMMUNICATION**

**DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION**

Downward communication flows from a higher authority o a lower authority. For example, the manager of a branch may communicate next year’s deposit targets of the branch to his employees. Orders, instructions, policy statements, notices, circulars, job sheets and employee handbooks are the main forms of downward communication.

Downward communication is very common. It is based on the assumptions that at higher level individuals have the authority to communicate to the lower level persons. It is also known as downstream communication. Managers have to be effective communicators. Goals and policies of the company need to be explained clearly and precisely. Subordinates have to be encouraged to talk and share information- good or bad.

Both oral and written media are used for downward communication. Face-to-face talks, telephone and public address systems are the means of oral messages. Written messages are transmitted in the form of circulars, notices, bulletins and manuals. Audio-visual media like film slides may also be used to provide information and to explain work procedures to employees.

**ADVANTAGES**

1. **Delegating authority and responsibility**: Delegation means entrusting the subordinates with some responsibilities along with due authority. It is essential to make the subordinates capable in performing their jobs. Since downward communication starts form higher level, it helps mangers in delegating authority and responsibility to the right persons.
2. **Marinating discipline**: Downward communication occurs in conformity with officially recognized rules and regulations. So it helps in establishing official discipline in the organization.
3. **Increasing efficiency**: Downward communication provides necessary guidance, orders, instructions and explanations of various complex issues to the subordinates that ultimately increase the efficiency of the employees.
4. **Informing organizational plans and procedures**: In an organization, the top-level executives develop the plans, policies, strategies, procedures etc. downward communication plays a significant role in communicating those plans, policies, strategies’ and procedures to the lower levels of the organization.
5. **Explaining the complex issues**: Sometimes subordinates need explanation of organizational policies and procedures. In such situations, managers rely on downward communication to provide necessary explanations and analysis.
6. **Issuing orders and instructions**: Downward communication is the only means to circulate various orders, instructions, guidance, and advices to the subordinates. Without downward communication, organization is like a boat without boatman.
7. **Maintaining good labor-management relationship**: Downward communication helps to create and maintain good labor-management relationships in the organization. When top-level executives communicate with their subordinates sincerely and courteously, it develops good interpersonal and inter-group relationships between management and works. In turn, this will motivate the employees and ensure good labor-management relation in the organization.

**Disadvantages or demerits of downward communication**

Though downward communication provides many advantages to the organization, it is not free limitations. Its main limitations or disadvantages are discussed below:

1. **Time-consuming**: Downward communication is a delayed process. In this communication, information flows through different levels of hierarchy. As a result, when information reaches to the lower level workers, it may have lost its significance or utility.
2. **Distortion of information**: Downward communication also suffers form problem of distortion of message. People have a tendency to modify or manipulate information. Therefore, information is passed from one individual to another or form one level to another, authenticity of information is lost.
3. **Lack of explanation**: In most cases, downward communication contains messages without necessary explanation and clarification. For this reason, subordinates fail to understand the message accurately.
4. **Deterioration of relationship**: Heavy reliance on downward communication also deteriorates the labor-management relationships. Because it does not provide any scope of direct communication between them.
5. **Lack of feedback**: Absence of [feedback](https://thebusinesscommunication.com/principles-of-feedback/) is another major drawback of downward communication. The top-level executives usually place little or no importance to the messages received from subordinates. Superiors hardly seek feedback from the subordinates. Due to negligence of the superiors, subordinates also seldom send feedback. As a result, communication becomes ineffective.
6. **Lack of enthusiasm**: Managers send orders instructions and advices to the subordinates through downward communication. This form of communication energizes and activates the employees. Therefore, delay in the downward flow of information adversely affects the enthusiasm of the employees.
7. **Creation of frustration**: Downward communication is directive in nature. This type of communication hardly allows the subordinates to discuss any matter with their superiors. Moreover, the subordinates are compelled to follow the orders and instructions of the superiors. Such coercion creates frustration in the mind of the employees.

**UPWARD COMMUNICATION**

Upward or upstream communication means the flow of information and ideas from lower levels of authority (subordinates) to higher levels (superiors). For example, a branch manager may send quarterly reports to the regional manager on the performance of the branch. Upward communication can be in the form of both written and oral messages which contain suggestions, grievances, complaints, appeals, etc. managers are now giving increasing attention to upward communication.

Upward communication is essential for the successful functioning of every organization. Therefore, managers at every level should cultivate and encourage the upward flow of messages. Special efforts are necessary because communication does not move upward easily and naturally. Manager must encourage employees to come out of their shell, shed fear and communicate freely. **Advantages of upward communication**

1. **Development of plan**: The information received from subordinate plays important role to help development of planning of the organization.
2. **Providing suggestions and opinions**: By upward communication system, subordinate takes necessary suggestions and opinions from superiors about the work-related issues of the organization.
3. **Motivating to employees**: Upward communication system allows lower level staff to express their attitude or opinion to upper-level staff. As a result, sub-ordinates are influenced to work more towards fulfillment to target.
4. **Providing constructive suggestion**: All employees are supplied with constructive and important messages that can help to implement the goals or objectives.
5. **Good labor-management relationship**: Here, information is invited from lower level executives and employees and on the basis of this information top executive makes a decision. So, good relation between subordinates and bosses should create for the betterment of the organization.
6. **Providing feedback**: The subordinate’s reaction is returned to the superior in this communication system. So, top level management can decide what to do and what not do clearly understand and followed.
7. **Creating favorable environment**: Upward communication helps to develop a favorable working situation in an organization by creating a good relation among all employees.
8. **Promote harmony**: Upward communication creates a friendly environment in the organization which leads to a peaceful and harmonious relationship among the subordinates and superiors.
9. **Decision making**: Top level executives or superiors needed much information before taking a decision on a particular issue. Subordinates supply this information through the help of upward communication.
10. **Developing creative and innovative ideas**: Upward communication facilitates easy excess of the employees or subordinate to the superiors in providing necessary constructive suggestions and opinions about the work-related issues of the organization.
11. **Facilitating collective decision**: Since upward communication is participative in nature. It communication allows the subordinates to convey their feelings, constructive suggestions and opinions and the work-related in the decision making process.

## Disadvantages of upward communication

The main disadvantages of upward communication are as follows:

1. **Changes of information**: In upward communication subordinates may change their accurate information. So, the top executive cannot take an accurate decision.
2. **Unwillingness**: Sometimes subordinates don’t send the information to their superior willingly. So, [the communication](https://thebusinesscommunication.com/) system may be disrupted.
3. **Fear of inefficiency**: The main problem of upward communication is fair to superiors. Generally, superiors make a question about the employees work position and efficiency. Many employees fear to communicate and share their ideas, constructive suggestions and opinions with the superiors.
4. **Indiscipline**: Sometimes employees communicate directly to superior by avoiding proper channel or chain of command. Here disciplines are not properly maintained.
5. **Bypassing**: In the process of upward communication, sometimes workers directly approach the topmost authority with their suggestions or bypassing their immediate boss. This is harmful to any organization.
6. **Flattery**: In order to convince the superior bosses, subordinates can take the help of flattery and for this reason, subordinates may conceal the true and provide incomplete information to top level.
7. **Lake of initiative**: Generally subordinate is reluctant to take the initiative to upward communication for a different reason.
8. **Risk of distortion of messages**: In upward communication, subordinates willingly distort the message because they fear if they tell the original fact to their bosses, they may face some problems.
9. **Delay**: It is an important limitation of upward communication is the long and slow movement of information to the higher authority.
10. **Supervisor’s negligence**: Sometimes top-level executives discourage the upward flow of information and neglect the constructive suggestions and opinions about the work-related issues of the organization.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| POINT OF COMPARISON | UPWARD COMMUNICATION | DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION |
| FLOW | From lower to higher levels | From higher to lower levels |
| NATURE | Appealing and informative | Directive and authoritative |
| SPEED | Slow | Fast |
| PURPOSE | To provide feedback | To implement plans |
| EXAMPLES | Reports, suggestions, appeals, grievances | Orders, notices, circulars, instructions |

**HORIZONTAL/ LATERAL COMMUNICATION**

Horizontal communication refers to the flow of information and ideas between persons and departments at the same level of authority (peers). It is communication among individuals and groups of equal rank and status. For example, production department may communicate with marketing department. Horizontal or lateral communication is a very frequently used channel. The main purpose of horizontal communication is to ensure mutual cooperation and coordination between peers and inter-dependent work units.

It allows freedom of expression due to informal atmosphere, doubts can be cleared on the spot an immediate feedback is available. Periodical meetings between heads of departments also enable persons of equal status to share information and ideas. Such discussions help to solve common problems and to create teamwork.

Horizontal communication is essential for the smooth functioning of every organization. The work of different employees and departments is inter-dependent. Horizontal communication keeps every department informed of the needs and activities of other departments.

**Advantages of Horizontal Communication**

The followings are the main benefits that can be derived from horizontal communication.

* **Coordination:** Organizational activities are divided into various departments or groups. Horizontal communication facilities coordination of various departmental activities so that organization can reach its ultimate goal.
* **Reducing Misunderstanding**: Misunderstanding and conflict among the mangers and staffs are very common in organizational life. Horizontal communication helps to reduce possible misunderstanding and conflict though meeting, discussion, face to face conversation etc.
* **Strengthening group efforts**: Group efforts and teamwork are essential prerequisites for organizational success. Horizontal communication helps in reducing conflicts, controversies, and differences in opinions and thus establishes consensus among the managers and workers concerned. This consensus strengthens group efforts and team spirit in the organization.
* **Performing interdepartmental communication:** Horizontal communication occurs between people at the same level in various departments. Therefore interdepartmental communication occurs smoothly.
* **Gaining benefits of informal communication**: Though horizontal communication is formal in nature, it enjoys some degree of informality in exchanging information as the senders and the receivers hold same position, status and honor.
* **Distortion-free communication**: Horizontal communication is usually free form distortion. Since the sender and the receiver of horizontal communication can exchange information directly, there is no possibility of distortion of message.
* **Bringing dynamism in workplace**: Horizontal communication helps to overcome misunderstanding and confects among the managers. It creates an environment of cooperation, teamwork and team spirit. This brings dynamism in performing organizational activities.

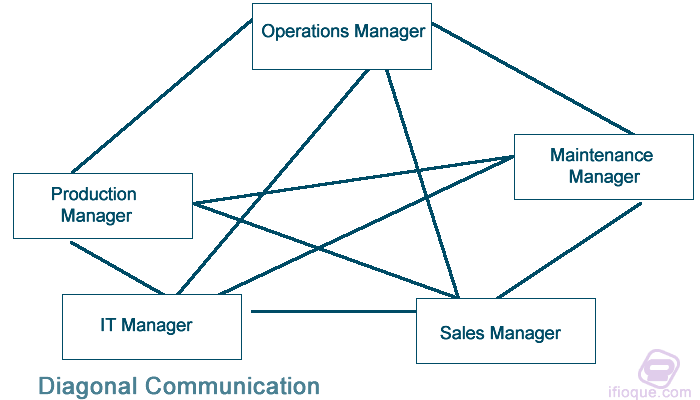
**Disadvantages of Horizontal Communication**

Though horizontal communication is essential for smooth functioning of an organization, it is not completely free form defects or flaws. Followings are the possible drawbacks of horizontal communication.

* **Rivaling attitude**: Horizontal communication occurs between the people at the same rank and position. If there exists any hostility or rivalry between them, they will not exchange information spontaneously. Moreover, they will conceal their information intentionally to deprive someone from the real news.
* **Interdepartmental conflict**: The success of horizontal communication depends on good relationship between sender and receiver. If there is any conflict, distrust or suspicion between them, horizontal communication will be ineffective.
* **Discouraging attitude of top management**: In some cases, top managers discourage horizontal communication thinking that workers may become friendly with one another and may create threat for the management.
* **Ignoring vertical communication**: More concentration on horizontal communication may work as substitute of upward and downward communication. In that case upward and downward communications are ignored.

**DIAGONAL OR CROSSWISE COMMUNICATION**

Diagonal or crosswise communication takes place when persons working at a lower level interact with those working at a higher level across the limits of their reporting relationships. The persons who communicate are neither in the same work unit not at the same level of organizational hierarchy. For instance, the production manger may communicate directly with sales officers in the marketing department. It boosts morale, helps coordination an speeds up action.



**Advantages of Diagonal Communication**

* Diagonal communication may speed up the flow of information.
* It can help create a healthy environment and relationship.
* It can also build better coordination among staff members.
* It can help in solving problems easily as different ideas are brought together.
* There will be no distortion of information as individuals are in direct contact with others.

**Disadvantages of Diagonal Communication**

* It can create doubts and uneasiness among superiors who are bypassed as it is likely to bypass the chain of command.
* Superiors may see diagonal communication as interfering with their work.
* It can easily lead to leakage of information and grapevine.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

* The term verbal implies ‘use of words’ which makes language. Verbal communication means communication through spoken and written words. The process of communication involves the use of a common set of symbols between the sender and the receiver. Most of the communication in organisations takes place through words.

**ORAL COMMUNICATION**

* Oral communication refers to the spoken word. The development of numerous languages across the world has empowered oral communication. Oral communication plays a vital role in everyday life, both for individuals and organisations. It is, indeed the most commonly used method of communication both at the social and at the organisational level.

**ADVANTAGES OF ORAL COMMUNICATION**

**IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK** - The biggest advantage of oral communication is that it provides immediate feedback to both the sender and the receiver. Each can ask the other for clarification and elaboration on the spot. The speaker can immediately understand the reaction of the audience or group, he is addressing.

**TIME SAVING** - Oral communication is very fast. It saves the time involved in writing the message.

**ECONOMICA**L - Oral communication saves the money spent on stationery in an organisation.

**PERSONAL TOUCH** - Oral communication builds upon healthy climate in the organisation by bringing superiors and subordinates closer. It is an effective tool of persuasion.

**FLEXIBILITY** - Oral communication provides an opportunity to he speaker to correct himself and make himself clear by changing his voice, pitch, tone etc.. Body language can be used to reinforce words.

**SECRECY** - Oral messages can be more easily kept confidential than written messages.

**GROUP COMMUNICATION**- Oral communication is extremely useful for communicating with groups in meetings, conferences etc.

**LIMITATIONS OF ORAL COMMUNICATION**

**POOR RETENTION** - The listener cannot retain oral messages in his memory for a long time. The speaker himself may not recall what he actually said.

**NO RECORD** - Oral communication provides no record for future reference. In the absence of record, oral messages have no legal validity.

**TIME CONSUMING** - Oral communication may not always be time saving. Sometimes meeting continue for a long time without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion.

**LENGTHY MESSAGES** - Oral communication is not suitable for transmitting lengthy messages. Some parts of vital importance are more likely to be missed when lengthy explanation is required.

**LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY** - Oral messages are not recorded. Therefore, it becomes difficult to hold persons responsible for mistakes, inaccuracy and false claims in oral communication.

**MISUNDERSTANDING** - Oral communication is likely to be misunderstood due to poor vocal expressions and noise. The speaker may not be able to make himself quite clear or the listener may be inattentive.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

While oral communication is natural and spontaneous, written communication requires conscious efforts. It involves transmission of information through letters, notices, circulars, memos, reports etc.

**ADVANTAGES OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

WIDE ACCESS - Written communication is the most economical and probably the only means of communication when the sender and receiver of the message are separated by long distances. It has the widest possible coverage.

**PRECISION AND ACCURACY** - In written communication the communicator tends to be accurate and factual because authenticity of written message can be challenged and verified. So it is more accurate, precise and reliable.

**REPETITION** - It can be read again and again. Therefore the message is likely to be understood better. There is little chance of any part of the message being lost.

**MECHANICAL EFFICIENCY** - Message can be written and conveniently transmitted, filed and retrieved. Copies in any numbers are also easy to make and distribute at relatively low cost.

**PERMANENT RECORD** - It provides a permanent record for future reference.

**LEGAL EVIDENCE** - It can be used as legal evidence in a court of law and in case of disputes with employee, clients etc. .

**LENGTHY MESSAGES** - It is very suitable for transmitting lengthy messages.

**CONVINIENC**E -The personal presence of neither the sender nor the receiver of message at a certain place at the same time is necessary. The writer can write at a time that suits him and the reader too can read or re-read at his own convenience.

**LIMITATIONS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

**TIME CONSUMING** - In addition to the time involved in sending written messages, time has to be spent in putting the message in writing. So, it is not **suitable when the message is to be sent immediately.**

**EXPENSIVE** - It costs a lot of money for buying stationery for the office and for storing written records.

**LACK OF SECRECY** - It is difficult to keep written messages completely secret.

**RIGIDITY** - It lacks flexibility. Clarifications and adjustments are difficult to make on the spot.

**DELAYED FEEDBACK** - Immediate feedback is not possible in case of written communication.

**FORMAL COMMUNICATION**

Formal communication refers to the flow of messages along the routes prescribed in the organization structure. Formal channels are deliberately designed and represent authority, responsibility and relationships between different positions in the organization. For example, if a branch manager wants to communicate with the chairman of the bank, the former has to pass his message through the area manager, regional manager and other functionaries. Every employee is required to use the prescribed channels so that the concerned officers are kept informed of what is happening in the organization.

**ADVANTAGES OF FORMAL COMMUNICATION:**

1. Formal communication allows flow of information in an orderly and authentic manner as it takes place along the officially prescribed routes.

Formal channels cover all sub systems of an organization. It is useful for reaching out easily to the branches and offices of an organization spread far and wide.

In formal channels of communication, there is a tendency to filter information. Therefore, the managers at higher levels are not bogged down with it.

**LIMITATIONS OF FORMAL COMMUNICATION:**

1. Formal channels of communication tend to inhibit the free flow of information as messages have to pass through prescribed routes.

Formal communication is slow and rigid. Therefore it is time consuming.

Due to the tendency of filtering information, distortions many occur when the message has to pass through several levels of authority.

