



## Communication Skills in Business

### KEYWORDS

encoding, decoding, communication process, networks, grapevine and barriers.

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**ABSTRACT** *As nothing is possible without communication, it has emerged as one of the most required skills to excel in today's business environment. Ability to communicate with one another is one of the reasons civilization can exist. In business there is nothing without communication. Management is possible only if the communication system is proper. An organization cannot survive without management but management is not possible without effective communication. So communication is a building block of successful organizations.*

*Present paper is based on secondary sources of information and aims at describing various aspects of communication; its meaning, components, importance in business, its barriers and their removal. The purpose of the paper is just to summarize these aspects of communication.*

### Meaning

Communication is a process of exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages. Communication is sending and receiving information between two or more persons. The content of communication can be facts, concepts, opinions, attitudes, ideas and emotions. Communication word has been derived from the word "communis" which means 'to share'. Communication means to share ideas, information, emotions, data, information, facts etc. Any activity which involves more than one person to complete it cannot be completed successfully without communication. Knowledge cannot be spread, preserved without a way to communicate it. In business, where a no. of persons is engaged, nothing is possible without communication.

### Types

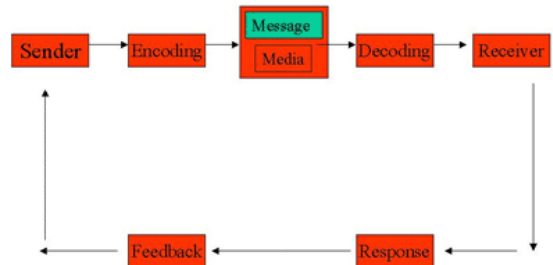
Communication can be oral/verbal (using voice), written (using printed or digital media such as magazines, books, websites etc.), visual (using maps, logos, charts or graphs), non-verbal (using body language, gestures and the tone and pitch of the voice).

### Components of communication process:

Communication is a process of transferring data, facts, information, ideas etc. from one person/place to another person/ place. It is a continuous process. Essential element of the process is message which is to be transmitted from the sender to the recipient. For such transmission, some media/ channel are required. It is essential that the recipient understand the message in the same sense that the sender intended. The recipient must respond within a time frame. So communication is a two way process i.e. if the recipient does not get the message or in the same sense, then there is no communication happened.

### Communication process involves:

**1. Sender:** sender may be an individual, group or an organisation. The sender encodes the message i.e. makes use of symbols, word or visual aids to convey the message and produce the intended response. The views, background, approach and skill of the sender has a great impact on the message construction.



### Components of communication process

**2. Message:** message is the main component of the process which decides the response of the recipient. Communication starts with deciding about the message to be conveyed. Objective of message must be very clear.

**3. Medium:** medium is means to transmit the message. Choice of appropriate medium is essential to send the message correctly and effectively. The choice of medium depends upon the requirements of the communication. For instance message in written form will do better when it is to be conveyed to a small no. of recipients but it would be better to communicate orally when a spontaneous response is sought as misunderstandings or confusions are cleared then and there.

**4. Recipient:** the recipient decodes the message sent by the sender/encoder. Understanding of message by the decoder depends on his knowledge, reliance on the encoder.

**5. Feedback:** efficacy of the message is judged by feedback from the recipient. It helps the sender ensuring the correct interpretation of the message by the recipient. Feedback may be in verbal (through words) or non-verbal (in form of smile, sighs etc.). It may be in written form in case of reports or memos.

### Communication skills in business:

Communication skill means ability to communicate effectively. Communication skill is the most important of all life skills. Communication skills are significant to undertake the basic functions of management i.e. planning, organizing,

coordinating, motivating, supervising and controlling etc. Management is nothing without communication. Communication acts as organizational blood because managers are dependent on communication to have information for planning and then to convey the plans to implement them timely and effectively. Organizing also requires effective communication with others about their roles and responsibilities etc. Controlling is also not possible without written and oral communication. Managers spend their 75% time in communication. This is the importance of communication in business. Communication helps in motivating employees by clarifying their roles, manners of improving their performance. Communication helps in identifying different courses of actions to support effective decision making. Communication helps in altering attitudes as a well informed employee will have better attitude than a less informed one.

In the early days, communication was one way only i.e. from top to bottom. Everything from strategy formulation to dealing with employees would be discussed behind the doors. Employees were having no say in the management but to follow the decisions of the owners. Such management attitudes led to growth of labor unions. In reaction to union demands, managements created communication systems where rank and file members could speak their minds through their representatives. Managers eventually realized that employees could have contributed to solve company problems. When given the chance to contribute many employees made most of it. This type of feedback came to be called bottom-up communication. Today we have participated management where the business owners don't just read the reports but visit the factories to observe the employees on work and ask their opinions.

To be a good communicator in business one has to improve upon interpersonal skills, writing skills, presentation skills and personal skills. When we interact with one or more persons then we use interpersonal skills which can be affected by our listening ability. Listening is the most important interpersonal skill. The ability to write clearly and effectively is key to communication. Personal skills helps to maintain a healthy body and mind and thus effects communication.

### 7 c's of effective communication in business

#### According to the 7 c's communication needs to be:

1. Clear
2. Concise
3. Concrete
4. Correct
5. Coherent
6. Complete
7. Courteous

1. **Clear:** the purpose of the message must be very clear in a communication. For making it clear try to minimize the ideas involved in a sentence and thus easy for the recipient to understand and minimum effort on his/her part to make assumptions.

2. **Concise:** the message should very concise avoiding the filler words and repetitions of the same points.

3. **Concrete:** the message should be solid, with details (but not too many), vivid facts and laser like focus to make it effective.

4. **Correct:** a correct communication always fits the recipient.

ent. It is without grammatical errors, correctly spelled and technically recipient friendly.

5. **Coherent:** coherent communication is logical and has relevance to main topic. The consistent tone and flow of text make it easy to understand and more logical.

6. **Complete:** a complete message has everything it meant to inform the recipient. There is nothing missing in it.

7. **Courteous:** courteous communication is without hidden, passive, aggressive words, clear, honest and open. It is always according to the viewpoint of the recipient and empathetic to his/her needs.

### Organizational grapevine

In business, the better one communicates the more credibility he/she will have with the colleagues, customers and the boss.

There are two kinds of communication networks in an organization: Formal communication network and Informal communication network. Formal or organized networks are encouraged explicitly by the management. Informal networks which are also known as organizational grapevine wherein new, views and information are exchanged over coffee, tea and less formally over drinks and cigarettes. Informal networks consist of colleagues, superiors and subordinates.

### Grapevine communication helps:

- Carrying and spreading information rapidly
- Getting quick feedback on the policies of management.
- Developing group cohesiveness among employees as they discuss their views and ideas openly.
- As emotional support for the employees and get back to the work after any setback or demotion etc.
- As supplement in those cases where formal communication does not serve the purpose.

### Grapevine communication is discouraged because:

- It is more based on rumors and does not carry correct and complete information.
- It is not trustworthy but based on gossip and unconfirmed report.
- It affects the productivity of employees as they work less but talk more to discuss unnecessary issues.
- It leads to make hostility against the executives.
- It may hamper the goodwill of the organization as it may spread negative information about the high level officials of the organization.

Organizational grapevine should be used for the best interest of the organization while minimizing its disadvantages.

### Barriers to communication

Communication is effective and complete if it is received and understood with the same meaning by the recipient, the sender has send it with. But if there is any kind of disturbance in any step of the communication process, the message will be destroyed and the purpose of communication is beaten. And this leads to great problems in organizations. Thus it is required to locate such disturbing factors/barriers and to get rid of them.

### Here are communication barriers:

- ❖ **Difference in perception and language:** perception means the interpretation of things by an individual. Every person perceives according to his or her values,

beliefs. And moreover one message may have different values for different persons. One person wants to receive messages which are valuable to him. Another barrier is linguistic difference. One term may have different situational meanings which can be understood differently.

- ❖ **Information overload:** managers are to handle ample of information. They need to control the flow of information for it not being overlooked or misunderstood.
- ❖ **Inattention:** proper listening is required to meet the purpose of effective communication. Properly listened message is half done communication. Generally superiors don't listen attentively to their subordinates especially when they are busy in some work. It results in disappointment on subordinate's behalf. Moreover to make it effective too much repetition of messages is to be discouraged.
- ❖ **Time pressures:** to meet deadlines, improper or half messages may be communicated which may result in disasters in organizations. So communication should be given proper and required time.
- ❖ **Noise:** communication is affected by noise such as loud speakers. There may be other distractions such as unfriendly environment, improper lighting, unhygienic conditions, uncomfortable sitting etc. which may hamper the quality of communication.
- ❖ **Emotional state:** emotional behavior patterns also affect the communication. Angry sender may not communicate correctly to the receiver and further he may interpret according to his own situational emotional behavior.
- ❖ **Organizational structure:** the more the no. of formal layers in an organization, the higher the chances of communication distortion.
- ❖ **Poor retention:** one cannot always remember what is being told, especially if he is not listening attentively. So this is again a barrier to effective communication.

#### Overcoming communication barriers:

Profitability of an organization is proportionate to the labor put in by its employees. Labor here means smart work done by employees, transparency between the team members, free flow of information from superior to subordinates. And all this is possible through effective communication i.e. total absence of communication barriers. Here is how these barriers can be eliminated:

- ❖ **Eliminating difference in perception:** perceptual differences can be eliminated through induction programs, training and counseling. Moreover HR manager should ensure that recruited employees must have command over the written and spoken language. Sufficiently elaborated messages may help in eliminating language barriers.
- ❖ **Reduction of noise levels:** sources of noise should be identified and eliminated on priority basis.
- ❖ **Proper and active listening:** Listening should be for understanding and just for responding. Proper listening can be ensured by the sender through asking questions.
- ❖ **Emotional intelligence:** the sender must not show his emotions while communicating because the recipient may interpret the message wrongly.
- ❖ **Avoiding information overload:** managers should prioritize their work so as to avoid overload and give quality time to their subordinates and to ensure proper feedback.
- ❖ **Simple organizational structure:** the structure of the organization should have required minimum layers so as to facilitate proper and timely flow of information across it.
- ❖ **Meaningful feedback:** the superiors should give constructive feedback to the subordinates so as to encourage further accomplishments on their behalf.
- ❖ **Proper media:** messages should be delivered using proper media. Short and informal messages can be delivered through face to face interactions and formal and complex messages should be transmitted through written media for future reference, complete understanding and record purposes.
- ❖ **Flexible target completions:** managers should ensure timely completion of targets while adhering to the formal channels of communication so as not to have excess burden of work and targets which leads to communication distortions at times.

**Conclusion:** communication is life blood of an organization. Today, in the era of information, when knowledge creation, storage and synthesis are the key to success, an organization cannot compromise on its communication system quality. An organization has to smarten its communication system to meet the burning desires of competing at global level.