



Business Correspondence and Reporting

Communication



CHAPTER-1

COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

“Communication (from Latin *communicāre*, meaning “to share”) is a process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions through speech, signals, writing, or behavior.

In communication process, a sender (encoder) encodes a message and then using a medium/ channel sends it to the receiver (decoder) who decodes the message and after processing information, sends back appropriate feedback/ reply using a medium/channel.”

Q-1 What do you mean by communication?

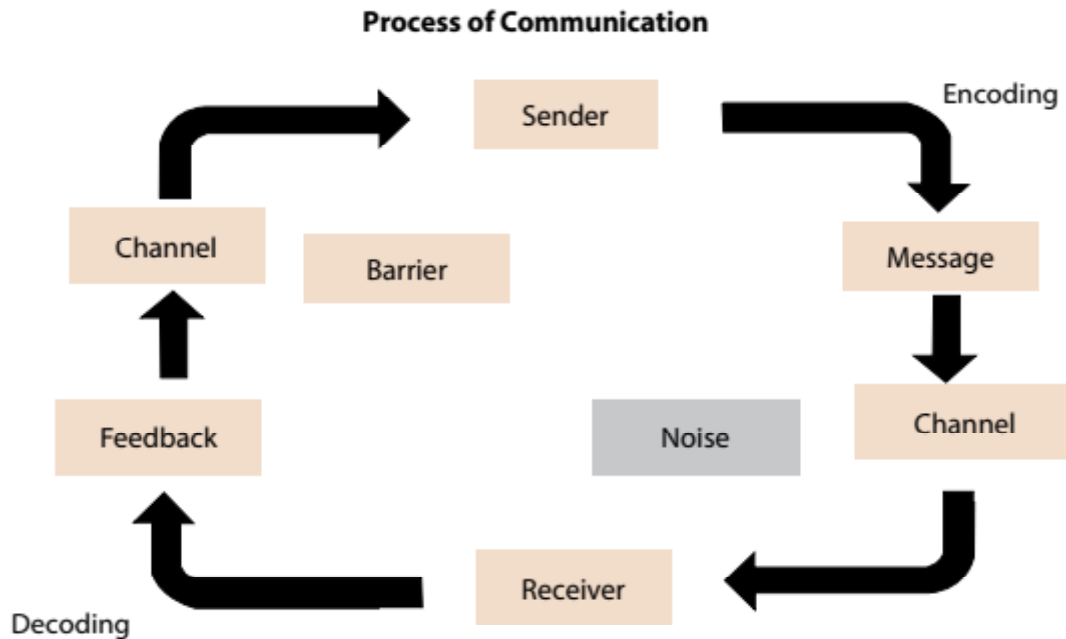
Ans.

- ➞ **The word “Communication” has been derived from a Latin word *communicāre*, meaning “to share”.**
- ➞ It is a process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions through speech, signals, writing or behavior.
- ➞ In communication process, a sender (encoder) encodes a message and then using a medium/ channel sends it to the receiver (decoder) who decodes the message and after processing information sends back appropriate feedback/ reply using a medium/channel.” (Source: ggu.ac.in)

Q-2 Examine the Steps in Communication:

The main steps inherent to all communication are:

1. The purpose or reason for the communication.
2. The contents of the message.
3. The medium used for conveying the message. (For example, internet, written text, speech, pictures, gestures and so on).
4. Transmitting the message.
5. Messages are often misinterpreted due to external disturbances such as noise created by humans, traffic and natural forces. These factors can result in miscommunication.
6. Receiving the message.
7. Deciphering and making sense of the message. Decode.
8. Interpreting and figuring out what the receiver thinks is the real message.



Q-3 Explain the types of communication:

Understanding different types of communication can be of great use. A good understanding of the different types and styles of communication can enhance your personal and professional relationships, resolve any misunderstandings and misconceptions and contribute to a successful business venture and a joyful personal life.

The Broad Categories of Communication are:

1. **Verbal:** It involves the use of words and language in delivering the intended message. Though 'verbal' primarily refers to communication through the spoken medium, while categorizing 'types' of verbal communication the written and oral form of communication are included.
 - **Written communication** includes letters and documents, e-mails, reports, handbooks, brochures, various chat-platforms, SMS and any form of written interaction between people. The written form of communication is essential and indispensable for formal business interactions (contracts, memos, press releases, formal business proposals etc.) and legal instructions and documentation. The effectiveness of written communication depends on the writing style, grammar, vocabulary, and clarity.
 - **Oral Communication** refers to communication through the spoken word, either face-to-face, telephonically, via-voice chat, video conferencing or any other medium. Formal medium like lectures, conferences, seminars, meetings and informal conversations, chit-chat, gossip etc are part of oral communications. Effectiveness of oral communication depends on clear speech and the tone used by the speaker. Speaking in too high/ low volume or too fast/slow can also impair communication between people. Even non-verbal communications such as body language and visual cues affect the quality of interaction among individuals or group.

Verbal communication is the easiest, fastest, and the most successful form of communication. Yet, surprisingly according to research, it comprises of only seven percent of all human communication!

2. **Nonverbal Communication:** Nonverbal communication is the practice of sending and receiving wordless messages. These messages can help verbal communication, convey thoughts and feelings contrary to the spoken words or express ideas and emotions on their own. Some of the functions of non-verbal communication in humans are to complement and illustrate, to reinforce and emphasize, to replace and substitute, to control and regulate, and to contradict the denoted message.

➤ **Physical nonverbal communication: An individual's body language that is,** facial expressions, stance, gestures, tone of voice, touch, and other physical signals constitute this type of communication. For example, leaning forward may mean friendliness, acceptance and interest, while crossing arms can be interpreted as antagonistic or defensive posture.

Research estimates that physical, non-verbal communication accounts for 55 percent of all communication. Smiles, frowns, pursing of lips, clenching of hands etc. transmit emotions which are not expressed through verbal communication.

➤ **Paralanguage:** The way you say something, more than the actual words used, reveal the intent of the message, The voice quality, intonation, pitch, stress, emotion, tone, and style of speaking, communicates approval, interest or the lack of it. Research estimates that tone of the voice accounts for 38 percent of all communications.

➤ **Aesthetic communication:** Art forms such as dancing, painting, sculptor, music are also means of communication. They distinctly convey the ideas and thoughts of the artist.

➤ **Appearance:** Appearance is usually the first thing noticed about a person. A well dressed and groomed person is presumed to be organized and methodical, whereas a sloppy or shabby person fails to make a favorable impression. Therefore, dressing appropriately in all formal interactions is emphasized.

The dress code in office is generally formal. It constitutes of formal suits, trousers with plain white or light colored shirts and leather shoes. Bright colours, jeans, T- shirts, especially with slogans and other informal wear are frowned upon. For women formal two-piece trouser or skirt sets or formal ethnic wear like sarees, is permissible.

➤ **Symbols** such as religious, status, or ego-building symbols

3. **Visual Communication:** Visual communication through visual aids such as signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, color and other electronic resources usually reinforces written communication. Sometimes, it may replace written communication altogether. Visual communication is powerful medium. It is the reason that the print and audio-visual media makes effective use of visuals to convey their message. Visuals like graphs, pie charts and other diagrammatic presentations convey clearly and concisely a great deal of information. They are an essential part of official presentations these days.

Q-4 Explain Formal & Informal Communication.

➤ Well structured formal communication channels need to be established in every organization for its success.

➤ Informal channels of communication are equally important for the success of the company. Most verbal communications between friends, family and community are informal and casual in nature.

1. **Formal communication:** Formal communication, both oral and written, follows certain rules, principles and conventions in conveying the message. The hierarchy in the organization has to be followed. Formal format, style and language have to be used. The communication pattern can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal.

- **Vertical:** Information can flow upwards or downwards in the organization. Data that is collected flows up to the top levels of management for review and decision making, while instructions and orders are passed down from the management/ seniors to the subordinates for implementation.
- **Horizontal:** Horizontal communication that involves communication between two parts of the organization at the same level. For example, the managers of a project in a company may hold a regular daily, weekly or monthly meeting to discuss the progress of the project.
- **Diagonal:** Cross-functional communication between employees at different levels of the organizational hierarchy is described as diagonal communication. Diagonal communication is increasingly common in larger organizations. It reduces the chances of distortion or misinterpretation by encouraging direct communication between the relevant parties. For example, a junior engineer reports directly to the General Manager regarding the progress on the project.

2. **Informal communication:** Informal Communication is casual, friendly and unofficial. It is spontaneous conversation and exchange of information between two or more persons without conforming to the prescribed official rules, processes, systems, formalities and chain of command.

Informal communication is between family, friends, neighbors, members of the community and other social relations that are based on common interests, tastes and dispositions. Information can flow from any source in any direction. Employees in an organization interact with each other outside the formal domain. Such communication is called 'grapevine' - gossip in the office. Employees of different departments and varied levels meet and discuss matters casually and informally. The grapevine satisfies the social needs of the people and helps in building relationships. It is also useful in addressing certain needs and grievances of employees.

Q-5 Explain various networks in communication:

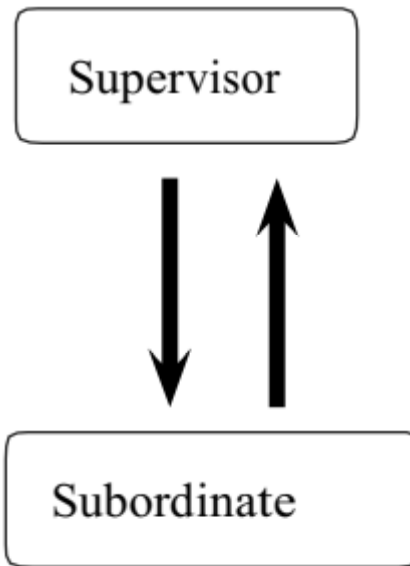
A **communication network** refers to the method and pattern used by members of an organization to pass on information to other employees in the organization.

Network helps managers create various types of communication flows according to requirement of the task at hand. Some companies have established and predefined networks of communication for specified venture.

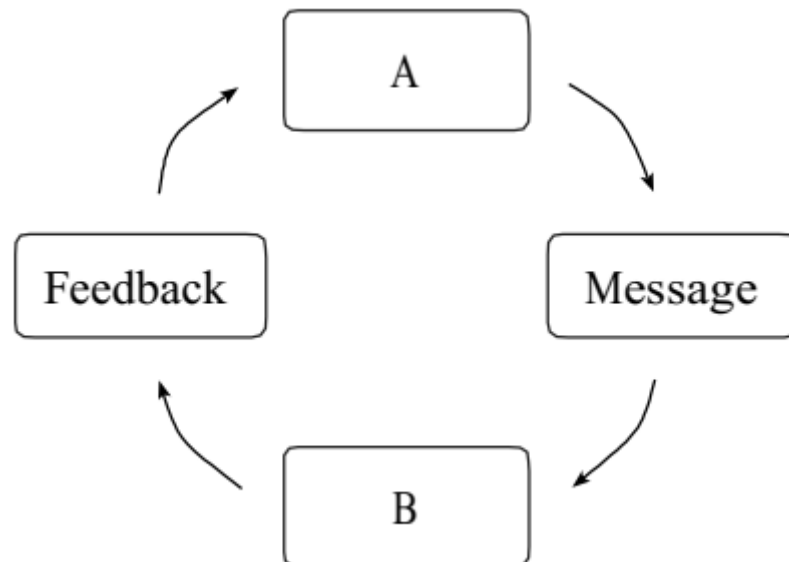
The structure of communication within a company depends upon the size of the organization, type of communication channels in the organization and the number of persons involved in the process. There can be many patterns of communication network.

The most common networks followed in organizations are the following:

1. **Vertical Network :** The vertical network is a formal network. It is usually between a higher ranking employee and a subordinate. In this two-way communication, immediate feedback is possible.

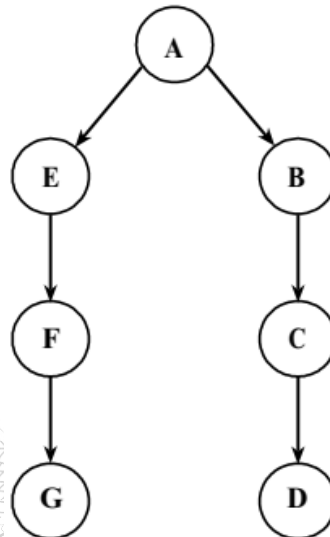


2. **Circuit Network** : When two persons communicate with each other sending messages and feedback, they form a communication circuit. Therefore it is known as circuit network. The two people interacting can be colleagues placed at the same hierarchical level in the organization.



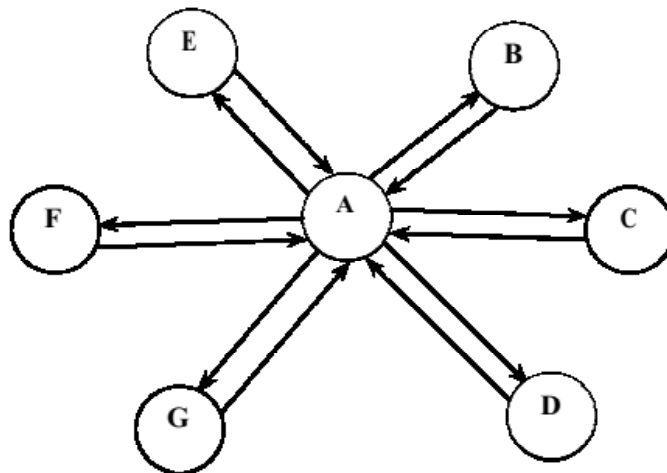
3. **Chain Network** : The communication pattern that follows the chain of command from the senior to the junior is called the chain network. Communication starts at the top, like from a CEO, and works its way down to the different levels of employees. The supervisor/ manager/ CEO gives commands or instructions to those working under him/her in the organization. B, C, D and E, F, G are the subordinates

to A in the organizational hierarchy and receive commands from 'A' as shown in the diagram. The chain network often takes up time, and communication may not be clear.



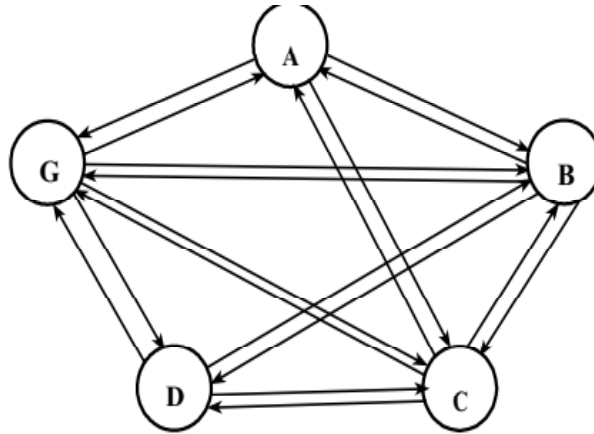
Chain of Command

4. **Wheel & Spoke Network** : This is an organization where there is a single controlling authority who gives instructions and orders to all employees working under him/her. All employees get instructions directly from the leader and report back to him/her. It is direct and efficient for a small business/ company, but inappropriate way of communication in a large organization with many people. A company with many employees needs more decision makers or nothing would get done. Can a large conglomerate like Reliance or Tata Sons have one person making decisions? Moreover, if the central figure is not competent, the entire business will suffer.



Wheel and Spoke Network

5. **Star Network :** The star communication network has multiple channels of communication open between all members. This network propagates group communication and is essential where teamwork is involved. The members communicate and exchange information with each other freely, and without hindrance or hesitation.



The usefulness of all networks depends on the structure and size of the company, and the manner of communication between the employees. Good communication relies on the sincerity of the employees within the company as well as properly defined processes in the organization. These parameters help the organization achieve its objectives.

Q-6 Explain the characteristics of effective communication.

Several aspects must be kept in mind while interacting with others for our communication to convey the intended message.

1. **Clear:** Any spoken or written communication should state the purpose of message clearly. The language should be simple. Sentences ought to be short as the core message is lost in long, complicated sentences. Each idea or point must be explained in a separate bulleted points or paragraphs. Make it easy for the reader to grasp the intent of the communiqué.
2. **Concise:** Brevity is the essence of business communication. No one has the time to read long drawn out essays. Besides, the core content is lost in elaborate details. Avoid using too many irrelevant words or adjectives, for example, 'you see', 'I mean to say', etc. Ensure that there are no repetitions.
3. **Concrete:** The content of your communiqué should be tangible. Base it on facts and figures. Abstract ideas and thoughts are liable to misinterpretation. Make sure that there is just sufficient detail to support your case/argument and bring focus to the main message.
4. **Coherent:** Coherence in writing and speech refers to the logical bridge between words, sentences, and paragraphs. Main ideas and meaning can be difficult for the reader to follow if the writer jumps from one idea to another and uses contradictory words to express himself. The key to coherence is sequentially organized and logically presented information which is easily understood. All content under the topic should be relevant, interconnected and present information in a flow.
5. **Complete:** A complete communication conveys all facts and information required by the recipient. It keeps in mind the receiver's intellect and attitude and conveys the message accordingly. A complete communication helps in building the company's reputation, aids in better decision making as all relevant and required information is available with the receiver.

6. **Courteous:** Courtesy implies that the sender is polite, considerate, respectful, open and honest with the receiver. The sender of the message takes into consideration the viewpoints and feelings of the receiver of the message. Make sure nothing offensive or with hidden negative tone is included.
7. **Listening for Understanding:** We are bombarded by noise and sound in all our waking hours. We 'hear' conversations, news, gossip and many other forms of speech all the time. However, most of it is not listened to carefully and therefore, not understood, partially understood or misunderstood. A good listener does not only listen to the spoken words, but observes carefully the nonverbal cues to understand the complete message. He absorbs the given information, processes it, and understands its context and meaning so as to form an accurate, reasoned, intelligent response.
The listener has to be objective, practical and in control of his emotions. Often the understanding of a listener is colored by his own emotions, judgments, opinions, and reactions to what is being said. While listening for understanding, we focus on the individual and his agenda. A perceptive listener is able to satisfy a customer and suggest solutions as per the needs of the client.
8. **Focus and Attention:** Everyday work environment has multiple activities going on simultaneously. The ringing of the phone, an incoming email, or a number of tasks requiring your attention, anxiety related to work, emotional distress etc. can distract you. Such distractions are detrimental to the communication process with an individual or a group of people. You may overlook or completely miss important points or cues in the interaction. Thus, keeping your focus and attention during the communication is imperative for effective communication.
9. **Emotional Awareness and Control:** Emotions play a major role in our interactions with other people. They are a powerful force that affects our perception of reality regardless of how hard we try to be unbiased. In fact, intense emotions can undermine a person's capacity for rational decision-making, even when the individual is aware of the need to make careful decisions. Consequently, emotional awareness is a necessary element of good communication. While interacting with another person or a group, it is important to understand the emotions you and he/she/they are bringing to the discussion. Managing your own and others emotions and communicating keeping in mind the emotional state of others helps in smooth interaction and breakdown of the communication process.

Q-7 Examine various barriers to Communication.

There are multiple barriers in the communication process. These barriers result in distortion and misunderstanding of the intended communication. The barriers can be physical, psychological, emotional, cultural, linguistic etcetera

1. **Physical barriers:** These are a result of our surroundings. Noise, technical disturbances, outdated equipment, distant locations, office doors, separate areas for people of different areas, large office spaces, old technology and lack of appropriate infrastructure can lead to problems in transmission of message.
2. **Organizational structure barriers:** Communication problems occur when the systems, structures and processes in the organization are not clear or have gaps in them. If the chain of command is unclear, a person may not know whom to contact for a particular issue. Inappropriate information transmission systems, lack of supervision, and unclear role and responsibility demarcations lead to confusion and inefficiency.
3. **Language barriers:** Language can create many obstacles in communication. Literally, people from different regions and countries may interpret the same words differently. Difficult words, subject specific terminology, unfamiliar expressions and ambiguous words having multiple meanings, create hurdles in communicating. It is also a fact that the linguistic ability of various people in the work place is different. Some maybe proficient in the language while others may possess just

basic skills. Therefore, it is important to use clear, simple easily understood language in most of your official communications.

- 4. Cultural barriers:** Understanding *cultural aspects of communication* refers to having knowledge of different cultures in order to communicate effectively with cross culture people. Understanding various cultures in this era of globalization is an absolute necessity as the existence of cultural differences between people from various countries, regions tribes and, religions, where words and symbols may be interpreted differently can result in communication barriers and miscommunications. Multinational companies offer special courses and documents to familiarize their staff with the culture of the country where they are based for work. In addition, every organization too has its own work culture. In fact, departments within the same company may also differ in their expectations, norms and ideologies. This can impact intra and inter organizational communication.

The same principle applies to families and family groups, where people have different expectations according to their background and traditions leading to friction and misunderstanding. A very simple example is of the way food is served by a member of a family. It can be the cause of appreciation or displeasure.

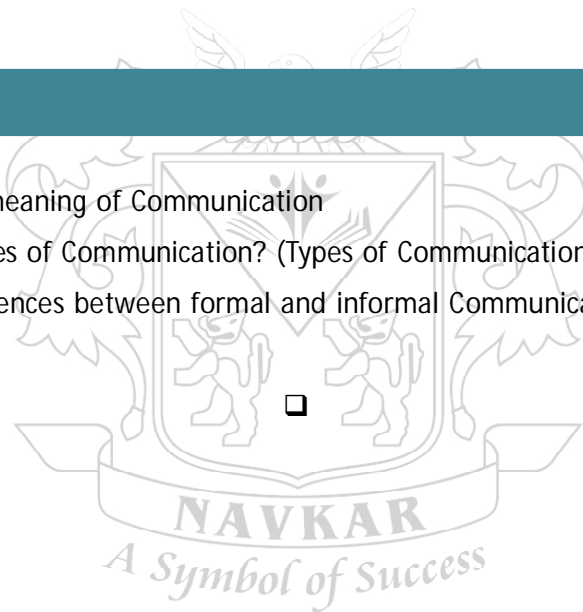
- 5. Emotional barriers:** One of the chief barriers to open and free communications is the emotional barrier. Anger, fear of criticism or ridicule, mistrust of person, suspicion of intentions, jealousy, anxiety and many more feelings and sentiments we carry within us, affect our communication ability and quality. A person who is upset and disturbed cannot pass on or receive information appropriately and objectively. His emotions will color his perception and assessment of the communication.
- 6. Attitude barriers-** Personal attitudes of employees can affect communication within the organization.
A proactive, motivated worker will facilitate the communication process, whereas a dissatisfied, disgruntled, shy, introvert or lazy employee can delay, hesitate in taking the initiative, or refuse to communicate. Attitude problems can be addressed by good management and regular interaction with staff members.
- 7. Perception Barriers-** Each one of us perceives the world differently and this causes problems in communicating. The same content is seen and interpreted differently by two people and therein lies the root cause of miscommunications and misunderstandings.
- 8. Physiological barriers-** Ill-health, poor eyesight, hearing difficulties or any other physiological problems can be hurdles in effective interaction with others.
- 9. Technology barriers-** In today's world, communication modes are primarily technology driven. This communication technology is being constantly upgraded or new formats emerge ever so frequently. Anyone who is not tech friendly struggles to communicate effectively via the medium. Moreover, an individual is faced with a huge amount of information every day in the form of emails, texts and social updates. Multitasking is the norm these days. The information overload and trying to accomplish too many things together can result in gaps in communication and miscommunications.
- 10. Gender barriers-** Men and women communicate differently. The reason for this lies in the wiring of a man's and woman's brains. Men talk in a linear, logical and compartmentalized manner whereas the women use both logic and emotion, and are more verbose. This may be the cause of communication problem in an office where both men and women work side by side. Men can be held guilty of providing insufficient information, while women may be blamed for providing too much detail. Gender bias is another factor in communication barriers. Due to traditional mindsets, many men find it difficult to take orders from, or provide information to women.

CLASS WORK

- Q-1** State the types of communication channels used by humans. Explain each in a couple of sentences?
- Q-2** What are main steps in process of communication?
- Q-3** Mention the networks used in communication. Which is the most effective for team work and why?
- Q-4** What are the disadvantages of the wheel network?
- Q-5** According to you which are five most important characteristics of effective communication? Give reasons for your answer.
- Q-6** What are barriers in communication? In an organization which barrier, according to you, impedes communication the most?
- Q-7** How do cultural barriers affect communication? Explain with examples of your own.

HOME WORK

- Q-1** Write definition and meaning of Communication
- Q-2** What are the categories of Communication? (Types of Communication)
- Q-3** Write about the differences between formal and informal Communication.





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