

Course: Corporate Communication and Public Relations

Lecture 1: A review of the communication process

Lecturer: Protais Niyonshima



Objectives

By the end of this session, a learner will be able to:

1. Define effectively Communication
2. Describe clearly the elements of a Communication process
3. Explain the types of Communication

Introduction

The word communication is from the verb 'communicate' which is historically related to the word 'common'. Communicate is from the Latin verb *communicare*, which means 'to share' or 'to make common'. In communication, therefore, we shape a common sense by sharing information. (Karl, 2000).

The concept of communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas, facts, opinions, beliefs, feelings and attitudes through a verbal or nonverbal means between two people or within a group of people.

Definitions of communication

- Oxford Dictionary (1998) explains communication as an activity through which people express ideas and feelings or give information.
- Birvenu (1987) states that communication is the process of transmitting feelings, attitudes, facts, beliefs as well as ideas between living beings.
- Masterson, Beebe, and Watson (1989) define human communication as the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.

Meaning of communication

Communication can mean:

- ✓ A process through which individuals mutually exchange their ideas, values, thoughts, feeling & actions with one or more people.
- ✓ The transfer of information from the sender to the receiver so that it is understood in the right context
- ✓ The process of initiating, transmitting & receiving information.
- ✓ The means of making the transfer of information productive & goal oriented.
- ✓ The process of sharing information, ideas and attitudes between individual.

Process of communication

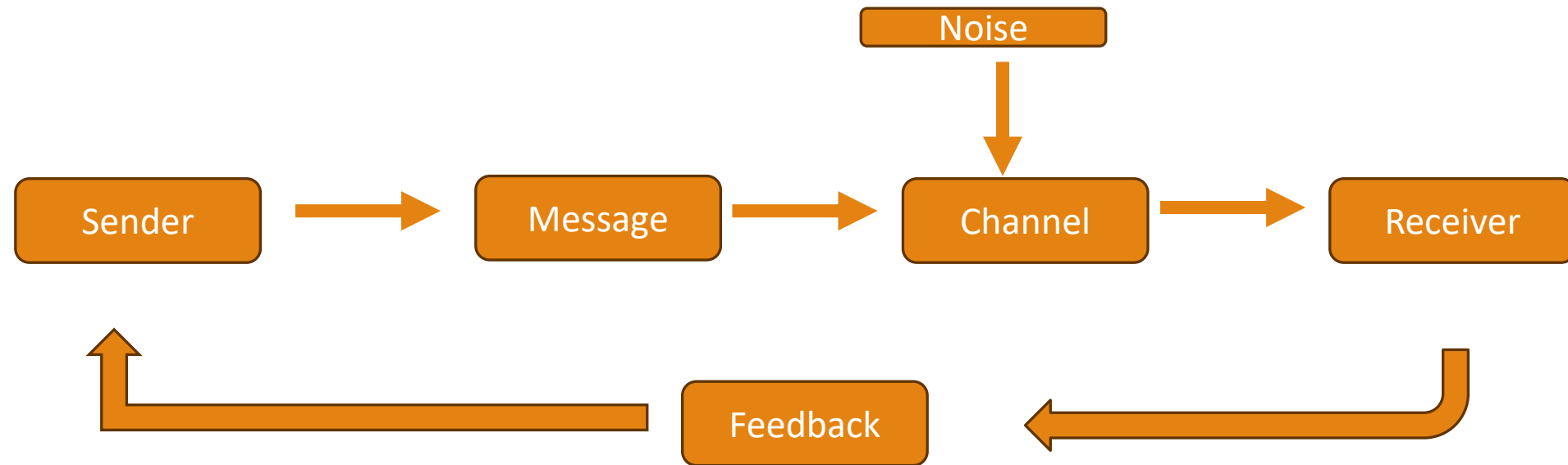


Fig 1: Designed by Protais Niyonshima

The main elements of the communication process

1. Referent

A referent is a person or a thing that motivates the sender (or receiver) to share information (message, objects, sounds, sights, time schedule, ideas, perceptions, sensation, emotion, odor, etc.) that may initiate communication.

2. Sender

A sender is a person who encodes & sends the message to the expected receiver through an appropriate channel.

A sender is the source of the message that is generated to be delivered to the receiver after appropriate stimulus from the referent.

3. Message

A message is the content of communication. It may contain verbal, nonverbal or symbolic language.

The perception and personal factors of the sender & receiver may sometimes distort this element, thus the intended outcome of communication may not be achieved.

4. Channel

A channel is a medium through which a message is sent or received between two or many people.

Different channels can be used to send or receive the message i.e.: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting.

In order to choose a pertinent channel of communication several factors must be considered: availability of channel(s), purpose, suitability, type of receiver, type of message, preference of sender and receiver, communication skills of the sender, cost, etc.

Classification of communication channels

- 1. Visual channel:** Facial expression, body language, posture, gestures, pictures, and written words, electronic mails, mass media, etc.
- 2. Auditory channel:** spoken words, sounds, telephone or mobile communications, delivering audio content (radio, voicemail), etc.
- 3. Tactile channel:** Touch sensations, therapeutic touch, etc.
- 4. Combined channel:** Audiovisual media, counseling a person with touch and spoken words.

5. Receiver

A receiver is an individual or a group of individuals intended to receive, decode and interpret the message sent by the sender/source of message. A receiver is also referred to as decoder.

He/she is expected to have the ability and skills to receive, decode and interpret the message.

6. Feedback

It is a return message from the receiver to the sender. It is an important element of the communication process because it proves that the receiver has received and understood the primary message sent by the sender.

A successful communication must be a two-way process where the sender sends the message and receives feedback from the receiver.

The feedback could be verbal and nonverbal.

Confounding elements

These elements are not a direct part of the flow of the communication process but influence the communication process significantly.

These elements are namely:

- ❖ **Interpersonal variables** of the sender and the receiver (*perception, belief, values, social cultural background, educational and developmental levels, emotion, gender, physical, mental health, etc.*).
- ❖ **Environment** where the communication process takes place. (*workplace, new places, noisy place, etc.*)

Types of communication

- Based on the means of delivering the message
- Based on the purpose of communication
- Based on the levels of communication
- Based on the pattern of communication

Based on the means of delivering the message

a) Verbal communication

It occurs through spoken or written medium.

It is a combination of several words used to convey a specific meaning, each word plays its role.

Some important elements of verbal communication are language, vocabulary, denotative and connotative meaning, pacing, intonation, clarity, consciousness, preciseness, comprehension, brevity, timing and relevance.

Cont'

Subtypes of verbal communication:

1. Spoken communication
2. Written communication
3. Telecommunication

Cont'

b)Nonverbal communication

This communication occurs without words; where the five senses and whole range of body movements, posture gesture, facial expressions and silence are used for sending and receiving the message.

Nonverbal communication is a more accurate way of communication because it conveys the true and intended meaning of the message.

Cont'

Nonverbal communication may be accomplished by the following means:

- ✓ Touch
- ✓ Eye contact
- ✓ Facial expression
- ✓ Posture
- ✓ Gait
- ✓ Gesture
- ✓ Physical appearance
- ✓ Sound
- ✓ Silence

Cont'

b) informal communication

Informal communication does not follow line of authority

Examples of informal communication are gossip, chitchat, and kitty parties

It is very fast and usually takes place in social groups like friends, family, peer groups, etc.

C) Therapeutic communication:

Therapeutic communication takes place between a health care professional and a patient, with the purpose of modifying the patient behaviour.

This is accomplished with repeated interaction using certain essential attribute such as trust, empathy, tenderness, concern and nonjudgmental attitude.

III. Based on the levels of communication

a) Intrapersonal communication

It takes place within an individual; it can also be referred to as a self-talk.

It is crucial because it provides a person with an opportunity to think before acting on something.

b) Interpersonal communication

It takes place whenever two or many people interact and exchange messages or ideas.

This is also one of the most common forms of communication in our daily lives.

Interpersonal communication may further be categorized into assertive, nonassertive and aggressive communication.

Cont'

c) Transpersonal communication

It takes place within a person's spiritual perspective.

The purpose of transpersonal communication is to realize selfhood, enhance spirituality and answer spiritual questions in nature.

Cont'

d) Small-group communication

It is when one interacts with two or many individuals face to face or through a medium of communication.

e) Public communication

Public is generally defined as a large group of people. Communication with such a large group of people is known as public communication.

Public communication requires essential skills to influence people at large and media materials to reach members of the public.

Cont'

f) Organizational communication

It takes place when individuals and groups within an organisation communicate with each other to achieve established organizational goals.

IV. Based on the pattern of communication

a) One-way communication

It takes place when a message is delivered to the audience from the communicator only without constant feedback.

One of the examples of one-way communication is a lecture delivered in a classroom.

Cont'

b) Two-way communication

It takes place when both a communicator and audience take part in the process.

The audience may raise questions and add information, ideas and opinions on the subject.

c) One-to-one communication

Communication between one sender and one recipient at one time is termed as one-to-one communication.

Example: A doctor and a patient in consultation session.

Cont'

d) One-to-many communication

Where one person communicates with many people at the same time, it is termed as one-to-many communication.

Example: In a TVET Campaign, a speaker addresses many people the intended goal of the campaign.

e) Many-to-one communication

Many-to-one communication takes place when several people communicate with one person at the same time.

Example: A panel of experts interviewing one person.

Facilitators of communication

Seven Cs of effective communication

- ❖ Completeness
- ❖ Clarity
- ❖ Courtesy
- ❖ Consideration
- ❖ Conciseness
- ❖ Concreteness
- ❖ Correctness

Other attributes

- Positive attitudes
- Improving communication skills
- Getting feedback of communication skills
- Goal-oriented communication
- Using creative alternative approaches
- Minimizing negative impact
- Warmth and friendliness
- Empathy
- Comfortable environment

Barriers of communication

1. Physiological barriers

- Poor retention due to memory problem
- Lack of attention
- Discomfort due to illness
- Poor sensory perception
- Hearing problems
- Poor listening skills
- Information overload
- Gender Physiological differences

2. Environmental barriers

- ❖ Loud background noise
- ❖ Poor lighting
- ❖ Uncomfortable setting
- ❖ Unhygienic surrounding and bar odor
- ❖ Very hot or cold room
- ❖ Distance

3. Psychological barriers

- Misperception and misunderstanding
- Distrust and unhappy emotions
- Emotional disturbances
- Psychotic or neurotic illness
- Worry and emotional disturbances
- Fear, anxiety and confused thinking

4. Social barriers

Difference in social norms, values and behaviour

Social taboos

Different social strata

5. Cultural barriers

Ethnic, religious, and cultural differences

Cultural tradition, values and behaviour.

6. Semantic barriers

- Languages barriers
- Faulty language translation
- Individual differences in expression and perception
- Past experiences of an individual failure to listen

7. Organisation barriers

- Organizational policy, rules and regulations
- Technical failure
- Time pressure
- Complexity of organisation structure due to hierarchy
- Size of the organisation

8. Communication process-related barriers

- ❖ Unclear and conflicting message
- ❖ Stereotypical approach
- ❖ Inappropriate channels
- ❖ Lack of or poor feedback

Methods to overcome barriers of communication

1. Methods to overcome physiological barriers

- Keep in each others retention and recollection abilities.
- Pay attention during the sharing of information
- Ensure the intactness of sensory perception.
- The limitation of hearing abilities must keep in min.
- Active listening
- Information overload must be avoided

2. Methods to overcome environmental barriers

- Good lighting must be ensured to facilitate nonverbal communication.
- A comfortable seating arrangement.
- A hygienic and odor-free environment.

3. Methods to overcome psychological barriers

- Happy and trustworthy manner
- Should not harbor negative emotions
- Avoid feeling of prejudice, resentment and antagonism
- Free from fear, anxiety and confusion.

4. Methods to overcome social barriers

- The difference in social norms, values and behaviour must be given consideration.
- Social beliefs must be kept in mind.

5. Methods to overcome cultural barriers

- Consider cultural differences
- Consider cultural traditions, values and behaviour

Cont'

6. Methods to overcome semantic barriers

- Use the same language
- Consider difference in the expression and perception of message

7. Methods to overcome organizational barriers

- Considered organizational policy, rules and regulations
- Organisation structure must be simple and noncomplex
- Large organisation must be divided into smaller subsets.

8. Methods to overcome communication process-related barriers

- An appropriate channel must be used.
- A stereotypical approach must be avoided in communication
- The message must be clear and nonconflicting
- Proper feedback must be ensured by the recipient.

Techniques of effective communication

I. Conversational skills

- Focusing
- Paraphrasing
- Sharing information
- Providing information
- Asking relevant question
- Clarifying and summarizing
- Sharing humor

II. Listening skills

- Active listening
- Using silence
- Listening with purpose
- Acknowledgement of message
- Giving feedback

III. Technical skills

- Using touch
- Using nonverbal skills
- Sharing feeling
- Sharing observations
- Sharing hope
- Presenting reality
- Sharing empathy

References

Birvenu (1987). Definition of Communication, In Doctor, R and A. Doctor, Principles and Practice of Business Communication, Bombay: Sheth Publishers.

Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, accessed on the 07th September 2023, from <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>

Masterson, J., Beebe, S., Watson, N., (1989). Invitation to effective speech communication. Scott, Foresman.

Thank you!