

COURSE TITLE
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Chapter 5
COMMUNICATION

Lecture 5 (week 5)

Introduction to Communication, Structure of Communication, Process of communication, Types and Levels of Communication and Barriers and Enhancement of Communication

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Learning Objective

- 5.1 Introduction to communication.
- 5.2 Structure of communication.
- 5.3 Process of communication.
- 5.4 Types and Levels of communication.
- 5.5 Barriers and Enhancement of communication

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

The term communication is derived from Latin word “communicare” which means to make common, mutual donation, building together a defense. Communication is the process of exchanging information between two or more people, through a common system of symbols. It involves transfer of meaning, if no information or ideas have not been conveyed, communication hasn’t taken place. Effective management is an output of effective communication. So, it is taken as the fundamental management function and lifeblood of any organization.

Without communication an organization would only be an assembly of men, material and processes which are inoperative. Organizational effectiveness depends upon the quality of communication. Managers have to communicate with subordinates and superiors. 50% to 90% of a manager’s time is spent communicating. [1] Communication involves the systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding. If communication stops, the organization will cease to exist. Communication is vital for the very existence of the organization.

Management needs to take employees in confidence and make them aware of organizational policies, problems and vision. Following points need interaction with employees for successful running of an organization [2]

- (a) Organizations policy and future plans
- (b) Results achieved in relation to the industry performance
- (c) Achievement of higher productivity
- (d) Industrial safety, health and welfare measures
- (e) Technical developments
- (f) Personal growth prospects

Features of communication

- The channels of communication must be clearly set and be known to all.
- Every member of the organization should be reached by some channel of communication.
- The line of communication should be as direct as possible.
- There should be no blockage in the line of communication and formal line should be used.
- The communicator should be highly skilled in the art of communication.
- The line of communication should be constantly kept open.
- Every communication should be authenticated.

Objectives of Communication

1. To keep employees abreast with external and internal environment.
2. Develop understanding and cordial relationship with management.
3. Development of team spirit, group task resolution and psychological bent of mind.
4. Promote creativity and innovativeness.
5. Develop social commitment among employees.
6. Make them aware of their rights, entitlements, and responsibilities.
7. Prepare employees to accept and implement change.
8. Prevent misinformation and counter rumours.
9. Promote participative type of leadership model.

Advantages

- Increase productivity
- Reduce stress
- Better understand what others are saying
- Better understand how to get your message across
- Enhance relationships

Characteristics

- Continuous process
- Complete system
- Interactive, timely and ever changing
- Mostly irreversible
- Intentional and unintentional
- Multi directional

5.2 STRUCTURE OF COMMUNICATION

The communication structure in an organization refers to the formal and informal channels of communication that exist between different levels of employees and departments. It defines the flow of information, the people involved in the process, and the procedures that are used to communicate information throughout the organization. [3]

1. Formal Structure

(a) Vertical Structure

- Top Down
- Down Top
- Both Ways

(b) Horizontal Structure

(c) Diagonal Structure

2. Informal Structure

- Grapevine

Formal Structure

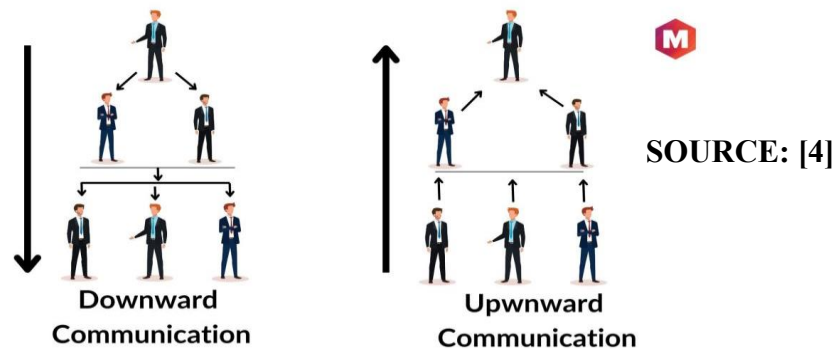
A. Vertical Structure

1. Downward (Top – Down) Communication

In this pattern the communication flows from superior to subordinates. Any communication that flows from a manager down the authority or along the chain of commands is downward communication. It is used to inform, direct, coordinate and evaluate subordinates. It is in the written form like policy letters, standing orders, staff regulations, handbooks, procedure, manuals and the like.

2. Upward (Down –Top) Communication

Managers rely on individuals below them for information. Reports are sent upwards in the authority hierarchy to inform higher management of progress towards goals and current problems. The flow of information from bottom to top helps the top management to know the actions, attitude, opinion and feelings of people. Hence upward communication is flow from subordinates to higher level managers.

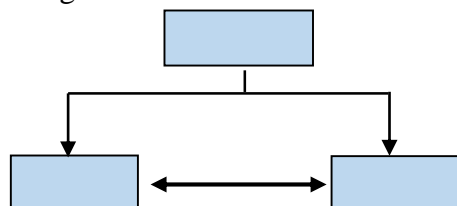


3. Both way Communication

The process of sharing information back and forth between two parties. In other words, it's a conversation where both the sender and receiver invite and offer feedback. When the communication is flown from both sides top level managers and the subordinates then it is taken as both way communication. Basically found in those organization which follows participative management.

B. Horizontal Structure

This type of communication refers to communication across departments or between people within different departments. It does not have a superior – subordinate relationship as downward and upward communication has. It is more informal in nature and is necessary in promoting a supportive organizational climate. It is necessary to save time and facilitate coordination.



C. Diagonal Communication

Diagonal communication in a workplace is when people from different levels or departments talk directly. It doesn't follow the conventional top-down or bottom-up patterns. It involves information moving sideways, cutting across different levels and departments. [5]



SOURCE: [5]

Informal Structure

It is that communication structure that is not approved by management and not defined by the structural hierarchy. Grapevine is most common kind of information structure almost present in any organization. When the formal channels fail or do not work properly and some over-smart people spread rumours, false and irresponsible statement or half-truths in all the directions. It is called the communication on the grapevine channel.

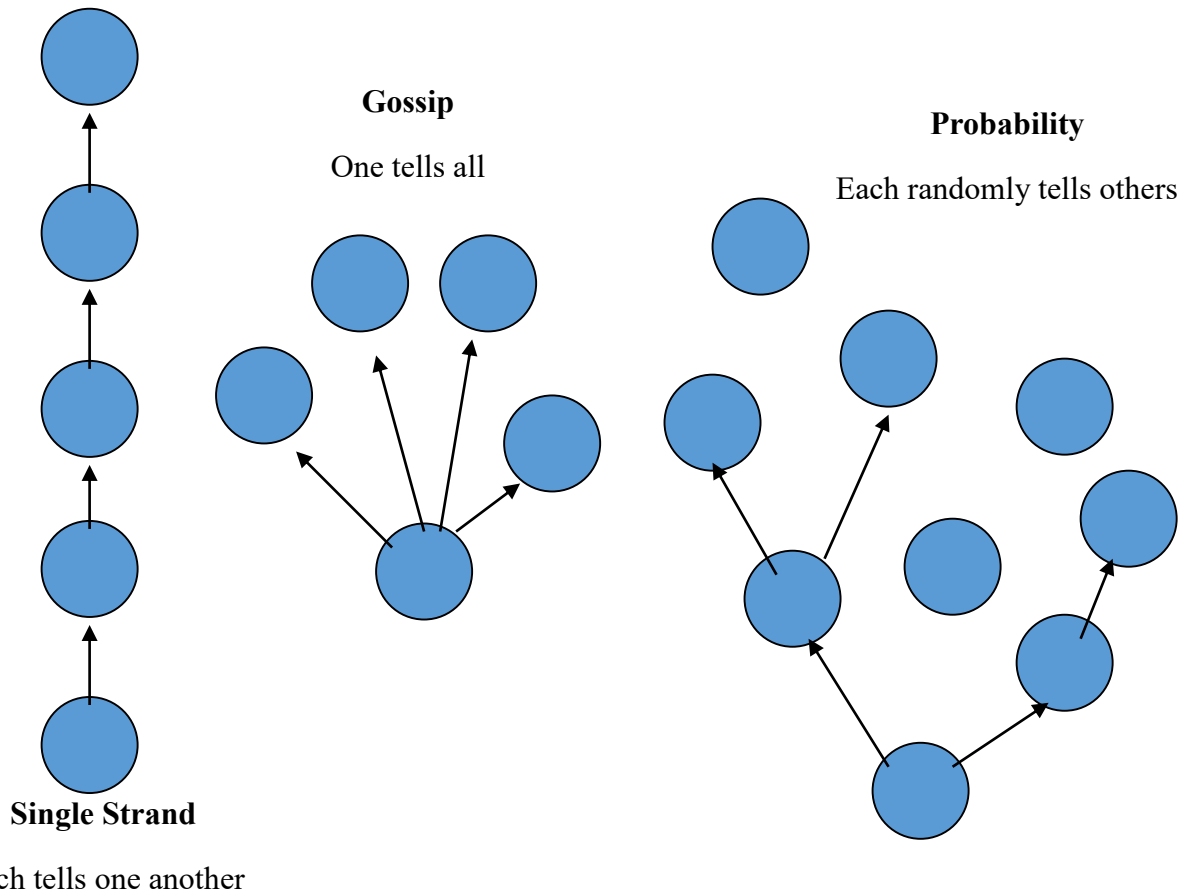
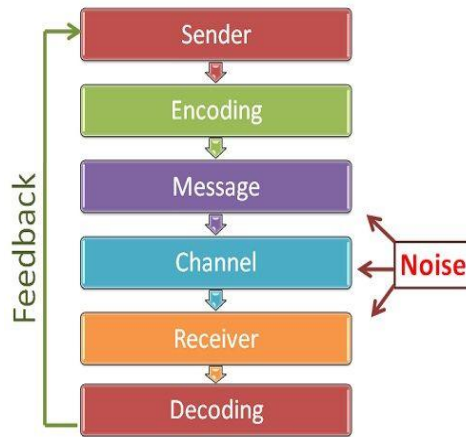


Fig: Forms of Informal Structures

5.3 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is the dynamic process of sending and receiving the message/information between two people. The sender conceptualizes the idea and sends it to the receiver by some medium/means. The most common ways/means to communicate is by speaking, writing or body language (physical gestures or signs or symbols)



SOURCE: [6]

Developing ideas by sender:

The communicator develops or conceptualizes an idea to be sent. It is also known as the planning stage since in this stage the communicator plans the subject matter of communication.

Encoding:

Encoding means converting or translation the idea into a perceivable form that can be communicated to others. The sender begins with the encoding process wherein he uses certain words or non-verbal methods such as symbols, signs, body gestures, etc. to translate the information into a message.

Selecting the medium:

Medium is the channel or means of transmitting the message to the receiver. Once the sender has encoded his into a message, the next step is to select a suitable medium for transmitting it to the receiver. The medium of communication can be speaking, writing, signaling, gesturing etc. Communicating with those outside the organization opens up further possibilities, such as news releases, press conferences, and advertising on television and radio or in magazines, in newspapers, and on the Internet. [7]

Receiving the message by receiver:

This stage simply involves the reception of sender's message by the receiver. The message can be received in the form of hearing, seeing, feeling and so on. The receiver is the person for whom the message is intended or targeted. He tries to comprehend it in the best possible manner such that the communication objective is attained. The degree to which the receiver decodes the message depends on his knowledge of the subject matter, experience, trust and relationship with the sender.

Decoding:

Decoding is the receiver's interpretation of the sender's message. Here the receiver converts the message into thoughts and tries to analyze and understand it. Effective communication can occur only when both the sender and the receiver assign the same or similar meanings to the message.

Feedback:

Feedback means receiver's response to sender's message. It increases the effectiveness of communication. It ensures that the receiver has correctly understood the message. Feedback is the essence of two-way communication.

Noise:

It is the disturbances that interfere with the transmission of a message. Presences of noise reduce the chance of good and effective communication.

5.4 TYPES AND LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

Types of Communication based on the communication channels are:

- Verbal Communication
- Non Verbal Communication

The choice as to which method to adopt would largely depend upon the location of the sender and receiver, ability, the nature of the message, urgency with which the information is required to be passed on and the cost involved in passing or receiving the information. [2]

1. Verbal Communication

It refers to the form of communication in which message is transmitted verbally. Communication is done by the word of mouth and a piece of writing. Divided into two parts

- Oral Communication and
- Written Communication

Oral Communication

Anything that emanates from the mouth is referred as oral communication. Spoken words are used. Includes face to face conversation, speech, telephonic conversation, television, voice etc. Communication is influenced by pitch, volume, speed, and clarity of speaking. Oral communication is the best way of transforming an individual with particular reference to attitude, beliefs, trust and faith. To make oral communication more effective monotonous speech should be avoided.

Oral conversations at the workplace may be formal or informal. In the workplace, oral communication is crucial for:

Meetings - can be formal and informal, depending on the participants and the nature of the discussion.

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Videoconferencing - it enables oral communication with participants from around the world.

Telephone - telephone communications are regular in the workplace, especially within office buildings.

Formal Communications - oral communication with managers and clients are frequent at the workplace. Such conversations are formal and precise.

Advantages of Oral Communication

- It brings quick feedback
- Better relationships
- Time saving
- Effective tool for group communication
- Economical
- Allows to measure effectiveness immediately.
- It's the only way out during emergency.

In a face to face conversation, by reading facial expression and body language one can trust what's being said or not.

Disadvantages of Oral Communication

- Lack of documentation
- Distortion in passing the message.
- No legal validity
- Possibility of misunderstanding.
- Unsuitable for long messages.
- It is constrained by physical barriers.
- Not effective when the target group is spread out.
- In a face to face discussion user is unable to think about what he is delivering, so this can be counted as fault.

Written Communication

Written signs and symbols are used for the communication. Message can be transmitted via email, fax, letter, report, memo etc. Most common form of communication used in the business. Written communication is generally in the form of standing orders, policy documents, orders, instructions, notes, memos, formal letter, demi official letters etc.

Advantages of Written Communication

- Ready reference
- Legal defense

- Mass access
- Suitable for distance communication
- Message can be edited and revised.
- Provides record and back up.
- Enables receivers to fully understand it and send appropriate feedback.

Disadvantages of Written Communication

- Limited to literature world.
- Time consuming
- Lot of paper work
- Need expertise in expression
- Doesn't bring instant feedback.
- It takes more time in composing a written message.
- Number of people struggles for writing ability.
- No immediate clarification

2. Non Verbal Communication

Nonverbal messages are transmitted through gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, touch, posture and through body language. It is all about the body language of the speaker. Nonverbal communication plays an important role in how people interact with one another. It includes three elements:

Appearance: clothing, hairstyle, neatness,

Body language: gesture, facial expression, postures

Sound: voice, tone, volume, speech rate.

LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION

1. Intra personal Communication

Communication that occurs in your own mind. This type of communication is known as self-talk and is the internal process that people use to think, reflect, and make sense of their experiences. Example – what to eat or wear, where to go in weekend etc. It can be considered surface-level communication as both the sender and the receiver of the message is the same person.

2. Interpersonal Communication

Communication between two people is known as interpersonal communication (IPC). It is most often face to face conversation. It can be exchange of ideas, knowledge, instruction, and information between two people. Immediate feedback is possible. Both sender and receiver are present. Technology mediated IPC is through internet, telephone, mobile etc.

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3. Small Group Communication

Communication within formal or informal groups or team. It is a group interaction that results in decision making, problem solving and discussion within an organization.

4. Mass Communication

Mass communication, process of sharing information with a large audience. Mass communication is accomplished via mass media—that is, technology capable of sending messages to great numbers of people, many of whom are unknown to the sender (e.g., television). [8]

5.5 BARRIERS AND ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNICATION

When a communication is made by a sender, it must be received correctly by the receiver. Message must be interpreted by the receiver as has been intended by the sender. There are various problems like the message does not reach the receiver, problems of encoding and decoding, faulty selection of channel, wrong language or the interpretation of the message. [2] The list can be long and unending. These problems are called ‘Noise’ in communication. These problems can be classified as various barriers

1. Organizational Barriers

These barriers arise when duties and line of authority are not clearly defined.

- Policy
- Rules and Regulations
- Facilities
- Complex organization
- Status and position

2. Emotional / Psychological barriers

- Poor pronunciation
- Confused thinking
- Communication overload
- Attitude
- Fear and anxiety
- Suspicious, jealousy, anger
- Lack of interest and lack of listening
- Inattention

3. Physical Barrier

- Poor timing
- Choice of channel
- Inadequate information
- Information overload
- Poor hearing
- Distances

4. Mechanical Barriers

- Non availability of proper machines
- Presence of defective machine
- Interruption
- Power Failure

6. Semantic barriers

- Symbol with different meaning
- Badly expressed message
- Faulty translation
- Unclarified assumption
- Specialist's language

5. Perceptual Barriers

- Lack of common experience
- Linguistic: different language and vocabulary.
- Low IQ
- From receiver side: interrupting the speaker, asking too many questions.
- From sender side: unclear message, incomplete sentence.

ENHANCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Use Feedback

Many communication problems can be directly attributed to misunderstanding and inaccuracies. These problems are less likely to occur if the manager uses the feedback loop in communication process. Feedback can help sender to know about the real response of the receiver

Listen Actively

If the receiver doesn't give priority and listen to the sender, he/she will not be able to capture the message. Hence receiver should actively listen to what the sender is saying in order to get the true meaning of information.

Simplify languages

Since language is the barrier to effective communication, managers should choose words and structure their messages in ways that will make those message clear and understanding to the receiver. The managers need to simplify his or her language and consider the audience to whom the message is directed to so the language will be tailored to the receivers.

Constrain Emotions

Emotions can severely cloud and distort the transference of meaning. A manager who is emotionally upset over an issue will not be able to express his message effectively. Hence he should transmit the message when he has regained his composure.

Avoiding overload of information

Information flow should be regulated by providing it on time. The message should be up to date and not sent the message at the same time. If the information is timely it will help in avoiding overload of information at the same time

Empathy (Fellow feeling)

It is the ability to put oneself on the other person's role and to assume the viewpoints and emotions of that person. It requires communicators to place themselves in the receivers' positions and anticipate how the message is likely to be decoded. It helps in decreasing many barriers to effective communication

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