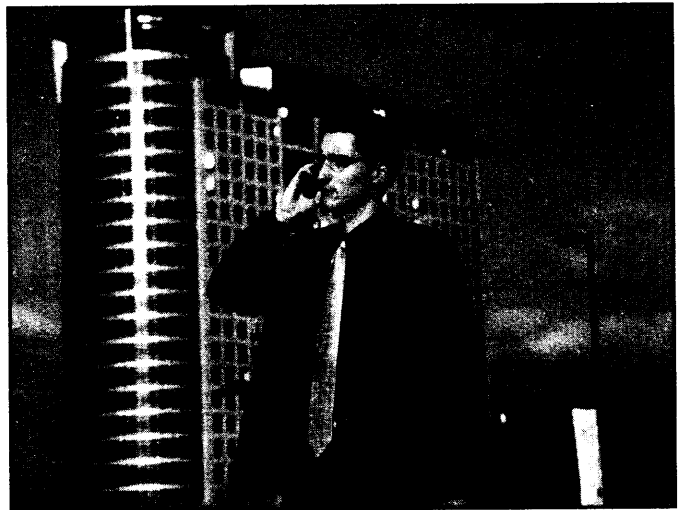# Theory of Communication

CHAPTER 1

Profile of an Effective
Communicator—
A Case Study

CHAPTER 2

Nature and Process
of Communication

CHAPTER 3

Organisational
Communication

People don't get along
Because they fear each other

People fear each other
Because they don't know each other

They don't know each other
Because they have not
Communicated with each other.

—Martin Luther King

Chapter 1

Profile of an Effective Communicator—A Case Study

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify attributes necessary for effective communication.
- Understand the role of language skills in communication.
- Know the significance of speaker–listener relationships in determining the tone of communication.
- Interpret the message conveyed by gestures, dress, and demeanour.
- Learn the art of resolving conflicts.
- Understand the role of personality in communication.

It's not what you say; it's how you say it—because personality always wins the day.
                                                    -Arthur Miller

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DEVOX (INDIA) LIMITED

■ The Case of a Less Expensive Customer

[*Sunday, 11:40 A.M. The showroom of Devox sports shoes and sportswear in a posh market of a metro city. Mr and Mrs Oberoi walk towards the showroom from the parking lot holding a box of Devox shoes. Mr Oberoi is an HRD executive with a multinational company. Mr Oberoi is sporting a brick red T-shirt and a pair of khaki long shorts and sandals. Mrs Oberoi is wearing a light blue plain salwar kameez. She has a shopping bag and a small purse. Mr Oberoi enters the shop first as Mrs Oberoi decides to stay on for a while to do some window shopping. On entering the shop, he is greeted by Rahul, the young sales executive trainee, who is on a visit to the showroom from the headquarters.*]

Rahul:	Good morning, Sir! May I help you?
Mr Oberoi:	Oh, yes. Well, I had bought this pair of shoes last Sunday. I have just worn it twice. I have a feeling that they are from a "seconds" lot. (Tries to hand over the box, but Rahul has his hands behind his back).
Rahul:	Sir, we don't stock "seconds" in this showroom.
Mr Oberoi:	(Opening the box of shoes) It did strike me here itself but I was more keen on the colour; maybe, therefore, I overlooked it. (Pointing at the toes of the shoes) There is a difference between the two shoes here. The stripes are not aligned identically. It seems to be a manufacturing defect.
Rahul:	(Looking at the shoes but still with his hands behind the back) Sir, this is the way they are designed. It is not a manufacturing defect.
Mr Oberoi:	(Getting closer to Rahul and trying to hand over the pair to him to have a look). This can't be the design. It is an alignment defect and it looks like a "seconds" pair.
Rahul:	(Still not taking the pair) Sir, I can show you other pairs also. They are all made the same way. (He asks one of the shop assistants to get a couple of pairs of the same make, and moves on to attend other customers. When he returns after about six minutes,

he finds Mr Oberoi trying a different pair) See, I said that they were all made the same way. It is the design, not a manufacturing defect.

Mr Oberoi: Then I have a feeling that this showroom is selling defective pieces. They are not from the fresh stock.

Rahul: I told you as a policy, we do not keep any "seconds" in this showroom. In fact, we don't have much of "seconds" stock because our production line is most modern.

Mr Oberoi: (Picking up his pair of shoes) Anyway, I want to return them. I don't want to wear a defective pair.

Rahul: Sorry, sir. We can't take it back. We don't have a policy of accepting sold goods back.

Mr Oberoi: What! (raising his voice) First you do not accept that this is a defective pair. And, then, you tell me that I can't return it. What kind of shop is this?

Rahul: (Looking grim but speaking steadily) Sir, I told you that they are not defective. Secondly, you have already used them. How can I take them back?

[*At this moment, Mr Sharma, the manager of the showroom, comes from his cabin, notices them and walks up to Mr Oberoi.*]

Mr Sharma: May I help you, gentleman?

Rahul: He is Mr ...(trying to introduce Mr Oberoi)

Mr Oberoi: (Interrupting Rahul) I'm Oberoi. I bought this pair (showing him the shoes) last week from your showroom. I find that there is something wrong with the design (points to the toes). In fact, a couple of my friends pointed it out.

Mr Sharma: Did you notice this while buying them?

Mr Oberoi: I noticed it but didn't bother much.

Mr Sharma: Why?

Mr Oberoi: Maybe I was concentrating on the colour.

Mr Sharma: Well, Mr Oberoi, this is no design or manufacturing defect. On the contrary, this is the way they are made to look. You can see that all of them (pointing at the pairs lying on the floor) have the same pattern.

Mr Oberoi:	But, they look old. And, I don't want to wear something, which look like "seconds".
Mr Sharma:	Mr Oberoi, we don't have a policy of ...
Mr Oberoi:	(Interrupting him) Then, I am leaving them here (drops the pair on the floor). Please do whatever you want to do with them.
Mr Sharma:	(Looking down at the pair for a while) Do you have a receipt?
Mr Oberoi:	(Searching for a while in his wallet and the box of shoes) Let me check with my wife (and turns to look for her; she is coming towards them). You have the receipt for these shoes?
Mrs Oberoi:	No, I don't think you gave it to me (and starts looking into her purse). No.
Mr Oberoi:	I don't know. I may have left it at home.
Mr Sharma:	Please give us a moment (and asks Rahul to accompany him to his cabin).
Mrs Oberoi:	What are they saying?
Mr Oberoi:	They don't have a policy of taking sold goods back.
Mrs Oberoi:	I told you; they won't take them back.
Mr Oberoi:	Is it? They will have to take them back; you wait and see.
	[*In the meanwhile, Rahul emerges from behind the shop and approaches Mr Oberoi.*]
Rahul:	See, we will have to check with our head office regarding this. You may find out after two days.
Mr Oberoi:	I can't come on weekdays.
Rahul:	Then, next Sunday?
Mr Oberoi:	But, I have other things to do on Sunday.
Rahul:	Then, you can find out over phone (and gets him a card with the phone number).
Mr Oberoi:	(Instead of taking the card, he takes out his own business card from the wallet and gives it to him) Why don't you inform me?
Rahul:	(Taking the card) Sure, we will. But, in case we are not able to get through to you, you could also try.

Mr Oberoi:	(Reluctantly) O.K. (takes the card and turns to exit).
Rahul:	(Picking up the pair from the floor) You may keep them with you in the meanwhile.
Mr Oberoi:	(Moving back towards him) What will I do with them?
Rahul:	Sir, unless and until I have heard from our head office, I can't keep them here. Secondly, in the absence of any receipt, they might get misplaced.
Mr Oberoi:	(Looking hard at him and thinking for a while) O.K. But do let me know soon.
Rahul:	(Packing the pair back in its box and handing it over to him) Sure.
	[On the advice of Mr Sharma, next day, Rahul speaks to Mr Khare, General Manager (Sales) at the headquarters. Mr Khare asks him to fax the details. Rahul sends the following communication:]

Dear Sir,   12 June 2003

A customer, Mr Sunil Oberoi, wants to return a pair of shoes, which he had bought from this showroom a week back. He claims that there is a manufacturing defect in the design. In fact, he is accusing us of selling seconds from this shop. Mr Sharma and I tried to convince him about our policies; but all in vain. Finally, to prevent him from creating an ugly scene, we promised that we would let him know our decision after consulting head office. I have also been successful in convincing him to take the pair back with him. But, he will certainly want to get an answer from us within a couple of days.

Please advise.

Regards,

(Rahul)

[*The following day being Tuesday, Rahul leaves the town on an official tour. On Wednesday morning, Mr Sharma finds the following message from Mr Khare on the fax machine*]

"If he is a Rs. 4,500-customer, don't ask any questions, take the shoes back, give him a new pair, and salute him. But if he is a Rs. 1,250-customer, then tell him clearly that it is not possible.

Please remember that customer is king; but, kings are also big and small and rich and poor."

DEVOX (INDIA) LTD—AN ANALYSIS

■ P rofile of an Effective Communicator

In "The Case of a Less Expensive Customer", who is the most effective communicator? And why? Let us see.

This question was taken up and answered by over 500 participants in various communication workshops. And, 70 per cent of the participants considered Rahul to be the most effective communicator. Why?

Rahul is convincing, polite, calm, cool, flexible, smart, clever, uses proper gestures, gives options, behaves as a professional salesperson — his communication is audience conscious. He knows what, when, and how much to say.

An important dimension of business communication is the *"you" attitude* of the speaker. The interest of the listener/receiver must be the informing principle of the message. Rahul observes this principle by finally making the reluctant Mr Oberoi keep back the pair, till they hear from the head office. Mr Oberoi would not have appreciated Rahul's first reason for not taking back the pair—"Sir, unless and until I have heard from my head office, I can't accept them back!" But, the second reason given by Rahul concerns Mr Oberoi's interest, hence motivates him effectively—"Secondly, in absence of any receipt, they might just get misplaced." So, if they get misplaced, in other words lost, it will be Mr Oberoi's loss owing to his own fault of not producing the receipt. Rahul is successful in manipulating the whole situation effectively through his ability to communicate not just from his point of view but from the listener's point of view too.

Rahul's *audience-directed communication* is seen also in his assurance of informing Mr Oberoi over phone, but he insists, "in case we are not able to get through to you, you could also try." The phrase, 'not able to get through to you' conveys the negative possibility of not informing as an unintended circumstance. He, thus, requests Mr Oberoi to try and find out. Reluctantly, Mr Oberoi accepts Rahul's suggestion, in his own interest. An important dimension for communication to be convincing is its *tone of sincerity*. The message must be perceived by the audience as a true and reliable statement of intentions. We find this ring of reassuring sincerity in Rahul's final "Sure" to Mr Oberoi.

An important dimension of business communication is the "you" attitude of the speaker.

The next most central player in this case is Mr Oberoi. Mr Oberoi is confident and persisting. He has the air of a well–dressed, relaxed multinational company executive. But, he is not able to keep his cool while pressing his point. He flares up. He is impatient. Instead of being a persuasive communicator, he tries to force the issue in a way that is not in good taste.

To some extent, Mr Oberoi's attitude is reflected in his dress, choice of colours (brick red and khaki) and the style of shorts (long) and sandals (casual). He is equally casual in his argument. He jumps from one argument to another. First, the manufacturing defect, then "seconds"; and, finally, his own choice of not wearing something that looks so old. Mr Oberoi's argument that he had noticed it but did not bother much is not very convincing. Moreover, if he did not bother much, then why should he accept other people's observations.

Mr Oberoi's approach and attitude are marked by his sense of being a customer; a buyer who he assumes always enjoys a superior voice in a deal. He himself is an HRD executive with a multinational company. But, he lacks the most important dimensions of communication — *coherence, logic,* and *tone of persuasive reasoning.* He is not persuasive enough. For he assumes that as a customer he is always right. His conversation with Mrs Oberoi, who claims to have foretold him that "they won't take them back", shows that he believes that things can be forced. First, he questions the validity of the real/factual situation, then challenges the possible end. "Is it? They will have to take them back, you will see." There are the words of claims instead of negotiations.

Throughout, Mr Oberoi exhibits a sense of arrogance, which really acts to hide his helplessness in the given situation. He says, almost as a helpless child, "Anyway, I want to return them!" And, when he fears failure, he raises his voice and declaims "What!" questioning the absurdity of the whole situation. Mr Oberoi becomes emotive. He betrays his weaknesses. In sheer disgust, he gives up the argument and his purpose of changing the pair by dropping them at the floor and saying, "Please do whatever you want to do with them."

Obviously, at this point, Mr Oberoi has completely failed as an effective communicator. We know that communication is successful only when the purpose is fulfilled. The purpose of communication may be to inform, persuade, or motivate to a desired action. In each situation/case, there is a positive change intended to be brought

The purpose of communication may be to inform, persuade or motivate to a desired action.

about in the audience/listener or the receiver of the communication—change of attitude, or perception, or belief in the target audience in a desired manner. So, in the ultimate analysis, all business communication is manipulative, purposive, and goal-directed. Therefore, the measure of communication effectiveness depends on the extent to which the final goal is achieved.

Mr Oberoi is a case in point. Does he succeed in his purpose? Is he really able to spell out what exactly he wanted to get done? Does he want to return the pair and get back his money? Or, does he want to get the pair replaced/changed for a fresh pair of the same quality and price? He is not exactly precise in his communication. He allows the argument of "seconds" to develop into the final issue without getting to the real purpose of his coming back. From his talk with Mrs Oberoi you may say that his purpose was to see that "they (the shop) take them (the pair) back". What, in other words, he intended was to return them as he says to Rahul, "And then, you tell me that I cannot return it".

Also, Mr Oberoi is not consistent in his reasoning. He first points at the possible manufacturing defect, "The stripes are not aligned identically." Later on, he shifts to another reason: "They look old". Mr Oberoi's argument varies from manufacturing defect to seconds stock to old pair. One has to be convincing in one's argument. To convince, we have to give facts. Facts are objective and certain. They are not based on the feelings or wishes of the speaker or listener. Unfortunately, from the very beginning, Mr Oberoi gives subjective reasons. His reasons are always preceded by a qualifying subjective statement. "I have a feeling..." or "It seems to be...". Now 'feeling' is not 'thinking' just as 'seems' is not 'reality'. They lack the necessary logical force of an argument based on objective facts, verifiable and demonstrable. The use of such modifiers may help the speaker sound polite, but it certainly weakens the logic and factual strength of the statement of an evidence.

The measure of communication effectiveness depends on the extent to which the final goal is achieved.

In contrast to Mr Oberoi's expressions, we see that Rahul makes categorical statements that are assertive in nature. "Sir, we don't have "seconds" stock in this showroom. "Sir, this is the way they are designed. It is not a manufacturing defect."

Throughout, Rahul is categorical and brief. We can appreciate the difference in the force of these two kinds of statements by looking at the following conversation between Rahul and Mr Oberoi—

Mr Oberoi :   Then, I have a feeling this showroom is selling defective pieces. They are not fresh stocks.

Rahul: I told you. As a policy, we do not keep "seconds" pairs in company's showroom. In fact, we do not have much of "seconds" stock because our production line is most modern.

The difference is obvious and it lies in the nature of the language used by the two speakers.

Hence, one of the very basic dimensions of effective communication is the knowledge and use of proper language for a specific purpose. Just as communication is always purposive, language is also purposive. Therefore, we have to study the relation between language and the purpose of its use. The purpose can be to inform, to persuade, to create, or to argue. One can use language by combining some of these purposes. One can inform as well as persuade. Later, we shall examine the role of appropriate language in communication. Here, we should see that Rahul's use of spoken and written English is characterized by a certain style, which is simple, brief, exact, and professional in tone. His purpose was to convince Mr Oberoi that the company showroom was not dealing in "seconds" and that he would check with their head office regarding the possibility of taking back Mr Oberoi's used pair. And, with Mr Khare, his purpose was to inform him about the whole incident and seek advice on the matter.

The use of such modifiers may help the speaker sound polite, but it certainly weakens the logic and factual strength of the statement of an evidence.

Some 20 per cent of the participants thought that, as a communicator, Mr Sharma was more successful than others. For, he is clear, both about his role and his purpose. He is polite, firm, and a better listener. Listening is also an effective form of communicating. Not communicating deliberately is, as in Mr Sharma's case, also purposive. He is strategic in his intervention. Often to help out rather than join in the issue. He is the manager, conscious of his role to help resolve the problem at the conflicting stage. As a strategy, he does not directly contradict Mr Oberoi's complaint. He does not begin by telling Mr Oberoi that he (Mr Oberoi) was wrong, that there was no manufacturing defect in the particular pair bought by him. Instead, in a soft manner, he asks Mr Oberoi, "You had not seen it at the time of buying them." And, he puts in his "why"? but only after first giving Mr Oberoi a chance to tell his point. That shows Mr Sharma's ability as a questioning communicator.

Generally, one tends to sound quite rude or offensive when the interrogative mode is used. You can see the difference in the tone

by combining Mr Sharma's two statements into a single question. "Why you had not seen it at the time of buying them?" By doing so, you change the very nature, feel, and tone of Mr Sharma's statement. Mr Sharma's first question is a questioning observation, not a direct question. "You had not seen it at the time of buying them?" It does not question the ability of Mr Oberoi as an observant, careful buyer. That would have hurt Mr Oberoi, who thought there was something wrong with the design of the shoes even though only when a couple of his friends pointed that out. So, Mr Sharma questions Mr Oberoi's concerns, and not his power of observation. He does not embarrass Mr Oberoi as a customer and allows him to arrogate over his choice of colour.

Here, it looks that Mr Sharma knows the strategies of effective communication. He does not contradict. He does not go about convincing Mr Oberoi that there was no design or manufacturing defect. On the contrary, he points out that it was a deliberate, patterned shape. As a result, Mr Oberoi gives in, and shifts to a new argument of the pair looking old. It is essential to notice the psychology of the customer who claims to reject the pair for he does not want to wear something, that can be passed off as "seconds".

Again, Mr Sharma's communication strategy is to be noted. He does not directly tell Mr Oberoi that it was not a "seconds" pair. Instead, he responds impersonally. He does not even say 'we do not keep...' or 'our policy'. He politely informs Mr Oberoi about the company's policy. This impersonal communication is best suited to negative situations.

Another strategy used by Mr Sharma is to divert the topic of discussion or contention at a crucial juncture. When Mr Oberoi dumps the pair on the floor and says, "Please do whatever you want to do with them", he is obviously frustrated to the extent of feeling helpless in the given situation. Here, Mr Sharma moves from the shoes to the question of the receipt. This is a psychological move. It enthuses Mr Oberoi as a positive possible condition to return the pair. But, as Mr Oberoi says he does not have the receipt with him, Mr Sharma dramatically withdraws from the scene by taking Rahul to his cabin. By doing so, he gives Mr Oberoi the impression that he is going to further discuss the possible way of helping him.

By creating a time gap in the communication situation, Mr Sharma enables Rahul to return to Mr Oberoi with the final resolution of the situation. Here, Rahul's communication to Mr Oberoi is activated by involving Mr Oberoi as an interested

participant whose interest is being ensured by the communicator—
"See, we will have to check with our head office regarding this.
You may find out after two days." The use of 'see' directly involves
Mr Oberoi in the situation as an understanding participant who is
being persuaded to believe that, at their own level, they would have
taken back the pair, but, as required by the company's policy and
practice, they are unable to do so. However, they are ready to help
him by referring the matter to their head office.

What about the rating of other characters in the case. Some 10
per cent of the participants considered Mr Khare to be the most
effective communicator. He is brief, has clarity of policy; is
humorous and decisive, certain and firm, and above all, is prompt
and unimposing in his role as a final adviser in the case. He offers
specific guidelines to be followed by Rahul, according to the status
of the customer.

The other perspective is that Mr Khare is professional in his
advice. He communicates as a senior to a junior. He uses assertive
sentences. His advice to Rahul appears to be an order rather than a
piece of simple advice. He uses jargon to justify his discrimination
between rich and poor customers. 'Customer is king' is a cliche.
But, Mr Khare's shrewdness is communicated through his use of
jargon to apply common sense to marketing policy. A big and rich
king to be saluted and the small and poor to be simply shown the
door.

> The customer is king. A big and rich king ought to be saluted and the small and poor to be simply shown the door.

The final character in the case is Mrs Oberoi. She shares a brief
verbal communication in the situation. But, we receive many details
about her through her non-verbal communication mode. For
example, Mrs Oberoi chooses to stay away from the scene of
dialogue. Her silence is deliberate. For, it communicates that she
knew that it would be of no purpose to try to return the pair. "I told
you; they won't take them back," she tells Mr Oberoi towards the
end of the negotiations. Her clothes and purse communicate her
nature and purpose of coming out with her husband. She had come
with him to do her own shopping. Her decision to stay out for a
while appeared to be for some window-shopping. But, in the context
of the total situation, her staying away seems to be a deliberate
decision to allow Mr Oberoi speak for himself. For, she was not
herself of the view that the shoes could be returned. It is significant
that she joins Mr Oberoi only when he is left alone. And her opening
utterance to her husband, "What are they saying?" shows her

Verbally, we find spoken and written forms of communication used to exchange thoughts, inform, argue, convince, advise, and instruct.

questioning mind and cool understanding of facts as they are. Perhaps, she does not share Mr Oberoi's belief that "They will have to take them back; you will see."

Mrs Oberoi uses short, assertive sentences. Her words, "I told you" and "they won't take them back" have the tone of certainty. She is factual. She thinks and speaks more like Rahul than Mr Oberoi.

Rahul's ability to communicate in writing is seen in his fax to Mr Khare. In this fax, the details of the incident, which was all oral communication, are put into written form of communication. It gives an accurate account of the incident. It is brief and to the point. Its language is simple and conversational. Its short sentences give the expression certain raciness, a smooth flow of ideas. The use of connectives, such as 'in fact', 'finally', and 'but', gives his writing coherence and logic.

His written communication is a factual reporting of the incident. In a single chronologically organized paragraph, Rahul is able to convey the total situation accurately as it really happened, developed, and what the pending decisions were.

What is important in Rahul's language, both spoken and written, is his use of assertive form of sentences and choice of words. This characteristic of his language is related to his personality as a rational and cool-headed person. His professional training and culture as a salesperson actuate his communication with his customer, Mr Oberoi, and his senior, Mr Khare. All along, he is conscious of his relationship with his customer. This is why he uses a courteous idiom of 'Sir' in his conversation with Mr Oberoi. He impresses us as an effective communicator because he is able to dramatize his personality through language and comes off a well organized, clear headed, smart sales executive.

All these characters communicate verbally and non-verbally. Verbally, we find spoken and written forms of communication used to exchange thoughts, inform, argue, convince, advise, and instruct. But, the verbal communication is given its full force and meaning by the personality of the communicator. The speaker's dress, gestures, body language, tone, clarity of approach, understanding of subject matter of communication, silence, humour, assertiveness and aggressiveness — all combine to constitute the personality of the communicator in a certain context and relationship with the receiver or audience, determining the sense of the total message communicated.

Verbal communication is given its full force and meaning by the personality of the communicator.

Further, the effectiveness of communication depends upon the kind

of personality that communicates. Whether it is an "I" personality or a "you" personality or an "it" personality. And, accordingly the communication will be, in the words of Walker Gibson, "tough", "sweet", or "stuffy". Gibson believes that even unconsciously when a communicator chooses certain words and not others, and he prefers certain organisations of words to other possible organisations, he projects a personality, "with a particular centre of concern and a particular relation to the person he is addressing". Such self-dramatisations in language are known as style. We believe that the speaker or writer, according to his personality chooses his style of verbal and non-verbal communication to purposively establish a particular centre of interest and relationship with the audience. In other words, his entire act of communication is the index of his mind, thoughts, concerns, and attitude towards his audience, himself and his subject. That is to say, his whole personality is at work when he seeks to perform as an effective communicator.

The effectiveness of communication depends upon the kind of personality that communicates.

Summary

- This chapter comprises a case study and its analysis.
- The case introduces you to all the essential attributes necessary for effective oral, non-verbal, and written communication.
- It focuses on the role of personality in communication.
- The analysis brings out the art of resolving conflicts. It shows how our attitude determines the tone of communication.
- Further the analysis explains the role of language skills in communication.

Review Questions

1. Write a note on the important characteristics of a successful communicator.
2. Do language skills contribute to the effectiveness of communication? Discuss.
3. Based on your study of the Devox case, discuss the strong points of Rahul and Mr Sharma as communicators.
4. Discuss the importance of tone in oral communication.
5. Briefly discuss the part you think personality plays in communication.
6. Discuss the message you have received through the non-verbal mode about different characters in the given case.

Chapter 2

Nature and Process of Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Realise the pitfalls of poor communication.
- Know the principal concepts of communication.
- Understand the communication process and its elements.
- Know why communication succeeds or fails.
- Recognise the techniques that help in communicating a message accurately.
- Understand some basic facts about communication.

For communication to be effective, there has to be both information and meaning. And meaning requires communication.

-Peter F Drucker

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Human beings are poor communicators. The irony is we hardly ever realise that when we fail to achieve our objective in relationships, negotiations, or decision-making, it is, to quite an extent, owing to a failure in communicating our purpose and ideas accurately to the others involved.

It may be a failure in terms of the content of the message or the form of the message/communication, or both.

Instances of such failures in communication are common in personal and organisational communications. You may have heard your colleagues or friends remark—

"Sorry, I did not realise that you wanted me to..."

Or, "I would have changed the arrangement, but nobody told me that it was to be changed in this way."

Or, "I did not know you wanted me to ..."

Or, "But what was the point of this discussion..."

Such remarks show communication failures. And when communication fails, the intended purpose is affected.

Each of the above remarks indicates the regret and disappointment felt by the receiver of the communication for having failed to provide the communicator with the expected performance. For example—

A vice-president of a company asked his secretary to call an urgent meeting of all the managers. But the VP was surprised to find that the meeting had been fixed for the next morning. The secretary thought the word "urgent" meant "serious" and not "immediate".

In the above instance, the receiver missed the purpose of communication because the VP did not clearly and precisely specify the time of the meeting. The secretary must have regretted her failure to accomplish the intended purpose. Sometimes, the failure can be very disappointing. Consider the following case—

Vinay Prasad is an assistant engineer with NTPC, Delhi. He specialises in high voltage power generation. He reads about an upcoming international power conference in Chennai. He is keen on attending it. He immediately writes to his chief power engineer Mr Ashok Jha, describing the conference.

Human beings are poor communicators.

> The Chief Power Engineer   12 Aug. 2003
>
> An international conference on power generation which would be of great interest to us is being held in Chennai. The enclosed brochure shows that the technical information to be presented in the conference would be of great help in our upcoming projects. The registration fee is just Rs. 5,000 and the cost of travel and stay about Rs. 8,000. Hence, only Rs. 13, 000 will be required. I am informing you about the conference now, so that you can take a decision in time for me to make necessary arrangements for train/flight bookings and stay.
>
> Vinay Prasad

The chief power engineer was equally thrilled to receive Vinay Prasad's memo and reverted immediately—

> Vinay Prasad   13 Aug. 2003
>
> Thanks for informing me about the conference in Chennai. I will certainly attend it. Please make all the necessary arrangements for me as suggested in your memo.
>
> Ashok Jha
>
> (based on cam's memo to Fred in Technically-Write, R.S. Blicq (1972), Prentice Hall, New Jersey)

Analyse the above situation. See what has happened. Say, why?

DEFINING COMMUNICATION

The word "communication" is derived from "communis" (Latin), meaning "common". It stands for a natural activity of all human beings to convey opinions, feelings, information, and ideas to others through words (written or spoken), body language, or signs.

The word "communication" is derived from "communis" (Latin), meaning "common". It stands for a natural activity of all human beings to convey opinions, feelings, information, and ideas to others through words (written or spoken), body language, or signs.

George Vardman in his book *Effective Communication of Ideas* defines effective communication as "purposive interchange, resulting in workable understanding and agreement between the sender and receiver of a message".

Robert Anderson, in his concept of communication, adds the element of medium also. In *Professional Selling*, he observes, "Communication is interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information, by speech, writing, or signs".

Emphasising the various processes of communication, Allen

Louis says, "Communication is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another; it involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening, and understanding."

In *Human Behaviour at Work*, Keith Davis defines communication as, "The transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others with facts, ideas, thoughts, and values. It is a bridge of meanings among people so that they can share what they feel and know. By using this bridge, a person can cross safely the river of misunderstanding that sometimes separates people".

CLASSIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION

We classify communication according to the number of persons (receivers) to whom the message is addressed.

Intrapersonal communication It is talking to oneself in one's own mind. Examples are soliloquies or asides in dramatic works.

Interpersonal communication It is the exchange of messages between two persons. For example, a conversation, dialogue, or an interview in which two persons interact (others may also be present as audience). An author communicates *interpersonally* with his reader, who is always present as a silent audience in the author's mind while he writes. A letter too is an example of interpersonal communication between the writer and the person to whom it is written.

Group communication It can be among small or large groups, like an organisation, club or classroom, in which all individuals retain their individual identity.

Mass communication It occurs when the message is sent to large groups of people, for example, by newspaper, radio, or television. In this process, each person becomes a faceless individual with almost no opportunity for personal response or feedback.

Communication can also be classified on the basis of the medium employed.

Verbal communication It means communicating with words, written or spoken. Verbal communication consists of speaking, listening, writing, reading, and thinking.

Non-verbal communication It includes using of pictures, signs,
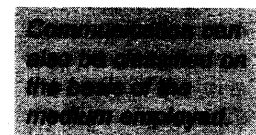
Non-verbal communication flows through all acts of speaking or writing.

gestures, and facial expressions for exchanging information between persons. It is done through sign language, action language, or object language.

Non-verbal communication flows through all acts of speaking or writing. It is a wordless message conveyed through gestures (sign), movements (action language), and object language (pictures/ clothes) and so on. Further non-verbal communication can be identified by personal space (proxemics, body language, and kinesics), touch (haptics), eyes (oculesics), sense of smell (olfactics), and time (chronemics).

All these forms of non-verbal communication need to be understood as they affect and at times contradict the meaning of verbal communication. We shall discuss them later in detail.

Metacommunication Here the speaker's choice of words unintentionally communicates something more than what the actual words state. For example, a flattering remark like "I've never seen you so smartly dressed" could also mean that the regular attire of the listener needed improvement.

PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION

Broadly speaking, in business we communicate to—

- Inform
- Persuade

Often, these two goals are present in the mind of the communicator. However, he may sometimes seek only to inform, just as all scientific writings do. He would still want the reader to be convinced about the validity of his findings. Likewise, the communicator may basically seek to persuade the reader as all journalistic writings do. Or the communicator may both inform and persuade, as all sales letters/advertisements/announcements do.

Communication to Inform

Communication to inform (expository communication) is directed by the desire to expose, develop, and explain the subject. Its focus is on the subject of the communication.

Communication to inform (expository communication) is directed by the desire to expose, develop, and explain the subject. It focuses on the subject of the communication. For example, consider the short expository piece of writing given below—

"Farming provides most of the food we eat. Our chief food crops are cereals or grains. Cereals include maize, rice, and wheat. We also grow barley and gram."

Or let us analyse the information given below—

"Flies are our deadly enemies because they feed on dirt and rubbish. When they come and crawl over meat, sweetmeats, and cakes with their dirty legs, they leave all kinds of germs behind and thus poison our food."

Clearly, in the above passages the focus is on the subject— "our food" or "Flies—our deadly enemies" and the logical presentation of facts associated with flies convinces us about the danger of flies.

ommunication to Persuade

The communicator may seek primarily to persuade the reader. In such a form of communication the focus is on the receiver and not the message.

For example, consider the "home loan" advertisement by HSBC. "Now your dream home is just a step away from being a reality. Simply get an HSBC home loan and choose from a range of highly flexible repayment options, based on your convenience".

The advertisement is reader-centric. The purpose of this write-up is not just to inform you about the HSBC home loan scheme but also to persuade you that HSBC offers the most flexible and convenient home loan schemes.

See how different adverbs and adjectives are chosen and placed to work on you. The adverb "Now" is placed at the head (beginning) of the communication. This is the most important position in the structure of the sentence/paragraph. Placed in the subject (head position), the adverb "Now" seeks to persuade you to believe that no other home loan scheme has brought your home dream so close to reality as this scheme by HSBC. Similarly, the qualifying phrase "highly flexible" aims at impressing you with the extraordinary range and personal conveniences offered by HSBC.

Essentially, all communication is a deliberate and intentional act of persuasion. A persuasive communicator wants the reader to understand the message and to be influenced, as intended by him.

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PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

he Linear Concept

The earliest conceptualisation of communication involved the

Communication was considered a one-way process marked by the flow of information from a sender to a receiver.

following five basic questions—

● Who?

● Says what?

● On which channel?

● To whom?

● With what effect?

Communication was considered a one-way process marked by the flow of information from a sender to a receiver.

Figure 2.1
The linear model.

| Sender | → Message → | Media | → Message → | Receiver | → | Action |
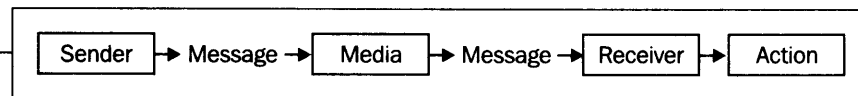
According to the linear view, a receiver passively receives the message and acts as directed or desired by the sender. Communication is intended to control/manipulate the receiver. It is assumed that the message, while passing through the medium chosen by the sender, reaches the receiver without any distortion or change.

Shannon–Weaver Model

C E Shannon and W Weaver were the first to point out that in actual practice, messages can be changed or blocked. Shannon's model of communication was first published in the Bell System Technical Journal. It was based on the mathematical or mechanistic view of communication process in which the basic problem is that the message received is not equal to the message sent. He attributed the loss to noise. The Shannon model was, later in 1949, brought out in the mathematical theory of communication, co-authored with Weaver. Weaver introduced feedback as a corrective to noise. However, in the Shannon–Weaver model, feedback was not considered to be an integral component because the model conceived the communication process as a linear act and feedback another new act of communication. This is why in the Shannon–Weaver model (Figure 2.2), feedback is shown in dotted lines.

The model is based on the idea that communication occurs only when the message has been received and that it should be received, as far as possible, unchanged. This is, of course, a theoretical concept of perfect communication. In real life, filters in the minds of both sender and receiver affect the content of message. To an extent,
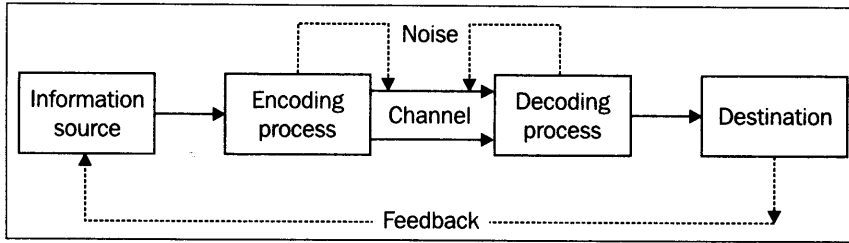
Figure 2.2
Shannon–Weaver model.

feedback corrects the distortions, if any, and tends to complete the cycle of communication.
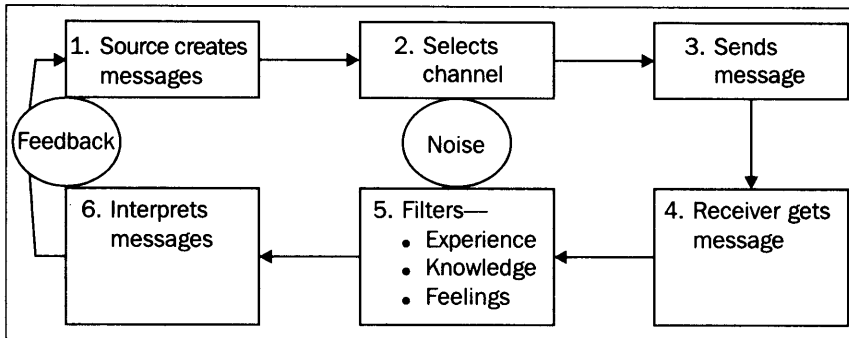

Figure 2.3
How communication takes place.

Information source (ideation) The communication process begins with the information source. The sender has some raw information. His intention changes that information into a message to be communicated. The source of a message therefore, is the information source of the communication process.

Encoding Having thought over the message, the sender puts it into words (verbal symbols or any other symbolic form of expression). This process is called encoding.

Channel (transmission) An appropriate medium—oral, written, electronic, in code, or a signaling system—chosen to send the message is known as channel.

Decoding The receiver gets the message through decoding— by receiving, understanding, and interpreting the message.

Acting The communication process ends with the receiver putting the interpreted message into action, as intended by the sender.

Thus, we see that communication completes a full circle, bringing together the sender and the receiver to become two aspects of a single purpose. It is this unifying process and role of

A group of people are involved to complete the cycle of communication, in which the receiver also acts as the sender of the feedback to transmitter (sender).

communication that has made modern management organisations and systems consider communication as an essential skill for successful managers. According to Davis, "The only way that management can be achieved in an organisation is through the process of communication."

Noise This process is open to "noise" which prevents or distorts communication. Noise may be described as any distortion or hindrance, preventing transmission of the message from the (mind of) sender to the (mind of) receiver.

For some communication theorists, noise basically stands for external disturbance in the physical environment surrounding the act of communication, or noise in the machine used for communicating the message, such as telephone, or poor printout, or bad handwriting.

Communication distortion caused by subjective factors such as mind sets of the sender and receiver are attributed to what is called filters.

Filters These are mental in nature. They include attitudes, beliefs, experiences, consciousness of personal status, and the ability to think clearly. Misunderstandings and different problems may arise as the sender's message passes through the filters of the receiver, which comprise the sender filters plus others such as low interest or involvement in the message or distraction and fatigue causing loss of concentration. Filters as socio-psychological barriers to communication are discussed, in detail, later in this chapter.

Two-Way Communication Process

Later conceptualisations of the communication process look at communication as a two-way process. A group of people are involved to complete the cycle of communication, in which the receiver also acts as the sender of the feedback to transmitter (sender). Thus, both the sender and the receiver play reciprocal and reversible roles, as in telemarketing, or call-centre communication. Consider the following two-way flow of communication.

The two-way concept is more contemporary. It considers communication essentially to be a reciprocal process and a mutual exchange of messages.

The two-way concept is more contemporary. It considers communication essentially to be a reciprocal process and a mutual exchange of messages. It makes no sharp distinction between the roles of sender (source) and receiver, because the same person plays both roles, often simultaneously.

The earlier linear view treated the sender as the determiner of message and its meaning. The two-way concept involves receiver as an active agent in the construction of meaning of the message.

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┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      ┌──────────────┐                    ┌──────────────┐    │
│      │   Message    │ ───────────────▶   │  Transmitter │    │
│      └──────────────┘                    └──────────────┘    │
│   ╱                     Communication            │           │
│ ┌──────────────┐           process               │           │
│ │   Receiver   │                                 │           │
│ └──────────────┘                                 ▼           │
│       ╲         ┌──────────────┐         ┌──────────────┐    │
│        ◀──────  │Communication │ ◀────── │Communication │    │
│                 │   channel    │         │   symbols    │    │
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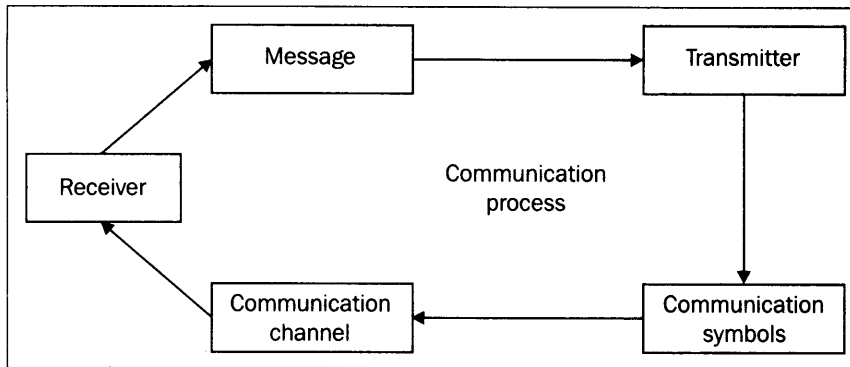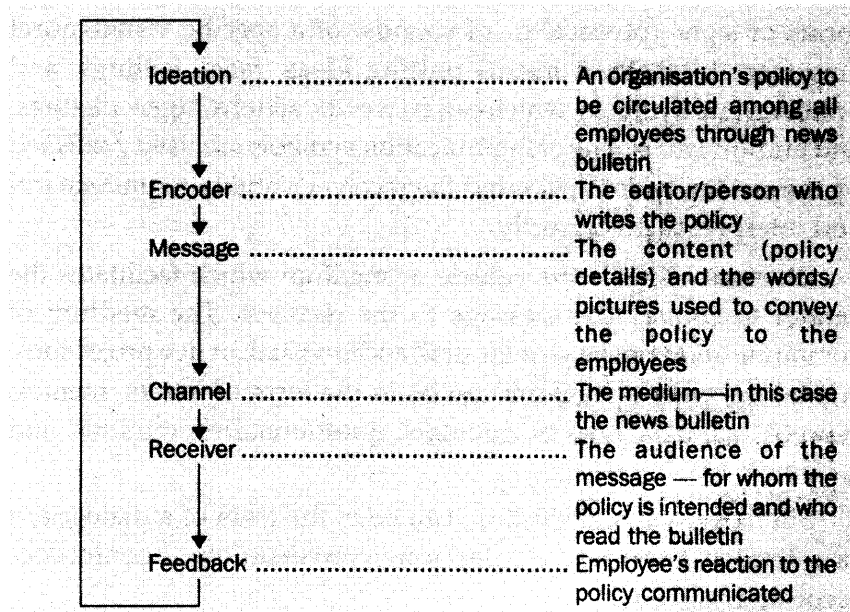
Figure 2.4
Flow of communication.

The message is as the receiver perceives it, in the light of his/her experiences, beliefs, and feelings. The intended and received meanings may have common interpretations of situations, ideas, schemes, and events to the extent people have lived and worked together and have developed common attitudes and viewpoints with regard to the organisation they work in or society they live in. The two-way communication is also known as transactional communication.

Communication is purposive in nature. It achieves success by manipulating the target audience through information and persuasion to effect the intended action. The two-way theory of communication can be seen through a concrete example given below.

Example

Ideation	An organisation's policy to be circulated among all employees through news bulletin
Encoder	The editor/person who writes the policy
Message	The content (policy details) and the words/pictures used to convey the policy to the employees
Channel	The medium—in this case the news bulletin
Receiver	The audience of the message — for whom the policy is intended and who read the bulletin
Feedback	Employee's reaction to the policy communicated

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

The various elements of communication are briefly described to help you understand the process of communication.

Message   It is information, written or spoken, which is to be sent from one person to another. Here, the word "person" stands for the two ends of a system, and may represent an individual, or a group of individuals, or even electronic machines.

The most important characteristic of a message as an element of communication is that it is organised, structured, shaped, and selective — a product of pre-writing or pre-speaking stage. It exists in the mind of the sender (communicator).

Sender   The person who transmits, spreads, or communicates a message or operates an electronic device is the one who conceives and initiates the message with the purpose of informing/ persuading/influencing/changing the attitude, opinion, or behaviour of the receiver (audience/listener). He decides the communication symbols, the channel, and the time for sending the message after carefully considering the total situation in which communication takes place.

Encoding   Encoding is changing the message (from its mental form) into symbols, that is, patterns of words/gestures/pictorial forms or signs (physical or of sounds) of a specific visual/aural language. In short, it means putting ideas, facts, feelings, and opinions into symbols, which can be words, actions, signs, pictures, and audio-visuals. The communication symbols are used /selected by the sender, keeping in mind the receiver's ability to understand and interpret them correctly.

Channel   This is the vehicle or medium which facilitates the sender to convey the message to the receiver. The medium of communication can be written, oral, audio-visual, or live projections. Again, the written medium can be in the form of letters, memos, reports, manuals, notices, circulars, questionnaires, minutes, and so on.

Similarly, the oral medium can be in the form of a dialogue, a face-to-face interview, a telephone conversation, a conference recording, and so on.

The channel (medium) can be visuals, such as hoardings, posters, slides, documentary films, television programmes, and advertisements.

Receiver A receiver is the targeted audience of the message. The receiver gets the message, understands, interprets, and tries to perceive the total meaning of the message as transmitted by the sender.

Decoding This is the act of translating symbols of communication into their ordinary meanings. However, the total meaning would consist of meanings of the words (symbols) together with the tone and the attitude of the sender as reflected by the structure of the message and the choice of words used by him (the sender).

Acting Communication manipulates the receiver to act in a desired manner. A receiver's response action shows that he has understood the message. Finally, the receiver completes the chain of communication by responding to the message.

Feedback This is the loop that connects the receiver in the communication process with the sender, who, in turn, acts as a feedback receiver and, thus, gets to know that communication has been accomplished. In communication, feedback plays an important role. It helps the communicator know if there are any corrections or changes to be made in the proposed action. It also ensures that the receiver has received the message and understood it as intended by the sender.

In management, the decision-making process is greatly helped by receiving feedback from those who are directly concerned with any changes proposed or effected and communicated to them. The process of feedback assures the initiator of the action about its correctness and possible impact.

MAJOR DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION

The following are the main difficulties usually experienced by communicators:

- Ensuring that the received meaning affects receiver's behaviour in the desired way.
- Achieving accuracy in communicating the message.
- Ensuring that the message conveys the desired meaning.

COMMON PROBLEMS IN TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

To be effective, communication process needs to be two-way; but, the more detailed the process is, the more are the likely difficulties. Given below are some of the common problems related to two-way communication:

- No perceived benefit to the audience.
- Noise, outside disturbance — hard to hold attention.
- Variations in listening skills.
- Cultural differences.
- Complexity of subject matter/message.
- Time restraints — real or perceived.
- Personal biases, hostility, or both.
- Responding to difficult questions.
- Sidestepping sensitive issues.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNCATION

In communication, as a psycho-semantic process, the word barrier implies, mainly, something non-physical that keeps people apart or prevents activity, movement, and so on. For example social/ethnic/language barriers or lack of confidence. These negative forces may affect the effectiveness of communication by acting upon any or all of the basic elements of communication act/process and the sender/receiver/channel.

The commonly experienced barriers to communication are—

- Noise
- Lack of planning
- Wrong/unclarified assumptions
- Semantic problems
- Cultural barriers
- Socio-psychological barriers
- Emotions
- Selective perception
- Filtering
- Information overload
- Loss by transmission
- Poor retention
- Poor listening

In communication, as a psycho-semantic process, the word barrier implies, mainly, something non-physical that keeps people apart or prevents activity, movement, and so on.

- Goal conflicts
- Offensive style
- Time and distance
- Abstracting
- Slanting
- Inferring

Broadly speaking, some of these barriers can be attributed to the sender and the receiver:

Sender—

- Lack of planning
- Vagueness about the purpose of communication
- Objectives to be achieved
- Choice of wrong language resulting in badly encoded message
- Unshared and unclarified assumptions
- Different perception of reality
- Wrong choice of the channel

Receiver—

- Poor listening
- Inattention
- Mistrust
- Lack of interest
- Premature evaluation
- Semantic difficulties
- Bias
- Different perception of reality
- Lack of trust
- Attitudinal clash with the sender
- Not in a fit physical state

A common barrier for the sender and the receiver can be created by the absence of a common frame of reference affecting the smooth interpretation of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes from the sender to the receiver in a specific social situation.

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The most important aspect of human communication is the fact that it takes place in the world of reality which surrounds us.

The mention of a well-defined social context in which communication takes place helps both the sender and the receiver to perceive the content of the communication in a similar way, as far as possible with similar implications and meaning.

The physical noise and other faults in the surroundings and the instruments of transmission of message relate mainly to the channel, but they may not distort the overall meaning of the total message to be communicated.

Many of the barriers listed above are easy to understand. But a few of them may still need further explanation.

Wrong and Unclarified Assumptions

All communications from one person to another are made under some assumptions, which are never communicated to the persons about whom they are made. These assumptions may turn out to be wrong and cause communication failure. For instance, we often assume that others—

- See the situation as we do.
- Should feel about the situation as we do.
- Think about the matter as we do.
- Understand the message as we understand it.

All such assumptions may be incorrect, therefore, one should try to verify them, whenever possible. That would help the communication to be effective.

Socio–Psychological Barriers

Status   Consciousness of one's status affects the two-way flow of communication. It gives rise to personal barriers caused by the superior–subordinate relationship. A two-way vertical channel is present in every organisation, yet few subordinates choose to communicate with their superiors.

Consciousness of one's status affects the two-way flow of communication. It gives rise to personal barriers caused by the superior–subordinate relationship.

Similarly superiors may be unwilling to directly listen or write to their subordinates. They would seldom accept if they were wrong. Though organisations are culturally changing and adopting flat structures, the psychological distance between the superior and the subordinate persists.

Perception and reality   The most important aspect of human communication is the fact that it takes place in the world of reality

which surrounds us. This world acts as our sensory environment. While we are engaged in the process of communicating, our sense organs remain stimulated by the signs (objects of the outside world — the so-called reality) registering different sensations of smell, taste, sound, forms and colours, or feelings. All these sense perceptions received by our brain through our senses recreate within each one of us the world which exists within our mind as its content. Thus, there are two aspects of the same reality — the one that actually surrounds the communicator from outside and the other which is its mental representation (in his mind) as he sees it or believes that he sees it.

The objects which excite our five sense perceptions/sense organs — eyes, ears, nose, tongue (taste), flesh (touch) — are called signs. Our senses respond to these signs and we receive sensations which pass from the senses into the brain through a network of sensory nerves within our brain. Our perceptions, the mental images of the external world, are stored in our brains as our viewpoint, experience, knowledge, feelings, and emotions. They constitute what we really are, or how we really think of something, or how we feel or respond to something. These stored perceptions colour and modify whatever our brain receives from any signs or set of signs, fresh data, thoughts, or messages. That is why these conditioning perceptions, existing in the brain, are called "filters". The mind "filters" the message received from the signs and gives it meaning, according to individual perception.

It is obvious that each individual's filter would be unique. No two individuals have the same or similar experiences, emotional make-up, knowledge, or ways of thinking. Because filters differ, different individuals respond to a sign with different understanding. The sign may be a word, a gesture, or any other object of nature; each individual will respond to it in his/her own way and assign the total meaning to that sign according to his/her filter.

The presence of a unique filter in each individual communicator and communicatee (receiver) causes the communication gap (distortion) in the message sent and the message received.

In face-to-face communication, this gap can be easily removed. In most cases the speaker does realize that he/she has not been correctly understood through the listener's facial expressions, gestures, or other forms of body language. Or the listener would

The objects which excite our five sense perceptions/sense organs — eyes, ears, nose, tongue (taste), flesh (touch) — are called signs.

Our perceptions, the mental images of the external world, are stored in our brains as our viewpoint, experience, knowledge, feelings, and emotions.

say, "Sorry, I couldn't get you." Of course, much depends on how formally/informally the two are related to each other in office, work place, or life.

But, in situations in which the audience remains invisibly present, as in written communications — letters, memos, notices, proposals, reports, etc. — the semantic gap between the intended meaning and the interpreted meaning remains unknown to the communicator and also to the unsuspecting receiver who misses the total meaning in terms of tone and feelings of concern and seriousness of purpose of the sender. The feedback does help the sender, but it may be too late.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

No two individuals have the same or similar experience, emotional make-up, knowledge or ways of thinking.

Basically, to communicate is to share "information", in its widest sense, with others in an intelligible, participative form through the medium of words — spoken or written, or body gestures, or other symbolic signs.

Two basic things stand out here. One, the message is to be both "known" and "understood" by others. Two, communication in its nature is a symbolic act, verbal or non-verbal.

These two aspects, the purpose and nature of communication, act as the two determining influences in the theory and practice of communication in all contexts of speaking or writing.

Herein lies the crucial critical difference between effective and ineffective communication. If "something" is communicated and it is not fully understood by the receiver, the communication has been just ineffective. Not fully serving its other condition of being understood. The fact that the message has been understood is established by the response of the receiver — the feedback.

Rule of Five

Keith Davis[1] lays down the Rule of Five to guide the receiver to be an effective element of the communication process.

"In the communication process, the role of receiver is, I believe, as important as that of sender. There are five receiver steps in the process of communication—Receive, Understand, Accept, Use, and Give a Feedback. Without these steps, being followed by the

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[1] Keith Davis, 1993, *Human Behavior*, Mcgraw-Hill, New York, pp. 402–403.

receiver, no communication process would be complete and successful".

Communication is successful when

● The message is properly understood.

● The purpose of the sender is fulfilled.

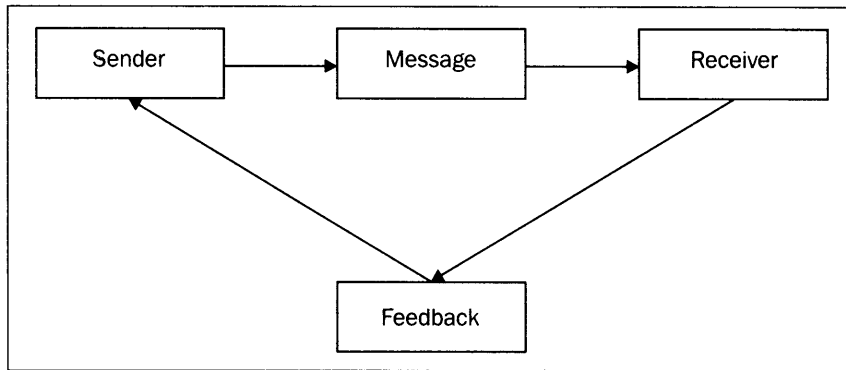● The sender and receiver of the message remain linked through feedback.

Figure 2.5
Successful
communication.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

Seven Cs of Communication

Francis J Bergin advocates that there are seven Cs to remember in verbal communication. These are equally applicable to written communication. They are

1. Candidness
2. Clarity
3. Completeness
4. Conciseness
5. Concreteness
6. Correctness
7. Courtesy

Candidness   In all business transactions, our view of a matter should be honest, sincere, and guileless. We should speak and listen without prejudice or bias. Our guiding principle should be fairness to self and to others involved in the situation. For example, when we qualify our observation with the words "My honest opinion" or

"Frankly speaking", we are trying to be candid, open hearted, and sincere. Candidness, in a way, implies consideration of the other person's (listener's) interest and his/her (the listener's) need to know things objectively and fairly. We should share our thoughts without reservation in an unbiased manner, if we want to help the receiver to understand what is communicated. It should be characterized by the "you"-attitude.

Candid talk also exhibits the speaker's self-confidence. In oral communication the key element that creates impact is confidence. When we say something without hesitation or hitch, we say it in a confident manner.

In everyday life or in business, we see persons in power doing things, such as appointing relatives, neglecting merit in assigning jobs/functions or allowing too much closeness to an individual or a group of individuals. This action is bound to emotionally alienate others from that person. Out of consideration and concern for that person's long-term image and good human relationships in the organisation, if you communicate your view of his administrative fairness in an unbiased manner, you are being candid in your communication.

Clarity The principle of clarity is most important in all communications, especially when you are involved in face-to-face interaction. It is not always easy to verbalise ideas accurately on the spot during conversation, presentation, or any other form of interaction.

To ensure that we express ourselves clearly, we should use accurate and familiar words with proper intonation, stresses, and pauses. Our spoken language should consist of simple words and short sentences. Thoughts should be clear and well-organised. We should know what we want to say and why. It is a clear mind that can talk clearly and effectively.

However, in case of doubt or uncertainty, due to lack of clarity of thought or expression, the listener can, in one-to-one communication, seek immediate clarification.

Completeness Clarity is ensured also by completeness of message. In conversation or oral presentations one can miss some parts of the communication. It is, therefore, essential that oral presentations, discussions, or dialogues should be as far as possible, planned, and structured.

It is not always easy to verbalise ideas accurately on the spot during conversation, presentation, or any other form of interaction.

Therefore, when we begin the presentation or dialogue or address an audience, we should ensure that we have given all the information that listeners need or expect for understanding the message.

The principle of completeness requires that we communicate whatever is necessary, provide answers to all possible questions which could be raised and add something additional, if necessary as footnotes, to whatever has been said. We should be careful that we answer all questions put to us. For example, in an interview, if we leave out answering any question, it would imply that we are deliberately side-stepping a particular issue. It could also raise doubts in the audience that there is something to hide regarding that matter.

If we have no information or answer or are unwilling to answer or discuss any particular question, we should frankly express our inability to answer.

Conciseness   In business and professional communications, we should be brief and be able to say whatever we have to say in minimum words. We should avoid being repetitive. We sometimes believe erroneously that by repeating whatever has been said, we add emphasis to our message. Try to use single words for wordy phrases such as—

Wordy: At this point of time ....

Concise: Now, or at present ....

Wordy: As regards the fact that ......

Concise: Considering

Wordy :   Because of the fact that

Concise: As, or because

Wordy: Are in need of ....

Concise: Need

Wordy: In due course of time ....

Concise: Soon

Wordy: Not very far from here

Concise: Nearby, or close by

The above examples are just to show that, in speaking, we tend to become wordy. Less words should not mean less sense. Rather, we should, without sacrificing essential meaning, achieve intensity and concentration.

If we have no information or answer or are unwilling to answer or discuss any particular question, we should frankly express our inability to answer.

Concreteness Concreteness means being specific, definite in describing events and things. It also means the vivid description of an event or state. Avoid using vague words. In oral communication we cannot draw figures, tables, diagrams, or illustrations to make our statements vivid and concrete. But we can choose precise words and speak with proper modulation and force to make their sound reflect the sense. For example, in oral communication passive voice is avoided. Active voice verbs reflect force and action. They also sound more natural and direct. For example, no one says, "you are requested by me to ...". A more vivid way is its active form "I request you to ...".

Correctness In the spoken form of communication, grammatical errors are not uncommon. The speaker tends to forget the number and person of the subject of the verb if the sentence is too long. Sometimes even the sequence of tense is wrong. And most frequently the use of the pronoun is incorrect especially in indirect narration (reported speech). For example, in conversation the following lapses are very common—

Wrong: He said to me that I will surely go there.

Correct: He told me that he would surely go there.

Wrong: Being an experienced manager, we are sure you can resolve the conflict.

Correct: As you are an experienced manager, we are sure you can resolve the conflict.

Courtesy In conversational situations, meetings, and group discussions, an effective speaker maintains the proper decorum of speaking. One should say things with force and assertiveness without being rude. Courtesy demands that we do not use words that are insulting or hurtful to the listener.

In business discussions, it is necessary that we respect the other person by listening to him/her patiently. We should not interrupt. We should wait for our chance to speak and when it is our turn to speak, we should speak with force and clarity.

Our tone should reflect our respect for our listener/audience. And our pitch should not sound as if we are talking at each other and not to each other. The tone we use in conversation should not be aggressive. It should be level and measured as it can make or break our discussion.

Courtesy demands that we do not use words that are insulting or hurtful to the listener.

UNIVERSAL ELEMENTS IN COMMUNICATION

An analysis of the communication process suggests two basic features about communication, in general:

1. The presence of some universal elements in all human communication.

The communication environment All communicators act within the sensory environment around them from which their senses keep receiving competing stimuli impinging upon the content of communication.

Use of symbols All communicators use verbal symbols/signs such as words, body movements, facial expressions, and so on, to encode (and to decode) message.

The mental filter All communicators/receivers of message have to register, organise, transmit, receive, and interpret only through their minds that are uniquely structured and set with varying "filters", which consist of their entire experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

2. Some basic facts about the nature of communication. To understand communication better, we should know the following basic facts regarding its process.

Perfect communication is impossible Human communication is essentially imperfect. All our communication encoding/decoding acts are conditioned by the fact that a common mental filter is not humanly possible. Meanings differ because filters differ. No two filters are alike. No two persons, therefore, involved in the communicative act can perceive the same meaning of a message sent and received. What they tend to have is a "workable understanding", as Verdman rightly puts it in his definition of communication given earlier.

Besides filters, the fact that the symbols used for communicating are imprecise in their associative meanings further contributes to the imperfection of communication. Choosing correct symbols to encode an idea or thought/feeling is not an easy task. We tend to often pick up imprecise symbols for encoding. This tendency increases the chances of wrong interpretation or miscommunication between the sender and the receiver. Moreover, even the same symbols put in different order/sequence may change the overall

The symbols used for communicating are imprecise in their associative meanings further contributes to the imperfection of communication

meaning. Therefore, both the parties, the sender and the receiver, should possess the same level of ability to interpret the meaning of symbols (words) and their structure (the order in which they are used).

Meaning is not out there   By now it must be obvious that meaning is in the mind and not in the symbols. Symbols (except onomatopoeic words) are arbitrary signs. They have no intrinsic meaning. They stand for things. They are not the things themselves. Their meaning is conventional, commonly shared by the people belonging to a linguistic community. But this literal meaning is something that lies printed on the pages of a dictionary.

Communication, on the other hand, is a living act performed in specific contexts, in particular situations, and with a definite goal/purpose in mind. And, thus, an effective communicator creates new meanings of symbols (words) by structuring them in strings of images of his mind — his mental landscape.

An effective communicator creates new meanings of symbols (words) by structuring them in strings of images of his mind — his mental landscape.

Understanding this fundamental aspect of communication can help all receivers to look for the meaning of words (message) that the sender must have thought of when he chose them to communicate with them. They should not be satisfied with the usual approach of "I think it means..." Instead the receiver should search for "what they must have meant to the sender".

Personality communicates   Walt Whitman, in his famous "Song of Myself", poetically brings out the dimension of personality in communication. Of his poetic process — which is an act of communication, Whitman says, "I celebrate myself, and sing myself, and what I assume you shall assume, for every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you."

In fact, communication, in its final analysis can be seen as a projection of "myself" — how I think, feel, believe, perceive, and respond to reality.

If communication is anything, it is indeed a mental representation of reality. Symbols of communication symbolise the perceptions of the communicator, varying in import from person to person.

In this regard, the complexity of communication further arises

from a psychological truth Oliver Wendell Holmes so aptly states in one of his essays collected in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* (1858).

There are three Johns:

1. The real John, known only to Maker,

2. John's ideal John, never the real one and often very unlike him,

3. Thomas's ideal John, never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either.

The real problem in communication is caused by Thomas's ideal John.

The basic problem is that it is difficult for people to communicate effectively unless they have a correct knowledge of themselves. To realise how we see ourselves is the first step to improve our ability to communicate. We can improve this understanding by closely examining our own self-concept.

According to psychologists, there are three aspects of self-concept—

- The me that I know

- The me that I wish I were

- The me that I want others to see

Some people are so perfect in projecting images of themselves to others that the real person is never displayed. This art can be of advantage to a manager and his/her personal communication skills, but if practised to the extreme can prevent effective communication and understanding.

To be effective as audience (receiver), we should go with Whitman and practise "what I assume you shall assume". In communication, this process is known as "empathy" — the power or the state of imagining oneself to be another person, and also sharing his ideas and feelings. Empathy is needed not only for "listening", it is also a necessary state of mind while encoding — to be able to realise the audience's (receiver's) expectations, fears, emotions, needs, level of learning/knowledge, and, above all, the state of mind. It is only through this reciprocal empathy that we can effectively communicate in different contexts of life and work.

Some people are so perfect in projecting images of themselves to others that the real person is never displayed.

Case Study

Communication Failure

Mr and Mrs Basu went to Woodlands Apparel to buy a pullover. Mr Basu did not read the price tag on the piece selected by him. At the counter, while making the payment he asked for the price. Rs. 950 was the answer.

Meanwhile, Mrs Basu, who was still shopping came back and joined her husband. She was glad that he had selected a nice black pullover for himself. She pointed out that there was a 25% discount on that item. The counter person nodded in agreement.

Mr Basu was thrilled to hear that. "It means the price of this pullover is just Rs. 712.

That's fantastic", said Mr Basu.

He decided to buy one more pullover in green colour.

In no time, he returned with the second pullover and asked them to be packed. When he received the cash memo for payment, he was astonished to find that he had to pay Rs. 1,900 and not Rs. 1,424.

Mr Basu could hardly reconcile himself to the fact that the counter person had quoted the discounted price which was Rs. 950. The original price printed on the price tag was Rs. 1,266.

Questions to Answer

1. Identify the three sources of Mr Basu's information.
2. Discuss the main filter involved in this case.
3. What should Mr Basu have done to avoid the misunderstanding?
4. Who is to blame for this communication gap? And why?

Summary

This chapter deals with the key elements of the nature and process of communication.

- We began by discussing that human beings are poor communicators but their communicative competence can be improved by learning and practising effective communication skills.

- We then examined the symbolic nature of communication, which is an act of sharing one's ideas, emotions, attitudes, or perception with another person or group of persons through words — written or spoken, gestures, signals, signs, or any other mode of transmitting images. This act of transmission of ideas always suffers from barriers.

- Thereafter, we analysed the essential elements of the process of communication—Message, Sender, Encoding, Channel, Receiver, Decoding, Acting, Feedback, and Communication Environment.

- Next, we examined the role and responsibility of both sender and receiver in making the communication effective. The sender should encode the message accurately after considering the level, expectations and needs of his target audience (receiver); the receiver should try to understand the intended meaning of the sender.

- Finally, some universal common elements of communication and some basic facts about the nature of communication have been discussed. The common elements of communication are — the communication environment, use of symbols, and mental filters.

- Some basic facts about communication are that perfect communication is impossible; the meaning of a message is in the mind/perception of the receiver; and personality affects the effectiveness of communication.

- To communicate effectively, we should develop not only skills, but also a sense of reciprocal empathy.

Review Questions

1. Why is communication important for good relationship and effective management?
2. Why do we communicate?
3. Discuss communication as a two-way process of exchange of information.
4. Indicate the critical difference between successful and ineffective communication.
5. Discuss the important barriers in the communication process.
6. What is empathy? How does it contribute to the effectiveness of communication?
7. What is noise? Elaborate the elements of noise in the receiver. How can they be minimized?
8. Do you agree that, in its final form, communication is a manifestation of the personalities of both the sender and the receiver? Discuss.

Chapter 3

Organisational Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the functional relationship between communication and management.
- Identify new trends in organisational communication due to socio-technological changes and developments.
- Know why managers need communication skills.
- Understand the elements that form the structure of an organisation's communication network.
- Understand the formal and informal lines of organisational communication.
- Know what and how much should be communicated to employees in a work place.
- Learn how to maintain an effective communication system in an organisation.

The most important audience for a company's communications is not the customer, as is commonly believed, but the employee.

-Pratt and Whitney

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT

Communication skills constitute an important aspect of effective management. Managing is a complex process. In simple terms, it can be described as the organisation of capital, labour, and material to achieve production and distribution of particular goods or services.

Communication is the system by which operations are led and coordinated and the results fed back.

First, the management fixes its objectives — what to do, and forms its policy on how to do it. Then, there has to be a system through which the production and distribution processes can be guided, coordinated, and controlled to ensure that the management objectives are achieved. Communication is the system by which operations are led and coordinated and the results fed back.

SOME IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS OF MANAGING

Forecasting	determines organisational objectives and policies
Planning	prepares programmes, procedures, and budgets
Organising	sets the organisational structure
Instructing	provides the bedrock of organisation performance
Coordinating	ensures all efforts are directed torwards the organisational goals
Controlling	checks the results, receives feedback

The function of communication is to define and support the action involved in each of the above functions.

■Forecasting and Planning

Each function depends on effective communication for its success. For example, if the management fails to communicate its objectives, policies, programmes, procedures, and budgetary provisions to the concerned people at the proper time, an organisation would fail to run in an organised and targeted manner.

■Organising

Organising, as a management function, determines the formal and informal relationships within the organisation and outside it. These relationships are developed and maintained through inter-personal communication.

■Instructing

The function of instructing wholly depends upon interpersonal exchange of information regarding products, processes, and targets for its success.

■Coordinating

Coordinating as a manager's function is, perhaps, the most demanding of all functions. It requires excellent communication skills to ensure that all efforts are directed toward the achievement of a single organisational goal. To see that diverse activities are unified into a single whole, the manager should be able to relate with all people formally and socially.

■Controlling

Finally for controlling, the manager should have competence to receive information and respond quickly.

MANAGING AND COMMUNICATING

Managing is a unified, organised, and cooperative system committed to the achievement of common goals. The sense of unity of purpose and commitment to a single organisational goal can be developed only through the inspiring and persuasive power of communication. To be able to do so, a manager needs to have communication skills of a high order to structure the information, according to its negative/affirmative nature and to use words and tones according to purpose of the communication. The manager should be able to create a desired relationship with audience/ workers to produce the needed response.

Thus, a whole lot of strategies, verbal and non-verbal, of effective communication form an important part of management as a discipline.

The sense of unity of purpose and commitment to a single organisational goal can be developed only through the inspiring and persuasive power of communication.

NEED FOR COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT

Today, from the small to the multinational enterprise, every organisation needs an effective communication system to enable it to function and flourish. In an organisation, communication is a means—

- To increase employees' job performance and effectiveness by updating their knowledge.
- To promote employees' sense of belonging and commitment.
- To effect changes smoothly.
- To motivate and create a sense of identification with the organisation's goals.
- To inform and convince employees about decisions and the reasons behind those decisions.
- To develop employees' clear understanding of their roles and future growth opportunities in the organisation, and
- To empower employees with information on development and activities.

If decision-making is transparent, employees would understand reasons for those decisions and accept and implement them even if they affect them adversely.

Hence, an active communication system is vital for the good health of an organisation. If there is a continuous sharing of ideas and interactive meetings between the management and workers, the overall atmosphere of understanding and goodwill would prevail in the workplace. If decision-making is transparent, employees would understand reasons for those decisions and accept and implement them even if they affect them adversely. The following three advantages re-emphasize the need for communication in management:

Creates a sense of belonging An understanding of their roles and career paths in the organisation would make employees feel part of the whole setup.

Resolves disputes All disputes in organisations, which lead to huge losses of time, money, and good human relations, are caused by communication failures.

Develops sense of total situation A great value of effective communication lies in making people not only know and understand but also perceive the meaning of things happening around them. Through communication, employees not only "think of" but also "see" realities as part of the total business scenario.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

In the changing business environment of multinational competition and globalisation, communication tends to become an important component of an organisation. Like the functional areas of production, marketing, and finance, communication too is shaping into a distinct area, in the form of corporate communication.

The very size of organisations today poses problems for communication.

Theoretically, it is to bring under a single umbrella all communication activities done by different areas such as marketing, PR/ORM, and the like, directed at good image building and developing human capital. In this integrated form, communication is supposed to speak to the world outside the organisation and within it in a single voice, what marketing or public relations or quality control speak in different voices, to build the corporate image.

Several changes in the modern, socio-technological age of information have made people pay more attention to communication as an important tool of successful management. These changes are:

Size of organisation * Big organisations are getting bigger and bigger either through their own increased level of production or through multinational collaborations. The very size of organisations today poses problems of communicating. These problems have got to be looked into for a proper running of the whole project.

New developments in information technology The modern age, known as the Age of Information, is not just an age of many new media of information — telephone, radio, television, communications satellite, computers, and so on. It is also an era of a new attitude towards knowledge and the value of sharing it with others. In fact, communication is now looked upon as a source of empowerment of people. But the power of the media depends on the skills of those people who use them at both ends of the communication channel. It involves a new attitude towards the value and use of good communication.

The concept of human capital All employees and workers are considered to be the human component of business. They are not just the source of labour. Their attitudes, interest, and welfare constitute a major part of management concern to achieve targeted goals and objectives. Hence, there has to be a live channel of communication between the employees and the management.

The power of the media depends on the skills of those people who use them at both ends of the communication channel.

Need to learn corporate etiquette Top corporate executives are increasingly being sensitised about the importance of knowing how to conduct meetings, seminars, presentations, and negotiations. They realise that management executives should learn the rules of etiquette, if not already familiar with them. These include—

- How to greet
- How to shake hands
- How to dress for success
- How to present cards
- How to listen
- How to converse with seniors/ ladies/ and clients

The training, which again is a part of communication skills, develops the corporate etiquette to be observed and practised for success in international/ multinational/ or big national ventures. Good business manners speak of the culture of the organisation, not of the individual's, in particular.

These contemporary changes suggest that organisations not only need an effective communication system; they need to have executives/managers who are well equipped with these skills.

■**C**ommunication Concerns of the Manager

In business, a manager spends maximum time either speaking or writing to his colleagues, his seniors, his juniors, or his clients. A manager's success depends largely on his ability to communicate to his colleagues such objectives as what has to be done, and why it is to be done.

The success of an organisation depends upon the atmosphere in which there is a free flow of information

To be able to do this, the manager has to devote his time to—

- Receive and interpret information from other managers and departments.
- Send information to other department managers.
- Pass information and suggestions on new plans or projects upwards to senior/ top management.
- Send information downwards.
- Develop a positive attitude.

THE MANAGER

To a large extent, the success of an organisation depends upon the atmosphere in which there is a free flow of information — upward, downward, and horizontal. At the workplace, we primarily think of getting things done. For this, instructions and guidelines, supervision and monitoring, and periodic reporting are

One of the important concerns of the manager is to organise and ensure an effective information system across the organisation.

usually considered enough. But, if we wish to achieve more than the set task, a real involvement of all the employees from the highest to the lowest levels is to be secured by allowing every level of worker/employee to suggest/offer ideas, views, and experiences. Such a system of communication can be evolved and established within the organisation only by the manager. In fact, the manager functions as a point of intersection of all communication channels. One of the important concerns of the manager is to organise and ensure an effective information system across the organisation.

Why Managers Need Communication Skills

As analysed by Henry Mintzberg of MIT, managers need effective communication skills to perform the following inter-related roles—

* Interpersonal
* Informational
* Decisional

These groups with their roles, their descriptions and examples are clearly described in his book, *The Nature of the Managerial Work* (1973).

The interpersonal role makes the manager act as a figurehead leader, and liaison officer. The informational role makes the manager monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson. In the decisional role the manager functions as entrepreneur, trouble shooter, resource allocator, and negotiator.

Interpersonal role   It is necessary to ensure the effective operation of the organisation's system and to maintain proper relationships within the organisation and with the outside clients, suppliers, and other functionaries. If interpersonal communications are effective, internal systems run smoothly. For example, personnel functions within the organisation require that as manager you inspire confidence, win support, and guide your workers. You are a role-model for others. Develop the skill of patient listening. Act as an effective listener of the grievances and needs of your subordinates. Create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and goodwill within the organisation by transparent sharing of its objectives, missions, and problems.

If interpersonal communications are effective, internal systems run smoothly.

Informational role   If the internal information system is effective, systems such as stock control, personnel functions,

financial systems, and quality control operate smoothly. Shortcomings and problems can be quickly identified and remedial action taken immediately. Proper maintenance of product and service standards can be ensured through timely monitoring and instructing. Through effective, interactive communication, and a strong feedback system, the high morale and satisfaction of workers can be secured.

Without having necessary information, decisions may turn out to be unrealistic and based on guesswork.

Decisional role Decision-making is based upon receiving and interpreting all relevant and necessary information. Without having necessary information, decisions may turn out to be unrealistic and based on guesswork. Managers need to possess the skill of receiving relevant and latest information correctly and accurately to be able to take decisions and act rationally, fairly and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

All these functions require the manager to handle people and situations with the knowledge of human needs.
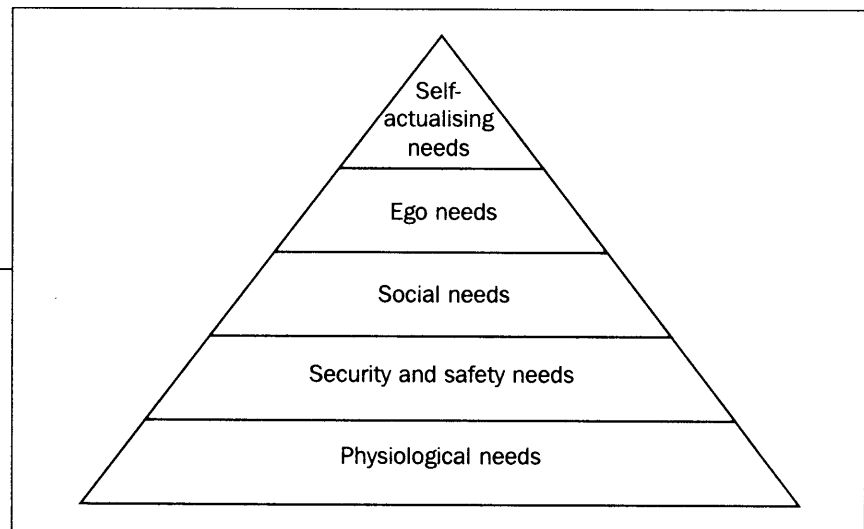
HUMAN NEEDS

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs suggests a succession of needs through which people move as they fulfil their wants and desires[1].

1. Physiological needs—The basic needs of food, shelter, and protection from the elements of nature.
2. Security and safety needs—Next comes the need to be free from physical danger and to feel safe with the knowledge that physiological needs are being met.
3. Social needs—The desire to be loved, to be accepted, and to belong.
4. Ego needs—Moving to a higher level of the pyramid of needs, people feel the need to be heard, to be appreciated, to be wanted. These needs of the ego are related to the status. Their fulfillment involves economic status as a means of attaining social status generally. Hence, the fulfillment of economic needs comes before the social expression of one's ego.
5. Self-actualising needs—To realise one's highest and complete potential through different forms of professional, social, intellectual, and cultural artistic activities. It is the level of needs placed at the final sequence of human needs and aspirations.

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[1] Abraham H Maslow, 1954, *Motivation and Personality*, Harper and Row, New York.

Figure 3.1
Maslow's pyramid of
human needs.

From the diagrammatic description of human needs, one should not think that any of these needs is absent from the human mind. It only means that as the lower level needs get satisfied, one feels the urge to satisfy other higher needs. In such a situation the pressure of lower needs is reduced, but they are present along with higher needs.

Hence, a manager should be able to identify the need levels of different individuals through his close interaction with his employees. He would thus create a business environment in which individual needs are largely recognised and satisfied. It is commonplace knowledge that a satisfied employee is more productive than a dissatisfied one.

McGregor's X and Y Theories

In highly developed countries, like America, even an average income group individual feels his basic needs are satisfied. Hence, most people pursue the satisfaction of their social needs and self-actualisation needs. They wish to be recognised, respected, and, above all, to belong and be a part of things.

In developing countries, such as India, perhaps, most people are primarily motivated to satisfy lower-level needs. Accordingly, in the past, the traditional management thinking did not consider