

# UNIT 1



# COMMUNICATION

Communication (from Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning “to share”) is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of ideas, feelings, intentions, attitudes, expectations, perceptions or commands, as by speech, gestures, writings, behaviour and possibly by other means such as electromagnetic, chemical or physical phenomena. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more participants that might or might not be living creatures.

Communication requires a sender, a message, a medium and a recipient, although the receiver does not have to be present or aware of **the sender’s intent to communicate at the time of communication**; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space. Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete **once the receiver understands the sender’s message**.

Communicating with others involves three primary steps:

- Thought: First, information exists in the mind of the sender. This can be a concept, idea, information, or feeling.
- Encoding: Next, a message is sent to a receiver in words or other symbols.
- Decoding: Lastly, the receiver translates the words or symbols into a concept or information that a person can understand.

There are a variety of verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. These include body language, eye contact, sign language, haptic communication, and chronemics. Other examples are media content such as pictures, graphics, sound, and writing. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also defines the communication to include the display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia, as well as written and plain language, human-reader, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of

communication, including accessible information and communication technology. Feedback is a critical component of effective communication.

## verbal communication

Human spoken and pictorial languages can be described as a system of symbols (sometimes known as lexemes) and the grammars (rules) by **which the symbols are manipulated. The word “language” also refers to** common properties of languages. Language learning normally occurs most intensively during human childhood. Most of the thousands of human languages use patterns of sound or gesture for symbols which enable communication with others around them. Languages seem to share certain properties although many of these include exceptions. There is no defined line between a language and a dialect. Constructed languages such as Esperanto, programming languages, and various mathematical formalisms are not necessarily restricted to the properties shared by human languages. Communication is the flow or exchange of information within people or a group of people.

## Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication describes the process of conveying meaning in the form of non-word messages. Some forms of non verbal communication include chronemics, haptics, gesture, body language or posture, facial expression and eye contact, object communication such as clothing, hairstyles, architecture, symbols, infographics, and tone of voice, as well as through an aggregate of the above. Speech also contains nonverbal elements known as paralanguage. This form of communication is the most known for interacting with people. These include voice lesson quality, emotion and speaking style as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. Research has shown that up to 55% of human communication may occur through non verbal facial expressions, and a further 38% through paralanguage. Likewise, written texts include nonverbal elements such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of

words and the use of emoticons to convey emotional expressions in pictorial form.

## Oral communication

Oral communication, while primarily referring to spoken verbal communication, can also employ visual aids and non-verbal elements to support the conveyance of meaning. Oral communication includes speeches, presentations, discussions, and aspects of interpersonal communication. As a type of face-to-face communication, body language and choice tonality play a significant role, and may have a greater impact upon the listener than informational content. This type of communication also garners immediate feedback.

## Business communication

A business can flourish only when all objectives of the organization are achieved effectively. For efficiency in an organization, all the people of the organization must be able to convey their message properly.

## Written communication and its historical development

Over time the forms of and ideas about communication have evolved through the continuing progression of technology. Advances include communications psychology and media psychology, an emerging field of study.

The progression of written communication can be divided into three **“information communication revolutions”**:

1Written communication first emerged through the use of pictographs. The pictograms were made in stone, hence written communication was not yet mobile.

2The next step occurred when writing began to appear on paper, papyrus, clay, wax, etc. with common alphabets. Communication became mobile.

3The final stage is characterized by the transfer of information through controlled waves of electromagnetic radiation (i.e., radio, microwave, infrared) and other electronic signals.

Communication is thus a process by which meaning is assigned and conveyed in an attempt to create shared understanding. This process, which requires a vast repertoire of skills in interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, gestures, and evaluating enables collaboration and cooperation.

Misunderstandings can be anticipated and solved through formulations, questions and answers, paraphrasing, examples, and stories of strategic talk. Written communication can be clarified by planning followup talks on critical written communication as part of the every-day way of doing business. A few minutes spent talking in the present will save valuable time later by avoiding misunderstandings in advance. A frequent **method for this purpose is reiterating what one heard in one's own words** and asking the other person if that really was what was meant.

## Effective communication

Effective communication occurs when a desired effect is the result of intentional or unintentional information sharing, which is interpreted between multiple entities and acted on in a desired way. This effect also ensures that messages are not distorted during the communication process. Effective communication should generate the desired effect and maintain the effect, with the potential to increase the effect of the message. Therefore, effective communication serves the purpose for which it was planned or designed. Possible purposes might be to elicit change, generate action, create understanding, inform or communicate a certain idea or point of view. When the desired effect is not achieved,

factors such as barriers to communication are explored, with the intention being to discover how the communication has been ineffective.

## **Barriers to effective human communication**

Barriers to effective communication can retard or distort the message and intention of the message being conveyed which may result in failure of the communication process or an effect that is undesirable. These include filtering, selective perception, information overload, emotions, language, silence, communication apprehension, gender differences and political correctness.

**This also includes a lack of expressing “knowledge-appropriate”** communication, which occurs when a person uses ambiguous or complex legal words, medical jargon, or descriptions of a situation or environment that is not understood by the recipient.

### **Physical barriers**

Physical barriers are often due to the nature of the environment. An example of this is the natural barrier which exists if staff are located in different buildings or on different sites. Likewise, poor or outdated equipment, particularly the failure of management to introduce new technology, may also cause problems. Staff shortages are another factor which frequently causes communication difficulties for an organization. While distractions like background noise, poor lighting or an environment **which is too hot or too cold can all affect people’s morale and concentration**, which in turn interfere with effective communication.

### **System design**

System design faults refer to problems with the structures or systems in place in an organization. Examples might include an organizational structure which is unclear and therefore makes it confusing to know whom to communicate with. Other examples could be inefficient or

inappropriate information systems, a lack of supervision or training, and a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities which can lead to staff being uncertain about what is expected of them.

### **Attitudinal barriers**

Attitudinal barriers come about as a result of problems with staff in an organization. These may be brought about, for example, by such factors as poor management, lack of consultation with employees, personality conflicts which can result in people delaying or refusing to communicate, the personal attitudes of individual employees which may be due to lack of motivation or dissatisfaction at work, brought about by insufficient training to enable them to carry out particular tasks, or just resistance to change due to entrenched attitudes and ideas.

### **Ambiguity of words/phrases**

Words sounding the same but having different meaning can convey a different meaning altogether. Hence the communicator must ensure that the receiver receives the same meaning. It is better if such words are avoided by using alternatives whenever possible.

### **Individual linguistic ability**

The use of jargon, difficult or inappropriate words in communication can prevent the recipients from understanding the message. Poorly explained or misunderstood messages can also result in confusion. However, research in communication has shown that confusion can lend legitimacy to research when persuasion fails.

### **Physiological barriers**

These may result from individuals' personal discomfort, caused—for example—by ill health, poor eyesight or hearing difficulties.