



## ART OF COMMUNICATION

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### ABSTRACT



Communication comes from the Latin word *communis* which means 'common'. When we communicate, we try to establish 'commonness' with others. Communication is a method of sharing our feelings, thoughts, and ideas and forming relationships with fellow beings. A person with whom we wish to share an idea will understand what we speak and write only when we try to communicate it in a way that will be understood by the other person. An idea by itself cannot be understood. It has to be coded either in words or in signs and symbols. An idea is always abstract or intangible. It has to be brought to light through our ability to express that idea in a concrete way.

The use of the seven deadly C's: Courtesy, Clarity, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, Consideration and Completeness collectively form the base of any effective communication. A communicator may speak or write fluently but she/he also has to be tactful, thoughtful, courteous, correct and complete in the communication that takes place. Then only he/she would be called a good communicator.

**Keywords:** *Communication---Ideas—Thoughts---Expressions—Verbal—Nonverbal---Definitions---Process Of Communication---Types of Communication---Communication Networks---Strategies for Effective Communication*

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Communication comes from the Latin word *communis* which means 'common'. When we communicate, we try to establish 'commonness' with others. Communication is a method of sharing our feelings, thoughts, and ideas and forming relationships with fellow beings.

"Communication is the art of being understood."

---Peter Ustinov

A person with whom we wish to share an idea will understand what we speak and write only when we try to communicate it in a way that will be understood by the other person. An idea by itself cannot be understood. It has to be coded either in words or in signs and symbols. An idea is always abstract or intangible. It has to be brought to light through our ability to express that idea in a concrete way.



Communication has been defined in different ways as:

- A transactional process that involves an exchange of ideas, information, feelings, attitudes, or beliefs and impressions.
- A multi-level process in an organization because it involves the organizational hierarchy, from the top to the bottom, and across the horizontal levels.
- A cultural interaction with people in groups for conversing and sharing ideas in social gatherings and not talking shop.
- A disseminating process that involves passing on of information to masses through the media.
- An interaction process with the corporate.
- A transformational process that motivates and fosters growth and mutual understanding.
- A dynamic process that challenges 'what you say' and 'how you say' at that particular moment.
- A mental/psychological process of talking to oneself in mind.

Simply put, communication is expression of an idea, which may be verbal, non-verbal or vocal, that is perceived, heard or read by another person. We all need to communicate, wherever we are and whatever we do. The inability to communicate appropriately and successfully leads to failure in our personal and professional lives. If one knows the art of communication, he/she can easily avoid a lot of miscommunication, waste of time, energy and money. Effective learning and teaching, better parent-child understanding, and interpersonal relations are some of the benefits of effective communication.

In order that we succeed in our efforts to communicate our thoughts effectively to the receiver of our communication, we need to understand that communication does not take place only by using words. More than 'what' we communicate, it is 'how' we communicate that is so crucial for the success rate of our communication. If we want our messages to be understood and accepted, we do need to take in to account the existence of the non-verbal accompaniments of communication. Gestures, voice, pitch, facial contact, are powerful non-verbal signals

which form an integral part of oral communication. So it is important that the speaker pays attention to the presence of the non-verbal factors in the art of communication.

The presence of these non-verbal factors in written communication is equally important. Long paragraphs, cluttered text, poor use of white space in the page, poor layouts of business letters, memos reports and other business documents are serious non-verbal errors. They affect the level of interest in the readers. So, skilled communicators pay great attention to these factors.

If we want our communication to be positive and forceful, we need to be aware of the power of the non-verbal factors in our oral and written communication besides choosing the right words to match our thoughts and feelings.

The relationship between thoughts and expressions is the relationship between intent and content of a message. Any communication is bound to be positive and pleasant only when our thought process is under control and we are in a positive frame of mind to communicate and also receive communication. Positive communication, which is minus negative thoughts and words, is closely connected with the communicator's existing frame of mind and the core competencies. In fact, a person whose inner qualities/core competencies are positive is likely to be a better communicator than those whose perceptions, values, outlook and attitude are not in a positive frame.

#### **TYPES OF COMMUNICATION**

There are different types of communication like:

- Personal / Intrapersonal communication
- Interpersonal communication
- Organizational communication
- Mass communication
- Social communication
- Transformational communication
- Corporate communication
- Group communication

In **Intrapersonal communication**, the individual communicates in his mind through the process of thinking and feeling. Carl Rogers had observed that if an individual does not practice intrapersonal communication, the person is likely to



lose touch with himself or herself and thus suffer mental agony. Intrapersonal communication enables an individual to shape self-concept and develop conviction of opinion.

**Interpersonal communication** involves interaction between two persons, or a small group, on a one-to-one basis. The advantage of interacting with fewer people makes it possible for people to open up and discuss matters to one another's convenience. The possibility of exchange of views and opinions on the spot makes this type of communication very valuable to an organization.

**Organizational communication** is at the very root of a successfully governed, well-understood and networked organization. Without a positive communication climate, no organization can either function or survive the complexities that besiege it every day.

**Social communication** occurs when people interact with one another in groups outside the organization, converse and share ideas in social gatherings and generally exchange pleasantries without talking shop. It demands that people know the social skills of greeting one another, making oneself known to the host/hostess/the organizers, mingle with the crowd without getting too rigid and socially gawky.

**Transformational communication** originates from the main source that is the sender. The sender conscientiously builds a larger frame of reference for a healthy understanding to develop. Also known as supportive communication, counselors, teachers, human resource managers practise transformational communication by listening to the grievances of the employees and seek solutions to the problems. The four elements of Transformational communication are thinking, sensing, intuiting and feeling (Carl Jung's psychological functions).

**Corporate communication** is the way in which a company builds and keeps contact with employees, dealers, business houses and all stakeholders. All the specialists from various departments and each and every employee in an organization have to play a key role to achieve the organization's planned objectives and to enhance the corporate culture of the organization.

**Group communication** occurs when meetings are held to have face-to-face discussions on issues that affect the working lives of employees. A successful group meeting allows each member to interact in a climate of open exchange of thoughts without anyone disrupting the discussion or suggestions made. The spirit of a good group lies in its respect for shared values and beliefs.

### PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is the transmission of information from the sender to the receiver, so it is necessary to understand the relationship between the two when communication takes place. The word 'process' indicates that it is an activity that is connected with a series of steps that are deliberately undertaken to reach the goal.

A communication process comprises the following elements:

- The sender
- The sender has an idea
- The sender encodes the idea into a message
- The message travels through the channel
- Noise in the transmission process
- The receiver gets the message
- The receiver decodes the message
- The receiver provides the feedback
- The frame of reference of the sender and the receiver
- The context of communication

Organizations can function efficiently only if it creates a system of communication networks that will specify who will communicate with whom. A proper communication system can only lead the organization to function as a cohesive body that is well networked for the daily work to go on smoothly.

### COMMUNICATION NETWORKS IN AN ORGANIZATION

Communication Networks refer to regular patterns of interaction among people and a systematic flow of information. The two kinds of networks that exist are:

- Formal network of communication
- Informal network of communication

**Formal network of communication** is also



labeled as the 'chain-of-command' model. All organizational policies and decisions originate with the top hierarchy and they flow down through the managers and supervisors to lower level employees. Modern day managements, however, encourage a lot of open communication with employees so that a free communication climate is generated for exchange of information. Such a type of climate helps the top brass to remain in tune with the changing trends in the market, increase efficiency and productivity, and most importantly, build employee morale.

**Informal communication network** is also labeled as 'grapevine'. As the formal communication networks have inherent problems of command and control, the idea of informal communication network emerged with employees playing the leading role. Grapevine is mainly the network of 'who talks to whom' which does not figure on the organizational chart. Such talks and interactions take place in the corridor, near the water cooler, in the wash room, the lunch room, near the notice boards where the people cluster around to express their feelings without any inhibitions.

### STRATEGY FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: THE USE OF THE SEVEN C'S OF COMMUNICATION

#### 1. Courtesy

As the word suggests, it expects the speaker/writer to be aware of the listener's/reader's feelings. In business communication, we not only pass on information but we also share and try to create a harmonious understanding for business to grow and develop and retain goodwill. Courtesy is not merely expressing perfunctorily the much used phrases 'thank you' and 'please', but it is a sincere and genuine expression that stems out of respect and care for others.

The following tips may be kept in mind if you wish to achieve courtesy in communication:

- Be sincere
- Avoid angry extreme rapture
- Refrain from preaching
- Use positive words
- Avoid negative words

- Avoid all discriminating words

#### 2. Clarity

When you choose simple, precise, familiar, right words and short sentences to express your ideas, you succeed in expressing your thoughts well. Clear expression is a fine balance between familiar words and words that are precise. Precision does not mean using jargon. Business requires the use of the right or the expected word and not general words that might cause ambiguity. For clarity, the writer or the speaker must know what kind of words the receiver will accept. So audience analysis or foreknowledge about the audience helps the communicator to use technical words for precise communication.

#### 3. Conciseness

This is a prerequisite to effective business communication. Time is money in business. A long winding message is a time robber and business people reject such messages in no time. Conciseness is achieved by eliminating all redundant words. Only relevant words and phrases are permitted in conciseness.

#### 4. Concreteness

Clarity and conciseness come with the use of concrete words. Use of figures, facts, names, examples, and vivid nouns add a special touch to expressions. The message is remembered easily. In business communication, we need to be precise and factual. Concreteness means opposite of being abstract or vague.

#### 5. Correctness

Correct use of grammar, message composition and appropriate words and adapting the right level of communication to suit the receiver's level determine the correctness of communication. Adapting the right tone for conveying a message is basic to the success of communication. Shop floor instructions, for instance, are different from client servicing communication.

#### 6. Consideration

This implies that the sender of the message gives due importance to the receiver and composes the message keeping in mind various factors like price, delivery date,



specifications, and other benefits from the receiver's side. This kind of thoughtful approach to communication is also termed as 'you-attitude'.

#### 7. Completeness

A business communication message is not complete unless it adheres to all the seven C's. Completeness does not only mean providing all necessary information, including something extra but also how the matter has been put across to the receiver of the message. The substance and the style of the message go hand in hand.

The power of the seven deadly C's cannot be underestimated as they collectively form the base of any effective communication. A communicator may speak or write fluently but she/he also has to be tactful, thoughtful, courteous, correct and complete in the communication that takes place.

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