



COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

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ABSTRACT



Communication means sharing meaning. With no sharing, there is no communication. To communicate successfully in a team or with others, at work or in the community, we have to understand the communication environment and the barriers which prevent messages being sent and received successfully. A communication barrier is anything that prevents us from receiving and understanding the messages others use to convey their information, ideas and thoughts. There are five of these types of barriers to effective communication, including: Attitudinal Barriers, Behavioral Barriers, Cultural Barriers, Language Barriers and Environment Barriers. A common cause of communication breakdown in a workplace situation is people holding different attitudes, values and discrimination. Valuing people who are different allows us to draw on a broader range of insights, ideas, experience and knowledge. The behaviors like bias, generalizations and stereotyping can cause communication barriers. Empathy is important for overcoming barriers to communication based on culture. Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. There are many environmental factors affecting the effective communication process.

Keywords: Language, Barrier, Attitude, Behavior, Culture, Language, Environment.

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Communication means sharing meaning. With no sharing, there is no communication. To communicate successfully in a team or with others, at work or in the community, we have to understand the communication environment and the barriers which prevent messages being sent and received

successfully. A communication barrier is anything that prevents us from receiving and understanding the messages others use to convey their information, ideas and thoughts. They can interfere with or block the message you are trying to send. This paper will help you to recognise the barriers to communication



which prevent messages being sent and received successfully.

Most people would agree that communication between two individuals should be simple. It's important to remember that there are differences between talking and communicating. When we communicate, we are successful in getting our point across to the person we're talking to. When we talk, we tend to erect barriers that hinder our ability to communicate. There are five of these types of barriers to effective communication, including:

1. Attitudinal barriers
2. Behavioral barriers
3. Cultural barriers
4. Language barriers and
5. Environment Barriers

ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

A common cause of communication breakdown in a workplace situation is people holding different attitudes, values and discrimination. An example of this is differing perceptions people have of power and status. Some people may think that they should treat people or be treated differently based on what they perceive as their status or power within a workplace or in the community. If they think that managers and supervisors have power over staff, for example, that they can allocate duties, reward, promote, or dismiss staff, this may lead to barriers before the communication even takes place. However, what one person considers power and control might be considered leadership or mentoring by another person. Effective communication is necessary no matter what level or position you occupy. If you feel someone is trying to exert power or control over you, communicate this to them. Discrimination arises when people make judgments about individuals or groups without thinking clearly. Behaviours such as stereotyping, bias and prejudice are forms of discrimination. When people discriminate, they make decisions without bothering to get all the necessary information about the people they are judging. Discrimination causes people to miss out on the value of difference, and the benefits that individuals and groups bring to any situation. Valuing people who are different allows us to draw on a broader range of insights, ideas,

experience and knowledge. Each person's uniqueness comes from personal characteristics such as:

- Race
- Gender
- Education
- Age
- Ability
- Lifestyle
- Experience

BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS

The behaviours like bias, generalisations and stereotyping can cause communication barriers. Having these attitudes and not confronting them is not just wrong, it's bad for individuals. In the workplace, such attitudes can cost the organisation time and money.

Stereotyping occurs when you assume we know something about a person because of their cultural or social background. Our views may come from a bias you may have against a particular behaviour, appearance, possession or even a particular geographical area. Our situation, appearance and behaviour may contribute to other people's stereotyped views. This could contribute to communication breakdown. Learn to treat everyone as an individual. We will open up the channels for communication and overcome the barriers based on discrimination

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Communication with people of different cultures and backgrounds means becoming aware of the differences in values, beliefs and attitudes that people hold. Empathy is important for overcoming barriers to communication based on culture. Empathy means sensing the feelings and attitudes of others as if we had experienced them personally.

Tips to create empathy

- Respecting other's feelings and attitudes
- Using active listening skills
- Encouraging involvement of others by asking questions while respecting personal privacy
- Using open body language and an encouraging vocal tone
- Taking other people's fears and concerns into consideration.
- Refraining from giving unsolicited advice.



- Not blaming, instead working towards a solution.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. However, barriers can also occur when people are speaking the same language. Sometimes barriers occur when we use inappropriate levels of language or we use jargon or slang which is not understood by one or more of the people communicating.

Often the situation in which the conversation is taking place, and whether or not people have prior experience of the matter being discussed, can also contribute to such barriers being formed.

TIPS TO OVERCOMING LANGUAGE BARRIERS

- Who we are communicating with
- What their language needs may be.
- Remember that preparation is an important part of communication

Using visuals like photographs, drawings, diagrams can help to overcome language barriers as can using appropriate non-verbal communication. We should be aware that different situations and different cultures have varying interpretations of non-verbal communication. What is acceptable in one culture may be offensive in another. What is clear to us may not be clear to others. The quality of your voice is also important for clear communication. Be sure to speak with appropriate volume for the situation and use clear diction. Listening actively to other people and letting them know that you are listening is an excellent way to overcome language barriers.

ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

Not all barriers to communication are caused by people. There are many environmental factors affecting the effective communication process. Messages can be blocked by environmental factors, such as the physical setting or the situation where communication takes place.

TIPS TO MANAGE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Here are some points to help you manage environmental factors for effective communication when in teams.

- Team meeting rooms should be cool, but not cold. A warm room makes participants sleepy; a cold room can make them very unhappy!
- Make sure that the environment is comfortable and secure. People need to feel safe before they will listen or offer suggestions.
- Check that nothing behind or near the team member will cause distraction (for example, activity seen through an open window or door; a television screen).
- Turn off your mobile phone when you are communicating with other people.
- Wait until machinery (or any other distracting noise) is turned off before you even try to communicate. If this is not possible, move to a quieter location.
- Use accepted format in any written communication (letters, memorandums and reports) and, if it's important, check with someone beforehand that they can understand it.

As a communicator, one has to think about what are the potential and real environmental barriers in your workplace or community.

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