

Short Notes

Business Communication

ENG301

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Definition of Communication

The word communication means the act or process of giving or exchanging of information, signals, or messages as by talk, gestures, or writing. Technically speaking, in the act of communication, we make opinions, feelings, information, etc known or understood by others through speech, writing or bodily movement.

Why do we communicate?

The purpose of any given communication may be:

a) to initiate some action;

Initiating Action

Initiating action may be achieved by two basic categories of communication.

1. Expressing needs and requirements
2. Persuading and motivating others to carry out the desired course of action"

b) to impart information, ideals attitudes, beliefs or feelings; and /or

Imparting Information

Imparting information, ideas, attitudes, beliefs and feelings may have any number of specific purposes.

- a) Creating awareness
- b) Creating understanding
- c) Persuading others
- d) Influencing others

c) to establish, acknowledge or maintain links or relations with other people.

Establishing relations

Establishing, acknowledging and maintaining relations with other people is a vital function of

Communication

A quality for Promotion



An executive must have the ability to communicate if he wants promotion. Those who cannot communicate effectively in either oral or written communication remain in the same positions.

Developing the right attitude

“To the customer, you are the company.” Your attitude when dealing with customers, clients, and the public reflect on the company you represent. Our attitude will reflect your country and your culture. Each message communicates the essential quality and culture of your company and can either build goodwill or destroy it.

What People required being Skilled Communicators?

They need extensive and complex body of knowledge that includes:

Semantics (the study of word choice)

Linguistics (the study of language)

Rhetoric (the study of writing and speaking effectively)

Psychology (the study of human behavior)

Sociology (the studying of society)

Graphic Design (the ability to communicate through visuals)

Computer Sciences (to handle word processing etc.)

Components of communication

Communication is a process of transmitting and receiving verbal and nonverbal message. Communication is considered effective when it achieves the desired reaction or response from the receiver. Simply stated, communication is a two-way process of exchanging ideas or information.

Cultural Diversity at Work

Today's workplace is increasingly diverse in age, gender, and national origin.

Diversity has brought problems to organizations and has brought strengths too.

To handle diversity issues in the workplace, companies need to take certain measures:

Seminars

Manager's needs to be open minded

Language problems

FLOW OF COMMUNICATION

- An organization is a group of people associated for business, political, professional, religious, social, or other purposes. Its activities require human beings to interact and react, that is, to communicate. They exchange information, ideas, plans, and order needed supplies and make decisions, rules, proposals, contracts, and agreements. All these activities require one skill that is communication.

So we can say that communication is the "Lifeline" of every organization

- An exchange of information within an organization is called **internal communication**. It takes place at different levels -- downwards, upwards and horizontal

Downwards

Organizational decisions are made at top level and then flow down to the people who carry them

Upward Flow

- To solve problems and make intelligent decision manager need what is going on in the organization. Many executives want comments from employees in addition to the usual periodic reports.

Horizontal Flow

- Horizontal flow takes place between peers in organizations in order to solve problems, perform job duties, prepare for meetings, and cooperate on important projects.

Informal Internal Communication



- Every organization has an informal communication network – a grapevine – that supplements official channel. It is important source of information. It is casual conversation of an organization.

External Communication

- Communication that takes place outside the organization is called external communication.

Ways of External Communication

- Letters, pamphlets, annual reports, interviews with the news media, etc.

Electronic Theory

- The message is *transmitted* as a signal through a channel, where it may be distorted by *noise* (such as smudged typing or acoustical problems). As a last step, the receiver *decodes* the message.

The electronic theory is helpful because it introduces the ideas of senders and receivers and of possible interference. It emphasizes one important aspect of communication: accuracy.

- Its usefulness is limited, people are not machines
- a accurate electronic communication system can be design but not a human one
- ignores money other important dimensions of the situation in which we communicate

Social Environment Theory

- We need to understand the rules, or the “culture,” of the environment in order to communicate: both the official rules – such as company policies and practices – and those unwritten rules regarding to whom, how, and when, and for how long it is appropriate for us to communicate within a certain organization.

Social environment is helpful because it adds the important dimension of the specific social situation



Rhetorical Theory

- Third set of theorists add more dimensions to our understanding of the communication process: communication is not linear, but circular; not just sending a message to be received, but producing a response; not static, but dynamic.
- Rhetorical theorists provide an important addition to a communication model for business

Communicators

Communication is a process of sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages.

The process of communication has six components: sender/encoder, message, medium, receiver/decoder, and feedbacks.

CONTEXT

Every message, whether oral or written, begins with context. Context is a broad field that includes country, culture, organization and external and internal stimuli. Every country, every culture and every company or organization has its own conventions for processing and communicating information.

SENDER-ENCODER

Sender is the person who communicates the idea, information, material, etc. He acts in the capacity of speaker, writer, or encoder.

The message he intends to send

The message he actually sends

The message the other person receives or understands.

The other person interpretation of the message

The other person response

MESSAGE



The message may be in the form of order, opinion, advice, suggestion, instruction, question answer or material. It is necessary and important that idea or message received be identical to the idea or message sent. It is possible only when both communicator's sender and receiver are skillful in communication and its language.

MEDIUM

Medium of communication includes letters report telegrams fax mailgrams cables tealeaf postal telephones charts pictures or any other mechanical device. Medium may be a person as a postman. It may be a device as a telephone. It may also be an organization as a post office or news agency.

RECEIVER-DECODER

The receiver is the decoder. He when receives decodes or interprets the message. Since perfect communication is not possible, there is deviation between the idea sent and the idea received or interpreted. If the receiver is skillful in communication then the deviation will be small.

FEEDBACK

Feedback can be an oral or a written message, an action or simply silence.

People in the world are not exactly alike. Cultures or countries are not the same. These differences, however, can cause problems in conveying your meanings. Each person's mind is different from others. As a result, message sender's meanings and the receiver's responses are affected by many factors.

Semantic barriers

A basic principle of communication is that the symbols the sender uses to communicate messages must have the same meaning in both the sender's and receiver's minds. You can never be sure that the message in your mind will be clearly sent to your receiver. The world is full with errors, as a result of differences in semantic (meaning) understanding.



Denotation

A denotation is usually the dictionary definition of a word. Denotative meanings name objects, people or events without indicating positive or negative qualities. Such words as car, desk, book, house, and water convey denotative meanings. The receiver has a similar understanding of the thing in which the word is used.

Connotation

A connotation is an implication of a word or a suggestion separate from the usual definition. Some words have connotative meanings, that is, qualitative judgments and personal reactions. The word man is denotative, father, prophet, brother are connotative. Some words have positive connotations in some contexts and negative meanings in others. For example, slim girl and slim chances.

Physical Barriers

Communication does not consist of words alone. Another set of barriers is caused by your own physical appearance, your audience or the context of the document or the presentation. Your ideas, however good and however skillfully imparted, are at the mercy of various potential physical barriers.

Psychological Barriers

Because of the changing world, everyone has his own concept of reality. Our sensory perceptions – touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste are limited and each person's mental filter is unique. In our daily interaction with others, we make various abstractions, inferences and evaluations of the world around us.

Emotional Barriers

One possible psychological block is emotional, you may be emotionally block is you are announcing a new policy you may become popular or unpopular

Abstracting

Selecting some details and omitting others is a process called abstracting.



Differences in abstracting take place not only when persons describe events but also when they describe people and objects

Inferring

Conclusions made by reasoning from evidence are called inferences. We make assumptions and draw conclusions even though we are not able to immediately verify the evidence. Some inferences are both necessary and desirable; others are risky, even dangerous.

Barriers Involving Values, Attitudes

Occasionally people react according to their attitudes toward a situation rather than to the facts

Other factors effecting attitudes, opinions and responses

Environmental stresses

Personal problems

Sensitivity

Nonverbal communication consists of that part of a message that is not encoded in words. The nonverbal part of the message tends to be less conscious and often reveals the sender's feelings and preferences more spontaneously and honestly than the verbal part. If the verbal message does not match the nonverbal communication, people tend to believe the nonverbal message.

Four types of nonverbal messages

Personal Nonverbal communication involves kinds of nonverbal behavior that are unique to a person. The meaning is also unique to the person sending the message.

Cultural nonverbal communication, by contrast, is characteristics of, or common to, a group of people.

Universal nonverbal communication is behavior that is common to humankind.



Unrelated nonverbal communication, such as a sneeze, is unrelated to the verbal message.

Analyzing Nonverbal Communication

Seven different aspects

- Theoretical writings and research classify nonverbal communication into seven main areas:

1. Body movement, or kinesics behavior, includes movement of the hands, head, feet and legs, posture, eye movements and facial expressions – all these affect the message.

2. Physical characteristics such as body shape, general attractiveness, body and breathe odors, weight, hair and skin color are important parts of nonverbal communication.

3. Paralanguage is that part of language associated with but not involving the word system. It consists of the voice qualities and vocalizations that affect how something is said rather than *what* is said.

The tones of voice, rate of speaking and voice inflection are an important part of the total message

4. Proximity means nearness, in terms of physical space. How people use their personal space and that of others communicates a message. This response to spatial relationships in formal, informal and intimate setting indicates how that person perceives and feels in that space

Personal space varies according to:

- Gender
- Status
- Roles



- Culture

5. Artifacts are objects used to convey nonverbal messages about self-concept, image, mood, feeling or style. For example, perfume, clothes, lipstick, glasses and hairpieces project the style or mood of the wearer.

6. The environment can influence the outcome of communication. For this reason, organization gives careful consideration to office space, factory layout, the sales area and conference venues. The environment should put people at ease and match their expectations; an unsuitable environment can produce 'noise' that causes communication barriers and interferes with the communication process.

Following are the traits of good communicators:

Perception: They are able to predict how you will receive their message. They anticipate your reaction and shape the message accordingly. They read your response correctly and constantly adjust to correct any misunderstanding.

Precision: They create a 'meeting of the minds'. When they finish expressing themselves, they share the same mental picture.

Credibility: They are believable. They have faith in the substance of their message. You trust their information and their intentions.

Control: They shape your response. Depending on their purpose, they can make you laugh or cry, calm down, change your mind or take action.

Congeniality: They maintain friendly, pleasure relations with you

Feedback

Make feedback more useful by:

- Planning how and when to accept it.
- Being receptive to your audience's responses.
- Encouraging frankness.

- Using it to improve communication.

To communicate easily and effectively with your readers, you should apply the following Seven 'C' principles:

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

Clarity

- Clarity means getting your message across so that the receiver will understand what you are trying to convey. Choose precise, concrete and familiar words.

Construct effective sentences and paragraphs.

- At the core of clarity is the sentence. A sentence moves thought clearly within a paragraph.

Important characteristics are as follows:

- **Length**
- **Unity**
- **Coherence**

- Vague: Being the chief executive, we can expect help from you.

- Clear: Being the chief executive, you can surely help us.

- **Emphasis**

- Little Emphasis: The order was received and the manager started preparing for it.

- Better Emphasis: As the letter was received, the manager started preparing for it.



Correctness

The correctness principle is more than proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. Though mistakes are never intentional, they spoil our image. Errors in the messages fall in the following categories:

Mistakes in names, figures, facts, and words

Mistakes in punctuation and capitalization

Mistakes in the level of Language

There are two types of writings:

In formal writing, our style is un conversational

In informal writing, we use words that are short, familiar and conversational.

- A formal style is characterized by more complex sentences.
- An informal style is characterized by Short words and sentences (Thanks a lot for your letter).
- Contraction & Abbreviations (I haven't, there's) simple words.

Conciseness

Eliminate wordy expressions

- To avoid wordy expressions, use single words whenever possible. Here are some examples of how word economy saves the reader's time and effort.

Avoid unnecessary repetition.

- Avoid repetition by using pronouns, short names or acronyms, etc
- Stick to the purpose of the message.
- Writing concisely means using only necessary, meaningful words.

Courtesy

Courtesy does not mean the use of old-fashioned expressions such as 'your kind enquiry', 'thank you' and 'please'. Rather, it is politeness that grows out of respect and concern for others. Courtesy is a quality that enables a request to be refused

without killing all hope of future business. Courtesy also means replying promptly to all letters. If you feel your correspondent's comments are unfair, try to answer tactfully. In short, the whole letter should have a courteous tone. It is not what you say, it is how you say it.

The following are suggestions for producing a courteous tone:

- Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful, and appreciative
- Use expressions that show respect
- Choose nondiscriminatory expressions

Courtesy also requires use of nondiscriminatory expressions that refer to any particular, gender, race, ethnic and Origin, etc.

Consideration

Consideration means writing every letter with your reader in mind. It also means acting on the 'you attitude'. When we put ourselves in our reader's place, we are considerate. We can understand our reader's desires, problems, circumstances and emotions. This thoughtful consideration is exactly 'you attitude'. Three specific ways to indicate consideration are:

- Focus on 'you' instead of 'I' and 'we'
- Show audience benefits or interest
- Emphasize positive, pleasant facts
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Completeness

• A business message is complete when it contains all facts that the reader or listener needs for the reaction you desire. Senders and receivers are influenced by their background, viewpoint, needs, experience, attitude, status and emotions. Because of their difference, the receiver needs to be sure that he has included all relevant information. Completeness is closely related to clarity.

• A complete message brings desired result. It does a better job of building goodwill. It helps remove costly lawsuits that may result if important information

is missing. Moreover, the communication that seems unimportant can be surprisingly important if the information is complete and effective.

For completeness, keep the following guideline in mind:

- Provide all necessary information
- Answer all questions asked
- Give something extra when desirable

Concreteness

Concreteness means that a message is specific, definite and vivid. If a message lacks these qualities, it will be vague and general. To achieve concreteness, denotative words will be used instead of connotative words.

The following guideline should help you compose concrete, convincing message.

- Use specific facts and figures
- Put active verbs in the sentences

Globalization means that for a Company to survive, it must establish markets not only in its own country but also in many foreign countries.

Thus employees must understand other cultures as well as their own country's ethnic diversity.

1. Background to intercultural communication

2. National cultural variables

3. Individual variables

There are different styles in fashion and it is difficult to say which one is the best.

Nowadays firms use the following types and formats:

1. The Block-form / Modified – Block
2. Full-Block
3. The Semi-Block
4. AMS (Administrative Management Society)



1. The Block-form / Modified – Block

This form is named so because inside address, salutation and paragraphs are blocked not indented in this form. If plain paper is being used, heading, date, complimentary close and signature are typewritten at the horizontal centre of the page. Place so that they end near the right hand margin.

Double spaces between two parts are given while single space is used within the paragraph. In Pakistan, closed punctuation is used. This form is a time saver as no part is indented in it.

2. Full Block

This format is considered to be the most modern. All essential parts in this form are started from the left-hand margin. Open punctuation should be used in this form. This form saves time more than any other form.

3. The Semi-Block

This form is much used in Pakistan. Heading, date, complimentary close and signature sections begin at the horizontal of the page or are placed so that they end near the right-hand margin. First line of each paragraph is indented five to seven spaces. Only closed form of punctuation is used in this form. This letter style is attractive on the page.

4. AMS (Administrative Management Society)

It has been in use since 1950, AMS is simple style. It uses full-block form and open punctuation. No salutation or complimentary close is used. Reader's name is used in the first and last sentences. Subject and writer's name are typed in capitals.

Punctuation Styles

1. Close Punctuation

Parts of heading, date, inside address, salutation and complimentary close are punctuated.

2. Standard Punctuation

No line of heading or inside address is punctuated. After salutation and complimentary close a comma is placed.

3. Open Punctuation

It requires no punctuation even after the salutation and the complimentary close.

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