

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

COURSE CODE : HUCS101

UNIT-1

1. Introduction to Communication- Meaning & Definitions:

Meaning of Communication:

Communication can broadly be defined as exchange of ideas, messages and information between two or more persons, through a medium, in a manner that the sender and the receiver understand the message in the common sense, that is, they develop common understanding of the message.

The English word '**communication**' is derived from the Latin word *communis*, which means common. The term communication refers to the sharing of ideas in common. In other words, it is the transmission and interaction of facts, ideas, opinions, feelings, or attitudes. It emphasises on sharing common information, ideas and messages. It is not merely issuing orders and instructions.

Communication is a two-way process of exchanging ideas or information. One person alone cannot carry out communication. When you communicate, there has to be a receiver or an audience that would reciprocate. Only then can your communication be complete. Communication is a process of transmitting and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages. It is considered effective only when it achieves the desired reaction or response from the receiver. The response may be positive or negative. In case of absence of any response, communication is incomplete.

Definitions:

1. "Communication is the transfer of information from a sender to a receiver, with the information being understood by the receiver".
— Koontz and Wehrich
2. The Oxford dictionary defines communication as 'the imparting or exchange of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

3. According to Newman and Summer, 'Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more people.'
4. 'Communication is the sum of all things a person does when he wants to create an understanding in the mind of another.' – Louis A. Allen
5. 'It is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another. It is essentially a bridge of meaning between people. By using this bridge of meaning, a person can safely cross the river of misunderstanding that separates all the people'. – Keith Davis

To summarize, communication has been defined as:

- A process of passing information and understanding
- A two-way process of reaching mutual understanding
- The act of making one's ideas and opinions known to others
- The process of imparting ideas and making oneself understood by others
- The transmission and accurate replication of ideas ensured by feedback for the purpose of eliciting actions.
- A systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION:

The desire to socialize and get formed into organised groups necessitates the need for communication. In the fast-changing world, managers communicate changes in technology, structure or people to the subordinates. If the communication system is well organised, it becomes easier for subordinates to understand and act upon the message. Communication plays important role in the lives of individuals and organisations.

The following points highlight the importance of communication:

- 1. Basis for planning:** Planning is the basic function of management. If plans are well designed and communicated for their implementation, it leads to organisational success. Planning requires extensive environmental scanning and information about internal and external organisation elements. An

effective system of communication helps in obtaining this information. Implementing the plans requires communicating them to everybody in the organisation. Communication is, thus, the basis of planning.

2. Motivation to work: Employees are motivated to work if their needs are satisfied. Communication helps managers know needs of their employees so that they can adopt suitable motivators and inspire them to develop positive attitude towards the work environment.

3. The Basis of Co-ordination: The manager explains to the employees the organizational goals, modes of their achievement and also the interpersonal relationships amongst them. This provides coordination between various employees and also departments. Thus, communications act as a basis for coordination in the organization.

4. Fluent Working: A manager coordinates the human and physical elements of an organization to run it smoothly and efficiently. This coordination is not possible without proper communication.

5. The Basis of Decision Making: Proper communication provides the information to the manager that is useful for the decision making. No decisions could be taken in the absence of information. Thus, communication is the basis of taking right decisions .

6. Increases Managerial Efficiency: The manager conveys the targets and issues instructions and allocates jobs to the subordinates. All these aspects involve communication. Thus, communication is essential for the quick and effective performance of the managers and the entire organization.

7. Increases Cooperation and Organizational Peace: The two-way communication process promotes co-operation and mutual understanding amongst the workers and also between them and the management. This leads to less friction and thus leads to industrial peace in the factory and efficient operations.

8. Boosts Morale of the Employees: Good communication helps the workers to adjust to the physical and social aspect of work. It also improves good human relations in the industry. An efficient system of communication enables the management to motivate, influence and satisfies the subordinates who in turn boost their morale and keeps them motivated.

9. Facilitates leadership: Effective leaders interact with followers, guide and inspire them to perform the individual and organisational goals. Effective communication process facilitates leaders to carry out the leadership functions. Planning is effective if accompanied by an effective control system. Control is possible when managers assess subordinates' performance, correct and prevent deviations and provide them regular feedback of performance. Control function largely depends upon communication system of the organisation. How effectively managers control organisational activities depends upon how effective is the communication system.

Functions of Communication:

Communication serves four major functions within a group or organization. These are:

- 1. Control**
- 2. Motivation**
- 3. Emotional expression**
- 4. Information**

Let's discuss these functions one by one

Control

When employees communicate any job-related grievance to their immediate boss, follow their job description, or comply with company policies, communication is performing a control function.

Motivation

Communication fosters motivation by clarifying to employees what they must do, how well they are doing it, and how they can improve if performance is subpar. The formation of specific goals, feedback on progress toward the goals, and reward for desired behavior all stimulate motivation and require communication.

Emotional Expression

Communication is a fundamental mechanism by which members of group shows their satisfaction and frustrations. Communication, therefore, provides for the emotional expression of feelings and fulfillment of social needs.

Information

Communication provides the information individuals and groups need to make decisions by transmitting the data needed to identify and evaluate choices. Thus, communication helps to facilitate decision making.

Nature of Communication

1. Consistency

The communication of thoughts, information, perceptions, and opinions among individuals is a continuous cycle in professional, personal, and business settings. It advances comprehension, proper understanding, and sharing of information applicable for making decisions.

2. Exchanges

Effective communication includes the exchanging of thoughts and feelings. Individuals associate and foster comprehension of one another by passing information among themselves.

3. Two-way process

Mostly communication is a two-way interaction with at least two people – sender and receiver. However, during intrapersonal communication, the individual speaks with himself.

4. Verbal and non-verbal

From written and verbal words to gestures, postures and body language are associated with the nature of communication. Looks, sounds, signs, and images are non-verbal communications that are as important as written or spoken words.

5. Dynamic cycle

Communication takes various mediums and forms relying on their needs, audiences, and goals. It is, subsequently, follows a dynamic cycle that continues to change in various circumstances.

6. Unavoidable or pervasive

Communication is the process that has to take place during human interactions. Hence it is an unavoidable action. It happens at all levels (top, center, low) in every single interaction of a business or organization.

7. Two individuals

At least two people, a sender, and a receiver should be available for communications to occur. It could be between any of the two individuals like bosses, subordinates, family members, friends, team members, etc.

8. Binding together organizational activities

The nature of communication is useful in binding together the internal organizational structure with its external counterparts. The communication further channelizes human resources and their skillsets into performance.

9. Mutual understanding

The nature of communication is also incorporated in its ability to change mutual understanding as communication is powerful when the sender and receiver foster a shared comprehension or understanding of the associated matter. Receivers have to understand the messages passed on by senders in the ideal sense.

10. Objective driven

Communications are also driven by their goals or objectives. When the receiver and sender know the objectives, they expect to accomplish while communicating with each other, it ensures maximum functional utility.

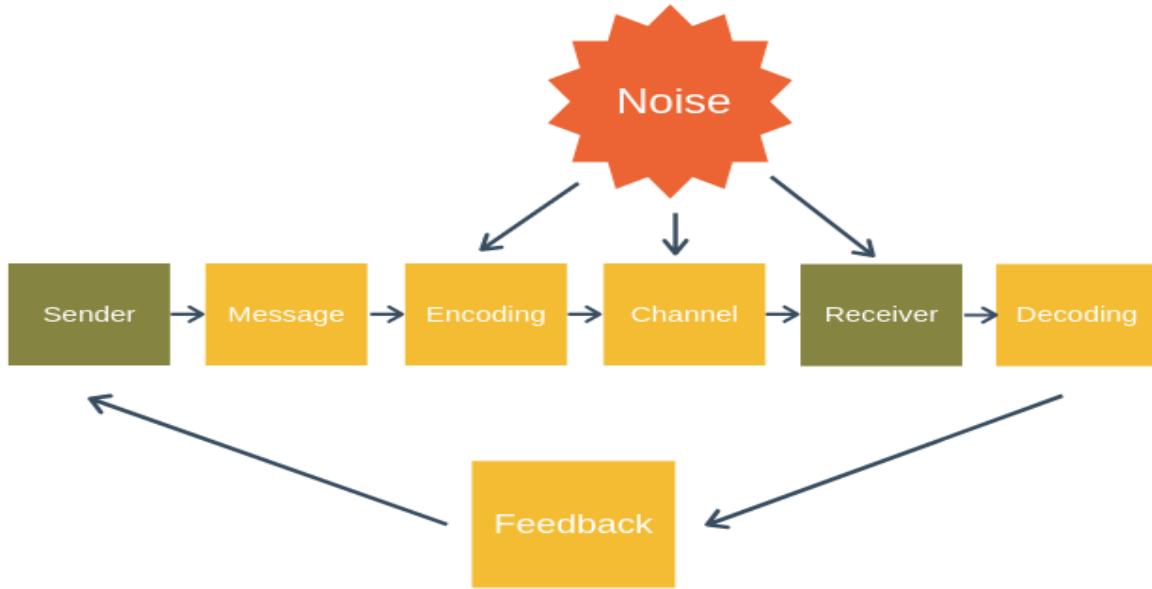


PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION:

The communication is a dynamic process that begins with the conceptualizing of ideas by the sender who then transmits the message through a channel to the receiver, who in turn gives the feedback in the form of some message or signal within the given time frame. Communication consists of the following eight components which are inter-related.

1. Idea
2. Sender
3. Encoding
4. Message
5. Channel & Medium
6. Receiver/ Decoder
7. Decoding
8. Feedback.

Communication Process



1. Idea:

Every message, whether oral or written, has its origin in an idea that germinates in the mind of the sender of the message. Every idea refers to some context. Thus, the idea or information that the sender wants to convey to the receiver is the source of the message in the communication process.

2. Sender/ Encoder:

The person who initiates the communication process is referred to as the encoder. The process of communication begins with the sender who identifies the need to communicate. The sender must have a clear picture in his mind about what he wants to communicate and should accordingly select symbols, words, images, etc. The sender must identify his audience and formulate the message in such a way that the receiver understands fully what he intends to convey and interprets it within the same context.

3. Encoding: Encoding takes place when the sender formulates his idea into a message to be transmitted to the receiver, using a series of symbols- verbal/ or non-verbal, written or oral. The sender should encode the message keeping in

mind the purpose of communication and should select words or symbols that help the receiver understand the communication correctly and to achieve the expected feedback. Encoding is a process of creating a message for transmission by an addresser to an addressee. A way that an individual puts his thought together with the way he is going to communicate.

4. Message:

A message is an idea transformed into words. It can be expressed in different ways depending upon the subject-matter, purpose, audience personal style and cultural background of the sender.

5. Channel and medium:

An appropriate medium chosen to send the message is known as channel. It is the vehicle which facilitates the sender to convey the message to the receiver. Channel is a system used to transmit a message, whereas medium is one of the forms/ types used under that system. For example, oral communication is a channel and telephone conversation is a medium. There are three broad channels of communication and there are several media under each. These are listed below:

<i>Channel</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Oral	- face- to-face conversations, telephone conversations, Audio tapes, Voice mails, gestures, etc.
Written	- letters, memos, reports, manuals, notices, circulars, questionnaires, minutes, emails, faxes, etc.
Audio-visual	- cinema, television, video-tapes, video conferences, Video chat, etc.

Thus, there is a difference between a channel and a medium. The sender should choose the best possible channel and medium to transmit his message.

6. Receiver/ Decoder: The person who receives the encoded message is referred to as receiver. The receiver may be an individual or a group of individuals. As communication is a two-way process, the receiver is as

important as the sender of the message. A receiver may be a listener or a reader or a viewer of the message. He not only receives the message but also tries to understand, interpret and perceive the total meaning of the message.

7. Decoding:

It is a process by which the receiver interprets the message and translates it into meaningful information. The meaning of the message is the sum total of the meanings of the words (symbols) together with the tone and the attitude of the sender as reflected by his choice of words and the structure of the message.

8. Feedback:

Feedback is the response given by the receiver of the message to the sender of the message. When the encoder receives feedback, he gets to know that communication has been accomplished. Feedback can be immediate, later, can be positive or negative. It can be verbal or non-verbal. In communication feedback plays an important role. It ensures that the receiver has received the message and understood it just as it was intended by the sender. Feedback is the most important component of communication. Without feedback, the communication process is incomplete.

• Importance of Feedback

Importance of Feedback in Communication

Basis of problem solving

Democratic approach

Effective communication

Identification of Improvement Area

Better understanding

Creating healthy relations

Effective coordination

Feedback is important in two-way communication. It completes two-way communications and provides a basis of understanding regarding the successful delivery of a message. The advantages or importance of feedback are highlighted below.

- 1. Basis of problem-solving:** In two-way communication, feedback is compulsory. The sender can only justify the attitude of the receiver if the feedback is provided. So, feedback 'ensures the basis of problem-solving and this is one of the importance of feedback.
- 2. Democratic approach:** It is a democratic approach to communication. It involves the participation of the receiver and therefore provides scope to express an opinion. It is another advantage of feedback.
- 3. Effective communication:** Two-way communication gets confirmed that the message is rightly sent and can understand the success or failure of communication.
- 4. Identification of Improvement Area:** Feedback gives input to the sender regarding the message provided by him. This helps to improve the communication problem.
- 5. Better understanding:** Feedback helps to understand the view and opinion of the receiver. With a better understanding, the sender decides on the next step.
- 6. Creating healthy relations:** One-way communication cannot create healthy relationships in the case of labour management. Hence two way communications are effective and therefore lower-level employees can depend on feedback to raise their voices.
- 7. Effective coordination:** Feedback enables effective coordination in an organization. All concerned departments can share the work-in-progress through the means of feedback. It supports the successful completion of a job or transaction.

Communication noise – In communication, noise can be thought of as those factors that disturb or distort the intended message. Noise may occur in each of the elements of communication. "Noise" hinders communication. It includes the following factors:

- (a) Factors that hinder the development of clear thought.

- (b) Faulty encoding due to ambiguous symbols.
- (c) Defects in the channel.
- (d) Inattentive reception.
- (e) Faulty decoding due to prejudices, wrong understanding, personal outlook, the wrong meaning of words and symbols.

Noise can result in miscommunication. Hence the important point is to realize all these possibilities of noise and to minimize them.

STAGES OF COMMUNICATION: 1. The sender conceptualises and encodes the message.

- 2. The sender chooses the channel and sends the message to the receiver
- 3. The receiver receives and decodes the message.
- 4. The receiver chooses the channel and sends the feedback.

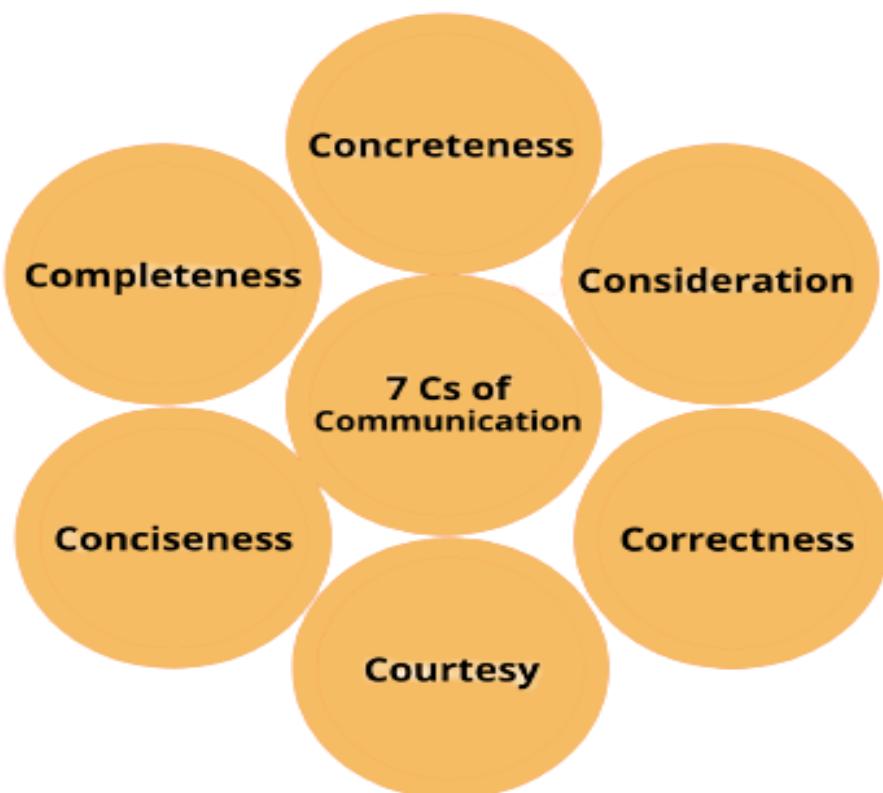
Communication – Characteristics

The characteristics of communication are as follows:

- (i) **At least two persons** – Communication involves at least two persons—the sender and the receiver. The sender sends the message and the receiver receives the message. There is an exchange of information between two or more persons.
- (ii) **Two-way process** – Communication is essentially a two-way process. It does not merely mean sending and receiving messages. It is not complete unless and until the message has been understood by the receiver in the same sense.
- (iii) **Form of communication** – Communication may take several forms, e.g., order, instruction, report, queries, etc. It may be verbal or written. It may be formal or informal.
- (iv) **Scope** – Communication is present in all human relationships. It is essential in all types of organizations and at all levels of management. It has a very wide scope.
- (v) **Dynamic process** – Communication is influenced by the mood and thinking of the sender and receiver. It keeps on changing depending upon the Level of understanding of the sender and receiver.

- (vi) **Goal-oriented** – Communication is goal-oriented and is effective only when there is a congruence of goals of the sender and the receiver.
- (vii) **Interdisciplinary** – Communication derives knowledge from several sciences like anthropology (the study of body language), sociology (the study of human behavior), psychology (the study of a human), etc. The linking between these sciences makes communication effective.
- (viii) **Interpersonal relations** – The main purpose of communication is to influence the human behavior which creates interpersonal relations.
- (ix) **Circular process** – There is a circular flow of information in the communication process. After the feedback, the receiver of the original message is required to transmit another message. The response indicates the success of the communication.

Principles of communication/ The 7 Cs of Communication:



The 7 Cs provide a checklist for making sure that your meetings, emails, conference calls, reports, and presentations are well constructed and clear –so your audience gets your message.

According to the 7 Cs, communication needs to be:

1. Clear.
2. Concise.
3. Concrete.
4. Courtesy.
5. Correct.
6. Consideration.
7. Complete.

1. Completeness - The communication must be complete. It should convey all facts required by the audience. A complete communication has following features:

- Complete communication develops and enhances reputation of an organization.
- Moreover, they are cost saving as no crucial information is missing and no additional cost is incurred in conveying extra message if the communication is complete.
- A complete communication always gives additional information wherever required. It leaves no questions in the mind of receiver.
- Complete communication helps in better decision-making by the audience/readers/receivers of message as they get all desired and crucial information.

2. Conciseness - Conciseness means wordiness, i.e., communicating what you want to convey in least possible words.

- It is both time-saving as well as cost-saving.
- It underlines and highlights the main message as it avoids using excessive and needless words.

- Concise communication provides short and essential message in limited words to the audience.
- Concise message is more appealing and comprehensible (understandable) to the audience.
- Concise message is non-repetitive in nature.

3. Consideration - Consideration implies “stepping into the shoes of others”. Effective communication must take the audience into consideration, i.e., the audience’s viewpoints, background, mind-set, education level, etc. Ensure that the self-respect of the audience is maintained and their emotions are not at harm. Modify your words in message to suit the audience’s needs while making your message complete. Features of considerate communication are as follows:

- Emphasize on “you” approach.
- Empathize with the audience and exhibit interest in the audience. This will stimulate a positive reaction from the audience.
- Show optimism towards your audience. Emphasize on “what is possible” rather than “what is impossible”. Stress on positive words such as jovial (jolly), committed, thanks, warm, healthy, help, etc.

4. Clarity - Clarity implies emphasizing on a specific message or goal at a time, rather than trying to achieve too much at once. Clarity in communication has following features:

- It makes understanding easier.
- Complete clarity of thoughts and ideas enhances the meaning of message.
- Clear message makes use of exact, appropriate and concrete words.

Clarity is lost because of following reasons:

- Using words which are difficult to understand. Eg. Cantankerous instead of quarrelsome.
- Writing illogical sentence structure.
- Using words that create ambiguity.
- Using Complicated sentences.

5. Concreteness - Concrete communication implies being particular and clear rather than fuzzy and general. Concreteness strengthens the confidence. Concrete message has following features:

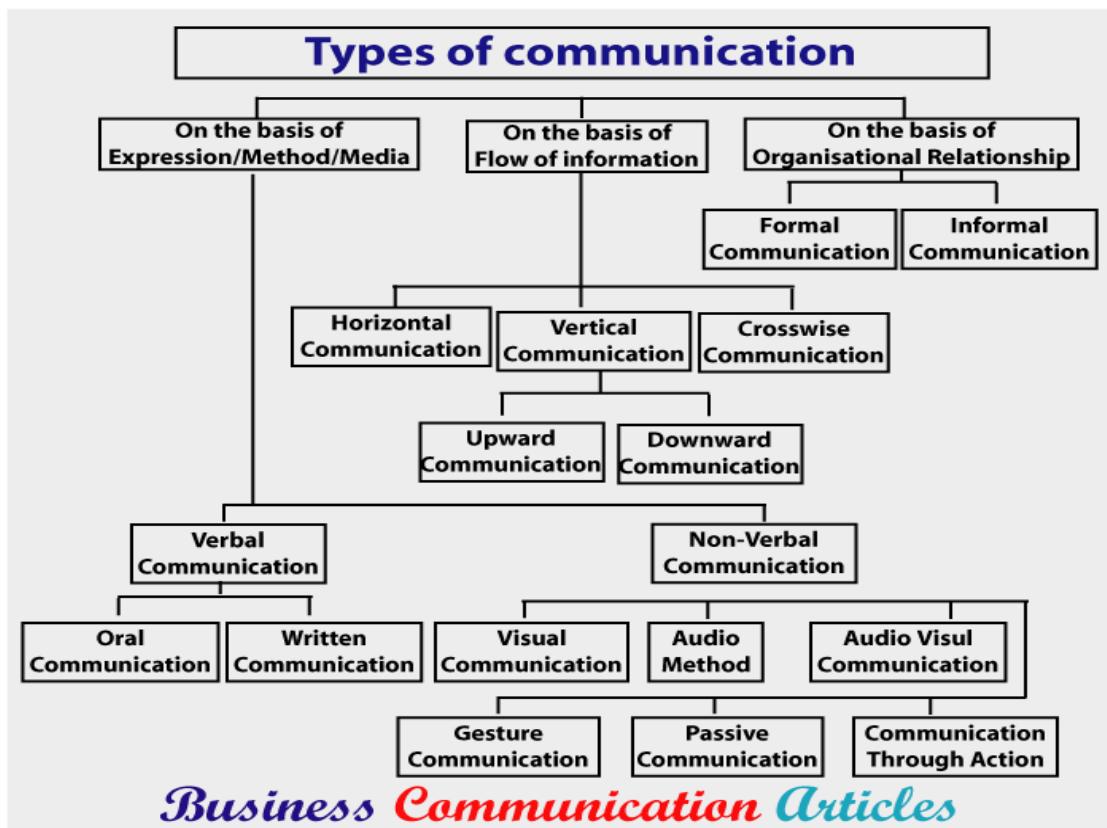
- It is supported with specific facts and figures.
- It makes use of words that are clear and that build the reputation.
- Concrete messages are not misinterpreted.

6. Courtesy - Courtesy in message implies the message should show the sender's expression as well as should respect the receiver. The sender of the message should be sincerely polite, judicious (sensible), reflective (thoughtful) and enthusiastic. Courteous message has following features:

- Courtesy implies taking into consideration both viewpoints as well as feelings of the receiver of the message.
- Courteous message is positive and focused at the audience.
- It makes use of terms showing respect for the receiver of message.
- It is not at all biased.

7. Correctness - Correctness in communication implies that there are no grammatical errors in communication. Correct communication has following features:

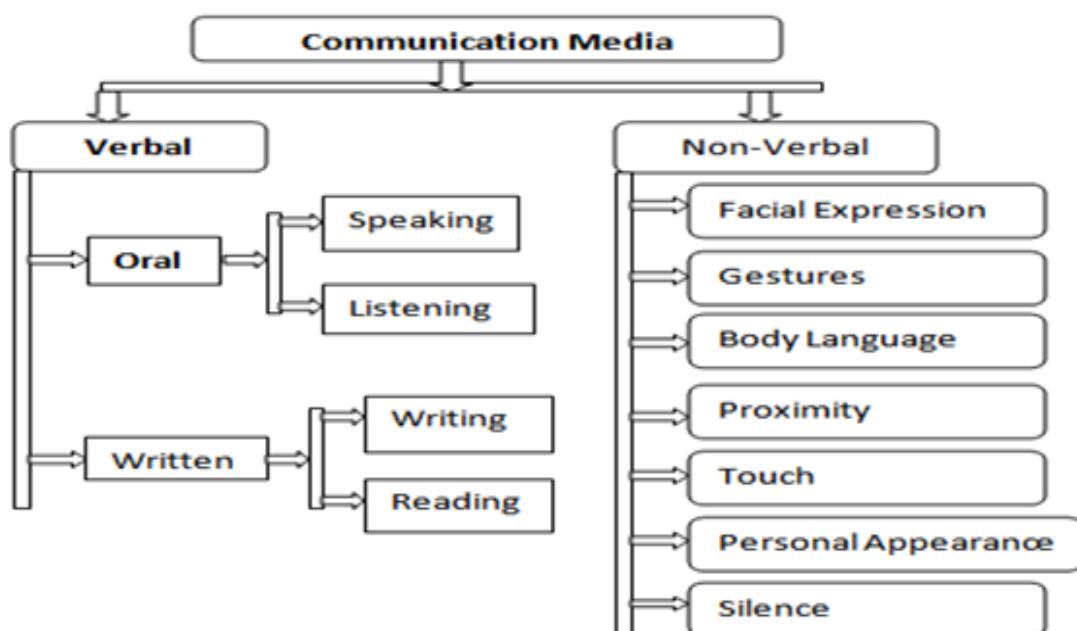
- The message is exact, correct and well-timed.
- If the communication is correct, it boosts up the confidence level.
- Correct message has greater impact on the audience/readers.
- It checks for the precision and accurateness of facts and figures used in the message.
- It makes use of appropriate and correct language in the message.



Business Communication Articles

Types of Communication:

❖ Verbal and Nonverbal Communication



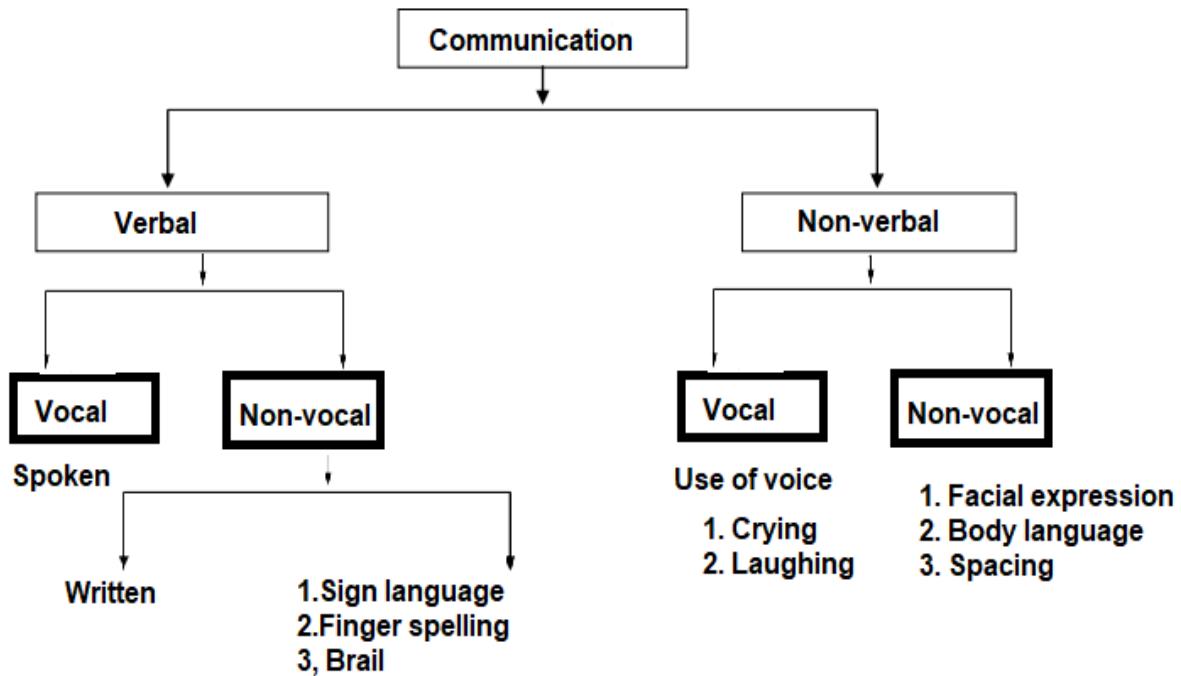


Fig- Types of Communication

Communication is a natural phenomenon; it is an act of interacting with people and sharing information with them.

There are two types of communication Verbal and Non-verbal.

Verbal communication is a form of communication in which you use words to interchange the information with other people either in the form of speech or writing. On the contrary, **Nonverbal communication** does not use words for communicating anything, but some other modes are used, i.e. where communication takes place by way of unspoken or unwritten messages such as body language, facial expressions, sign language and so forth.

Definition of Verbal Communication

The communication in which the sender uses words, whether spoken or written, to transmit the message to the receiver is known as Verbal Communication. It is the most effective form of communication that leads to the rapid interchange of information and feedback. There are fewer chances of misunderstanding as the communication between parties is clear, i.e. the parties are using words for saying anything.

The communication can be done in two ways;

- (i) Oral – like face-to-face communication, lectures, phone calls, seminars, etc.
- (ii) Written – Letters, E- mail, SMS, etc.

There are two types of communication, they are:

- **Formal Communication:** Also termed as official communication, it is a type of communication in which the sender follows a pre-defined channel to transmit the information to the receiver is known as formal communication.
- **Informal Communication:** Most commonly known as grapevine, the type of communication in which the sender does not follow any pre-defined channels to transmit the information is known as informal communication.

Definition of Nonverbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is based on the understanding of the parties to communication, as the transmission of messages from the sender to receiver is wordless i.e. the communication uses signs. So, if the receiver understands the message completely and proper feedback is given afterwards, then the communication succeeds.

It complements the verbal communication many times, to understand the mindset and the status of the of the parties, which is not spoken by them, but it is an act of understanding. The types of Non-verbal communication are as under:

- **Chronemics:** The use of time in communication is chronemics, which speaks about the personality of the sender / receiver like punctuality, the speed of speech, etc.
- **Vocalics:** The volume, tone of voice and pitch used by the sender for communicating a message to the receiver is known as vocalics or paralanguage.
- **Haptics:** The use of touch in communication is the expression of feelings and emotions.

- **Kinesics:** It is the study of the body language of a person, i.e., gestures, postures, facial expressions, etc.
- **Proxemics:** The distance maintained by a person while communicating with others, communicates about the relationship of the person with others like intimate, personal, social and public.

Artifacts: The appearance of a person speaks about his personality, i.e. by way of clothing, carrying jewellery, lifestyle, etc. This kind of communication is known as artifactual communication

What Is Verbal Communication?

Verbal communication means effectively presenting your thoughts in verbal format i.e., by talking. Verbal communication skills are essential in the world of business. Be it a weekly meeting or presentation to stakeholders, the importance of verbal communication is unparalleled. People always remember a person who speaks clearly, effectively, confidently, and charismatically.

For instance, Apple co-founder Steve Jobs's speech launching the iPhone is a classic example of brilliant verbal communication that people remember even today. Similarly, many speeches made by former US President Barack Obama are also unforgettable.

A powerful speaker is also able to connect with their audience easily. Like Oprah Winfrey says, "Great communication begins with a connection."

You too can be a great speaker with practice. Most of us possess the means of verbal communication, what's important is to recognize how to maximize them. Read on to learn more about its distinct characteristics.

Characteristics Of Verbal Communication

Before we explore the various defining features of verbal communication, let's look at its primary form. Verbal communication is oral in nature. Oral communication encompasses various activities such as talking, laughing or listening. We often navigate different emotional situations through oral forms of communication.

We also have written communication that includes script, alphabets, acronyms, logos and graphics. To interpret written messages, everyone involved must understand the code (e.g., the language). This is different from verbal or spoken communication.

There Are Several Characteristics That Are Specific To Verbal Communication, Namely:

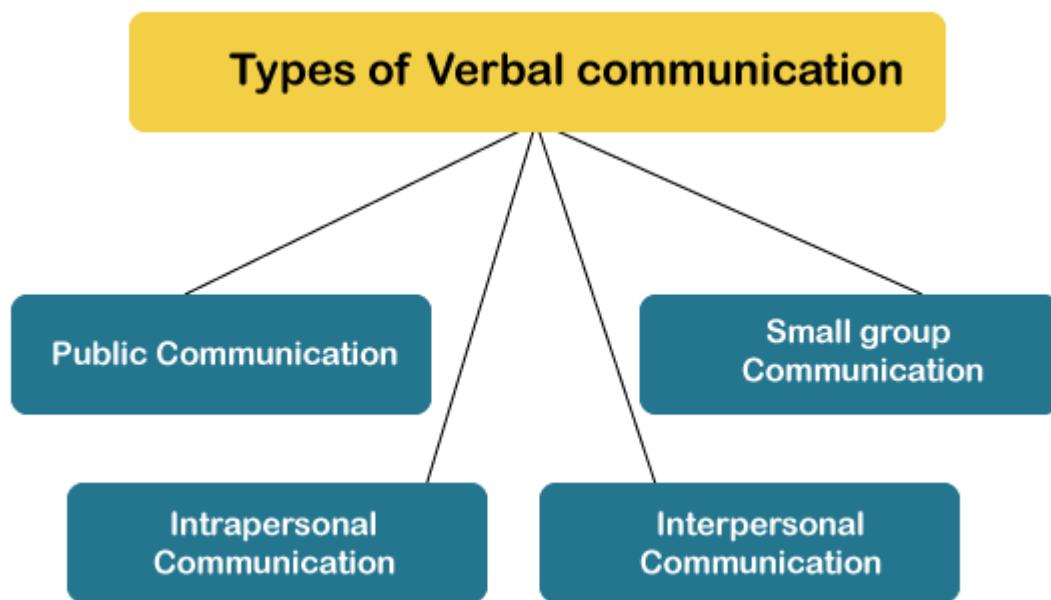
- The Message Being Communicated Is Directly Or Indirectly Related To An Object

- We Use Concepts To Communicate Messages
- The Content Should Be Understood By Both The Sender And Receiver
- Cultural Factors Influence The Content Of Messages
- While Communicating Emotions And Feelings, A Sender's State Of Mind Influences The Content Of Messages

Even though we talk to our friends, family and coworkers on a regular basis, we may not always be aware of how we're communicating. Mastering the art of verbal communication will help you in more ways than one. Let's explore different types of verbal communication and how your audience factors into it.

Types Of Verbal Communication

Verbal communication goes beyond words, sounds and languages. You can classify verbal communication into four types based on your audience.



1. Intrapersonal Communication

This is your private verbal communication channel. You talk to yourself and articulate your thoughts. Communicating with yourself will give you more confidence and clarity in your thoughts. It'll help you make up your mind, form your sentences, find suitable words and effective ways to connect with other people. This will help you gain your colleagues' trust in the workplace.

2. Interpersonal Communication

You can also call this one-to-one verbal communication. This type of communication happens between two individuals. It helps you understand if you're getting your thoughts across clearly. Reactions, responses and verbal and nonverbal cues from the other person will help you understand whether you're being understood or not. Make sure that you listen to the other person intently. Communication doesn't just mean to talk to someone. It's also about listening. So, listen, think and then respond. Take time to think and make sure you don't offend people with your response.

3. Small Group Communication

The number of people increases in small group communication. You move from communicating with a single participant to a few more. These small groups could be team meetings, board meetings or sales meetings. The number of participants is small enough for everyone to communicate with each other. When you attend small group meetings, be prepared with a topic to make sure you stay on track. Stay on topic and allow enough time for everyone to present their thoughts.

4. Public Communication

You may also know this type as 'public speaking'. Here, an individual addresses a large number of people at once. Speeches, election campaigns and presentations are a few examples of public communication. Since the number of people in the audience is larger in this type of communication, be sure to use words and phrases they'll understand easily and structure your thoughts before addressing the audience. The more prepared you are, the more confident you'll feel like a public speaker.

Verbal communication is a broad topic. There are various elements that help us organize our thoughts around it. They are:

1. Tone

When you express yourself your tone determines the message to be interpreted. For example, you can be saying something nice but if your tone is a sarcastic tone, the message will be conveyed differently. Your tone makes a huge difference to your speech.

2. Speed

The pace at which you speak is important as it determines the reaction of your audience. You may have attended lectures or webinars where people speaking slowly and softly can get boring. Similarly, it may be difficult to understand someone speaking at a rapid pace.

3. Volume

Volume ranges from a whisper to a scream. The volume at which you talk can convey various meanings. For example, if you whisper into someone's ears in the presence of multiple people, it can be misconstrued as something negative. On the other hand, screaming while someone is talking is rude. Always monitor your volume depending on the social context you're in.

Additionally, language, grammar and vocabulary are critical aspects of verbal communication. An erroneous message to a hiring manager, for example, can make or break your career opportunity. This is why verbal communication is a critical skill for success in professional settings as well. Effective communication helps with decision-making and increases collaboration in teams. Let's look at the benefits of different types of verbal communication.

Advantages Of Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is one of the most important mediums of communication. The stronger your communication skills are, the easier it is for you to establish trust and build lasting relationships with others. Here are some benefits of strong verbal communication skills:

- **It Provides Complete Understanding And There's Room To Clarify Any Messages That May Have Been Misunderstood**
- **It's One Of The Fastest Modes Of Communication And Is Time-Efficient**
- **There Is Space For Providing Feedback, Which Allows Two Or More People To Engage In A Conversation At The Same Time**
- **It Allows Speakers To Exercise Influence And Persuade Listeners To Agree With Ideas, Thoughts And Opinions**
- **It's Flexible, That Is, You Can Change Your Language And Tone Depending On The Situation You're In Or The Relationship You Share With An Individual**

In short, verbal communication is one of the most reliable methods of communication. Its benefits apply to the world of work as well. Let's look at the various ways in which strong verbal communication skills can be beneficial for professionals:

1. Building Relationships

Verbal communication allows you to build strong interpersonal relationships. It's easier when you find like-minded people who share similar interests, ideas and outlooks. This further encourages you to cooperate, collaborate and engage in teamwork.

2. Persuading Someone

In professional settings, you need to exert a certain amount of influence to get things going. For example, if you want your coworkers to join your project, you need to be able to convince them first. Even in brainstorming sessions, you need to be able to convince others of your ideas and perspectives.

3. Bringing Clarity

As verbal communication enables feedback, you can provide clarity to your message by repeating yourself. For example, in conflicts or arguments, you can repeat your message so that there's no room for ambiguity.

4. Improving Productivity

With proper communication in place, you can communicate effectively with team members and people across the organization. Well-established relationships enhance the process, allowing you to cooperate and collaborate quickly. Group discussions and teamwork maximize output, therefore increasing productivity.

5. Increasing Motivation

Verbal communication plays a crucial role in providing feedback and recognizing individual effort. Whether it's a congratulatory speech or email, words of support and appreciation boosts confidence levels. If you're a manager, don't miss the opportunity to celebrate your team's success and efforts. Not only will they get encouraged to do better, but it also cements your relationship with them.

Therefore, effective verbal communication opens up a two-way street that allows individuals to interact, engage and collaborate with each other, improving organizational efficiency and productivity. On an individual level, it helps you become more confident and a well-rounded professional.

Non-Verbal Communication

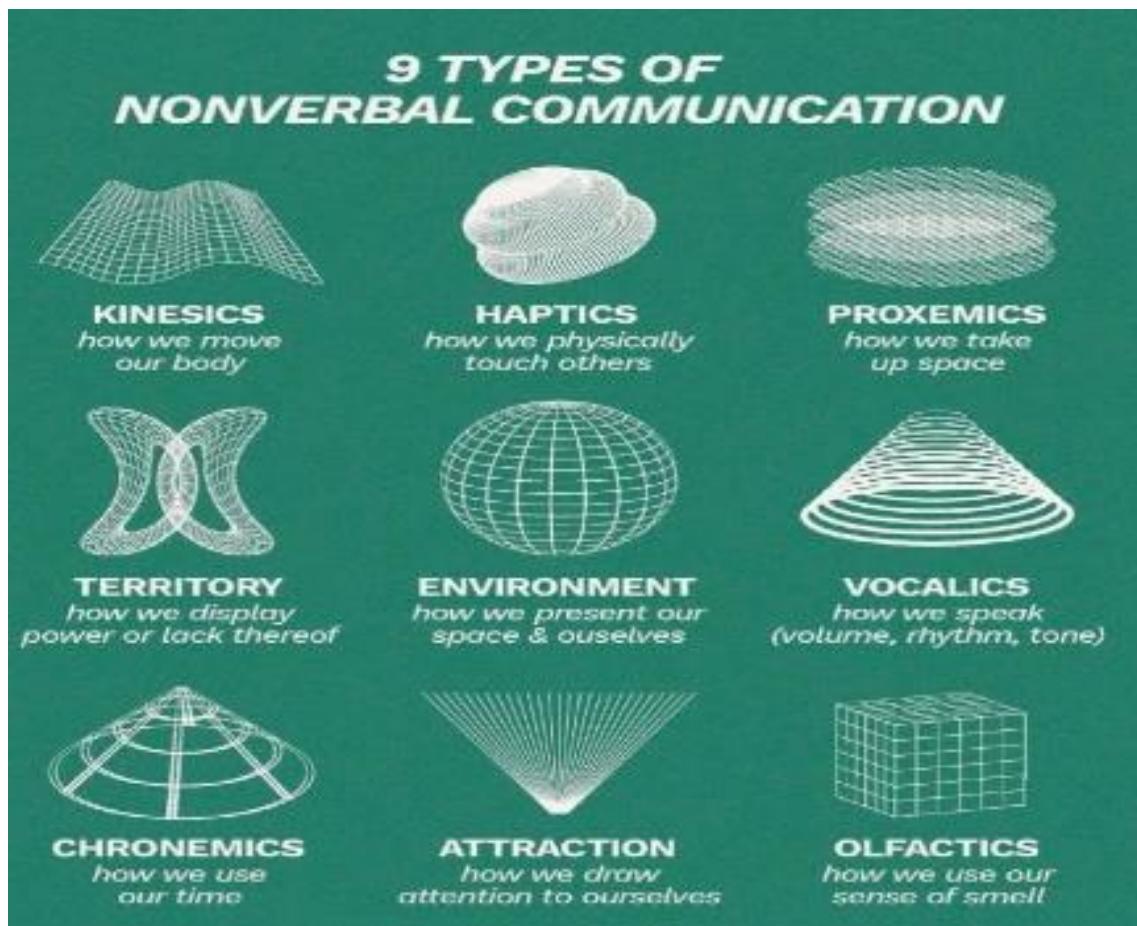
Definition: The **Non-Verbal Communication** is the process of conveying meaning without the use of words either written or spoken. In other words, any communication made between two or more persons through the use of facial expressions, hand movements, body language, postures, and gestures is called as non-verbal communication.

The Non-Verbal Communication, unlike the verbal communication, helps in establishing and maintaining the interpersonal relationships while the verbals only help in communicating the external events. People use non-verbals to express emotions and interpersonal attitudes, conduct rituals such as greetings and bring forward one's personality.

The non-verbal communication in the form of signals, expressions add meaning over the verbals and help people to communicate more efficiently. It supplements whatever is said in words, such as people nod to acknowledge and move their hands to give directions.

The non-verbal communication defines the distance between the communicators and helps them to exchange their emotional state of mind. Also, it regulates the flow of communication, for example, an individual can give signals to convey that he had finished speaking or else he wants to speak.

Sometimes, the non-verbals acts as a barrier to communicating effectively as the recipient could not understand what the sender is trying to say and may interpret it wrongly.



Non-verbal communication is based on the understanding of the parties to communication, as the transmission of messages from the sender to receiver is wordless i.e. the communication uses signs. So, if the receiver understands the message completely and proper feedback is given afterwards, then the communication succeeds.

It complements the verbal communication many times, to understand the mindset and the status of the of the parties, which is not spoken by them, but it is an act of understanding. **The types of Non-verbal communication are as under:**

- **Chronemics:** The use of time in communication is chronemics, which speaks about the personality of the sender / receiver like punctuality, the speed of speech, etc.
- **Vocalics:** The volume, tone of voice and pitch used by the sender for communicating a message to the receiver is known as vocalics or paralanguage.
- **Haptics:** The use of touch in communication is the expression of feelings and emotions.
- **Kinesics:** It is the study of the body language of a person, i.e., gestures, postures, facial expressions, etc.
- **Proxemics:** The distance maintained by a person while communicating with others, communicates about the relationship of the person with others like intimate, personal, social and public.
- **Artifacts:** The appearance of a person speaks about his personality, i.e. by way of clothing, carrying jewellery, lifestyle, etc. This kind of communication is known as artifactual communication.

Key Differences Between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

The following points explain the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication in detail:

1. The use of words in communication is Verbal communication. The communication which is based on signs, not on words is Non-verbal communication.
2. There are very fewer chances of confusion in verbal communication between the sender and receiver. Conversely, the chances of misunderstanding and confusion in non-verbal communication are very much as the use of language is not done.

3. In verbal communication, the interchange of the message is very fast which leads to rapid feedback. In opposition to this, the non-verbal communication is based more on understanding which takes time and hence it is comparatively slow.
4. In verbal communication, the presence of both the parties at the place of communication is not necessary, as it can also be done if the parties are at different locations. On the other hand, for an effective non-verbal communication, both the parties must be there, at the time of communication.
5. In verbal communication, the documentary evidence is maintained if the communication is formal or written. But, there is no conclusive evidence in case of non-verbal communication.
6. Verbal communication fulfills the most natural desire of humans – talk. In the case of Non-verbal communication, feelings, status, emotions, personality, etc are very easily communicated, through the acts done by the parties to the communication.

Or

Non-Verbal Communication: Any communication without word of mouth, spoken words, Conversation and written languages are called Non-Verbal Communication. It happens through Signs, symbols, colors, gestures, body language or any facial expressions are known as non-verbal communication. Examples: Traffic signals are one of the best examples for non-verbal communication.

TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

1. Kinesics Body Movements Gestures and Body Stance Facial Expressions Eyes Movements
2. Proxemics
3. Haptics
4. Chronemics
5. Paralanguage
6. Appearance
7. Artifacts
8. Environment

1. KINESICS:

a. Body language is a type of a nonverbal communication in which physical behaviors are used to express or convey the information. Such behavior includes facial expressions, body posture, gestures, eye movement, touch and the use of space. Interpretations of human body language. It is also known as kinesics.

b. Facial expression is a part of body language and the expression of emotions such as the movement of the eyes, eyebrows, lips, nose and

cheeks. The face displays numerous emotions such as: Happiness, Surprise, Disgust, Anger, Sadness, etc...

c. Head and neck signals: The body language of the head should be considered in conjunction with that of the neck. Body language conveyed by the head and neck involves various ranges of movement. Nodding of the head is generally considered as a sign of saying 'yes'. Shaking the head is usually interpreted as meaning 'no'.

d. Body postures: Emotions can also be detected through body postures. For example, a person feeling angry would portray dominance over the other, and their posture would display approach tendencies. Sitting or standing postures also indicate one's emotions. A person sitting till the back of their chair, leans forward with their head nodding along with the discussion implies that they are open, relaxed and generally ready to listen. On the other hand, a person who has their legs and arms crossed with the foot kicking slightly implies that they are feeling impatient and emotionally detached from the discussion

e. Gestures - Gestures are movements made with body parts (example hands, arms, fingers, head, legs) and they may be voluntary or involuntary. Different hand gestures help emphasize meanings and regulate interaction between or among participants. For Example: Relaxed hands indicate confidence and self-assurance, while clenched hands may be interpreted as signs of stress or anger. If a person is wringing their hands, this demonstrates nervousness and anxiety.

f. Oculistics - Oculistics, a subcategory of body language, is the study of eye movement, eye behavior, gaze, and eye-related nonverbal communication. Eyes are said to be the window to the soul. - Through eye contact, one can tell if the other party is paying attention to the speaker's words. - It can also help in determining whether one is saying the truth or not. - Through eye contact we can be able to know one's emotional condition.

2. PROXEMICS

Another notable area in the nonverbal world of body language is that of spatial relationships, which is also known as Proxemics. Introduced by Edward T. Hall in 1966, Proxemics is the study of measurable distances between people as they interact with one another.

Hall also came up with four distinct zones in which most men operate:

Intimate distance for embracing, touching or whispering

Personal distance for interactions among good friends or family members

Social distance for interactions among acquaintances

Public Distance used for public speaking.

3. HAPTICS(Touch)-

It is a subcategory of Body Language, and the study of touching as such, handshakes, holding hands, back slapping, high fives, brushing up against someone or patting someone all have meaning. Touching is the most developed sense at birth and formulates our initial views of the world. Touching can be used to soothe, for amusement during play, to flirt, to express power and maintain bonds between people, such as with baby and mother.

4. CHRONEMICS(Time)-

The use of time in nonverbal communication is formally defined as chronemics. Time perceptions include punctuality, willingness to wait, and interactions. The use of time can affect lifestyles, daily agendas, speed of speech, movements and how long people are willing to listen.

5. PARALANGUAGE-

The attributes of voice like audibility, pleasantness, distinctness, and correctness in pronunciation, flexibility, etc. help to shape the meaning in oral communication. – These attributes help in creating meaning. - Paralanguage goes beyond the linguistic form of an utterance. Diction, the highness and lowness of tone, intensity, the manner of delivery, rate of speaking, etc. create the intended meaning of an utterance. - When something is delivered coupled with gestures and facial expressions may reflect the feeling(s) and/or emotion(s) of the participant in a communicative situation.

6.APPEARANCE

Personal appearance refers to the way the audiences with their expectations of appropriateness, see and evaluate the way you look. The ways you look is all about your outward appearance of clothing, grooming, and make-ups. Physical appearance largely determines attractiveness and those who are attractive are more likely to be considered as more intelligent, more persuasive, and more likeable than the unattractive ones. Appearances also include:

*Hairstyles

- * Body cleanliness
- * Clean Nails
- * Shiny shoes
- *No tattoos
- *Being appropriately dressed

7. ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are forms of decorative ornamentation that are chosen to represent self-concept. They can include rings and tattoos, but may also include brand names and logos. From clothes to cars, watches, briefcases, purses, and even eyeglasses, what we choose to surround ourselves with communicates something about our sense of self. They may project gender, role or position, class or status, personality, and group membership or affiliation.

7. ENVIRONMENT

Environment involves the physical and psychological aspects of the communication context. The perception of one's environment influences one's reaction to it. For example, Google is famous for its work environment, with spaces created for physical activity and even in-house food service around the clock. The expense is no doubt considerable, but Google's actions speak volumes. The results produced in the environment, designed to facilitate creativity, interaction, and collaboration, are worth the effort.

Communication implies an exchange of information:

3 Forms of Communications are:

1. **On the basis of Organisational Structure**
2. **On the basis of Direction**
3. **On the basis of Mode of Expression**

1.Organisational Structure

- Formal Communication
- Informal Communication

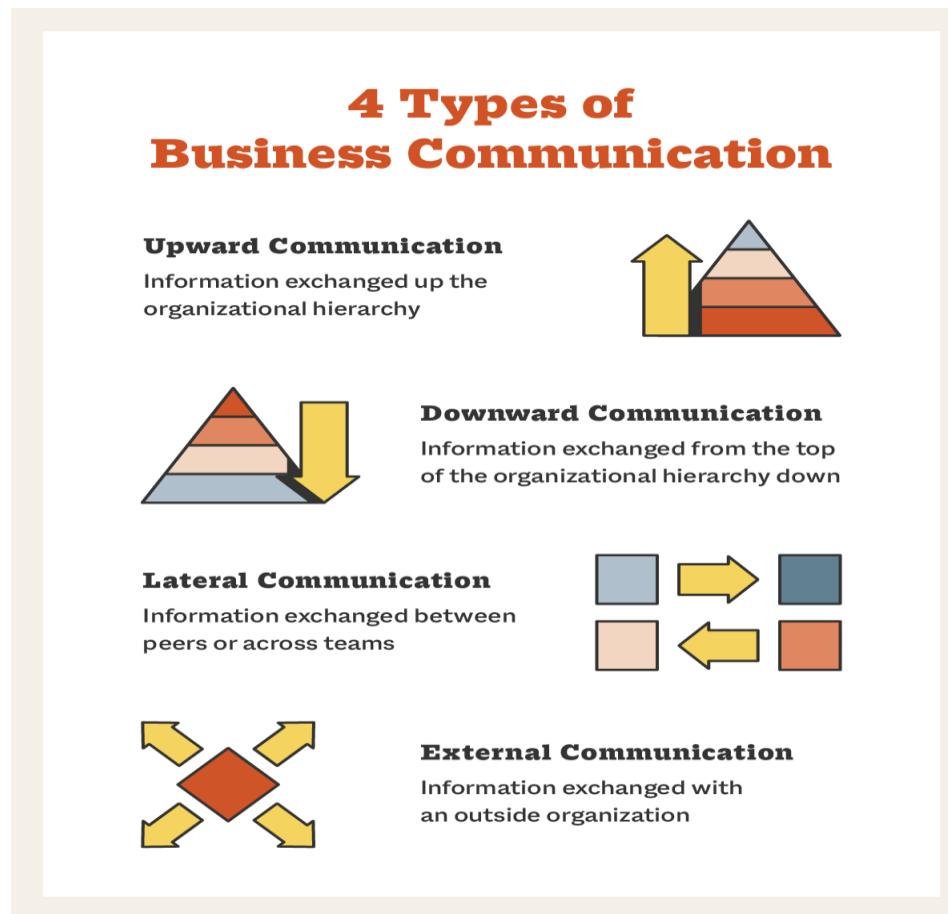
2.Direction

- Downward Communication

- Upward Communication
- Horizontal Communication
- Diagonal Communication

3. Mode of Expression

- Non-Verbal Communication
- Verbal Communication
 - A. Oral Communication
 - B. Written Communication



Formal Communication

Definition: The **Formal Communication** is the exchange of official information that flows along the different levels of the organizational hierarchy and conforms to the prescribed professional rules, policy, standards, processes and regulations of the organization.

The formal communication follows a proper predefined channel of communication and is deliberately controlled. It is governed by the chain of

command and complies with all the organizational conventional rules. In the organizational set up the formal communication can observe any of the following forms:



1. **Downward Communication:** The downward communication is when the information passes from the management level to the subordinate level. This is the most common form of formal communication wherein communication flows downwards, i.e. from the people occupying top positions in the organization to the people at lower levels.

It mainly includes orders and instructions and can either be written or oral depending on the importance of the message and also the status of individuals involved in the communication process. Reports, emails, letters, manuals, etc. are the commonly used communication tools.

2. **Upward Communication:** The upward communication is when the message passes from the subordinate level to the management level. Here, the communication flows upwards i.e. from the subordinates to the managers in the form of request, reports, suggestions, complaints, and instructions.
3. **Horizontal or Lateral Communication:** Horizontal communication means when the Co-workers with different areas of responsibilities, but at the same level in the organization communicate with each other. The communication between the managers of a different department, such as marketing, finance, production, HR, is the best example of horizontal communication.
4. **Diagonal or Crosswise Communication:** When the employees of different departments at different levels communicate with each other irrespective of the chain of command, then the communication is said to be a diagonal or a cross-wise communication. The communication between the floor manager and the sales team is the example of diagonal communication.

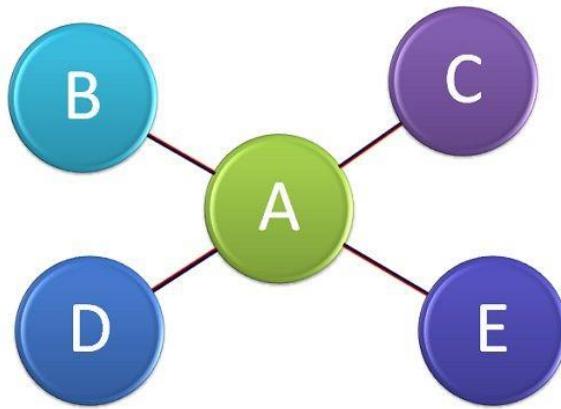
The way in which the formal communication can be facilitated is called as the formal communication network. There are several forms of [Formal Communication Network](#) that individuals use to get their message transmitted to others.

Formal Communication Network

Definition: The **Formal Communication Network** shows the pattern of the communication, i.e. the way in which the formal communication is facilitated.

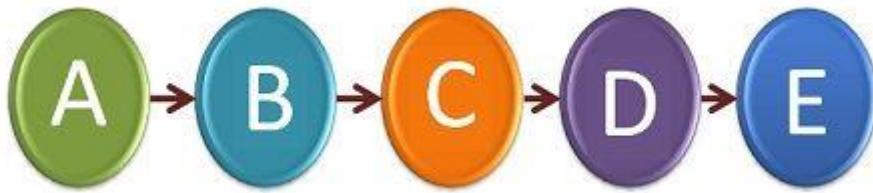
There are several types of formal communication networks classified on the basis of the degree to which they are centralized and decentralized. These are:

1. **Wheel Network:** This is the most centralized forms of a communication network wherein all the information flows from one central person, typically the leader. The other members have little or no communication link with each other. Here, the leader deliberately controls the line of communication and make sure that the information reaches all in the group.

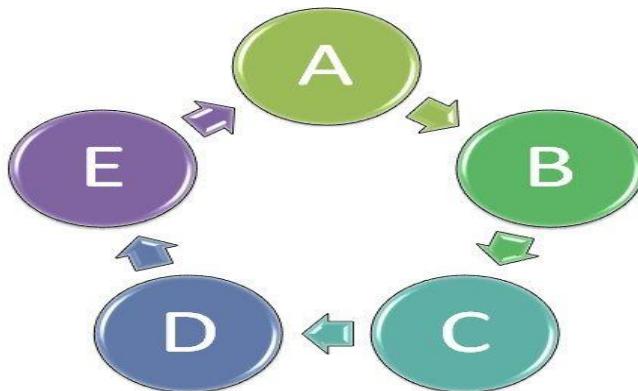


2. **Chain Network:** Under the chain pattern, the information flows either up or down the line. Here each person gets the information from his immediate superior and then passes it to their immediate subordinates. Likewise, the chain gets created, and all members get connected to a single person, typically the leader. This network is

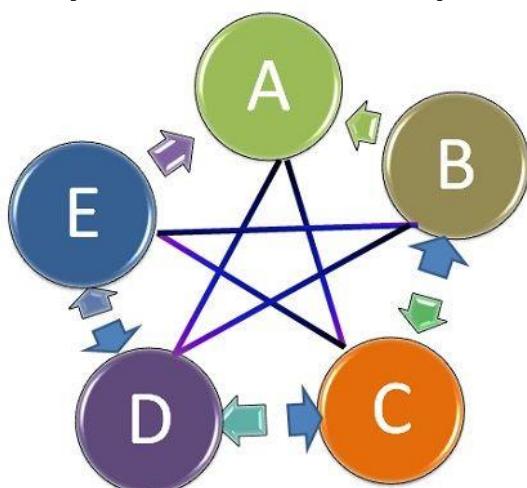
suitable when the information to be passed is legally correct.



3. **Circle Network:** The circle network is one of the decentralized forms of a communication network wherein the information is shared equally among all the members. Here each person gives and receives information from two or more persons in the network. Under this pattern, each member has the equal chance to participate.

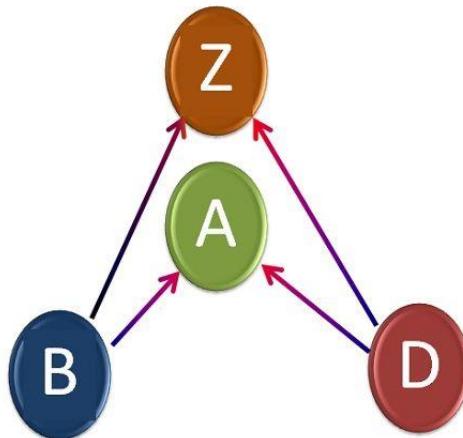


4. **Free Flow Network:** Under this pattern, everyone is connected to each other, and the information can flow freely from anywhere in the organization. It is the most decentralized form of formal communication. The distinct feature of this communication pattern is that all the persons in the group are linked to each other and can freely communicate with anyone they want.



5. **Inverted “V” Communication:** The inverted “V” communication is a formal network wherein the subordinate is allowed to communicate with his immediate superior as well as with the superior’s superior, i.e. the boss of the immediate boss. But, however, the

communication between the subordinate and the superior's superior



is limited.

Thus, several formal communication networks get created in the organization when people follow a proper channel of communication in respect of their hierarchical positions.

Informal Communication

Definition: The **Informal Communication** is the casual and unofficial form of communication wherein the information is exchanged spontaneously between two or more persons without conforming the prescribed official rules, processes, system, formalities and chain of command

The informal communications are based on the personal or informal relations such as friends, peers, family, club members, etc. and thus is free from the organizational conventional rules and other formalities. In the business context, the informal communication is called as a “**grapevine**” as it is difficult to define the beginning and end of the communication.

The informal communication is characterized by an indefinite channel of communication, which means there is no definite chain of command through which the information flows. Hence, the information can flow from anywhere. Often such communication arises out of the social relations that an individual creates with other persons on the basis of common interest, likings or dislikes.

There are four types of **Informal Communication (Grapevine) network** that show how the communication is facilitated. These are:

1. Single Strand Chain

2. Gossip Chain
3. Probability Chain
4. Cluster Chain

The gossip in the organization is the best example of informal communication, wherein the employees of different department irrespective of their hierarchical positions come together and communicate with each other. The grapevine satisfies the social needs of people and smoothens the formal relations by filling in the gaps and even bring together different people who do not fall under the common chain of command.

Informal Communication Network

Definition: The **Informal Channel Network** or **Grapevine Network** shows the pattern of the communication, i.e. how the informal communication passes from person to person.

Specialists have identified four distinct types of informal communication network, which are listed below:

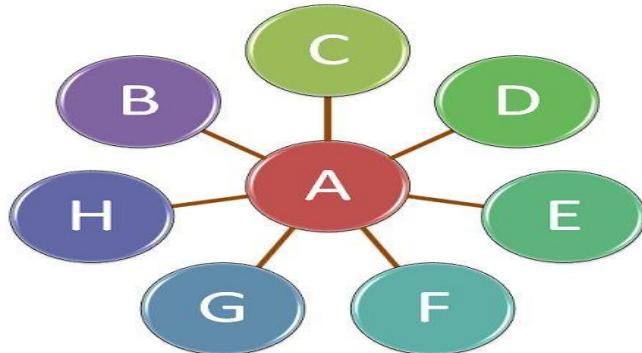
1. Single Strand Network: Under this communication pattern, the information flows from one person to the next person in the network. Such as, one person will give information to another person who will communicate it to the next person and similarly the third person will also communicate the same message to the next person in the network and so on. This type of chain is less reliable and accurate to pass on the message.



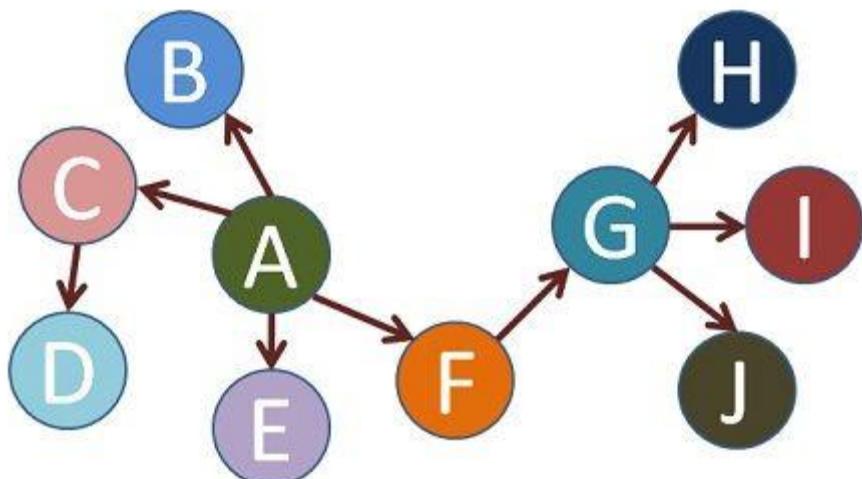
Here, the communication process is linear.

2. Gossip Chain Network: In the gossip chain network, there is an individual who tells the message to all other members in the network directly. He is generally the central person who seeks out and transmit information to all that he has obtained. Here, every person in the network

communicates with each other informally. This network is often used when the subject matter is unrelated to the nature of the job.



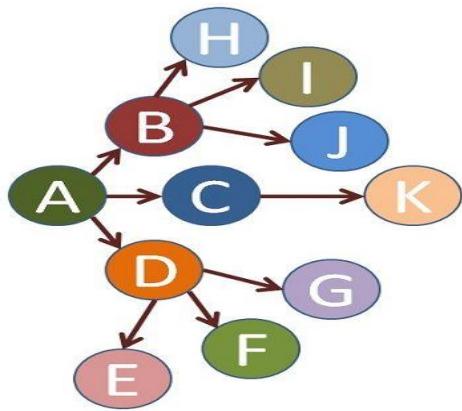
3. Probability Chain Network: Under this communication pattern the information passes randomly from persons to persons. Such as, there is an individual who acts as a source of message selects any person randomly in his network to communicate the message. That second person will again, select another person randomly and passes on the message to him, likewise the communication flows to different people chosen randomly. Here, the source of information for each member of the network is different. This communication pattern is used when the information is interesting, but



not significant.

4. Cluster Chain Network: In the cluster chain network, there is an individual who, acts as a source of a message, transmits information to the pre-selected group of individuals out of whom few individuals again tell the same message to other selected group of individuals. Likewise, the chain continues, and the message reaches to all in the network. This pattern is similar to the telephone tree, wherein one person calls other two persons, then these two persons call other three persons and again these three persons are expected to call other three persons. Likewise, the information gets transmitted to all persons connected to the telephone network. This is

the most common form of informal communication network.



Thus, several informal communication networks get created in an organization when people interact with each other irrespective of their hierarchical positions.

What Is Grapevine Communication?

The meaning of grapevine communication is communication held without following a recommended structure in an organization is informal communication. So, grapevine communication can be described as a casual and unofficial communication system within the organization.

Think of the lunch meetings you attend with your team. The conversation during such times revolves around your work, yet it remains unofficial and forms informal or personal relationships between you and your team members. Building rapport is a crucial aspect of workplace communication. It leads to better interpersonal relationships that factors into accomplishing organizational goals a lot more efficiently and effectively.

One of the greatest advantages of grapevine communication is team building and interpersonal relationships. Not only are you able to get on the same page as your coworkers but also allow them to get to know you. This is very important for you as an employee. Sometimes you need to let off steam

Advantages & Disadvantages Of Grapevine Communication

As with everything in life, grapevine communication also has its set of advantages and disadvantages. It can be to become too comfortable with someone in a professional context. You might just end up sharing sensitive information when you're not supposed to. But on the other hand, it also means you listen well to others, identify if any one of your team members needs help or even reach out to your colleagues easily without going through complicated communication channels.

The advantages and disadvantages of grapevine communication.
The advantages of grapevine communication are:

- **Grievance Redressal**

Often, during informal meetings, employees are able to talk about their requirements and express their opinions and feelings to others without any hesitation. In a more restricted environment, they may not have raised any issues. This also helps reduce the turnaround time for conflict to be resolved.

- **Improved Relationships**

An informal communication system effectively solves most of the problems or clashes between employees and the organization's management. This, in turn, creates positive relations among the teams and the management.

- **Increased Efficiency**

Employees share their concerns and issues openly under the informal system. This helps the management and the organization get precise feedback and solve the problems. Consequently, it develops and improves the efficiency of the employee.

The disadvantages of grapevine communication are:

- **Risk Of Misunderstandings**

When it comes to informal meetings, employees sometimes don't follow the formal authorization process. This may create misunderstanding among the team members and the management. If someone doesn't understand the brief or misunderstands information that has been shared, it can lead to wasted time and effort. This can be problematic for the leadership if it hampers your work.

- **Difficult To Control**

As informal conversations have no set rules or policies to be followed, controlling the spread of information can become difficult. This usually means important and sensitive information gets out. It's difficult to contain information that has gotten out of control. Important client information or financials can cause a problem in the professional environment.

From the advantages and disadvantages of grapevine communication we can understand how it works and why it's relevant in the workplace. Let's now explore the importance of grapevine communication and how it accelerates growth, teamwork and collaboration.

Importance Of Grapevine Communication:

Grapevine communication conveniently transmits certain messages that can't be passed through formal channels. You must have seen this at your workplace quite often. Whenever the information needs to be used quickly, the manager uses the informal or grapevine method instead of taking it to formal channels such as emails.

Grapevine also accelerates the feedback process. If used wisely, grapevine communication can provide valuable feedback to the management, and this input can be used to plan activities for the employees' welfare.

If used wisely in collaboration with the formal channels, grapevine communication can promote the efficient functioning of an organization.

Merits of Formal Communication

- Orderly flow of information is ensured in formal communication.
- Responsibilities can be fixed as the source of information can be located.
- Authority responsibility relationships can be maintained easily with the help of formal communication.
- Control over the work performance of different employees can be exercised with the help of formal communication.

Demerits of Formal Communication

- This type of communication channel can be time-consuming.
- It acts as a hindrance to the free and uninterrupted flow of information.
- An impersonal manner is used to convey the information in the case of formal communication

❖ BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

Communication is not always successful. Several things can prevent the message from reaching ' the intended recipient or from "having the desired effect on the recipient.

1. Physical Barriers: Obstacles that prevent a message from reaching the intended recipient may be outside and beyond the control of the persons concerned. Some can be controlled by the management; some cannot be controlled because they are in the environment.

(a) Defects in the Medium

Defects in the devices used for transmitting messages are external, and usually not within the control of the parties engaged in communication. The telephone, the postal system, the courier service, or electronic media may fail. Messages can get delayed, distorted and even lost while being transmitted. A partial failure of the mechanical equipment is more harmful than a total failure

because a partial failure may carry an incomplete or distorted message. A fax message can be wrongly delivered as a wrong number can get dialled on the telephone. The printout may not be clear at all. It is advisable to call up and check that the fax has been received.

(b) Noise

Noise is any disturbance which occurs in the transmission process. In face-to-face communication which is carried by air vibration, the air may be disturbed by noise such as traffic, factory work, or people talking. In a factory, oral communication is very difficult because of the noise of the machines.

Organisations that can afford sound-proof rooms can overcome this barrier to some extent.

(c) Information Overload

When there is too much information, some of it is blocked in transit and may not reach the intended audience. Advertising and sales information is an example of overload; so much communication about products floats through so many media that a good deal of it does not reach the potential buyer.

2. Semantic and Language Barriers:

Semantic means pertaining to or arising from the different meanings of words or other symbols. First of all, many words have multiple meanings. Just look into a good dictionary and see how many meanings you can find for some commonly used words like "charge", "spring", "check", "suit", "ring".

The meaning that comes to your mind first depends on your occupation ("charge" may mean electrical charge to an engineering student, but fee/rent to a commerce student). Words like "minute" and "wind" are pronounced in two different ways to mean two entirely different things. Some words like "present", "transfer", "record" are used as verb and as noun with a difference in stress in speaking, but no difference in spelling. A person may be present at a function and receive a present (stress on pre-), and present (stress on -sent) some thoughts on the budget. Similar sounding words like "access" and "excess", "flour" and "flower", "cite", "site" and "sight" can cause misunderstanding in speech. Phrases can be tricky; 'a red and a blue carpet' signifies two carpets: one red and one blue. 'A red and blue carpet' is one carpet in two colours.

Technical terms can also be a barrier to communication when used with an audience who are not members of that profession. Often, these words have other meanings in ordinary language, and are differently understood by people who do not belong to that occupational group. Consider the new meanings given to ordinary words by computer technology such as "mouse". More importantly, semantic barriers arise because words mean different things to different persons.

3.Organisational Barriers:

- **Editing and filtering:** A great deal of loss of information occurs as a message moves from senior management to lower levels. Each person through whom it passes edits it, filters it, and simplifies it for the understanding and needs of the next person who is to receive it. Loss or distortion of information as it moves downward may be caused by misinterpretation, lack of understanding, and neglect of messages by some of the members of the organisation.
Loss of information also occurs as messages move from subordinates to higher levels of authority. Messages are filtered at every level. There may be deliberate suppression of information out of self-interest and jealousy; a supervisor may suppress or change a good suggestion from a subordinate so as to take the credit personally; a senior officer may prevent information about discontent in the department from reaching the manager because it reflects on his/her human relations skills.
Deliberate withholding of information from peers who are perceived as rivals becomes a barrier in horizontal communication. A common barrier to horizontal communication is organisational politics; one manager may withhold information from another since possession of information usually has benefits and advantages.
- **Over-dependence on written communication:** Too much dependence on written communication is one of the reasons for communication gaps. Circulars, bulletins, notices and even letters are not always read carefully. Many employees are unable to read and understand long messages. Even better educated persons at higher levels do not always give proper attention to all written communication. Oral communication has to be used to supplement written communication when the message is important.

4. Cultural Barriers:

When we join a group and wish to remain in it, sooner or later we need to adopt the behaviour patterns of the group. These are the behaviours that the group accepts as signs of belonging. The group rewards such behaviour through acts of recognition, approval, and inclusion. In groups which are happy to accept you and where you are happy to conform, there is a mutuality of interests and a high level of win-win contact.

Where, however, there are barriers to your membership of a group, a high level of game-playing replaces good communication.

5. Gender Barriers:

There are distinct differences between the speech patterns in a man and those in a woman which may create misunderstanding between genders. Global studies suggest that a woman speaks between 22,000 and 25,000 words a day whereas a man speaks between 7,000 and 10,000. In childhood, girls speak earlier than boys and at the age of three, have a vocabulary twice that of boys. The reason for this lies in the wiring of a man's and woman's brains. When a man talks, his speech is located in the left side of the brain but in no specific area. When a woman talks, the speech is located in both hemispheres and in two specific locations. Scientifically speaking, a man talks in a linear, logical and compartmentalized way, which are the features of left-brain thinking; whereas a woman talks more freely, mixing logic and emotion, features of both sides of the brain. It also explains why women talk for much longer than men each day.

6. Socio-Psychological Barriers:

People have personal feelings, desires, fears and hopes, likes and dislikes, attitudes, views and opinions. They form a sort of emotional filter around the mind, and influence the way we respond to messages that we receive and to new experiences. Factors like the time, the place and the circumstances of a particular communication also influence our understanding and response. Problems of understanding, interpretation and response to communication arise partly from our socially-learnt attributes and partly from our personal attributes. These are called socio-psychological barriers.

(a) Self-centred Attitudes: We tend to see and hear everything in the light of our own interests and needs and desires. We pay attention to messages which are useful to us, and often do not pay enough attention to those messages which do not interest us.

(b) Group Identification: Our values and opinions are influenced, in some matters, by the group to which we belong, like family, the larger family of relatives, people of our locality or city, our religion or language group, gender, age group, nationality, economic group and so on. We tend to reject an idea which goes against the interests of the group.

(c) Self-Image: our idea about what we are, what we look like and what impression we make. It is quite difficult to accept any idea which goes against it.

(d) Selective Perception: we see, read or hear selectively according to our own needs, interests and experience may not perceive some of the aspects and information content of the message.

(e) Filtering: Filtering is the process of reducing the details or aspects of a message. Each person who passes on a message reduces or colours a message according to his/her understanding of the situation.

(f) Status Block: A "boss" who is conscious of status finds it difficult to receive any suggestions from subordinates as they feel that they know everything about how to run the business. They do not agree that a junior may have some good ideas and many good ideas are wasted only because they come from junior employees who are considered to be too young and inexperienced. Social distance sometimes makes workers too shy or frightened to speak to their senior bosses.

(g) Resistance to Change: Some people strongly resist new ideas which are against their established opinions or traditions or social customs. They may avoid new ideas because they feel insecure or afraid of changes in methods or situations.

(h) Closed Mind: Limited intellectual background, limited reading and narrow interests can cause a person's mind to be narrow and limits the ability to take in new ideas. Young employees with bright ideas and fresh approach feel frustrated by the closed mind of the senior people in an organisation.

(i) Poor Communication Skills: Lack of skill in writing and in speaking prevents a person from framing the message properly. Oral communication can be handicapped by a number of problems; nervousness in facing an audience may affect a person's clarity in speaking. Even excitement about an achievement or a new idea may make a person's speech incoherent. Lack of skill in reading and in listening is also common.

(j) State of Health: Pain or fever certainly makes a person disinclined to engage in communication; but even if the general state of health is poor, communicating ability is reduced. The mind is not sufficiently alert; there will be gaps in attention while reading or listening; there is lack of energy to think clearly and to find the right words. Perception is low when the state of health is poor. Emotions, which play an important part in successful communication, are easily disturbed.

(k) Experiential barriers: The difficulty in understanding matters not personally experienced. Our past experience may also negatively influence our perception and understanding related to those experiences.

(l) Perceptual barriers: The problem with communicating with others is that we all see the world differently. The selectivity/exposure filters that are developed on the basis of experience or lack of it play their part. A bad experience would perceptually block out unpleasant things. This could be in the shape of avoiding it and if that is not possible by altering the behaviours i.e., response types in different ways. Similarly, retention filters out things that feel good, and gives the tendency to forget those things that are painful.

(m) Emotional barriers: It is comprised mainly of fear, mistrust, and suspicion. The roots of our emotional mistrust of others lie in our childhood and infancy when we were taught to be careful what we said to others. "Don't speak until you're spoken to"; "Children should be seen and not heard". As a result, many people hold back from communicating their thoughts and feelings to others because they feel vulnerable. While some caution may be wise in certain relationships, excessive fear of what others might think of us can stunt our development into effective communicators and our ability to form meaningful relationships. Emotions influence both our speech and our listening. In many cases emotions may stop us from saying many things and in other instance may make us say things that we never wanted to say.

(n) Stereotypes: Stereotypes are mental images and expectations. Stereotypes provide a shortcut to form an opinion of someone. We tend to get opinionated sooner or later and it becomes difficult to change opinions. Opinions give us a base to relate to others. Humans are very diverse by nature whereas stereotyping them in categories with specific characteristics is very common and therefore it also becomes one of the most common barriers to communication

Methods of Overcoming Communication Barriers:

Considering the importance of effective communication in the successful functioning of business organisations, it is essential on the part of the managers to overcome the different barriers to communication. Though it may not be possible to eliminate the communication barriers altogether, yet suitable managerial actions in this direction can minimise their effect.

The following methods are suggested to avoid the communication barriers:

- 1. Full Information:** To make the communication effective, it is first of all necessary that the communicator should know completely and clearly what he intends to communicate.
- 2. Mutual Trust:** Communication is intended for acceptance and desired action. Such acceptance is, to a great extent, influenced by trust and confidence in the motives and sincerity of the communicator. If trust is lacking, communication will fall short of its expected results. So, it is necessary that an environment of trust and confidence is established within the organisation. This will encourage people to communicate honestly with one another.
- 3. Appropriate Language:** The language used for communication should be such that it can be easily comprehended by the receiver. Most popular symbols, clear and precise language should be used for proper communication.
- 4. Inter-Personal Relationship:** Proper inter-personal relationships must be developed between the superiors and the subordinates so that the latter may feel free and frank to transmit complete and correct information to the former. The superiors must appreciate useful criticisms and beneficial suggestions of the subordinates.

5. **Selection of Appropriate Channel:** The managers must be competent enough to select the most appropriate channel for sending messages. A rich channel such as face-to- face discussion or telephone should be used to send a complicated message. On the other hand, memos, letters or electronic mail may be used to send routine messages, because there is hardly any chance of misunderstanding.

6. **Mutual Understanding:** It is of considerable importance for both the senders and receivers to make a special effort to understand each other's perspective. By understanding others perspectives, remarks can be classified, perceptions understood, and objectivity maintained.

7. **Empathy in Communication:** The way for effective communication is to be sensitive towards the receiver's needs, feelings and perceptions. The communicator should convey the message in such a way that the emotions and sentiments of the receiver are not hurt. When the sender of the message looks at the problems from the receiver's point of view, many of the misunderstandings can be avoided.

8. **Two-Way Communication:** Communication is a two-way process. Two-way communication brings two minds together—which is the basic core of any communication. It involves a continuous dialogue between the sender and receiver of the message. Upward communication can become a reality in the organisation and effective if this fact is recognised.

9. **Supporting Words with Actions:** The most persuasive kind of communication is not what you say but what you do. The managers must make sure that their actions support the communication process. This will ensure the seriousness in communication.

10. **Examples and Visual Aids:** To fix the idea of communication in the receiver's mind, appropriate stories and word pictures may be used in appropriate situations to the understanding of the receiver. Further, visual aids through charts and diagrams can be advantageously used to stress particular points or ideas which may be difficult to describe properly by words.

11. **Good Listening:** Careful listening is essential for effective communication. By this process, one is not only giving chance to others to speak but gathers useful information for further communications. By concentrating on the speaker's explicit and implicit meanings, the manager can obtain a much better understanding of what is being said.

12. **Delaying Reaction:** It is a good practice for effective communication not to be influenced by immediate reaction of the first impression. Hasty reaction often results in ignoring the real implication of communication and experience shows that the delaying of action by the recipient becomes helpful in understanding the intended meaning of the communication.

13. **Strategic Use of Informal Communication (Grapevine):** A manager should use the informal channels of communication to supplement the formal communication system. For this purpose, he must understand the informal communication networks and should make their intelligent use to fill up the gaps in formal channels of communication.

14. **Evaluation:** There should be continuous programme of evaluating the flow of communication in different directions. This would highlight the problems in this area, identify their causes and thereby enable the adoption of suitable corrective action. The superiors should not be quick to evaluate the information before understanding it properly.
