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1. OVERCOMING THE GLOBAL, CULTURAL, AND COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Human communication is as old as human history. Cave paintings in prehistoric Europe - chart the beginning of human communication.

Communication is sharing who we are and what we know. We all share our ideas and feelings with others; however, how we share them with others varies from culture to culture. As our contact with people from other cultures expands, the need for competent intercultural communicators increases.

Advances in information technology have brought tremendous changes to communication media and to the role of communicators.

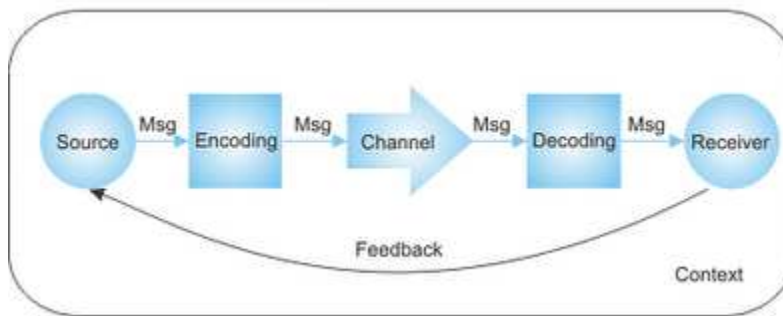
1.1. Communication Basics

Communication may be defined as a process concerning exchange of facts or ideas between persons holding different positions in an organization to achieve mutual harmony. The communication process is dynamic in nature rather than a static phenomenon. Communication process as such must be considered a constant and dynamic inter-action, both affecting and being affected by many factors.

The Seven major elements of communication process are: sender, ideas, encoding, communication channel, receiver, decoding and feedback.

- ✓ **Sender:** The person who intends to convey the message with the intention of passing information and ideas to others is known as sender or communicator.
- ✓ **Ideas:** This is the subject of the communication. This may be an opinion, attitude, feelings, views, orders, or suggestions.
- ✓ **Encoding:** Since the subject matter of communication is theoretical and cannot be touched, its further passing requires use of certain symbols such as words, actions or pictures etc. Transformation of subject matter into these symbols is the process of encoding.
- ✓ **Communication Channel:** The person who is interested in communicating has to choose the channel for sending the required information, ideas etc. This information is conveyed to the receiver through certain channels which may be either formal or informal.
- ✓ **Receiver:** Receiver is the person who receives the message or for whom the message is meant for. It is the receiver who tries to understand the message in the best possible manner in achieving the required objectives.
- ✓ **Decoding:** The person who receives the message or symbol from the communicator tries to translate the same in such a way so that he may extract its meaning to his complete understanding.
- ✓ **Feedback:** Feedback is the process of making sure that the receiver has received the message and understood in the same sense as sender meant it

Process of Communication



1.2. Elements of Communication

Communication is vital to maintaining successful business relations. For this reason, it is imperative that professionals working in business environments have first-class communication skills. There are three basic types of communication: verbal, non-verbal, and written. If you want to succeed in business, you need to master each of these types of communication.

Verbal Communication

Verbal or oral communication uses spoken words to communicate a message. Effective verbal or spoken communication is dependent on a number of factors and cannot be fully removed from other important interpersonal skills such as non-verbal communication, listening skills and clarification. Most people assume verbal communication consists of speaking, but listening is just as equally important skill for this type of communication to be successful. Verbal communication is suitable to a wide range of situations, ranging from informal office discussions to public speeches made to thousands of people. Improving your verbal communication skills can help you to develop better relationships with your coworkers and support a large network of contacts that you can call on when necessary.

Verbal communication (vocal included) contributes to 45% of our communication. The role of jargons is also vital in determining the efficiency of communication. While jargons help to communicate easily in a homogeneous group, excessive use of there can hamper communication. Use of jargons should be used sparingly while communicating to someone who is not familiar with the terms. Verbal communication becomes effective through the choice of right words & emphasis of the same. There should be an optimum use of pauses, non-words and phrases because excessive use of these leads to distraction of the receiver.

Non-Verbal Communication

Nonverbal communication describes the process of conveying meaning in the form of non-word messages. Non-verbal communication includes body language, gestures, facial expressions, and even posture. Non-verbal communication sets the tone of a conversation, and can seriously affect the message contained in your words if you are not cautious to control it. For example, slouching and shrinking back in your chair during a business meeting can make you seem under-confident, which may lead people to doubt the strength of your verbal contributions. On the contrary, leaning over an employee's desk and invading his or her personal space can turn a friendly chat into an aggressive confrontation that leaves the employee feeling victimized and undervalued.

A good communicator should have the right posture, facial expression and body language that are in tune with the words spoken. Lack of co-ordination between verbal and nonverbal contents of communication would only confuse the receiver. So while communicating, care should be taken to ensure a proper blend between words and actions.

Written Communication

Written communication is vital for communicating complicated information, such as statistics or other data, which could not be easily communicated through speech alone. Written communication also permits information to be recorded so that it can be referred to at a later date. When producing a piece of written communication, particularly one that is likely to be referred to over and over again, you need to plan what you want to say carefully to ensure that all the relevant information is correctly and clearly communicated. Written communication must be clear and concise in order to communicate information effectively. A good written report conveys the necessary information using precise, grammatically correct language, without using more words than are needed.

By improving your verbal, non-verbal, and written communication skills, you can become more efficient in all areas of business. Whether you are managing others or working as part of a team, the ability to communicate effectively can develop relations with your colleagues and help you all to work more efficiently together.

Listening & Feedback

Listening which comprises of hearing, attending, understanding and remembering can improve the effectiveness of communication. Listening can be pleasurable, discriminative or critical depending on the level of application of mind. Listener has to employ the suitable type of listening depending on the situation and nature of the message. Proper listening requires a reasonable background familiarity, right attitudes, interest, objectivity, patience and rapport with the sender. Absence of rapport with the sender often leads to ambush listening where the receiver listens only till he gets a point for argument after which his main desire would be to obstruct the communication. Lack of interest in the topic spoken by a person with whom we have a rapport would sometimes make us employ pseudo listening. Appropriate listener response serves as a means by which feedback is judged. The feedback should be given at the right time and should be helpful.

Rhetorical Theory

The rhetorical tradition views communication as a practical art of discourse. Rhetorical theory dates back centuries to ancient Greece, when Plato, Aristotle, and the sophists were speech teachers. Classical rhetorical theory is based on the philosophical idea that we are rational beings who can be persuaded by compelling arguments. Rhetorical communication deliberately attempts to influence the audience by using carefully constructed messages of verbal and often visual symbols. Those who create rhetorical communication are called rhetors, and the messages they create are rhetorical acts. Aristotle's Rhetoric was the most influential rhetorical text for thousands of years and had a significant influence on theories of communication. The model of rhetoric he proposed focuses on three elements in public speaking

- ✓ ethos, based on the personal character or credibility of the speaker

- ✓ pathos, based on inducing specific emotions or putting the audience into certain frames of mind
- ✓ logos, based on the arguments made in the speech.

Rhetorical analysis used to be confined to public speech, but is now also used to interpret mass media products such as those on radio, television, and film.

Managers are rhetors in that they strategically communicate with organizational members at different levels. Classifying a person in a management position as a rhetor draws attention to the ways in which he or she faces many of the same challenges as does the classical orator, but the notion of rhetor in the management context extends beyond an orator to denote a complex set of meanings, involving audience analysis, contextual sensitivity, and message structure. The manager-as-rhetor notion is a way of understanding how persuasion is part of an organizational leader's role. Just as an effective public speaker uses rhetorical tactics, a manager must construct a persuasive message that reflects the organization's need and goals.

Levels of Communication

- ✓ Intrapersonal communication - Process of understanding and sharing meaning within the self.
- ✓ Interpersonal communication - The process of understanding and sharing meaning between at least two people when relatively mutual opportunities for speaking and listening exist.
- ✓ Group communication - Purposeful communication in limited-sized groups in which decision making or problem solving occurs.
- ✓ Organizational communication - Communication in large cooperative networks including virtually all aspects of both interpersonal and group communication.
- ✓ Mass communication - The process of understanding and sharing meaning with a broad audience through mediated channels.

1.3. Effective Communication

Communication is about more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. Effective communication is also a two-way street. It's not only how you transmit a message so that it is received and understood by someone in exactly the way you intended, it's also how you listen to understand the full meaning of what's being said and to make the other person feel heard and understood. More than just the words you use, effective communication combines a set of skills including nonverbal communication, engaged listening, managing stress in the moment, the ability to communicate strongly, and the ability to recognize and understand your own emotions and those of the person you're communicating with. Effective communication is the tool that helps you expand your connections to others and improve teamwork, decision making, and problem solving. It enables you to communicate even negative or difficult messages without creating conflict or breaking trust.

While effective communication is a learned skill, it is more useful when it's spontaneous rather than rehearsed. A speech that is read, for example, rarely has the same impact as a speech that's delivered (or appears to be delivered) spontaneously. Of course, it takes more time and effort to develop these skills and become an effective communicator. The more effort and practice you put in, the more automatic and spur-of-the-moment your communication skills will become.

The success of an individual in a team depends mainly on the extent to which he can engage in effective communication. Faulty communication in organizations can lead to lowered efficiency and effectiveness at the organizational as well as individual level. Also most of the interpersonal friction can be attributed to faulty communication.

Effective management is a principle of effective communication. Interpersonal communication takes place every time we communicate with others. Communication is considered efficient when it succeeds in creating a desired response from the other person. Moreover failures in communication can be very costly for the organization by way of reduced co-operation and succeeding ill feeling between employees. Communication, to be effective, cannot be an unsystematic process. It has to be planned and executed so that it elicits the desired response.

SBAR

Effective communication can be addressed using the **SBAR** formula for effective communication. Used initially in the military, **SBAR** provides a framework to communicate important information from one person to another. **SBAR** is a mnemonic to help remember four critical elements of communication

- ✓ **S**ituation—What is the problem or reason for the communication?
- ✓ **B**ackground—What background data and information is being used?
- ✓ **A**ssessment—What are the behaviors or areas of concern? Summarize the facts.
- ✓ **R**ecommendations—What is the next step? What do you think needs to be done?

Let's look at an example in the workplace. A research faculty member needs to give one of her students (Mark) feedback on his behavior in the lab:

- ✓ **S**ituation: "Mark, I need to talk with you about your behavior working in the lab. You have typically been very high performing, but as of late there has been a change."
- ✓ **B**ackground: "I have reports from numerous colleagues in the lab who work with you, as well as my own observations."
- ✓ **A**ssessment: "The reports are all basically the same—that when others ask you for help you become defensive or resistant. I have also experienced this with you multiple times in the last 4-6 weeks."
- ✓ **R**ecommendations: "The behaviors need to change so that the lab can perform better. Is there anything going on I should be aware of? How can I help you? I'd like to create a plan with you to help you get back on track."

Verbal SBAR - To effectively speak with another individual using **SBAR**, consider the verbal and nonverbal elements in the communication process. Think about and follow the alphabet 'ABCDE' of effective speaking:

- ✓ **A**ppropriate eye contact
- ✓ **B**e simple and be clear when speaking
- ✓ **C**alm tone of voice and volume
- ✓ **D**one speaking—be quiet and listen
- ✓ **E**nd with clarifying questions and summary

SBAR can also be used when writing, as it clarifies important information that is necessary to share.

Written SBAR - To write using the SBAR formula, consider the following tips:

- ✓ Always be concise but full of detail and information
- ✓ Use accurate words and phrases that describe the situation—avoid jargon
- ✓ Write in active voice
 - ✓ A passive statement complicates and deadens the writing.
 - ✓ Using an active voice helps to provide information and comprehension.
- ✓ Check spelling and grammar

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