

## **BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE AND MEASURES TO ELIMINATE SUCH BARRIERS FROM THE ORGANIZATION**

Prof. Vaishali S. Miskin

General Science Department Fabtech College of Engineering &  
Research, Polytechnic, Sangola India  
miskin.vaishali@gmail.com

Prof. Rohit P. Dongarkar

General Science Department Fabtech College of Engineering &  
Research Institute, Sangola India  
rodongarkar@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

Communication is a process of transmitting information, knowledge, idea, creativity, emotion, and common understanding from one person to another. Communication helps employers as well as employees to maintain a good relationship. A communication problem may soon become a crisis or it may linger on for years. It also affects the role of the relationship in employer-employee members on the management team Working together in a team effectively accomplishes a decided goal or target, so effective communication is a secret key to opening the door to success. Communication in the workplace is critical to establishing and maintaining the quality of working relationships in organizations. This paper discusses the communication, communication process, and communication barriers, and provides a guideline for administrators to improve communication effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Communication, Barriers, Effectiveness, Administrators, Workplace, Guidelines.

### **Introduction**

Communication is an action that we can express through an interpretation in such a process that an action in which information, a motive, or viewpoint is exchanged. A person provides to the one to one takes it. Workplace communication occurs mainly between co workers and sometimes with their sovereignty. If there is good communication among the workers at the workplace, it affects the mentality to work together and it has a positive outcome on the excellence of their work. As a result, therefore subsequently the progress of the institution continues automatically. Thus every company expects everyone to have good communication skills. Communication is a major provocation for administrators because they are superintending on providing information, which results in the capability of producing a good and fruitful result. The administration and the workers need to study communication and purposefully enhance its quality in the workplace as it communicates with each other in many forms. This applies that each person communication skills influence both personal and institutional effectiveness. This paper delivers the communication process, the importance of communication, and barriers to the communication at the institution and provides guidelines on how administrators can improve their communication skills and effectiveness

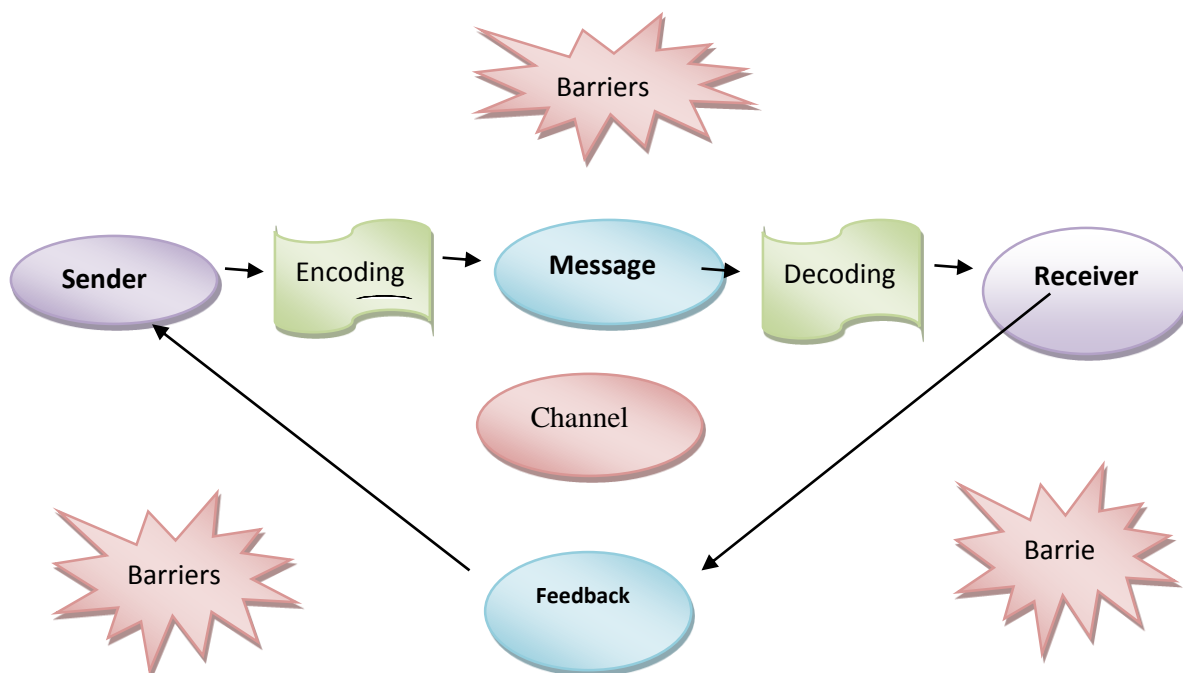
## Communication

Communication is the discourse of ideas, emotions, knowledge, message, and understanding between sender and receiver. A sender is the originator of a message in a particular situation and receivers are their audience in this situation. Good communication acts a big role between the coworkers for the progress of an institution/organization. Even if they interact with the workers as they always do, we cannot deny the possibility that one of them knows the exact meaning of the interaction or the motto of the speaker.

Once a letter, memorandum, fax, circular, or e-mail has been sent, many are ready to believe that communication has taken place. Proper communication does not take place unless the motto of the speaker is clear to the person in front or to the listener. The communication isn't complete without fully knowing what the communicator is encoding and the receiver is decoding it very clearly. A receiver may hear a sender but still not understand what the sender's message is. Being constantly engaged in encoding and decoding messages does not ensure that an administrator is an expert in communication. To encode a message means converting thoughts into Messages. The encoder uses a 'medium or channel' to encode the message e.g. a phone call, text message, email, PPT Presentation, face-to-face meeting, or another communication tool. The level of inner thoughts that are on the way towards encoding messages. And decoding means receive the message in a right way, interpreting, and understanding the message. In other words, decoding involves the interpretation in actual form and inspecting of a message. Different people may interpret messages differently. Let us see how the process of communication takes place.

## Communication Process

In the communication process, Sender transmits/sends the message and the receiver receives the message and then gives feedback to the sender. Communication is impossible without the participation of the sender and receiver.



The above figure illustrates the communication process. From the above diagram we can assume that sender sends message through medium means after decoding he chooses channel to send message and receiver decodes that message and give him feedback to sender in this activity some barriers can occurs.

### **Channels of Communication**

A message is sent through a channel or medium, which is the carrier of the message or communication. The selection of proper channel for delivering the message can be hard because there are many options. The medium can be verbal, nonverbal, written, oral, computer-aided, or electronic. For written media, a higher authority or other institutional members may choose from circulars, memorandums, letters, reports, notice boards, journals, newsletters, etc. Verbal contains person to person conversations, telephone, computer, television, record, messages, noise- slide shows, e-mail, and so on. Nonverbal gestures, facial expressions, body language, and even dress appearance can transmit messages.

### **Importance of Communication at the work area**

There is a huge importance of communication at the work area, and organizational people including from various social and professional background are bounded together to work for the same aims. Often it is seen that administrators do not realize the importance of communication at work and thus do not convey their ideas, organizational goals, vision, etc. very clearly. When administrators in an organization are unable to create an environment that encourages open and clear communication, it can harm the work culture and employee productivity. The importance of effective workplace communication is discussed below:

- Reduce conflicts- Open and free communication in the workplace can help prevent and resolve many conflicts. Workplace conflicts are easily resolved through open and clear communication and mutual discussions; this can lead to personal and professional growth.
- Build job satisfaction- encourage an open and easy correspondence between seniors and subordinates. If the work environment is friendly where the subordinates are motivate to communicate their views to their authorities regarding work-related work/issues. It builds the trust among the employers and higher authorities.
- Increases productivity- Effective communication at work is the most important topic for the success and failure of an organisation. Every organization has defined goals, objectives and vision. If an administrator is clear and open in his communication, the subordinates will know clearly what the organization wants, and thus they will be able to deliver the same to the best of their abilities.
- Proper utilization of resources- If any organization faces problems, crisis, and conflicts due to miscommunication between the staff members, resulting in unnecessary delays in the daily work. This leads to wastage of resources, quality time and low productivity of work. So good environment for communication is a must for any organization to better utilization of resources and increase productivity.
- Establish relationship- Open communication, between the employees and employers or between the management and employees, leads to the formation of good personal and professional relationships. This makes the employees valued and they are more likely to remain loyal to the organization. This creates a free and friendly

environment, and it promotes a better working relationship which is favorable to the work

### **Barriers to Effective Communication**

There is also process of barrier in communication. Pauley said an administrator has no greater responsibility than to develop effective communication. Blocked steps become communication barriers. Look at the following situations:

- Sender barrier. A new administrator with an innovative idea fails to speak up at a meeting, chaired by the superintendent, for fear of criticism.
- Encoding barrier. A Japanese-speaking staff member cannot get an English speaking administrator to understand a grievance about working conditions.
- Medium barrier. A very upset/stressed staff member sends an emotional resignation letter to the leader instead of transmitting her feelings face-to-face.
- Decoding barrier. An older principal is not sure what a young department head means when he refers to a teacher as "spaced out."
- Receiver barrier. A school management who is preoccupied with the preparation of the annual budget asks a staff member to repeat a statement, because she was not listening attentively to the conversation.
- Feedback barrier. During a meeting, the failure of school administrators to ask any questions causes the superintendent to wonder if any real understanding has taken place.

There are several barriers affecting the communication process. Communication is a complicated, give-and-take process; obstacles of any form anywhere in the cycle can stop the transfer of understanding. Let's discuss some barriers which are affecting the workplace

### **Types of barriers in communication at workplace**

- Linguistic barriers
- Cultural constraints barriers
- Psychological barriers
- Organizational barriers
- Environmental barriers
- Personal barriers

#### **1) Linguistic Barrier**

Linguistic barriers can exist even in a rather congruent workforce. Two employees with weak communication skills may fail to perceive each other's intended meaning when having a conversation. Fortunately, you can help your employees be better communicators by teaching them a few tangible tips. Communication is two-sided, with a sender and a receiver. It's the sender's responsibility to be as specific as possible.

For example, the sender can name specific deadlines instead of asking for a report to be handed in "next week."

Avoid using too many pronouns (such as him, her, it, that, then) as well. Vice Versa, it's the receiver's responsibility to give full attention to active listening. Be on the lookout for nonspecific language, and ask for clarification when needed.

Now let us see what measures the company should take to avoid this kind of problem some employees cannot speak English as their native language, and even a high level of fluency in English can make them trouble to perceive the sender's information or command. In such a case, the person who is giving the information or command, should use his voice in a very hallow manner and tell him exactly what is expected from him by constructing a word structure that the other person will understand .and the sender must take review from him whether he has fully understood the information or order. In the workplace, the organization should create an environment in which if an employee is unable to understand difficult English words, he or she should be able to ask questions without difficulty and any inferiority complex.

Some people still think English is a western language so they don't feel as comfortable reading, writing, or speaking it as they do speaking their mother tongue. Their accents can sometimes be vernacular. In such cases, the organization should conduct workshops for such employees in confidence and also provide them with mother-tongue translations of important documents so that they can understand them accurately, If employees are working in some department of work whose mother tongue is different and not local, then an interpreter should be appointed for such employees so that he can explain it to them properly. And in the halls of other language staff, their mother tongue panels should be placed so that such staff feels comfortable.

## 2) Cultural constraints barriers

Just as the language is different, so are the employees' cultural backgrounds. In some cultures, it is considered rude to ask a person who is superior to you in a straightforward manner or to speak in a high voice. Body language, gestures, and symbols can all carry different meanings from culture to culture as well. When communication occurs between two workers when their region is different company should appoint a translator between them for their ease.

## 3) Psychological barriers

An employee who is victim of anxiety and below average self-esteem may be not totally focuses about how he is perceived when talking with a higher authority. He may be worried about whether his manager/Head will notice that he is nervous, he may find it difficult to share his real thoughts or ideas. The problem that arises due to a particular frame of the sender or listener creates a psychological barrier. Biased mind, the ego problem, fear, assumption, self-esteem, prejudice, stress, tension, etc disturb the communication process.

For examples

- Assumption: Communication failure may occur if a sender fails to communicate instructions well because he assumes that the receiver has understood the message, but the fact that the receiver only partially understood, can cause ineffective communication
- Anger: The sender may communicate as aggressive and unapproachable. The receiver might feel threatened or fearful and the result is that the receiver might perceive the message differently.
- Self-image: If the sender has a negative self-image, he may not be able to relay the message appropriately. Again, the message may be forceless and lacking in conviction. Likewise, if the receiver has a poor self-image or lacking self-confidence, he o might judge himself as not intelligent enough to understand the message

#### 4) Organizational barriers.

The obstruction in the flow of information among the employees might result in a commercial failure of an organization; we can describe the organizational barrier in such words.

- Status and power consciousness. ...
- Message filtering. ...
- Organizational structure. ...
- Absence of formal channels. ...
- Communication flow. ...
- Wrong message type. ...
- Goal conflicts. ...
- Poor coordination.

In such a situation, the company should meet with the employees from time to time. The organization should also clarify what exactly is expected from the employees. Every worker should be treated with respect. Also in a working organization, no senior person should exploit a junior person in any way. What you want to say should be said in precise and concise words to let the other person know your true intentions.

#### 5) Environmental barriers

Environmental barrier can be defined as when workers cannot be fully focused on their work because of problem about the outer region among the work area. We can explain this as the noise or the disturbed mind can cause problem or affects it on the productivity.

Time is another barrier. Shortage of period to encode the message and as opposite shortage of period to decodes the message.

Furthermore, when subordinates encounter administrators who fail to act, they are unwilling to communicate. If there is a obstacle between the higher authority and workers while making communication it can affects the productivity.

Another environmental barrier may lead to miscommunication. Communication between people who use different vocabulary can be unproductive simply because people attach different meanings to the same words. Thus, lack of proper understanding can occur due to unfamiliar vocabulary. Today's complex organizational systems are highly specialized.



## 6) Personal Barriers

We can define personal barriers as the barriers or the problems affects during the understanding of message from sender. It can be included the disturbances of mind, lack of focus, brainstorming and obsessive thoughts that came again and again into mind. It can affect the decoding process and also it affects on the productivity. Hence there is a loss of institution.

In addition to frames of reference, one’s beliefs, values, and prejudices also can alter and block messages. Preconceived opinions and prejudices are formed based on varying personalities and backgrounds. Two additional personal barriers are status quo and evaluating the sender to determine whether one should retain or filter out messages. For instance, an administrator always ignores the complaints from the receptionist, because the receptionist tends to exaggerate issues and events.

However, one must be careful to evaluate and distinguish exaggerations from legitimate messages. The status quo is when individuals prefer the present situation. They intentionally filter out unpleasant information. For example, an administrator refuses to tell the staff of an impending dismissal. To prevent disorder, the administrator postpones the communication to retain the status quo. A final personal barrier is a lack of empathy, in other words, insensitivity to the emotional states of senders and receivers. Empathy is the ability to put one's self into another's shoes. The empathetic person can see the world through the eyes of the other person. Research shows that lack of empathy is one of the major obstacles to effective communication (Eisenberg, 2010)

## Overcoming Communication Barriers

Environmental and personal barriers exist are the first step to effective communication. By becoming cognizant of their existence, one can consciously minimize their impact. However, positive actions are needed to overcome these barriers. Longest et al (2000) provide us with several guidelines for overcoming communication barriers:

- Environmental barriers are reduced if receivers and senders ensure that attention is given to their messages and adequate time is devoted to listening to what is being communicated.
- A management philosophy that encourages the free flow of communication is constructive.
- Reducing the number of links and levels in the organizational hierarchy or steps between the sender and the receiver reduces opportunities for distortion.
- Include communication as a skill to be evaluated along with all the other skills in each person's job description. Help other people improve their communication skills by helping them understand their communication problems
- The power/status barrier can be removed by consciously tailoring words and symbols so that messages are understandable; reinforcing words with actions significantly improves communication among different power/status levels.
- Using multiple channels to reinforce complex messages decreases the likelihood of misunderstanding.

- Personal barriers to effective communication are reduced by conscious efforts of senders and receivers to understand each other’s values and beliefs. One must recognize that people engage in selective perception and are prone to jealousy and fear. Sharing empathy with those to whom messages are directed is the best way to increase effective communication.
- use of diagonal communication that flows through task forces or committees enhances communication throughout the organization.
- Use management processes that are cross-organizational rather than confined to functional or department procedures. Implementing management processes in the areas of planning, controlling, and managing information systems facilitate communication.
- Use human resources policies and procedures like job training and job rotation to enhance cooperation among members in organizations.
- Use management processes to resolve conflicts in an equitable manner to produce effective communication.
- Feedback should be helpful rather than hurtful. In this process both sender and receiver can play a Major role in using feedback to make communication truly two-way.

### **Improving Communication Effectiveness**

Several communication theorists have proposed ten guidelines of good communication, which are particularly applicable to the sender. These guidelines, together with a basic understanding of the communication process itself should provide a good foundation for developing and maintaining an effective set of interpersonal communication skills, which administrators can use when communicating with various stakeholders.

- Administrators need to clarify their ideas before communicating. The more systematically administrators analyze the problem or idea to be communicated, the clearer it becomes. Know the motive behind them. That’s the initial process of powerful communication. Many communications fail because of inadequate planning. Good planning must consider the goals, purpose, attitudes, and needs of those who will receive the communication and also those who will be affected by it.
- Authority need to examine and analyze the true purpose of each communication. Before administrators communicate, they must ask themselves what they want to accomplish with this message. Obtain information, deliver information, initiate action, or want to change another person’s attitude.
- Authority need to look for their most important goal and then perceive their language, tone, and total approach to serving that specific objective. Administrators should not try to get too much with each communication because the main content of the focus of their message, the greater its chances of success.
- Employer communicate frequently and transparently to their employees
- Administrators need to consider the total physical and human setting. Meaning and intent are conveyed by more than words alone. Many other factors influence the overall impact of communication, and administrators must be sensitive to the total setting in which they communicate



- Administrators should constantly be aware of the total setting in which they communicate. Like all living things, communication must be capable of adapting to its environment.
- Administrators/Employers give clear instructions on tasks/work and state what results are expected
- When appropriate, Administrators need to consult with others in planning communications. Frequently, it is desirable or necessary to seek the participation of others in planning a communication or in developing the facts on which to base the communication. Such consultation often lends additional insight and objectivity to the message. Moreover, those who have helped plan the communication will give it their active support.
- While communicating, Authority need to be mindful of the overtones as well as the basic content of the message. The administrator's tone of voice, expression, and apparent receptiveness to the responses of others, all have a tremendous impact on those the administrator wishes to reach. Frequently overlooked, these subtleties of communication language particularly his/her awareness of the fine shades of meaning and emotion in the words used predetermine in large part the reactions of the listeners.
- Administrators need to take the opportunity, when it arises, to convey something of help or value to the receiver. Consideration of the other person's interests and needs, trying to look at things from the other person's point of view frequently points up opportunities to convey something of immediate benefit or long-range value to the other person. Staff members are most responsive to administrators whose messages take staff interests into account.
- Administrators need to follow up on their communication. An administrator's best efforts at communication may be wasted, and he/she may never know whether he/she has succeeded in expressing his/her true meaning and intent if he/she does not follow up to see how well he/she has put his/her message across. An administrator can do this by asking questions, encouraging the receiver to express his/her reactions, by follow-up contacts, and by subsequent review of performance. An administrator needs to make certain that every important communication has feedback so that complete understanding and appropriate action result.
- Authority need to search, not only to be understood but to perceive and be a good listeners. When an administrator starts talking, he/she often ceases to listen, at least in that larger sense of being attuned to the other person's unspoken reactions and attitudes. Even more serious is the occasional inattentiveness an administrator may be guilty of when others are attempting to communicate with him. Listening is one of the most important, most difficult, and most neglected skills in communication. It demands that the administrator concentrates not only on the explicit meanings another person is expressing, but also on the implicit meanings, unspoken words, and undertones that may be far more significant. Thus, an administrator must learn to listen with the inner ear if he/she is to know the inner person
- Administrators encourage open discussion and feedback exchange
- Administrators need to be sure that their actions support their communications. In the final analysis, the most persuasive kind of communication is not what administrators say, but what they do.

- When administrators' actions or attitudes contradict their words, others tend to discount what they have said. For every administrator, this means that good supervisory practices such as the clear assignment of responsibility and authority, fair rewards for effort, and sound policy enforcement serve to communicate more than all the gifts of oratory.
- When you communicate with a subordinate, ensure that they understood the message properly. Requesting feedback proves that you are serious about what the other person views on the subject
- When you are delivering a meaningful and important message or conversing formally or informally, avoid any complex language or using a different accent

### **Receiver's Responsibilities**

Communication depends on the ability neither to send nor to receive messages. This means the sender, as well as the receiver, must be responsible for communication. So the capacity to listen properly greatly enhances the communication process (Lunenburg, 2010). But many of us are not good listeners. Both sender and receiver must be good listeners of effective communication. Effective listening skills can be developed, however. Here are proposed guidelines for good listening by Keen (2011) and others:

- Stop talking. You cannot listen if you are talking.
- Put the talker at ease. Help a person feel free to talk. This is often called a permissive environment.
- Show a talker that you want to listen to. Look and act interested. Listen to understand rather than to oppose.
- Listening requires two ears, one for meaning and one for feeling.
- Remove distractions, Stay focused and pay attention.
- Empathize with talkers. Try to help yourself see the other person's point of view.
- Be patient. Allow plenty of time.
- Do not interrupt a talker. Do not start for the door or walk away.
- Hold your temper. An angry person takes the wrong meaning from words.
- Go easy on argument and criticism. These put people on the defensive, and they may clam up or become angry. Do not argue: Even if you win, you lose.
- Ask questions. This encourages a talker and shows that you are listening. It helps to develop points further.
- One important listening skill is to be prepared to listen. Tune out thoughts about other people and other problems. Search for meaning in what the person is saying. A mental outline or summary of key thoughts can be very helpful.
- For effective communication, you must always listen to the other person attentively. Even though you and the other person may have a different perception of the subject, listening to the person overcomes barriers.
- Too much information can make it very difficult to listen with full attention. Try to focus on the relevant information and the central points that are being conveyed.
- Make a conscious effort to quiet your emotional reactions so that you can listen properly
- Listen for the essence of the speaker's thoughts: details, major ideas, and their meanings.

- Use questions to clarify your understanding, as well as to demonstrate an interest in what is being said.
- Be yourself, honestly and openly. Be honest with yourself; focus on working well with the people around you, and act with integrity.
- The receiver should be aware of both components to comprehend the total meaning of the message
- The receiver must try to hear exactly what the sender is saying in the message
- As a receiver of information, you can also help to improve communication by providing feedback. Feedback doesn't always need to be overt. Simply nodding your head, and repeating key points that are being communicated to you can help the speaker to know when you understand
- This is first and last because all other guides depend on it. You cannot do an effective listening job while you are talking. Nature gave people two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that they should listen more than they talk. Administrators who do not listen have less information for making sound decisions

## Conclusion

Communication at the workplace is complicated to establishing and maintaining quality working relationships in institutions. As activity of transmitting information and mutual understanding from one to one, effective communication in the workplace is important because every administrative function and activity involves some form of direct or indirect communication.

However, a powerful communication occurs when sender chooses the proper media to encode the message and receiver decodes it in a correct way. Effective communication is important to success and happiness. Strong communication is more likely to achieve organizational goals. A team that has good communication help team member collaborate and participate effectively in achieving defined organizational goals. Approach communication as a creative process rather than simply part of the chore of working with people. What works with one person may not work well with another person. Experiment with communication alternatives, channels, listening techniques, and feedback techniques.

Consequently, to improve the powerfulness of communications, higher authority must develop an awareness of the importance of the sender's and receiver's responsibilities and adhere to active listening skills. Effective communication skills in the workplace will improve an administrator's ability to be a strong leader. As a result authority should create such environment that workers can solve their doubts, issues, problems in appropriate way. This can provoke new ideas, positivity, innovation. Hence the productivity can be increase automatically.

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