

Meaning of communication

The word “communication” is derived from the **Latin** word “**communis**” meaning **COMMON**. It stands for a natural activity of all human beings to convey opinions, feelings, information and ideas to others through words (written or spoken), body language, or signs.

Communication is the process of sharing of information between two or more individuals or groups to reach a **COMMON** understanding.

Definition of communication

According to Allen Louis:

“Communication is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another; it involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.”

According to Keith Davis:

“The transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others with facts, ideas, thoughts and values. It is a bridge of meanings among people so that they can share what they feel and know. By using this bridge, a person can cross safely the river of misunderstanding that sometimes separates people.

According to Peter Drucker:

“Communication is the ability of the various functional groups within the enterprise to understand each other and each other’s functions and concerns.”

According to William Scott

“Administrative communication is a process which involves the transmission and accurate **replication** of **ideas** ensured by **feedback** for the purpose of eliciting **actions** which will accomplish organizational goals.”

Types of Communications

On the basis of number of people involved

1. Interpersonal communication (between 2 people)
2. Intrapersonal communication (talking to oneself)
3. Group communication (communication with large number of people)
4. Mass communication (communication with very large audience, mostly not face to face)

On the basis of organization involved

1. Internal communication (among the people of the same organization)
2. External communication (among people from different organizations)

Objectives of communication

The main purpose of all communication in an organization is the general welfare of the organization.

Some of the main objectives of communication are:

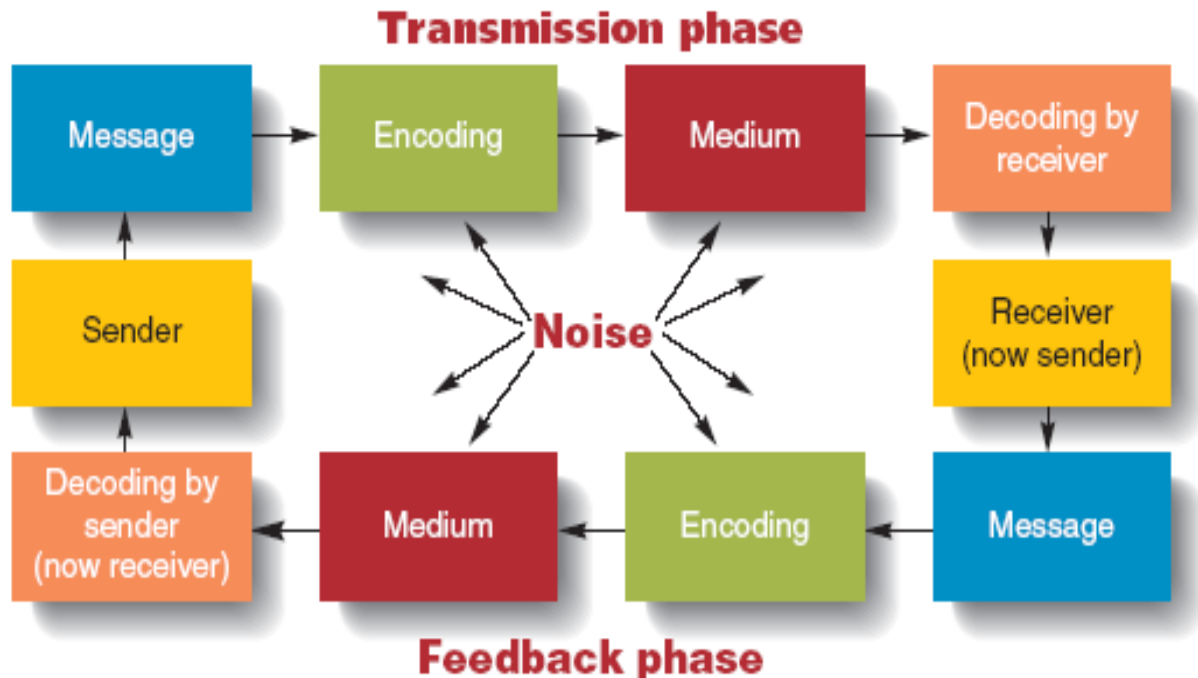
- To inform
- To organize
- To educate
- To persuade
- To motivate
- To report
- To entertain
- To analyze
- To promote
- To advice
- To suggest
- To warn
- To order

Nature of communication

- It is an universal process
- It is a continuous process
- It is a two way process/cyclic
- It is a purposeful process
- It is never perfect
- It can be both verbal or nonverbal
- It is complex
- It is learned
- It is context based

The communication cycle

The transmission of the sender's idea to the receiver and the receiver's feedback or response to the sender constitute the communication cycle. It can be diagrammatically represented as:



Thus the communication cycle goes as

1. The sender has an idea
2. He encodes the idea and formulates the message
3. He selects an appropriate channel and sends message
4. Receiver receives the message
5. Receiver decodes the message and
6. At last sends the feedback

Due to many reasons the communication cycle breaks down and the term **BRAIN DRAIN** is used to refer to the breakdown in the communication cycle. Communication is never perfect and the ideas get diluted, distorted or exaggerated either due to sender or receiver or the channel.

Elements of communication

The various elements of communication are

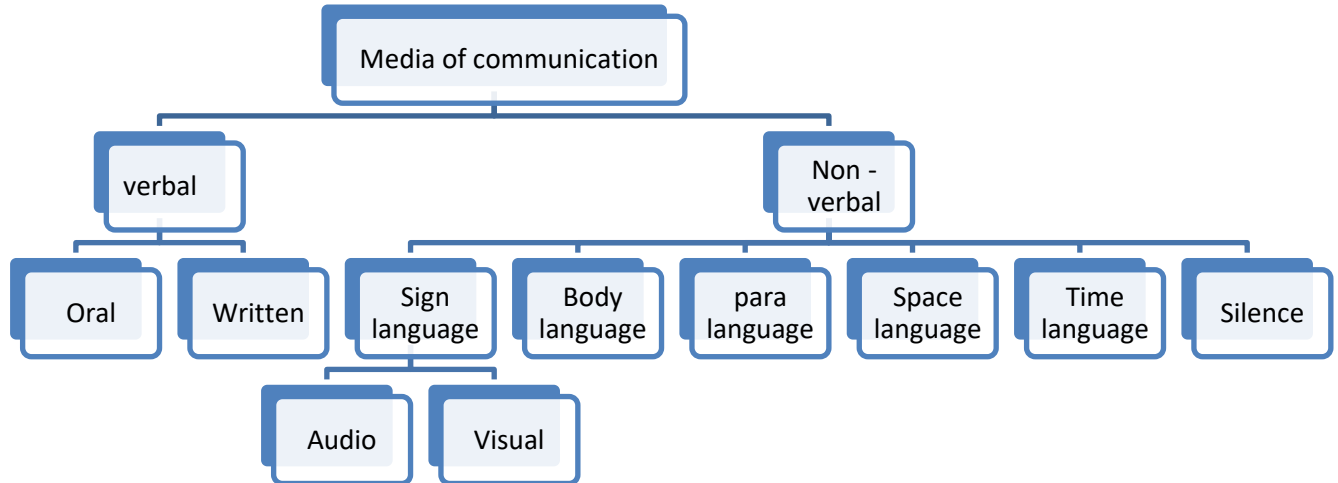
1. **Message:** it is the information written or spoken which is to be sent from one person to another. As an element of communication it is organized, structured, shaped and selective---a product of pre-writing or pre-speaking.
2. **Sender:** The person who transmits a message the message with any purpose is a sender. He decides the communication symbols, channel and time of transmitting the message after carefully considering the total situation in which communication takes place,
3. **Encoding:** Encoding is changing the message from its mental form into any other form (symbols, oral, written, gestures, signs, pictorial) according to the rules of that particular code.
4. **Channel:** This is the vehicle which facilitates the sender to convey the message to the receiver. It can be oral, written, and audio-visual. The written can be in the form of memos, reports, manuals, notices, circulars, questionnaires and so on. The oral can be in the form of dialogue, face to face, telephonic conversation, conference etc. The medium can also be hoardings, advertisements, posters, films and so on.
5. **Receiver:** A receiver is the targeted audience of the message. The receiver gets the message, understands, interprets and tries to perceive the total meaning of the message as transmitted by the sender.
6. **Decoding:** This is the act of translating symbols of communication into their ordinary meanings. Here the message received is analyzed and interpreted to correctly understand it. But always the total meaning would consist of meanings of the words together with the tone and the attitude of the sender as reflected by the structure of the message and choice of words.
7. **Acting:** Communication manipulates the receiver to act in a desired manner. His response shows that he has understood the message.
8. **Feedback:** it is the loop that connects the receiver in the communication process with the sender. Feedback helps the communicator know if there are any changes to be made in the proposed action. The degree of accuracy with which the idea is replicated in the receiver's mind is indicated by the feedback.

Along with the above main elements some other elements are: context, physical environment, emotional climate and various barriers of communication.

Medium of communication

Communication is possible through a vast variety of media. For the communication to be effective, the communicator has to be very careful and judicious in the choice of the medium, which will depend upon various factors like the urgency of the message, the time available, the expenditure involved, the intellectual levels of the receivers, need for record, direction of the information flow, number of people to be reached, confidentiality, nature of the information – length, complexity, speed of transfer and cost of the medium

All the media available can be represented as:



Verbal communication (oral and written)

The form of communication in which words are involved either spoken or written is called as verbal communication.

1. Oral Communication (merits and limitations)

Merits	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saves time • Saves money • More forceful • Conveys shades of meaning • Immediate feedback • Immediate clarification • More effective • Can be informal • Good for building interpersonal relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not possible for distant people • Unsuitable for lengthy messages • Messages can not be retained for long • No legal validity • Greater chances of misunderstanding • Not easy to fix responsibility • Can not be revised

Essentials of Effective Oral communication

- Brevity
- Precision
- Conviction
- Logical sequence
- Appropriate word choice

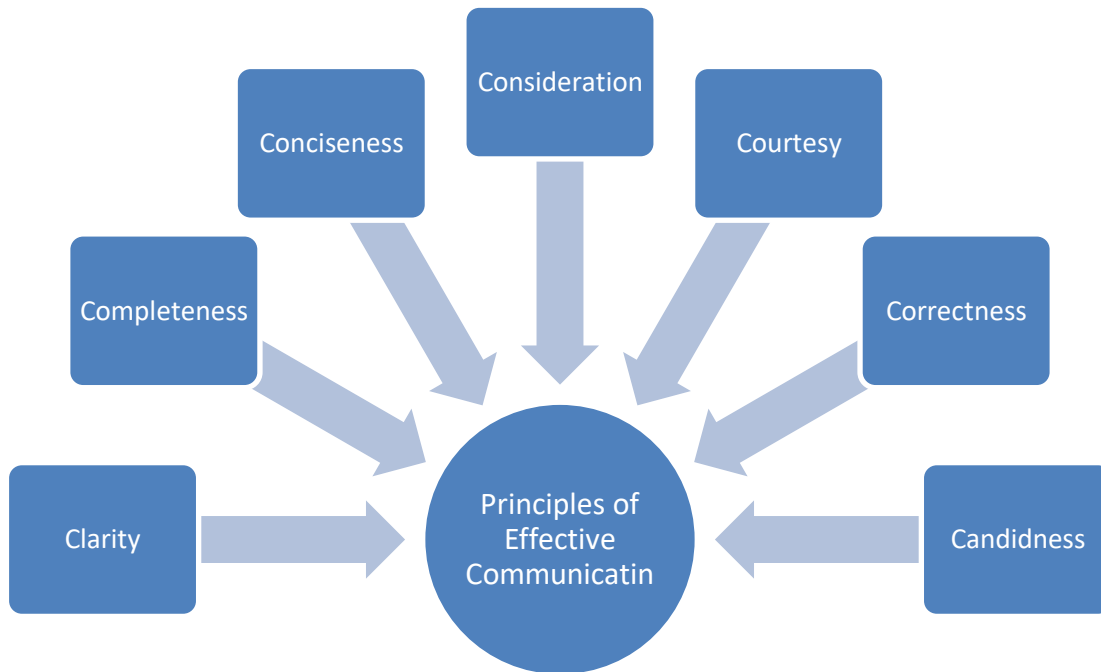
- Avoiding hackneyed phrases and cliché's
- Natural voice
- Right use of paralinguistic elements (tone, pitch, stress, pause, pace...)
- Congruity between verbal and non-verbal media
- Attentive listening
- Finding the right register(more noun or verb)
- Finally seven C's
 - ❖ Candid
 - ❖ Clear
 - ❖ Complete
 - ❖ Concise
 - ❖ Concrete(as we can't draw to make our statements vivid and concrete)
 - ❖ Correct
 - ❖ Courteous

2. Written Communication (merits and limitations)

Merits	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate • Precise • Permanent record • Legal document • Helps to fix responsibility • Formal and authoritative • Suitable for complex data • Suitable for statistical data • Can reach large audience simultaneously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Expensive • Quick clarification not possible • Literate skill required • Risk of leakage

Essentials of Effective Written Communication

In order make our memoranda, reports, letters and other types of written communication effective one should follow the **7 C's of communication**.



Principle of Clarity

The communication cycle begins with an idea in the mind of the sender. Sender must be very clear about

- Clarity of thought
 - ❖ What is the objective of communication?
 - ❖ What is to be communicated?
 - ❖ Which medium will be most suitable?
- Clarity of expression
 - ❖ Use simple and single words and short sentences
 - ❖ Avoid jargon, ambiguity, double entry and double negative
 - ❖ Prefer active construction

Principle of Completeness

In business communication completeness of facts is absolutely necessary. Incomplete message gives no result. For completeness

- Check the 5 W's (who, what, where, when, why...) and provide answers to all possible questions which could be raised and add something additional to make it completely understood.

Principle of Conciseness

Time is invaluable. Be as brief as possible but not at the cost of clarity, correctness, completeness.... . For conciseness

- include only relevant facts,
- avoid repetition and verbosity and
- Organize the message properly.

Principle of Consideration

In letters one must show consideration for the reader. Consideration implies respect for the reader. For consideration

- Adopt the YOU attitude
- Avoid gender bias
- Emphasize positive and pleasant facts
- Write only what you sincerely feel to be correct

Principle of Courtesy

In business we must create friendliness with all those we write to. Courtesy demands a considerate and friendly behavior towards others. Courtesy begets courtesy so make message courteous by

- Answer the letter promptly
- Don't use offensive language
- Apologize for any omissions
- Thank for the favors
- Use empathy in horizontal communication
- In downward be courteous
- In upward be respectful but not fawning

Principle of Candidness

In all business transactions, our view of a matter should be honest, sincere and without prejudice or bias. The guiding principle should be fairness to self and to others involved in the situation. Candidness in a way implies consideration of the other person's interest and his need to know things objectively and fairly. Candid talk also exhibits the speaker's self-confidence. In communication the key element that creates impact is confidence.

- There should not be beating around the bush
- Be straight forward.

Principle of Correctness

Business communication often leads to expensive operations. One should always transmit the absolutely correct message. If the message involves legal matter, one should know the correct legal position before one commits anything. For correctness

- Give correct facts
- Send at the correct time and
- Send in a suitable style

Non-verbal Communication

When a communication is transmitted without the use of words it is called as non-verbal communication. While a written communication is expressed in terms of words, oral communication involves both verbal and non-verbal elements.

What is said is not what is communicated. Words carry the STATED meaning; non-verbal signals transmit the IMPLIED meaning. When the stated and the implied meaning are put together, we get the actual meaning. In face to face communication spoken words account for only 35 percent of the total meaning produced while the remaining 65 percent is obtained by non-verbal clues. Some of the characteristics of non-verbal communication are:

- It is spontaneous
- Non verbal clues coexist with verbal
- Non-verbal clues are more reliable than verbal
- Non-verbal communication carries cultural bias
- Non-verbal clues need to be interpreted in context
- Non-verbal communication is not suitable for complex messages
- Non-verbal clues substitute (V)or repeat or complement or contradict the verbal message.

1. Sign language

- **Visual signs** (road signs, gestures, facial expression, graphs, maps.....)
- **Audio signs** (hooters, sirens, alarm, door bells.....)

2. Body language (kinesics)

- The study of body language is called as kinesics.
- Body language is very suitable for expressing feelings, emotions, etc
- Body language includes
 - ❖ Facial expressions
 - ❖ Gestures
 - ❖ Body movements
 - ❖ Posture
 - ❖ Eye contact
 - ❖ Touch (Haptics)
- Some of the kinds of kinesics are
 - ❖ Emblems (victory “V”)
 - ❖ Illustrators: movement of hands and arms (stretched arms)
 - ❖ Affect displays(clenched fist, head resting)

3. Paralanguage

Paralanguage suggests not what is said but how it is said. It refers to a wide range of vocal characteristics like

- Tone
- Pitch
- Speed of delivery
- Pauses
- Stress
- Speech breakers

4. Space language (Proxemics)

Proxemics is the study of space between two interacting persons. This space defines the level of intimacy between them. Each human being needs some personal space and no one likes someone to enter there without permission. Personal space is divided into four zones

- Intimate zone (0 to 18”)
- Friendly zone (18” to 4 feet)
- Social zone (4 to 10 feet)
- Public zone (over 10 feet)

5. Time language (Chronomics)

Chronomics is the study of time. Time influences the communication process in the subtle manner. How people handle time reflects on their personalities.

6. Silence

Silence is said to be more eloquent than words. What silence actually means in a given situation depends upon the context. Silence is most suitable for some selected responses like respect, fear.

Barriers to Communication

If the information as it is present in the mind of the transmitter is transferred unchanged into the mind of the receiver, it is called as the perfect communication. However in real life there does not exist any such thing as may be described as perfect communication.

In technical parlance anything that obstructs free flow of communication is called “noise” or simply as the barrier of communication. Thus noise is any distortion or hindrance preventing transmission of the message from the mind of the sender to the mind of the receiver.

1. **WRONG MEDIUM:** Every communication must be transmitted through an appropriate medium. An unsuitable medium is one of the biggest barriers of communication.
2. **PHYSICAL BARRIERS:** physical barriers like noise in factory, disturbance in telephone, poor handwriting, faulty seating arrangements and poor timing (if close to deadline) can be overcome with little care.
3. **SEMANTIC BARRIERS:** Semantic barriers may occur if the transmitter and the receiver assign different meanings to the same word, if the words carry different nuances, shades to the transmitter and the receiver.
4. **SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS:** some of the socio-psychological barriers are
 - Personal attitudes and opinions
 - Emotional state of mind.
 - Cultural diversity
 - Closed mindedness
 - Status consciousness
 - Inattentiveness and poor retention

Broadly speaking, some of these barriers can be attributed to the sender and the receiver:

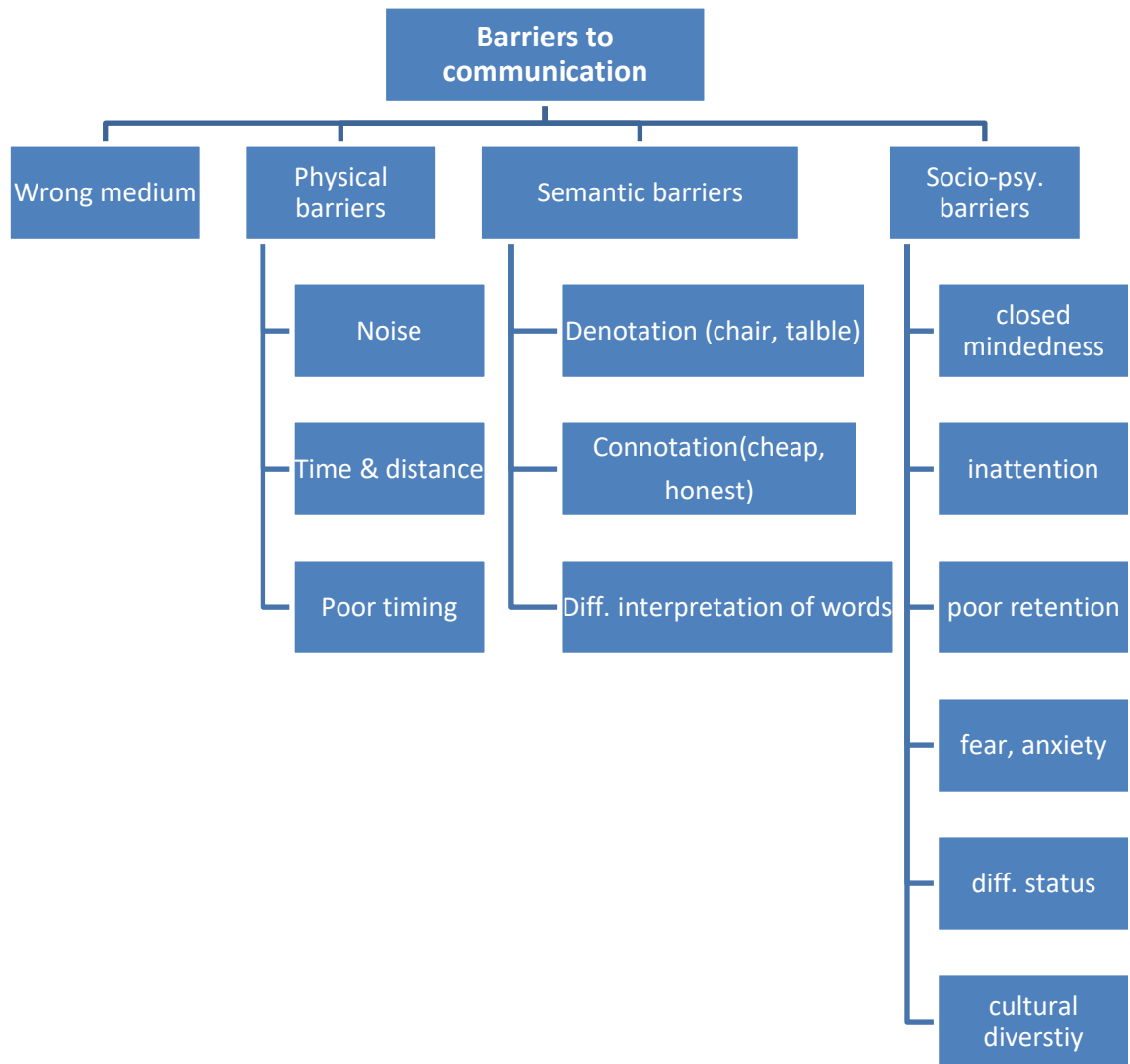
Sender:

- Lack of planning
- Vagueness about the purpose of communication
- Choice of wrong medium

- Unshared and unclarified assumptions
- Different perception of reality
- Bad encoding

Receiver:

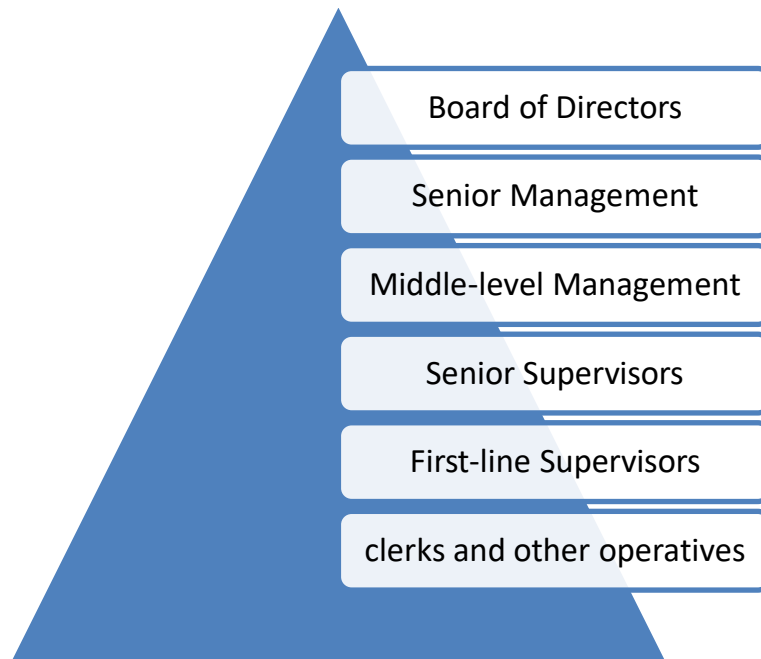
- Poor listening
- Inattention and lack of interest
- Mistrust and bias
- Premature evaluation
- Semantic difficulties
- Attitudinal clash with the sender
- Absence of common frame of reference



Types of communication (organizational pattern in Firms)

Every firm has an organizational pattern to carry out its activities. The power to take major policy decisions lies with the Board of Directors while the execution of the policies is entrusted to the Managing Director. The Managing Directors passes on all relevant information to departmental managers, who, in turn issue instructions to the supervisors. Clerks and other operative employees take orders from their supervisors.

Thus every organization has a hierarchical line of authority along which runs a communication channel used for transmitting all written and oral messages. A hierarchical line of authority is like a pyramid:



Communication within an organization is of two types:

1. **FORMAL OR OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION**
2. **INFORMAL OR GRAPEVINE COMMUNICATION**

Formal or Official Communication

Formal communication flows along prescribed channels, which all members desirous of communicating with someone are obliged to follow. Formal communication may flow **vertically (upward or downward)**, or **horizontally**.

DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION: It flows from a superior to the subordinated staff. Its objectives are

- To give directions
- To explain the policies and procedures
- To motivate the employees
- To coordinate the functioning of different departments
- To convey assessment of performance

It's limitations are:

- Under or over-communication
- Delay
- Loss of information
- Distortion
- Filtering
- Hardly any feedback
- Resentment by subordinate staff

UPWARD COMMUNICATION: It flows from the subordinated staff to the superiors. Its objectives are

- Providing feedback to the superiors
- Reporting job progress
- Releasing the pent-up emotions
- Providing useful suggestion
- Promoting harmony
- Seeking the superiors intervention for problem-solving

It's limitations are:

- Fear of adverse reaction
- Bypassed superiors feel insulted
- Great possibility of distortion and filtering
- Information overload at the higher levels

HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION: It flows between people at the same level. It is important for promoting understanding and coordination among various people or departments. It helps in decision making, problem solving and resolving conflicts.

Informal or Grapevine Communication

The formal channel of communication in organization follows certain definite, predetermined directions. Apart from them there operates in every organization an informal channel of communication called the Grapevine. It follows no set lines, nor any definite rules, but spreads like the grapevine, in any direction, anywhere and spreads fast.

Transmission of Information along the Grapevine

Professor Keith Davis, who has done some research on the nature of the grapevine, classifies it into four basic types:

1. **Single Strand:** The single strand chain involves the passing of information through a long line of persons to the ultimate recipient.
2. **Gossip Chain:** In the gossip chain, one person actively seeks and tells everyone.
3. **Probability Chain:** This is a random process in which one person transmits the information to others in accordance with the laws of probability and then these others tell still others in similar way.
4. **Cluster Chain:** In this one person tells a selected person, who may in turn relay the information to other selected individuals.

Importance of Grapevine

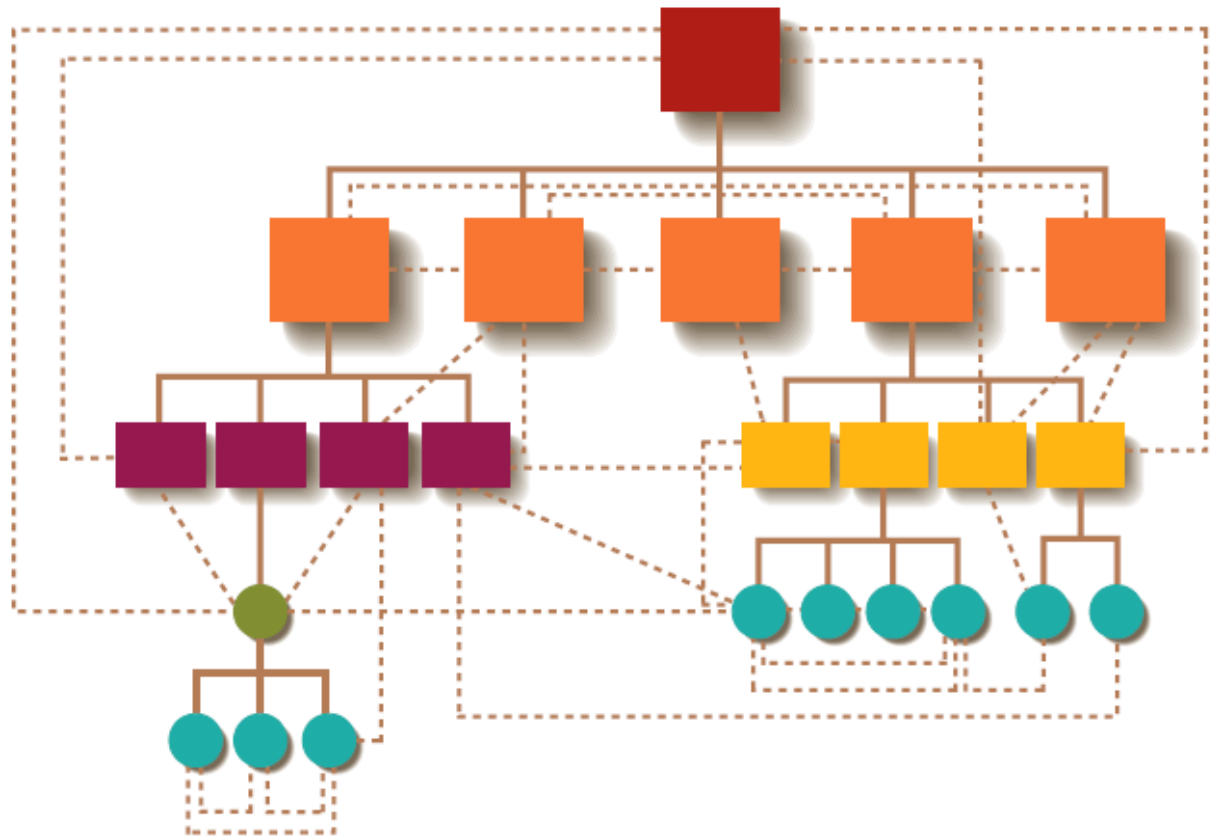
1. Works as a safety valve for the pent-up emotions of the subordinates.
2. Promotes organizational solidarity and cohesion, raise the morale of the workers.
3. Supplement to other channels, if there is some useful information unsuitable for being transmitted through official channels
4. Quick transmission
5. It provides feedback and enables the management to know what the subordinates think about the organization and its various activities.

Demerits of Grapevine

1. It spreads baseless, partial, distorted news which may sometimes be harmful to the employees.
2. The grapevine information is usually incomplete and not trustworthy.
3. The grapevine may hamper the goodwill of the organization.
4. The speed with which the grapevine transmits information may be damaging. It can cause serious damage before the management becomes aware of it and can take any rectifying steps.
5. It may lead to making hostility against the executives.

How to use Grapevine effectively

1. Keep an eye on rumors
2. Use it primarily for feedback
3. Involve the workers in the decision making process



- Formal pathways of communication summarized in an organization chart
- - - - Informal pathways along which a great deal of communication takes place