

Effective Team Working and Communication

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Introduction

Communication is defined as “the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another”. There are three main components in the process of communication: the sender, the message and the receiver. Communications can appear to be simple realised between at least one a sender and one recipient, but involve complex aspects. The accuracy of the message can be affected by a multitude of factors: individuals emotions, cultural background, the medium of communication, location (Oxford Dictionary, 2021).

The communication process is realised when the sender encodes the message and chooses to transmits in some way to the recipient or recipients who then decodes it. When addressing to more than one receiver the communication process is even more complex as each of the receivers can decode a slight different message as their understanding and interpretations may vary.

Communication skills

There are two **types of communication**: verbal and non-verbal. The non-verbal communication refers to the gestures, tone of voice, way of acting, standing, dressing etc. Verbal communication makes use of words, written or spoken. It includes face to face communication, phone calls, radio and television transmissions, and online through different types of media. Majority of face to face communications do not make distinction between the roles of senders and receives with the exchange of messages flowing between parties. This communications involve an interweaving of the verbal and non-verbal elements. In written communications is different with the sender and the receiver being more distinct and using words only, to convey the message. Written communications are in the form of letters, emails, text messages, books, social media, etc.

Therefore the sender encodes the message and sends it through a channel to one or more recipients who decode it to understand the meaning. At any stage in the communication process can occur misunderstandings and in order to ensure an effective communication the parties aim to overcome any potential barriers. **Effective communication** is defined as the “process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, knowledge and information such that the purpose or intention is fulfilled in the best possible manner”. It means for the sender to present his ideas, views and feelings in the best way to be understood by the receiver (Turaga, 2016).

An effective communication has a clear, precise and correct message, with complete information that is reliable. The medium of the communication is also important and it has to consider the receiver. That is why organisations consider that communications skills are a good asset and contribute to the good management and business results. In the world of business the effective

communication ensures team building, strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, develops trust, business growth, facilitates innovation.

Listening is also important skill to have and contributes to an effective communication. Active listening means that the listener pays attention to the speaker. It is defined as “the process of listening attentively while someone else speaks, paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said, and withholding judgment and advice”. It is important to have the right attitude, remaining neutral and trying to understand speakers emotions and thoughts (Baird, 1983).

Barriers to Effective Communication involve semantic aspects, personal background, physical barriers. The semantic barriers refer to languages and usage of words or abstractions and disorganised structure of the message or overload of information. The barriers related to personal background involve the education level, the culture, the attitude, demographic differences, level of experience, lack of patience and jumping to conclusions. The physical barriers can be in relation to physical distance where some elements can be missed, the noise from the environment or the communication system, personal disabilities.

Communication models

Models of communication: The Shannon-Weaver Model of communication, Schramm’s Model of Communication, Berlo’s Model of communication,. There are different theories in relation to the communication process. Some of them consider that some elements have more importance than others, whilst some models of communication do not take in consideration all the components.

Shannon-Weaver Model of communication (1948) presents six components: the sender, the encoder, the channel, the noise, the decoder, the receiver and the feedback. Initially this model did not include the feedback component. The communication process is seen as an one way system in this model where the reception of the message has the most weight.

The first step presented in the model starts with the information source, the sender who choses the message , the person to whom to send the message and how to send the message. The sender can chose to send the message through words oral or written, through body language etc. An example of the sender at my workplace is the manager instructing the team for the day. The manager will choose what he needs to say and how to say before the meeting starts.

The encoder can be the machine or the person that converts the thoughts into signals. This theory was based on telephonic and telegraph which encodes the message in signal waves. In the case of the direct communication the person can encode their thoughts using words. An example from my workplace is when the managers choses to communicate with us using the telephone, informing us when there are extra shifts. The encoding is the telephone that converts the voice into signal waves to us.

The channel is the medium, the infrastructure that makes possible the delivery of the message from the sender to the receiver. An example from my workplace is when the manager, the sender uses the internet as the channel to sent emails related to the organisation activity.

The noise is interruption of the message and it can be internal or external. The internal noise can be a problem in the encoding or decoding of the message. The external noise comes from external environments that is not in control of the sender or the receiver. An example of noise from my workplace is when the manager speaks to us in the warehouse which can be very loud at times and we can not hear properly what we are told.

The decoder is the step from the model that decodes the signal waves into a format that can be understood by the receiver. An example of decoding is the case of telephone conversation is the transformation of the single waves into words that are understood by us.

The receiver is the destination when the message is received. In the work examples given the receiver are my team workers.

The feedback which was added later by Weiner to address the loop of the model is the response of receiver in relation to the message received. The feedback for the work based examples provided is given by us to the manager confirming that we understood what is required from us to accomplish that day.

Schramm's Model of Communication (1954) takes a slightly different approach to explain the communication process. In comparison to the previous model of communication, this one is presented as a cyclical communication model analysing the exchange of information between at least two people. This model has the following elements: the sender, the encoder, the message and the receiver, the decoder. There is the case where the sender can be one with the receiver and is called an intra-personal communication. Because this is a two-way process, both sender and receiver get to encode and decode the message. It has to be realised correctly in order to deliver accurate messages.

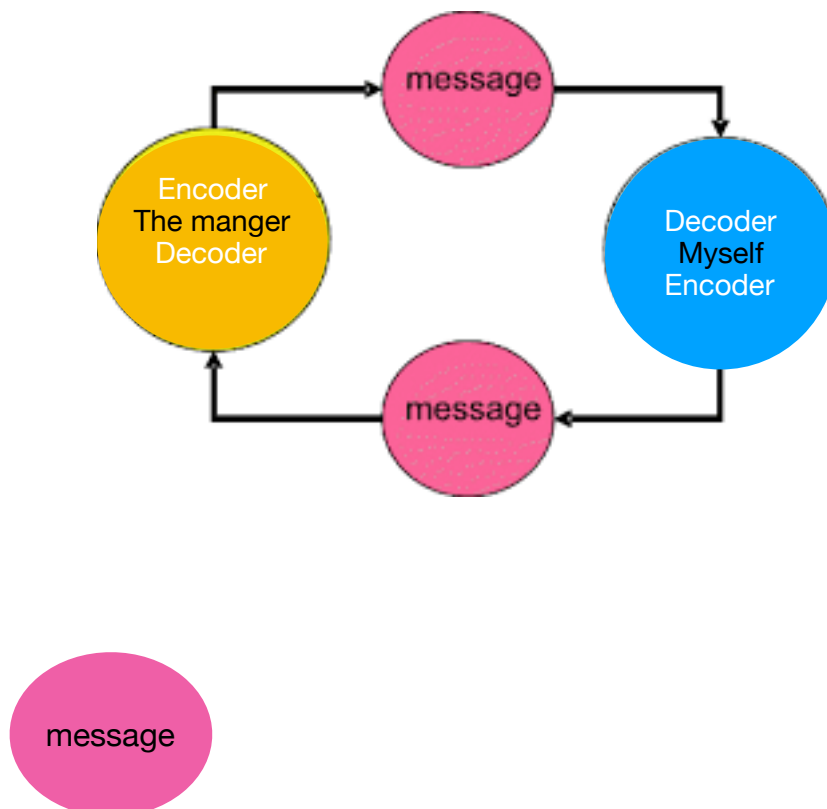
An example from the workplace is the communication between me and my manager when we have our monthly meeting for the performance appraisal. The manager is the sender when he starts the meeting and I am the receiver, but we exchange roles putting and answering questions. It is easy for the manager to encode the message as he knows my level of English and knows how to formulate the message. My manager has great communication skills and he is able to formulate clearly his message. In my role as a receiver even if I have problems decoding the message I ask for further explanations to which the manager answers happily and we have a successful flow of communication (illustrated in Figure 1.).

The message is the information from the communication process. It can be verbal or non-verbal. It can make use of words, symbols etc. In the selected example from my workplace of the communication in the performance appraisal meeting the message is created using words in face to face communication. It also involves body language such as eye contact, gestures etc. My manager makes eye contact when conveys the message, he chooses to speak clear and articulated as he knows that for some of the employees like me English is not their first language. He uses a calm tone of the voice making us comfortable as his style of leadership is to lead by example and promote communication.

Through feedback the receiver shows that he received the message and he responds to it. The feedback measures how was the message received. The feedback provided can be verbal or non

verbal, as in my example when asked by the manager if I understood what I was told I could simply nod meaning a positive answer.

Figure 1. Model of communication



Message1: Do you consider you need further training?
Message 2: Yes. Do you have anything scheduled?
Message 3: Yes. In July.

Berlo's model of communication (1960) differs from the above models of communications because emphasises the encoding and decoding to be more complex than a basic communication process. The main components of the model are the sender, the message, the channel and the receiver, that is why the model is know as the SMCR model of communication. The sender is identified as the source of information and the receiver is the destination of the message. Both relate to the following factors: communication skills which include speaking, reading, writing, presenting skills etc.; attitude; knowledge which refers to the subjected discussed; social systems like place, religion, values, laws etc.; culture. The message can be oral or written and the following factors can affect it: the content of the message; elements which refer to the non-non-verbal

aspects; treatment which is the modality through which the message is conveyed; structure which refers to the arrangement of the message; code which is the form of the message: language, video etc. The channel is the way the message is sent which relate to the five senses of the human being. The receiver which as mentioned is influenced by the same factors as the sender. In comparison to the other models there is no mention of feedback or noise. Another difference is that the model is presented as a linear model of communication and the people involved in the process should be similar. In workplaces this model should work between members of the same department that share similar characteristics. For example members of the same team in the same department.

In order to illustrate better the concept of communication this report will make use of a case study that presents a communication between two people called Maria and Pedro. Maria calls Pedro who works on a building site to ask him to buy her a chicken when he comes home. Pedro says yes but when he comes home he goes to the kitchen. When Maria asks him about the chicken he says that he did not buy any chicken as he understood that he has to go to the kitchen.

The model of communication that explains the confusion in this communication is Shannon-Weaver Model. The sender is Maria, the encoder is the phone transforming the voice into binary codes, the channel is the mobile network operator, the decoder is transforming back into words and the receiver is Pedro. The noise can be external as it is mentioned that Pedro works on a building site and Maria calls him when he is at work. According to this model in order to make the communication more effective it should be removed the noise. In this case Pedro should have chosen to go to the staff room in order to have a more quiet environment.

Conclusion

In **conclusion** effective communication depends on a variety of factors. The theoretical models presented have similar bases, the existence of a sender, a message and a receiver, but some other elements and factors are presented. The models should be analysed for any person who intends to develop their communication skills as there are provided different angles and perspectives that could help in understanding the process of communication.

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