

Effective Team Working and Communication

BMSW4002

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Introduction

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2021) the communication is defined as the “The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium and the successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings”. In simpler words is the process of transferring the message from one part to another, therefore it assumes a message to be sent, a sender and a receiver. There are different types of communication: verbal, nonverbal, written or visual communication.

Some communications are more effective than others, whilst some communications encounters different barriers and that is why the sender of the message should ensure that the message was understood by seeking feedback from the receiver. A distorted message could be the result of the noises of the channel or because of the sender's or receiver's capabilities to encode or decode a message. Therefore overcoming barriers is essential in order to convey a clear message and have an effective communication.

Barriers to communication can lead to conflicts and referring to the working place, the leadership style plays an important role in ensuring clear communication. Good managers have good leadership skills in order to engage the employees and communicate effectively the organisation's objectives. Leadership is defined as “the process in which an individual influences other group members towards the attainment of group or organisational goals” and that is realised using communication (Burns, 1978).

Communications models

This report will use and describe three communications models: The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model, Berlo's Model of communication, Schramm's Model of Communication.

The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model is the communication model that is presented from the sender, the information source which is the person that sends the desired message through the desired channel. The encoder, the transmitter is the conversion of the message into signal or binary data. The decoder, the receiver converts the signals or binary data into message and the receiver, the destination is the person that gets the message and offers feedback accordingly. The noise source is presented as the disturbances such as the environment that can interfere with the message. Presented in a simple face to face conversation between two persons, the brain is responsible for sending the message, the encoding of the message sent being realised using a particular language, the channel would be through air and the receiver would be the other persons ear and the decoding would be realised by the other persons brain. This model of communication was applied to all types of communication including technological channels (Shannon, Weaver, 1949).

Despite that this theory is a straightforward model of communication, it received criticism, being considered inadequate for the description of the complexity of the human communication and should only be applied to the context of radio or telephone communication. It is criticised that the focus lies on the efficiency of the channel instead of other important components such as communication reaction, semantics (Bowman, Targowski 1987).

Berlo's Model of communication, the SMCR model presents four main components: source, message, channel, receiver. This model of communication accounts the emotional aspects of the message and offers a more complex approach. *The Source* which is the sender that transfers the message to the receiver, by using an array of communication skills, attitude, knowledge, social system, culture. The communication skills influence the effectiveness of the message and assumes individual capacity to ensure he is understood and listened. The right attitude is also important as creates a lasting impression to the receivers. The knowledge refers to the clarity of the message and preparedness on the communication. The social system refers to the social set up to whom the sender is addressing, as communication could be irrelevant and disregarded to some parties and therefore ineffective. The culture portrays the background of the listeners (Berlo, 1960). *The Message* is formed when thoughts are put into words, the process of encoding. The elements of the message are: content, element, treatment, structure and code. The content is the script, the backbone of the communication. The element refers to the body language as part of the message as it influences the effectiveness of the message also. The treatment is the way the message is handled and delivered to ensure accuracy of the message is delivered. A good structure of the message makes possible the proper communication and the code involves the sum of the persons expressions, gestures and language which makes the receiver able to decode the accurate message. *The Channel* is the medium through which the message is sent to the receiver. It can be realised through hearing,

tasting, seeing, smelling, touching. *The Receiver* is the person that gets the message and tries to understand it, decoding it. The receiver should also have similar communication skills, the right attitude, similar knowledge and social and cultural background in order to understand the sender.

Berlo's model of communication provides different angles than Shannon and Weaver, but it was also criticised because as it is considered that in real life it is not possible that the receiver to be on common ground as the sender, meaning that the receiver could not have the right attitude or similar cultural background to ensure smooth conversion of the message (Thayer, 1968).

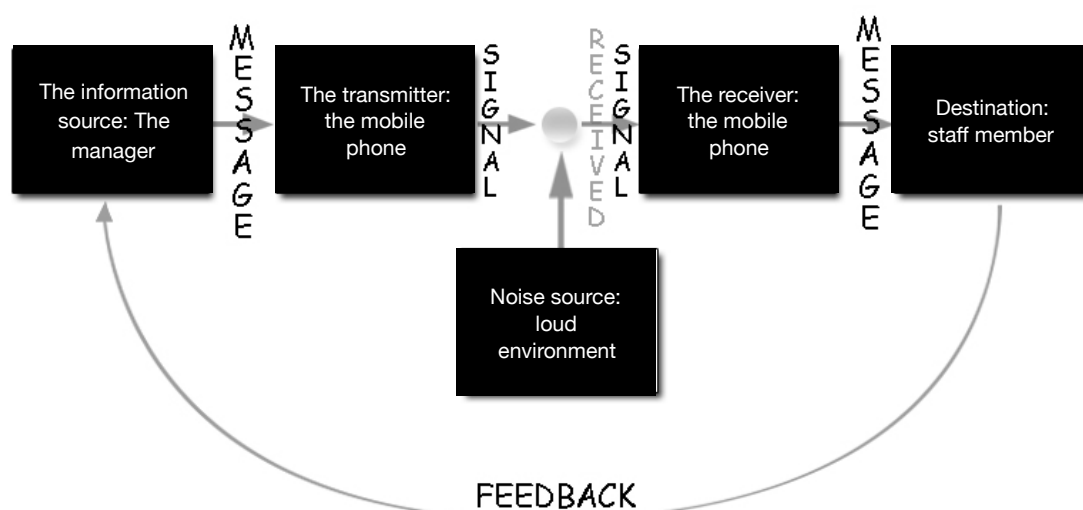
The third model, Schramm's Model of Communication highlights the importance of encoding and decoding process in order to have an effective communication. Encoding is the conversion of the thoughts into content and decoding is the understanding of the message. The model also emphasises that the communication is a two way process between parts, being considered that the communication is not complete if feedback is not provided being as it is receivers responsibility to do so. The message can be interpreted differently depending on cultural background or knowledge. Some messages have a general and standard interpretation with a lower possibility of misunderstanding and they are labeled as: having a denotative meaning. Other messages affected by emotional factors get distorted from various factors and are called connotative meaning (Schramm, 1954)

Communications Skills

Communication skills are the individual abilities that are used to receive and send a message and it refers to speaking, listening, observing and empathising. Having an effective communication depends on the speaker ability to convey the message and on the listener willingness to pay attention and listen. The message should be formulated in the best manner to be understood by the listener and the listener should have the right attitude and aiming to understand the speakers thoughts. Active listening is very important to have an effective communication and there are three categories of listening: critical, which is used to make a decision, informational used to get knowledge and empathetic when it is paid attention without judging and interfering (McKay, 2009).

This report will use concrete experiences and practical aspects based on the own work experience as a waiter to assess poor communication at the work place and in the Appendix it can be found an example of poor communication from a case study "Maria and Pedro". Referring to personal experiences from the workplace regarding the communication process, we often communicate through telephone and this type of communication can be illustrated using The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model. For example the manager- the information source, often calls us when there is shortage of staff from various reasons and he needs to find a cover. Then the manager encodes the message, using English as language. The message is converted into signal waves and transmitted through signals and choosing the phone as the channel for sending the message, he then calls one of the waiters that have day off to check if they can come to work. The receiver, the person called then provides feedback, answering if they can come to work or not. It happened when the Noise Source impacted the communication as many times the managers call from the restaurant, on the job and it happened to be interrupted by staff or customers and could not finish the communication (Figure 1).

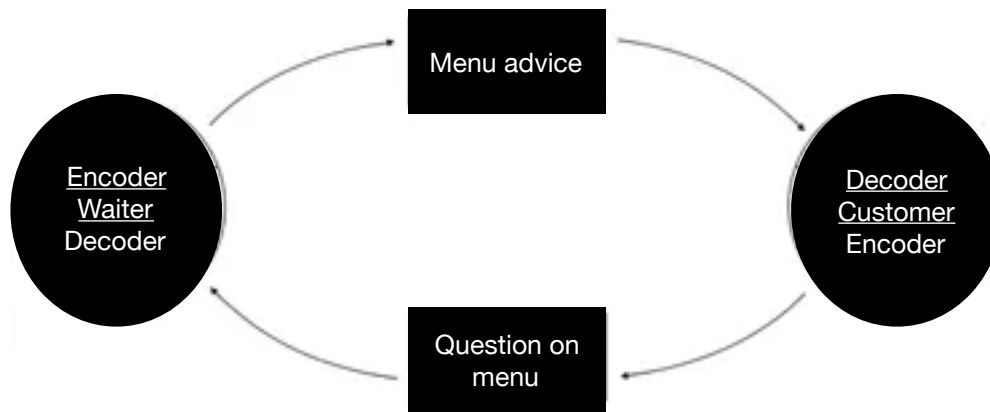
Figure 1. Shannon-Weaver communications model



At my work place my responsibilities are to provide excellent customer service, greeting customers, giving menu advice if required and taking customer orders, serving food and beverage, front-of-the-house duties and ultimately ensuring customer satisfaction whilst providing quality customer service. As waiter I am always communicating with the customers, for example when providing information on the menu. Therefore following Berlo's Model of communication, I can emphasise the importance of the communication skills, attitude, knowledge, social system and culture. As the food served in the restaurant is Italian many customers may not be aware of the name of the dish, way of preparation or ingredients. The effectiveness of the communication then would be ensured, according to Berlo's model, if I can make myself well understood by the customer- the receiver, by having the right attitude, the knowledge and details on the presented information regarding the menu, the social set up which is the restaurant and the culture. All this elements could be assumed that are shared by the receiver, as per customer willingness to select such a restaurant and show interest in the menu and ask for advice. Therefore it can be taken in consideration the application of this model of communication for the presented situation despite the criticised loopholes due to considered interest of the receiver in the message when asking for advice on the menu.

In the above examples, there were described two different experiences from the workplace. The first communication between the manager and the staff was realised using the telephone as channel of delivering the message. In the second situation it was a direct communication face to face between customer and waiter, through air. In order to apply Schramm's Model of communication it is taken into account the importance of the encoding and decoding process. For both communications the encoding was realised carefully, the manager and the waiter put the information into words and conveyed it to the staff and the customer. In the first situation the manager encoded the message with denotative meaning, asking directly if the employee could cover someone else's shift, but he was interrupted by other staff to attend a customer and he could not complete the communication as did not receive the feedback from the receiver. According to Schramm's theory it was not completed the full circle from the sender to the receiver and backwards. In the second situation where the waiter is providing menu advice to customers it can be stated that it was conveyed a message with denotative meaning and the receiver provided feedback and ordered the food accordingly to the information received, completing the circle of communication (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Schramm's communication model



Conclusion

In conclusion in a working environment, communication is very important. Communication within the organisation as exemplified above, between different layers of the organisational structures such as the management and the staff, but also between organisation and different stakeholders such as the waiter and the customer.

The communication models applied emphasised different factors to be analysed that are accounted for an effective communication, with some being considered of presenting loopholes or being inadequate, but still being enduring theories for the communication processes.

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Appendix

Maria and Pedro case study

Summary: This case study presents a communication between Maria and her husband Pedro. Pedro works on a building site. Maria calls him at work asking to buy her a chicken. Pedro says yes, but he returns without a chicken. When Maria asks about the chicken he says he understood to wait for her in the kitchen.

Analysis: it can be observed that it was not a very effective communication, Pedro did not understand the message conveyed by Maria. The Shannon- Weaver model of communication organises the communication as following: Maria is the source of information, she conveys the information into a message in English and she transmits it using the of mobile phone. Pedro is the destination who decodes the message. The noise is the interference that made the communication ineffective as Peter works on a building site and it can be very loud environment.