

University of Wales Trinity Saint David



Effective Team Working and Communication (BMSW4002)

Assessment 1

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1. Introduction

This reflection is centred on my personal learning experience in the Effective Team Working and Communication module at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London. One of the main reasons for joining this study program was to improve my communication and presentation skills and to boost my chances of employment.

In this report, the topics I am going to be talking about are communication models using the Shannon and Weaver one of the best-known transmitter-receiver models, communications skills, and the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication.

I will also be explaining my experience, observations, what helped me build meaningful relationships and conclusions during my learning experience.

Organisational communication

Communication is the oil that reduces the friction and lubricates the engine of every successful business in today's world of business. If the organisations do not communicate the correct information to the right audience at the appropriate time things may fall apart.

I will be referring to a case study to show how different models of communication works and their adaptability to our working environment. Lastly, I will be giving examples of poor communication, technical issues and explain how the advance modes of communication can improve organisation productivity and fix the issues.

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3. Models of Communication

Communication in its simplest form of definition is an act of transmitting information that includes the ideas, thoughts, and emotions. Communication can be verbal, nonverbal, or textual. It can be aural, visual, or even physical.

Berlo's model of communication otherwise known as the SMCR model is a linear model which includes 6 stages - the source, encoding of the message, message, delivery method of the message, decoding, and the message receiver. Further broken down into Source, Communication skills, Attributes, Knowledge of the subject that the person is communicating and their familiarity with it. Social system, culture, content, structure, elements. Sending a message through a channel such as email, a video, or a printed memo are good examples of the linear model. The main drawback of this model is that it lacks the feedback.

The Schramm model looks at communication as a process that involves a sender (transmitter) and a receiver. It includes a message, and a medium through which the message can be transmitted (Schramm, 1948). Schramm model on the other hand shows how the feedback work.

There are numerous communication models, some of which are already outdated, nevertheless, they have retained their validity in the age of modern era of digital communication.

Shannon and Weaver

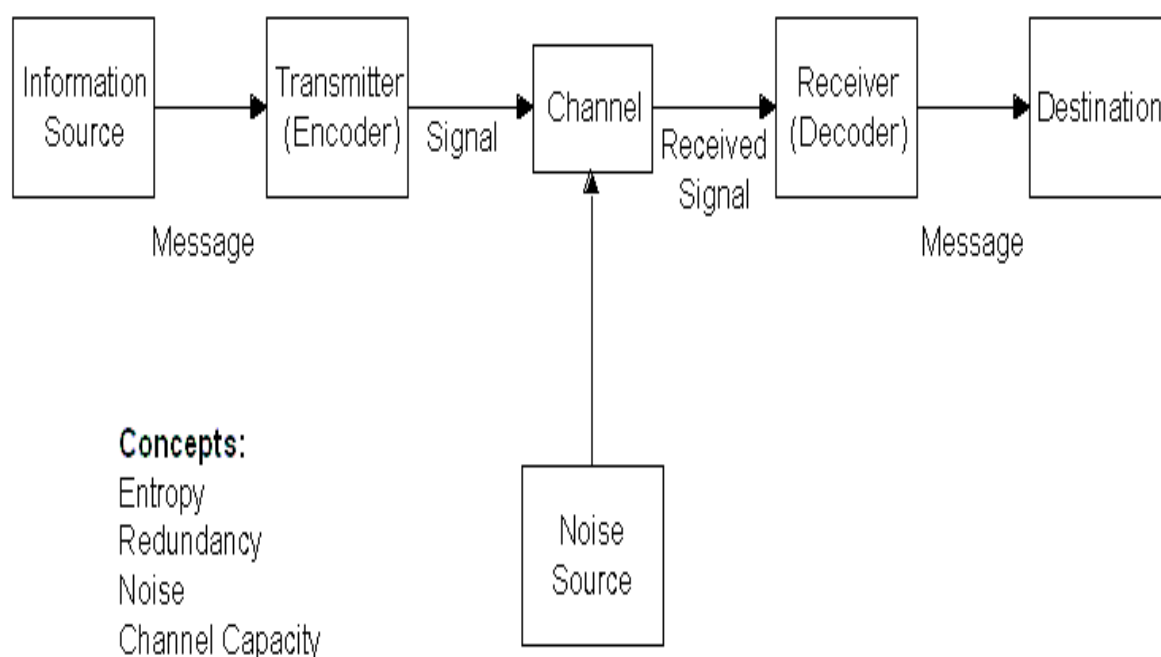
The most popular communication models are the ones which include a transmitter and a receiver scenario according to Shannon & Weaver. The model argues that human communication can be broken down into 6 key stages: sender, encoder, channel, noise, decoder, and receiver. It is considered as the "mother of all models." Shannon & Weaver is a media effectiveness model which considers the impact of language from an external view and provides a reason for elaboration which is an interesting departure from some of the outdated models. (Cleaverclips Studio, 2021)

- Transmitting a message requires a transmitter and receiver.
- They decrypt the codes of communication in their own way.
- If the code contradicts from verbal and non-verbal cues, as a result of different interpretations conflicts can occur.

This model assumes that communication flows unidirectional, a person can be a sender or receiver, but not both which doesn't fall in-line with modern day communication. Shannon &

Weaver is an old-fashioned model; however, it lacks the cordial aspects such as mutual relationships, motivation, and the receiver's feedback. This makes it rigid and less able to distinguish as a new model of transmission. However, the adaptable nature of core idea of an individual communication code makes it unbelievably interesting. (BMSK4002_LON, 2021)

The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model, 1949



Verbal and nonverbal communication and why it is important?

To communicate an idea or a thought effectively both verbal and non-verbal communication is extremely important. By listening you not only hear what the person speaks but also what is behind the words that are not said. Therefore, the body language plays a critical part as it shows how confident, a good listener you are allowing you to share your idea whilst reinforcing the relationships with your audience.

As an example, in a job interview, whether you are fit for the job is decided within the first few minutes - being natural, confident and on topic is extremely important. You are judged by not just by what you say, also how you say it and how you phase it, your tone etc. Particularly, if you are applying for a managerial role. It also shows how you would communicate your ideas to others if you were successful. (BMSK4002_LON, 2021)

There are 4 categories of non-verbal communication.

- Aesthetic – involves creative expressions such as art, music, dance
- Physical – involves bodily actions which engage the receiver
- Signs – signals to transmit a specific message with symbolic meaning
- Symbols – any material/object that promote social status e.g, jewelleryes

(BMSK4002_LON, Notes, 2021)

4. Reflection on ETW module

In addition to understanding common models of communication, my ability to deliver a message effectively improved significantly over this period. Below is a true reflection on my own experience, what I have noticed throughout this learning experience.

4.1 Things I have learned about effective communication

In addition to understanding the power of written communication, body language, writing effective business emails, my writing skills, and my ability to deliver a powerful message that captures the intended audience improved considerably. The module not only made me understand the power of communication that get things done but it also encouraged me to build deep and meaningful relationships with others through communication.

4.2. How do I feel about it now?

Over this period my transmission skills undoubtedly improved, and I am a much more intrepid speaker and a presenter than I was before. Also, I have noticed that communication is an integral part of teamwork. When everyone communicates and work as a team it is easy to manage and drive them towards a common direction that an organisation would like to achieve, it creates less conflicts, wasting time arguing or meetings that ends up with zero outcome. The experience shows that this increases the productivity, competitive advantage, and the position of the company.

4.3 What type of a communicator am I?

I enjoy ideas, theories and solving practical problems therefore the doing aspect which I believe makes me fall into the “converging” category when it comes to my learning style.

Every person has a unique style of communication, a way in which they interact and exchange information with others. Personally, I like to communicate things in an orderly fashion, therefore nothing gets missed. Hence, I believe this makes me a “functional

communicator” according to this classification. Additionally, I like process, detail, timelines, and well-thought-out plans which probably explains why I have been managing teams of technical experts and customers alike for quite a long time in my career.

I am also eager to know the big picture and avoid getting into nitty-gritty when it is not required which makes me seen as a leader, someone others can turn to “implementer” because others have confidence as I am both process and detail driven as and when required. (EPM, 2020; **Forbes**, 2015).

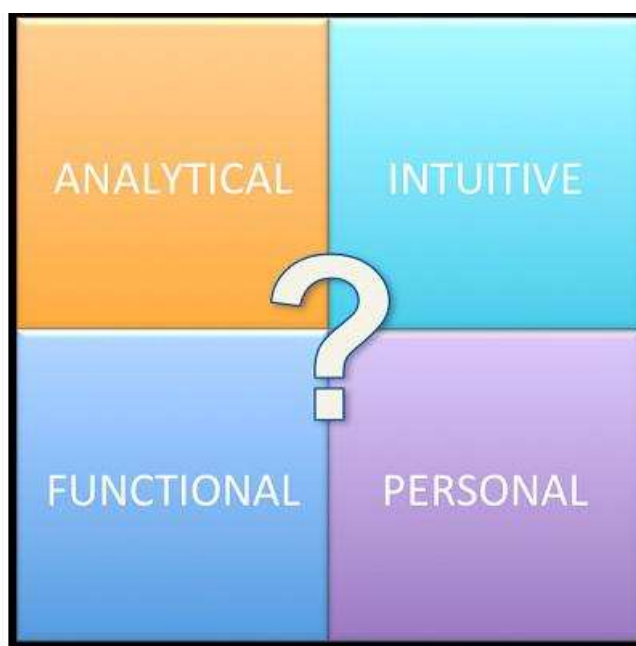


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5. Example of Poor Communication

When you are on a busy project with a demanding client implementing a large-scale change sending and receiving relatively unproblematic messages isn't adequate to be successful. Communication becomes extremely complex, and you must choose your strategy carefully and know what information you want to exchange, with who, what is the right time for it, social aspects and lot more. Having to deal with complexities like negotiating, communicating bad news, resolving conflicts within your own teams and with clients, fixing communication errors requires much more than the conventional approach of transmitting a message.

Having to make choices with limited information and getting confused each time you speak to the business as they come up with different, previously unspoken about requirements is not unusual being an IT professional. This often is a result of heavy use of jargon, caused by

emotional barriers, lack of context, ignoring non-verbal cues, gestures, expectations and prejudices or cultural differences. We also know that different people can be interpreting the exact same message very differently. As a result, the important information can be lost or overloaded, deleted, forgotten, or ignored.

Communication is how we understand our clients' needs and expectations. As someone who manages IT projects, it's how we work together as a team to put those requirements into a cohesive, feasible and actionable technical solutions. The example below depicts the single most common pitfall surrounding communication in the software industry today and it has been so since the time the industry was kicked-off even though we live in a modern, digital communication era. (Marcin Nowak MCX Group, 2021).

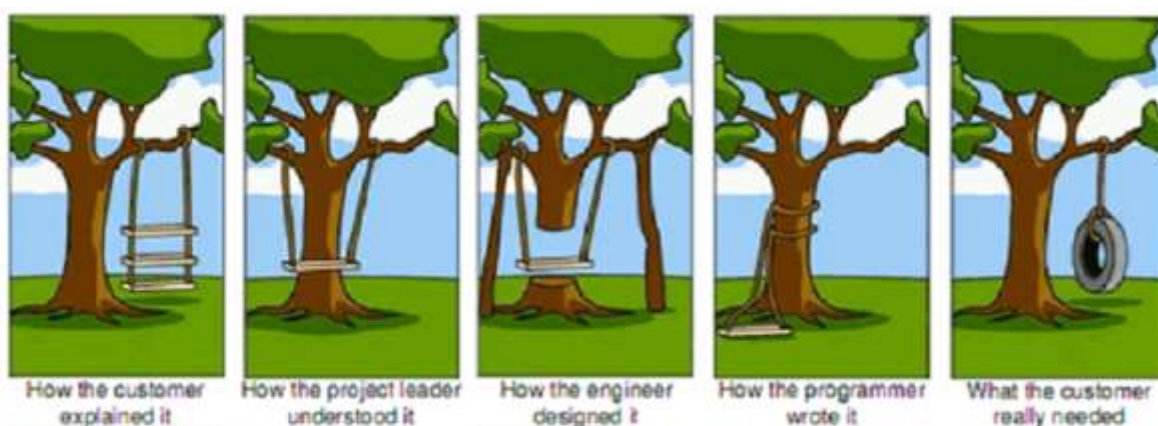


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5.1 What did we do to change it?

As a senior project manager, when I joined the research consultancy that I am currently work on the company was already going through a transformation from the Waterfall to Agile. In additions to implementing Agile methodology for the project teams, when I came onboard, we introduced a number of guidelines with the aim of improving quality and our delivery output just by fixing the communication errors based on our previous experiences.

The following guidelines helped extensively to improve communication between us and the customers. As a result, it increased productivity, first-time-fix-rates and reduce frustrations not only for us as those who runs the engine room but also for the client organisation.

- Be upfront with information
 1. Take time to think of everything required to get something fully in place
 2. Unless causing unnecessary disruption be 100% honest
 3. Early information can help others plan for problems
 4. Improve the quality of documentation

- Jobs should follow a proper and full implementation plan
 1. Plan out changes before committing
 2. Giving unrealistic deadlines can be harmful for everyone as there could be a huge chain of events to come after your work
 3. 5 jobs done properly is better than 10 jobs half done
 4. Partially done jobs end up in more come-back and ongoing support
- Get buy-in
 1. When providing new features or functions, get buy-in
 2. Get the stakeholder to provide the outcomes
 3. Buy-in provides responsibility and joint ownership of the solution
- Organising regular and fortnightly show & tells to show what we have developed and to get the customer feedback early so that we can make the adjustments, if any.
- Always to document the lessons learned, continues improvements
- Automate wherever possible

6. Conclusion

- In conclusion, if each of us were to be a little bit more mindful of how we communicate, we could make sure to not only avoid them, but also take advantage of this fantastic tool.
- Improved communication increase job satisfaction and morale among employees, motivate them, increase efficiencies in processes, resulting in financial gain. It,
 1. Improves productivity
 2. Creates a pleasant working environment
 3. People build bonds, and they stick around for much longer period
 4. Better products as people contribute with ideas, thoughts ways to improve
 5. Knowledge sharing
 6. Remote working but still highly committed
- From the above discussion it is critical to note that, the combination of the core aspects of different communication models offers the greatest potential for improving external and internal corporate communication. (Cleaverclips Studio, 2021)

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8. Appendix