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Communication can be defined as “the transactional use of symbols, influenced, guided and understood in the context of relationships.” (Duck, S and McMahan, D.T (2015), p.5). In the workplace effective communication is extremely important because without it we would find ourselves in a lot of misunderstandings.

Elements of Communication

Effective communication consists of three elements, they are:

1. Vocal: this refers to the tone that a person uses when communicating with another person. Different intonations can completely change the meaning of a sentence, which would lead to the recipient getting the wrong message, thus causing problems.
2. Visual: the visual element of communication refers to a person's body language when communicating with someone. For example, if a person had their arms crossed when talking to someone it could give the impression that they are closing themselves off and creating a distance between themselves and the other person. Whereas if someone was leaning forward while you were talking it could be seen as them being interested in what you were saying.
3. Verbal: this element refers to the actual words that were spoken during a conversation.

The Importance of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Surprisingly, words only account to 7% in the conversation, whereas the vocal element accounts to 38% and the visual element accounts to 55%. As humans we tend to trust what we see rather than what we hear, so if a person's words and actions are not the same then we will most likely believe what we see.

This does not mean that verbal communication isn't important. When communicating with a colleague we need to be able to relay information in the most effective and efficient way possible in order to minimise the chance of there being a misunderstanding. Before we relay our message, we need to make sure that it can be understood clearly and that whatever we need the person to do is also explained in a way that they won't have difficulty comprehending it.

If the message is too long then it is not efficient as it can take up a lot of time, short concise pieces of information can help avoid wasting time.

Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication as it can make the communication process move along much more smoothly. This is also known as paralinguistic communication. paralinguistic communication can be defined as everything that can enhance language that is not language for example, body language, facial expressions.

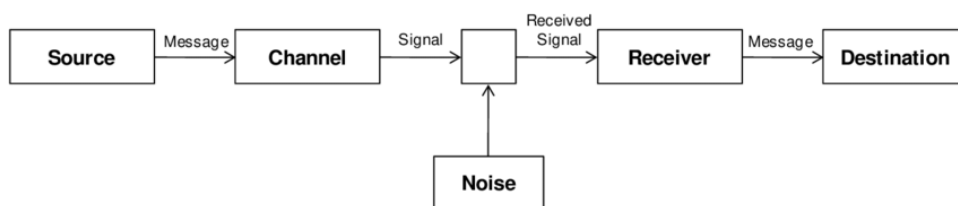
In the workplace non-verbal communication can be used to improve how you communicate with others. Good posture and maintaining eye contact can convey confidence. If a worker is always keeping their distance from others, does not make eye contact and looks disinterested when others

are talking, then they are giving off a bad impression. This can cause their co-workers to find it hard to trust them, thus making it harder for them to work together effectively.

Cycles of Communication

There are different stages when communicating, they can be presented in the form of a cycle. A few of them are as follows:

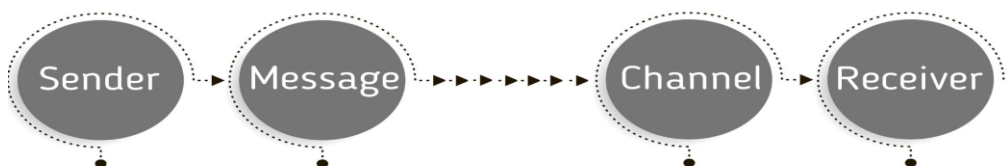
- The Shannon Weaver mathematical model, 1949:



This cycle shows the message being sent from the source to the receiver. In this cycle communication is complete when the receiver completely understands what the sender was trying to convey. In this diagram it shows that between the sender and receiver some 'noise' can disrupt the communication from being effective. This 'noise' can be anything that causes the receiver difficulty from understanding the message.

- Berlo's model of communication (SMCR):

Berlos Model of Communication



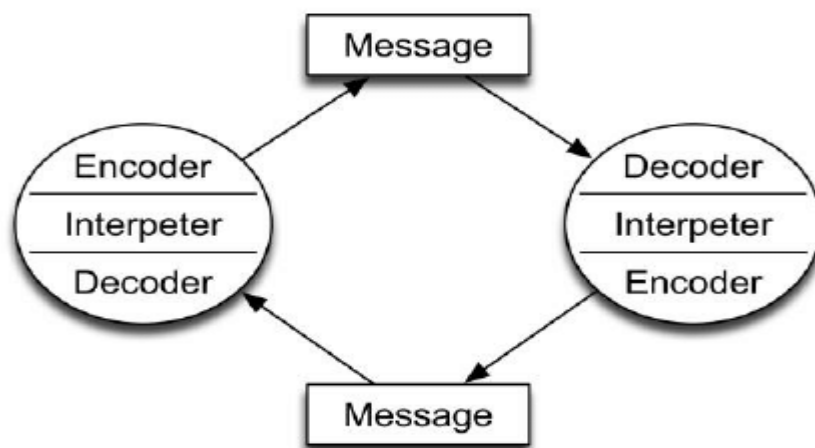
This model is very similar to Shannon Weaver's mathematical model. Berlo's model shows that the sender is the one who first comes up with the message before sending it to the receiver, the source is the encoder, and the receiver is the decoder. Factors that may affect the sender can also affect the receiver. Berlo's model identifies these few barriers as things that can cause ineffective communication. They are:

1. Communication skills: this includes things such as reading, listening, speaking. Ineffective communication skills can cause a message to be misinterpreted.
2. Attitude: the sender's attitude towards the receiver or the topic can change the meaning of the message as well as how the receiver interprets the message.
3. Knowledge: if the sender is more familiar with the subject that is being discussed then communication will be more effective.

4. Social system: a person's norms, values, religion and beliefs can influence the way they communicate the message and interpret the message.
5. Culture: cultural differences between the sender and the receiver can result in the message being interpreted differently.

In this model 'Channel refers to the way that the message is sent. For example, face to face, over email or a phone call. Unlike the way Berlo's model is presented, communication is not as smooth as it looks, many things can cause disruption in the process of relaying a message.

- Schramm's model of communication, 1954:



Unlike the previous two communication models, this one includes feedback. Feedback is needed for the communication to be effective. When feedback is given, the sender will be able to tell if the receiver understood the message or not. This can prevent any miscommunications from taking place.

In the workplace it is also very important to remember to use formal communication when communicating with people with higher positions, such as managers and team leaders. It is also important to keep in mind, that when you are communicating with another colleague that you need to use language that they understand and to avoid using jargon that they may not be familiar with. This can cause misunderstandings therefore meaning that the communication was not effective.

Evaluation on My Own Communication

In order to find out about whether my communication is effective or not, I decided to make a questionnaire and send it to a few of my colleagues and other people that I communicate with in my daily life. With the data that I managed to collect with the questionnaire I put it in a PDP so that I could address any areas of my communication that may need improving.

Priorities for development	Action to be taken	Review date
A few work colleagues stated that when I am put in a situation where I have to speak to new people or people who are superior to me in the	In order to gain more confidence in my workplace I will try my best to gain more knowledge and experience about the tasks that I am told	I will review my progress at the end of the academic year.

workplace, I become very quiet and am unable to communicate properly, so I need to learn to become more confident.	to carry out. Being more knowledgeable will make me feel less scared to speak up when talking to others.	
Due to my shyness, I am unable to be assertive when I need to be. This can cause a lot of problems for me as I often find myself doing a lot of work or in situations that make me feel a little uncomfortable.	As mentioned above, I will need to gain my confidence in order to become more assertive. I will try to do this by letting the managers and consultants know whenever the workload becomes too much or too hard for me. I will also try to get to know my colleagues better as I believe that if I get to know them more, then I will begin to trust them. This will make it easier for me to talk to them about my work.	I will review my progress at the end of the academic year.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Duck, S and McMahan, D.T (2015), p.5

Professor Albert Mehrabian's Communications Model

The Shannon Weaver mathematical model, 1949

Berlo's model of communication (SMCR)

Schramm's model of communication, 1954