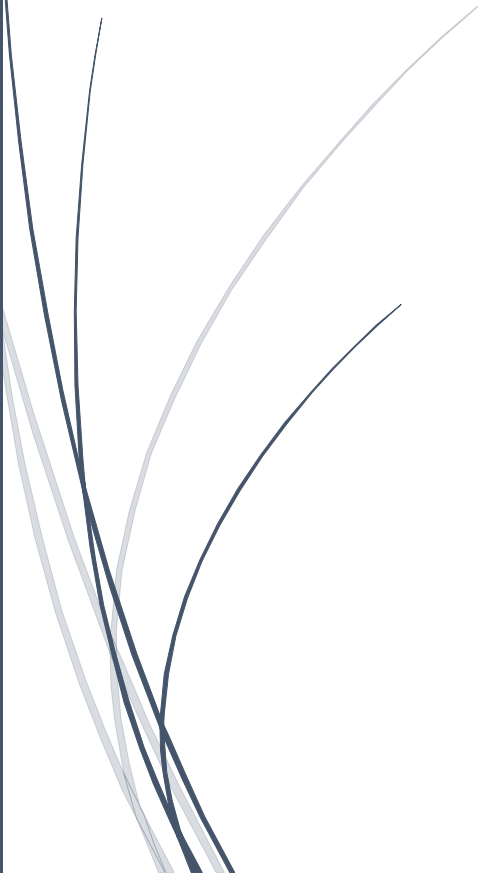


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4/29/2021

Communication Models and Communication skills

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Communication Models and Communication skills

Introduction

Communication is far more than sharing of information. It is the understanding of feelings behind this information. In our present modern times, we are constantly receiving, sending and processing large number of messages every day. One must be careful not to misinterpret or misunderstand the message intended to be delivered as this may cause a serious mishap. Hence, it is important to convey those intended messages effectively. Successfully communication tend to deepen relations in personal life and professional. In personal life, it helps us understand people and situations better, that occurs daily. In the past, model of communication was simple, but within the course of time, improvement have taken place and there have been establishment of new models.

By the 1950s, the models of communications became more elaborated and rendered a significant contribution toward the understanding of the communication processes. The three model which include Shannon and Weaver Model of communication, (1948) which follows the concept of a mathematical theory of communications in a linear fashion from sender to receiver, going through four steps in between. Schramm Model (1954) emphasises on both the sender encoding the information and the receiver decodes it. Berlo Model (1960) believe in face-to-face communication and takes into the account the emotional aspects of the message. All of which has also gained prominence its impact on our modern workforce communication will be discussed in this report. Additionally, elaborating on the different communications skills which are verbal, nonverbal and listening skills that makes a positive impact in our business world of today.

Model of Communications

Shannon and Weaver (1948)

This model is known to be the 'mother of all communication' models. Shannon a mathematician and Weaver an electrical engineer first came up with the idea of improving understanding of communication via telephone, in turn to improve the quality of phones. The Shannon weaver model of communication follows the concept of communication in a linear fashion from sender to receiver in the following steps (see dia.1 below). Sender, encoder, channel, noise, decoder and receiver. The very last step which is Feedback was added later by Norbert, (1949). By so doing, making it more of transactional process rather than a linear one. Shannon Weaver Model works by which sender encodes the message to be conveyed and sends it to the receiver through a technological channel like telephone, social media, telegraph. The sender converts the message into codes understandable to the machine. The message is sent in codes through a medium, phone, radio etc.

The receiver must decode the message before understanding it and interpreting it. The receptor machine can also act as a decoder in some cases. The channel can have noise and the receiver might not have the capacity to decode which might cause problems in communication process.

Shannon Weaver model of communication has its strengths in that it explains the concept of noise in details in term of technical problem, semantic problem, and effectiveness problems. Understanding the noise or distractors helps in eradicates them for effective communication. Though, originally made for communication through technological device, it can now be transferable to multiple situations. However, Shannon Weavers model does come with some criticism, it does not address one- to - many communication, preferably the Lasswell, (1949) model of communication would be appropriate because it addressed the five components that involve in mass communication. Furthermore, it lacks for sufficient feedback due to it being very

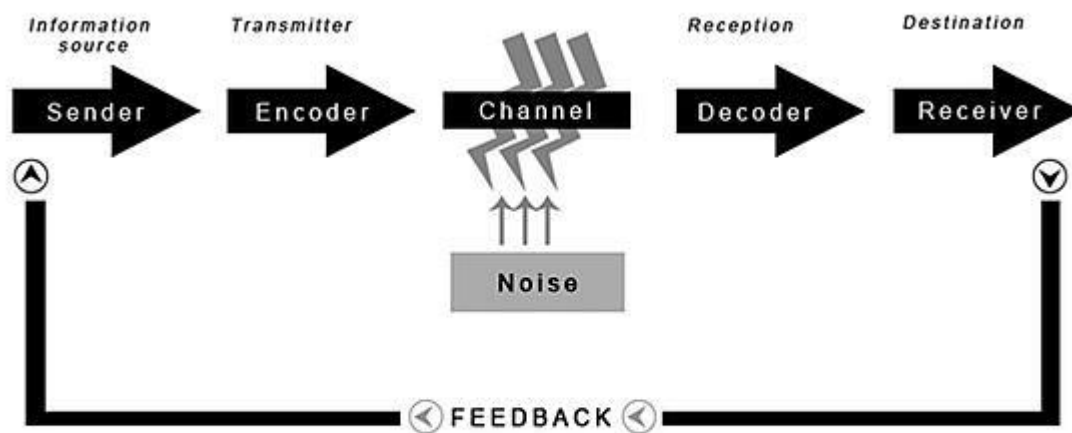
technical-dependent. Another downfall is that the receiver plays a passive part in the communication process.

I was able to understand the concept of Shannon Weaver model through my own experience at my workplace.

I work in a telecommunication firm where I must convey to the existing or and potential customers our vast varieties of services and new technology to win them over. To achieve this, effective communicating skills is crucial. Our department manager called out a meeting to introduce a new equipment – satellite box receiver that is due to be available. This is an update and advance version of the old one. The channel at which our meeting took place was via zoom (Shannon Weaver Model, 1949). During the meeting which involved other staff. Our manager explanation of the features and details of the new satellite box receiver was smooth. Questions were asked when information were not understood, so we had an immediate feedback. At the end of the meeting, the manager did ask if we have any questions. This was very important as this would rule out any misunderstandings, misinterpretations on both sides, we, the receiver and that of the sender, the manager. However, next day while executing my job and trying to market the new box receiver to customers, a customer asked the question if the films saved on the predecessor version will be lost or be transferred to the new equipment. A question I could not answer. The customer did not take on a new contract as this information was not met. At this point I realised that I may have missed out some crucial information during our zoom meeting. I asked my other colleagues. They all seem to miss the same information as they were asked the same question during one of their marketing interactions on the phone. This confirmed that either there was an external noise, like Wi-Fi interference, or voice transmission disturbance, or an internal interruption which could be from us or from the part of our department manager himself. I was able to ask my manager this question the next day, by a face-to-face conversation which give the benefit of the exclusion of misconception, avoid external factor

interruptions and instantaneous feedback (Shramm model, 1954). On our recent meeting, to prevent such problem arising again, both oral and written communication skill were applicable. Our manage took to social media and YouTube to deliver the message with under titles. The manager provided us -beforehand- with written materials for additional information. With the under titles, we were able to read the information on the screen, this provide us with extra assurance that no information was missed even if there should be a voice or speech interruption by Wi-Fi. After the meeting, we would go through the written instructions to be sure we have not missed out any information. This is to confirm how effective communication is imperative in business. The negative impact of ineffective communication can be evident in this situation in which the turnover and revenue of my firm could have been diminished by the customers not taking on the new satellite box receiver contracts. Once the pandemic is over, we shall resume our face-to-face group meeting which has also been productive. (Shramm model,1958).

Diagram 1: Shannon-Weaver's Model of Communication



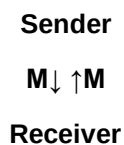
SHANNON-WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Schramm model of communication (1954)

Although influenced by Shannon and Weaver model, Schramm proceeded from a simple to a more complicated Model. In this model, he emphasis more on the shared experiences between the sender and receiver while communicating with each other. According to Schramm's, encoding and decoding are the two most important factors of an effective communication without which information can never flow between the two individuals (see dia. 2 below) He also emphasis that communication is incomplete unless a feedback is received from the recipient. This concept of exchanging similar information, makes the process of communication easy and effective, Furthermore, unlike in the linear model as discussed above, interaction, feedback, a two-way engagement takes between the first party and second party and this can be positively impacted if the sender and recipient had similar knowledge, experience, cultural background. For example, a sender and a receiver from the same telecommunication firm, will have an easy flow of communication. In contrary, individuals from diverse cultural background, religion, knowledge and experiences tend to interpret message differently. In such situation, even though there are messages with Denotative meaning (these are messages that are the same for all individual, despite their background, for example, a clock can never be confused with a wristwatch), Connotative messages may sometimes present itself because of the differences in beliefs, culture and religion that may play a role in their perception of the message received. In the corporate world, when individuals are from the same department and have similar duties, same background, experience, communication becomes very effective, compared to two individuals who have no commonality or from a totally different profession or

department. For example, a sender is a doctor, and a receiver is an engineer. That is why such criteria must be reinforced. This can be compared to my own experience above, in which all the people addressed were from the same department providing the same service. The sender was our department manager who is familiar with our job. In the case of a different department manager, communication would have been more difficult. More so, solution to my experience should have been easily prevented by implementing the Shramm's model. Shramm's Model allows for more accurate information's as the noise can be readily resolved, and feedback are given directly and instantaneously. However, it may be a problem to bring together people of the same background, culture and experience as we are in a world where diversity is prevalent.

Diagram 2. Shramm Model of communication



M – stands for message.

Berlo Model (1960)

In Berlo's model of communications, it considers the emotional aspects of the message. Unlike in Aristotle model of communication which puts the speaker in the central position and who leads and navigate the whole entire communication excluding the emotional aspects, Berlo's model of communication operates on the SMCR model (See Dia.,3 below)

Diagram 3. BERLO's model of communication

In the SMCR model

- S - Stands for **Source**
- M - **Message**
- C - **Channel**
- R – **Receiver**

The source also known as the sender, will have to transfer the information to the recipient with the help of communication skills, attitude, knowledge, social system and culture. Without this concept communication will not be effective. The right attitude must be attained. The sender must have knowledge of the information he is trying to convey, the sender must also take into account, social system of the type of crowd he is directing his message to. The cultural background of the community or listener must correlate with the message his trying to portray. Secondly, the message which is the individual thoughts into words also known as encoding, has to have special elements for it to be properly understood by recipients. For example, the message has contents. The **contents** explained by Berlo, (1960), are the matter or script of the communication made into simpler words and is the bases of any communication. The message must be comprised of **element** such as body movement, gestures, facial expression hand movement to capture the attention of the listener and to make the speech impressive. Otherwise, the second party may lose interest. A speaker or sender must know how to **treat** its message, have a full understanding and its importance and know how to handle it in an accurate form. For example, a boss who want to give a formal warning to one of his members of staff, must be delivered firmly and not casually with a smile on his face!

The **structure** of the message cannot be expressed in a whole. It has to be a properly structured message in a most desired form. The message must have a correct code in communication, for examples, body movement, gestures, facial expressions, are the codes of the message and this also cannot deliver information if they are not accurate

or do not correspond to the codes. For instance, when sharing a serious script and face expressions is happy. This may convey a distorted impression to recipient or the listeners.

Berlo, (1960), also emphasised more on the **channel** of the message as this is the medium at which the information flows from the sender to the receiver. The message or information to be accurately received. All Berlo's five channels, **hearing, tasting, seeing, smelling and touching** have to be fully implemented in other for human beings to communicate effectively with each other. For example, how does one know the drink is hot or cold? -Through **Touching**. Finally, the receiver, who is the decoder, plays very important role. For smooth conversation to take place, he has to have the right attitude, social system, religion, cultural background, knowledge experience as the speaker, which is also suggested by Shramm,(1958). However, there are some criticisms, in which both the sender and the receiver must be on the same common ground which is sometimes difficult in real life situation. Sometimes, there are some unforeseen circumstances that could make that impossible. Both sender and receiver have to be sometimes reinforced which could be difficult because of diversity prevalence.

Communication skills.

Communication can be categorized into three basic types: (1) verbal communication, in which you listen to a person to understand their meaning; (2) written communication, in which you read their meaning; and (3) nonverbal communication, in which you observe a person and infer meaning. Each has its own advantages, disadvantages, and even pitfalls.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication in business takes place over the phone or in person. The medium of the message is oral. Messages are conveyed from the sender which could be the boss, to the receiver which could be an employee by telephone. A message can travel successfully from Sender to Receiver by the sender speaking clearly, perhaps breaking down the conversation into several steps. Each step may consist of a specific task, time frame, quantity, or goal. The receiver or employee must be an active listener. Who repeats what has been heard? This is the feedback section of the communication. One of the advantages of verbal communications is the immediate feedback it rendered. Feedback help ensured the message has been delivered correctly and to avoid any misunderstanding. Feedback also reassures the sender that he or she has communicated the message correctly.

In contrast to verbal communications, written communications are printed messages. Some examples of written communication are operating policies, memo, proposal, emails, letters and training manuals. These may be printed on papers, handwritten, or on social medias and screens. In comparison to verbal communication, verbal communication takes place in real time while written communication can be constructed over a longer period. Written communication is often asynchronous, which means happening at different times. Receivers can read the message at different times. It can also be read by many people, anywhere and at any time! It is a “one-to-many approach, contrary to verbal communication which is a one-to-one communication (Lengel & Daft, 1988) which is more suggested by Schramm’s model. However, there are exceptions. A voicemail is an oral message that is asynchronous. Conference call are oral one-to-many communication, and emails may have only one recipient or many. Many responding companies reported that they take writing into consideration when hiring professional employees, and 91% always take writing into account when hiring (for any position, not just professional-level ones) who can communicate simply and clearly project a stronger image than those who write a lot but say nothing (Gorden,1974).

Nonverbal communication

To be effective communicators, we need to align our body language, appearance, and tone with the words we are trying to convey. What one says is a crucial part of any communication. But it is the quiet moment that can be even more important. Research also shows that 55% of in-person communication comes from nonverbal cues like facial expressions, body stance, and tone of voice. According to one study, only 7% of a Receiver's understanding of a Message is based on the Sender's actual words; 38% is based on paralanguage (the tone, pace, and volume of speech), and 55% is based on *nonverbal cues* (body language) (Mehrabian, 1981).

Research shows that nonverbal cues can also affect whether you get a job offer. For this reason, it is important to consider how we appear in business as well as what we say (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008).

Posture is another strong silent messenger that conveys interest, alertness, professionalism. Positioning our body relative to a chair or another person, standing head-up with straight but not rigid back implies confidence, upright character. The subtle repetition of the other person's posture conveys that we are actively listening, involved and responding (Staw & Cummings, 1983).

When it comes to body language, a simple rule applies, which is simplicity, directness, and warmth convey sincerity (Schulz & Copley, 2013). Sincerity is key to effective communication. A firm handshake, given with a warm, dry hand, is a great way to establish trust. A weak, clammy handshake conveys a lack of trustworthiness. Gnawing one's lip conveys uncertainty. A direct smile and eye contact conveys confidence and trust. Although, body language can be extended to touch, however, touch differs between individuals, gender, religion and cultures. In Mexico, during business interaction, grabbing one's arm is acceptable and signifies closeness, trust, easiness, pulling away is seen as rude. In the far east, their business etiquette, is considered impolite for a woman

to shake a man's hand" (Daud, 2008). Subsequently, for an effective communication, background religion, culture, values and beliefs of the receiver need to be considered as Berlo, (1960) model of communication skill strongly focuses on.

Another element of nonverbal communication is tone. A different tone can change the perceived meaning of a message. Table 1.1" demonstrates how clearly this can be true, whether in verbal or written communication. If we simply read these words without the added emphasis, we would be left to wonder, but the emphasis shows us how the tone conveys a great deal of information (Lippencolt, 1994). Now you can see how changing one's tone of voice or writing can incite or defuse a misunderstanding.

Table 1.1 *'Different tone, different meaning'*

Placement of the emphasis	What it means
The boss did not cancel the appointment	Someone else cancel the appointment
The boss did not cancel the appointment	This did not occur
The boss did not cancel the appointment	The boss has cancelled something else

However, we cannot forget how important the channel through which our communication is delivered (Katzenbach et al., 1994). The channel, or medium, used to communicate a message affects how accurately the message will be received. Verbal, written, and nonverbal communications have different strengths and weaknesses. Like face-to-face and telephone conversation, videoconferencing has **high** information richness because Receivers and Senders consider other aspects rather than just words (nonverbal cues). Handheld devices, blogs, and written letters and memos offer **medium**-rich channels because they convey words and pictures/photos. Formal written documents, such as legal documents, and spreadsheets, such as the division's budget, convey the **least** richness because the format is quite rigid and standardized.

In business, the decision to communicate verbally or in written form can be powerful. Verbal communications are a better way to convey feelings. Written communications do a better job of conveying facts and can readily reach a wider audience. It is not place and time-dependent (Daft & Lengel,1984).

Listening

Active listening

According to Madelyn Burley-Allen (1982), listening is a learnable skill which is not typically with other communication skills. Listening is not the same as hearing as many so. To be an active listener, one has to pay undivided attention to the speaker without getting distracted by either external factors like noise, duties, chores or by internal factors like being impatience and not assuming the what the speaker is about to say or interrupting the speakers during verbal and written communication. Not until that is achieved can one be an empathetic listener.

Empathetic listening

Empathetic listening is achieved by rephrasing the speaker content and reflecting on the emotions of the speaker otherwise known as Our reflective Approach. This approach allows the receiver to project oneself into the personality to the speaker in order to better understand that person's emotions or feelings (Salem, 1982). As Burley-Allen, (1982) points out, empathetic listening has empowering qualities. It provides an opportunity for people to talk through their problem which releases emotional distress (Gordon,1977).

Conclusion

In summary, it is evident that the concept the models of communications helped individual in acquiring an understanding of the processes of communication. Through extensive research, on the development on the model of communication, has given rise to Shannon Weaver model (1949), Shramm model (1954) and Berlo (1960) and many more. Each of the model has their unique process which emphasis on different steps or stage of the process. This has provided vast variety and h in depth knowledge of how information is transfer from sender to receiver. Though, in some case there are limitations. However, understanding the limitations, helps to eradicate them and, or employ the appropriate model suitable for the situation at present. We have also learned about the strengths and weakness of the different kind of communication skill and know when and how to implement them for the most effective communication. Furthermore, we are also aware that different communication channels are effective at transmitting different kinds of information. Some types of communication are information rich while others are medium rich. Incorporating the right method and model create successful businesses.

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