

Module Code and Title: BMSW4002 Effective Team Work and Communication

Assignment Title: Effective Team Work and Communication Assignment 1 (Report)

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Introduction

Communication is simplistically defined as the process of exchanging information from one medium or person to another using different channels. While it may seem simple, communication is a complex process – both technically and generally. It is often difficult to determine when the process of communication starts and ends. This is where the communication models come in handy. These models are used to simplify even the most complex communication processes. Communication technologies have also been developed that ensure effective personal and professional communication. In this report, we will discuss the three models of communication with examples on how they impact the process, the three communication skills that make a person a good communicator, and the advantages and disadvantages of communication technologies.

The first and the most popular model of communication is Shannon and Weaver's model. It was developed in 1948 by Claude Shannon, a mathematician, and Warren Weaver, a scientist. This model is a mathematical theory of communication that primarily describes how messages are distorted in the complex process of communication (Al-Fedaghi, 2012, p. 55). The model is a linear representation of the process of communication and consists of seven key components: sender, encoder, channel, noise, decoder, receiver, and feedback. The model is also used technically, such as in engineering to calculate transmissions that occur in machines (Al-Fedaghi, 2012, p. 56).

The first of the seven components is the sender. The sender is where the communication is initiated and is the primary source of the information. The channel and medium of the communication is selected by the sender, which could be verbal, written or any other. The second component is the encoder, also known as the transmitter. The encoder is the person who converts the information into written or spoken words. The third component is channel, which is the medium or device that is used to carry the information from the sender to the receiver. The fourth component is noise, which is the distortions or interruptions in the communication process. These noises can be in the background such as a child crying while someone is talking on the phone. Decoder is the fifth component where the information is deciphered such as the speaker of a phone. The sixth component is the receiver, the end point or

destination of the message. The last component is feedback, which ensures that the message has been successfully received and been responded to such as when a person replies to the message (Baecker, 2013, p. 90).

This model is the most popular one as it accounts to effective communication. The seventh component of 'feedback' makes the process two-way. In addition to this, any distortion or noise is identified and resolved, hence making communication flawless. For example, Mark is holding a telephonic conversation with his subordinate and there is distortion in the signals. The subordinate will provide feedback and ask Mark to repeat himself. The communication process will not move forward until the noise is not clear. There are also limitations to this model as it is applicable only for face-to-face, one-on-one communication, and not for mass communication.

Schramm's model of communication was developed in 1954. The model, proposed by Wilber Schramm, proposed that any communication is useless without feedback from the receiver (Elleström, 2018, p. 286). It is also known as a circular model because throughout the process, the information travels in two directions. The sender encodes the message while the receiver decodes it. This goes on in a continuous cycle. Whenever the sender encodes the message, it is the responsibility of the receiver to decode it and send feedback. Hence, in this model, encoding and decoding are the two essential processes that makes the communication complete (Elleström, 2018, p. 289). An example of this model is when two people are talking and one is just listening without responding. That doesn't make the communication complete.

Schramm believed that contrary to Shannon and Weaver's model, communication cannot be linear. For example, at a workplace a manager cannot conduct a meeting that has one-way communication. According to Schramm's model, everyone present in the meeting must keep giving feedback in terms of facial expressions or take notes to ensure that the message is being received positively (Kuznar and Yager, 2020). This makes a meeting two-way as well. If a manager is the only one speaking, chances of miscommunication and misinterpretation are more than if he is asking for continuous feedback.

Furthermore, Schramm's model also says that an individual's background plays an important role in making the communication process complete or successful. The cultural background, knowledge, experience, religion, and

other factors all affect the message differently. For example, Kelly says to her servant, “I have a sore throat, bring me a hot drink” and the servant brings her a glass of lukewarm water when actually she wanted tea or hot chocolate. The message was misinterpreted by the servant due to lack of common grounds and background difference. This was neither Kelly nor the servant’s fault. Therefore, Schramm’s model highlights the importance of feedback because if the servant would have given feedback it would’ve been clear if he had understood the message and thus the communication would’ve been effective.

The third model is Berlo’s model of communication. This model focuses on the factors that exist between the sender and the receiver that can impact the message, such as cultural factors, emotional aspect, knowledge, skills, or even difference in perception of both parties. Berlo developed the SMCR model – source, message, channel, and receiver – which are factors contributing to make a communication process successful and complete (Kuznar and Yager, 2020). This model also says that in order for the communication to be successful, the sender and receiver must be on the same level.

The source of the message is the sender who initiated the communication. According to Berlo, the elements that affect the message at this stage are communication skills of the sender, attitude, knowledge, social system they are in, and culture. Berlo suggests that such factors can easily influence the process of communication. The second part of the SMCR model is message – the encoding of the information. The factors that affect the process at this stage are content of the message, elements, treatment, structure, and code. The third part is the channel or the medium through which the message is being conveyed (Kuznar and Yager, 2020). According to Berlo, humans use their five senses as mediums to communicate effectively. The last part is receiver, the stage where the message is decoded. Berlo’s model has many limitations as it requires the receiver to have the same attitude, understanding, and common ground to have a smooth process of communication. This model may not be applicable in the practical world all the time. For example, if Kelly wants to communicate with her servant, whose native language is not the same as hers, she cannot hold a complete conversation.

Smooth communication typically consists of three skills: verbal, non-verbal, and active listening. To improve communication skills, these are the three areas one must focus on. Verbal communication is the simplest and most obvious skill. It includes all sorts of spoken and written communication, whether face-to-face, on phone, video calls, emails, or letters. Verbal communication, while seems to be the easiest skill, may often result in miscommunication as well. This could be due to factors such as noise, interruption, lack of same background, ineffective body language etc (Keyton, 2013, p. 161). For example, Susie is a supervisor at a local firm and handles her team meeting through video calls. The smallest of background noises such as her dog barking in the background creates disturbance in her meetings. She can overcome this problem by finding a closed room to conduct all her meetings without background noises and, as per Schramm's model, constantly asking for feedback to ensure her message is being heard and understood by everyone.

Nonverbal communication skills and their importance often goes unnoticed, but they can make or break a message completely. Nonverbal communication is all sort of communication that is not verbal or written. This includes body language, attitude, facial expressions and gestures, eye movements, cultural background, knowledge, skills, etc (Sharifirad, 2012). It could be anything that plays a part in the communication process to be successful or unsuccessful. Nonverbal communication skills are so important but sometimes are not consciously considered as part of the process (Training, 2012).

For instance, the body language and facial expressions of a manager at a workplace greatly affects the way the subordinates perceive his message. An example is when Mark, manager of a local food store, gives instructions to his subordinates. Mark is generally a serious man with a sturdy look on his face. He is also about 6 feet tall and hence when he gives instructions, he is perceived to be bossy and dominating, even though that is his usual tone. Mark unconsciously gives that impression and thus no one wants to work in his department. He could improve it by keeping a smile on his face, sitting down while giving instructions, or maintaining eye contact to appear more understanding. A person who aligns verbal communication with nonverbal communication skills can become a better communicator and can easily convey information without misunderstandings.

The third skill important to the communication process is active listening. It includes giving facial expressions such as nodding, using words such as 'yes', 'I understand', or a simple 'hmm', or asking questions and taking notes. These listening skills make a two-way conversation more effective and smoother (Training, 2012). Other skills that come under active listening are paying attention, providing feedback, no judgments, responding appropriately, and positive body language. Any person who personally or professionally uses a combination of these three skills can become a good communicator (Wahyuni, 2018).

Communication technology includes any digital devices and tools that are used to send and receive messages. Technologies include television, radio, mobile phones, internet, GPS system, and other machines (Blackmore, 2003). The communication technologies that have had a greater impact in the recent years are mobile phones, the internet, and social media (Nurmanov, 2015, p. 82). They are mostly used for people are not in the same location physically. It has greatly changed the way communication occurs especially for students. They can use different tools to enhance their learning – both in-class and through remote learning.

The biggest advantage is that learning is not restricted to physical spaces anymore. Students interact with each other and their teachers through video conferencing, group chats, and other online sharing platforms. This gives them a chance to expand their learning out of class as well and connect with peers outside the school. The internet has made it easier for students to go beyond their course outlines and learn more about any subject. They can share ideas, research, and take virtual courses to upskill their capabilities. Digital textbooks and other resources are also accessible through the internet, giving the students a chance to enhance their learning beyond course books (Nurmanov, 2017).

especially during remote classes where there is no physical check and balance. While these technologies have made it easier for students and opened a huge gate of opportunities and building network, it has also impacted students' concentration levels to a great extent.

Team work is the combined effort of the group to achieve definite and common goals or to complete task in a more effective and efficient way. This is basically a collective group of interdependent individuals which share

common goals and put their effort to achieve the stability and objective of the firm. Moreover, team size can vary according to their goals. As we know group of people having same goal they must have strong communication skills to share their plans with each other effectively. It means stronger communication skills have positive impact on team work as they have to share common objective. So, for a good team work a good communication skills among group of people is required. Communication and team work are interrelated

In conclusion, communication models, skills, and technologies are all used to make the process smooth in our personal and professional lives. Almost all human interactions can come under the three models described in this report while the three communication skills are essential if one wants to strive in their professional lives. No workplace can flourish without effective communication that comes with a mix of verbal, nonverbal, and active listening skills. Furthermore, we have also learnt that technology is making it easier for workplaces and academic institutions to disseminate information to their employees/students and enhance their performances.

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