

Effective Team Working and Communication

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to examine the various models of communication which we learnt during this module of effective team working as this is essential in our everyday lives, including professional and personal. These models include, the Shannon-Weaver model (1949), Schramm (1954), and Berlo's SMCR model. I will also be looking at the relevant case studies in addition to possible barriers to communication such as cultural differences and personal biases. As defined by a ThoughtCo. article, "Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages through verbal or nonverbal means, including speech, or oral communication," (Nordquist, 2019).

Shannon and Weaver Model

The first model of discussion is the Shannon-Weaver model. This model follows a process of information source (sender), transmitter (encoder), channel, receiver (decoder), and destination. Through this process, the original message is sent via transmitted signals to be encoded and decoded. In the Berlo model, this idea is expanded upon, following the SMCR method (source, message, channel, and receiver). The model considers external factors such as attitude, knowledge, and culture which may affect the interpretation of the message. In the third example, we have Schramm's model of communication which uses a cycle to trade messages between the sender and receiver, rather than a linear pattern. This also allows feedback to be shared between the two parties. Due to the differing natures of these models, they each have their own advantages and disadvantages.

In the case study of 'Maria and Pedro', we can apply the Shannon-Weaver model as there was a breakdown in the channel of communication between the transmitter and receiver due to noise interference. In this case, Pedro misunderstands Maria as he is working on a construction site which causes background noise. A solution to this would be Pedro asking for clarification. We can also apply the Berlo method to prevent this situation by removing the element of noise when encoding the message.

Berlo and Schramm's Model

Another good case study is 'the Professor and the Village People'. In this case, we can apply both the Berlo and Schramm's model of communication as the message was unable to be

decoded by the village people, thus interrupting the flow of the cycle. The professor could not be understood as he used complex language, therefore the village people did not help when his house had set fire.

Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

In our second week of class, we examined different types of communication skills and found that the most used forms are verbal and non-verbal. As described in a Lexie Hearing article, “Verbal communication is using speech or spoken word to exchange information, emotions, and thoughts. Conversely, non-verbal communication is conveying and exchanging messages without the use of spoken words.” (Brown, 2020). Skills in line with the former include maintaining eye contact, empathetic language, and feedback.

Non-verbal Communication

Therefore, in non-verbal communication, we use gestures, facial expressions, body language, and tone to convey different meanings. This is often done subconsciously as our non-verbal cues do not always align with our verbal communication. For example, someone may assure that they are fine, but their facial expressions indicate otherwise. Even silence may be interpreted as an answer. Another form of non-verbal communication are illustrators which are often used in conversation for emphasis and are generally expressed through hand gestures. We can also use the previously mentioned skills as a substitute to verbal communication or to complement our verbal message.

Knowledge of both verbal and non-verbal communication is essential in becoming a successful leader. For example, knowledge of body language and hand gestures when delivering a speech can indicate one’s level of charisma; an important quality when garnering supporters or rallying moral. As a virtualspeech article explains, “Your non-verbal cues will impact on the way your message is received, how engaged your audience is, and what they think of you as an individual” (Thompson, 2017).

Verbal Communication

We also have emotive language, a useful and powerful tool in verbal communication when persuading a reader or listener. This means using specific word choices to evoke emotions. We can see examples of this in speeches and literature. A Pumble article explains that “There are certain words — often used in emotive language — that are called loaded terms. They have a secondary, emotive meaning that carries a positive or negative connotation, beyond their primary meaning” (Jovanovic, 2022), meaning that certain word choices can evoke a negative or positive emotional response based on its connotations and therefore affect the way a message is received.

Written Communication

Another type of verbal communication is written. These include letters, emails, and messaging. Within this form of communication, there is formal and informal depending on our relationship to the reader. One drawback of this type of communication is the inability to properly convey tone. However, it can be very useful in providing vital information, therefore it is important to be clear and concise. We can do this by using proper punctuation, sentences, and paragraphs to divide our speech. There must also be a common or overall theme to serve our main point. Another advantage is that written communication often contains facts and key information which makes it much more reliable than spoken word. As stated in a 'Key differences' article, "people normally believe in the written text more than what they hear that is why written communication is considered as the reliable method of communication" (Surbhi S, 2022). As such, despite the rise of other forms of communication, the written word remains the most reliable. For example, a published article or report will have verified research and backed up sources.

Communication in Business

In business, we also see both oral and written channels of communication. These forms of communication can be either internal or external. Internal refers to the communication which takes place within the business or company whereas external refers to the interaction between the business and outside individuals or organisations. An essential factor to remember in business writing is the use of formal language, as it is important to be polite, especially when making requests.

Message Interpretation

We also explored the different demographics which may affect the interpretation of a message. For example, a phrase or gesture can mean different things depending on one's cultural background as well as personal biases or past experiences; by which someone may twist a message to fit their own narrative. However, understanding these factors and using listening skills will allow us to communicate more effectively. In article for 'hailo', it states that "it is important to find a common ground for effective communication and adapt to the work culture of the organization to communicate effectively" (Martic). It also mentions that there are three types of communication barriers; physical, emotional, and language communication barriers.

In the case study of 'Barry and Barriers to Communication,' we see an example of ineffective communication. This is shown by the range of demographics among his employees who differ in age and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We can also see that for many of them English is not their native language. However, due to the high number of customers, staff training is often rushed and so because of these factors, Barry is unable to create an effective and communicable environment.

These misinterpretations can come not just as a result of cultural or demographic differences but also attitudinal differences as someone may twist a message to fit their own agenda as depending on one's background or personality, these messages may be filtered differently.

Another bad example when delivering messages is being unprepared. This means having a disorganised speech or bombarding an audience with information; also known as information overload.

Effective Listening

Types of effective listening we can use are informational, critical, and empathetic. These are listening to gather information, providing feedback, and lending someone a compassionate ear. There are also techniques to help facilitate active listening which include reflecting, feedback, and clarification. These skills help us to progress in our professional and personal lives in order to reduce conflict and improve relationships. It also allows a fair chance for everyone to contribute their ideas. In business, this helps employees to better appeal to their customers by making them feel understood, thus becoming more receptive. In both the workplace and personal relationships; effective communication ensures everyone's needs are being met in addition to encouraging further growth and development.

The case study of 'Max the Multi-tasker' explores the importance of listening and feedback. Listening skills highlighted in this case are active and empathetic. As we can see in this case study, Max is unable to take Tamara's request of rescheduling as he continues to take another client's call. This exhibits a lack of active listening skills. On the Tamara's end, she fails to empathise with Max as he previously explained that he could not afford to take on any more employees to share the workload due to his mother's expensive medication and housing. Therefore, both parties are guilty of not listening to the other.

Communication in the 21st Century

In the present day, we are inundated with many new technologies. These have altered the way we interact with each other. For example, due to the recent pandemic, many students have switched to online learning. This new form of learning has its equal advantages and disadvantages. E-learning allows us to study remotely and is also equipped with many different resources and learning tools. Another benefit of technology is being able to communicate virtually. For instance; in a group project, we can collaborate in sharing ideas. One drawback of this however is the lack of proper clarification which can lead to misunderstandings and/or misinterpretations.

In all aspects of life, technology has evolved and dramatically changed the way we communicate in the world. One of the most significant innovations is the emergence of social media which has given us 24/7 access to interact with the international community. In addition to this newfound method of communication, we have the rise of e-commerce, allowing us the ability to conveniently shop the international market from the comfort of our own homes. These evolutions have come with many advantages such as improved business efficiency and instant access to whole hosts of information on any given subject which have been particularly useful to students in their research. Technology has also been beneficial to both employers and employees in the creation of employment as applicants can be processed much more effectively as well as giving equal opportunity to potential employees. However, these new technologies have also come with its own drawbacks such as explained in a 'rosiinc' article, "This distraction can sometimes be a "time waster" reducing productivity and negating any increase in communication output that an advancement of technology has

provided.” (Guard, 2015). Another drawback mentioned in the article is its tendency to be impersonal as opposed to face-to-face interaction. For instance, a business investor may be more likely to advocate for someone they have built a relationship with, in person.

In weighing these pros and cons, we have found that technology has left a large impact on society and in communication which can be interpreted in both a good and bad light but ultimately, we owe these new advancements in giving us accessibility to communicate with many people, regardless of time and place.

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