Communication Models and Theories

- Simplest model of communication reflects the work of Shannon and Weaver.
- Model consists of a sender, a message, a channel where the message travels, noise or interference and a receiver.

Communication Models and Theories

- Often, communicators blame the audience for not accepting a message, but it is often that the sender, encoding process or channels chosen were not applied correctly.

Communication Models and Theories

- This first model is missing an essential step in the communications process — feedback.
- Without feedback, we don't know if the receiver received or understood our message.

Communication Models and Theories

Overcoming barriers to effective communication:

- Design and deliver message so that it gets the attention of intended audience.
- Relate to common experiences between the source and destination.
- Offer a way to meet personality needs appropriate to the group situation the receiver is in at the time you want that receiver to respond.

Communication Models and Theories

From Wilbur Schramm:

- Communication is something people do.
- There is no meaning in a message except what people put into it.
- To understand human communication process, one must understand how people relate to each other.

Communication Models and Theories

Wilbur Schramm's Modifications:

- Added to the model the context of the relationship, and how that relationship will affect Communicator A and Communicator B.
- Included the social environment in the model, noting that it will influence the frame of reference of both Communicator A and B.

Communication Models and Theories

Walter Lippmann's barriers to effective communication include:

- Artificial censorship.
- Gatekeepers in the media.
- Shrinking news holes.
- Limitation of social contact.
- Meager time for paying attention.

Communication Models and Theories

The Seven Cs of Communication help overcome barriers:

1. Clarity
2. Credibility
3. Content
4. Context
5. Continuity
6. Capability
7. Channels

Communication Models and Theories

The Hawthorne Effect:

- We don't always need words to communicate.
- Example: A company that could not afford raises, instead repainted and refreshed the workspace.
- As a result, employee productivity increased.
- Researchers concluded improvements communicated the message "We care" to employees.

The Public Opinion Process

Grunig identified four types of publics based on the way they behave toward messages and issues:

1. All-issue publics
2. Apathetic publics
3. Single-issue publics
4. Hot-issue publics

The Public Opinion Process

Grunig also identified another way of labeling publics:

1. Nonpublics
2. Latent publics
3. Aware publics
4. Active publics

The Public Opinion Process

- The types of publics are important to the process of public opinion because influencing each of them will require different tactics.
- We must also consider the elements that make up public opinion: opinion, belief, attitude and value.

The Public Opinion Process

- Opinion – View formed in the mind about a particular matter.
- Belief – State or habit in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing.

The Public Opinion Process

- Attitude – Mental position with regard to fact or state; a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state.
- Value – Something intrinsically valuable or desirable; something esteemed.

The Public Opinion Process

What happens when individual opinions merge into public opinion?

- A classic, early model comes from the work of sociologists Lang and Lang in “Collective Dynamics.”

The Public Opinion Process

- In any given situation, there is an existing mass sentiment or a general social consensus.
- At different times, people have different views about issues, which leads to public debate.
- Public debates lead people to make up their minds.

The Public Opinion Process

- When people make up their minds, a new public opinion develops.
- This new public opinion can lead to social action (an election, taking a product off the market, etc.).
- At this point, a new social value has emerged and becomes part of mass sentiment. (The time it takes for this to occur is significant.)

Agenda-Setting Theory

- McCombs and Shaw (1993): The media not only tell people what to think about in broad terms, but additionally how to think about specific items, and then what to think.
- In other words, media shape top-of-mind presence regarding issues.

Agenda-Setting Theory

- However, with the next news cycle, a topic from the day before may disappear, and so does its importance among news consumers.
- Rogers and Dearing (1996) further developed this theory and provided key agenda-setting concepts.

Agenda-Setting Theory

- Concept 1: The agenda-setting process is a very fluid, dynamic attempt to get the attention of the media, the public and/or policy makers.
- Concept 2: The agenda is a “set of issues.”
- Recent research indicates that agenda-setting theory can be multi-directional.

Diffusion Theory

- Process by which new ideas are adopted or rejected.
- We are creatures of habit.
- Human beings do not like change.

Diffusion Theory

Helps you understand and explain:

- Why you can't accomplish major change in a brief time.
- Why you can't accomplish major change through the news media only.
- What kind of interpersonal communication is most effective in accomplishing major change.

Diffusion Theory

Emphasizes why channels of interpersonal communication are the most effective.

- Word-of-mouth is very important in diffusion.
- We need targeted audiences to talk about what they are reading in the papers or are seeing on television.

Diffusion Theory

There are five stages within the diffusion process:

1. Awareness – Individual is aware of “it.”
2. Interest – Wants to learn more.
3. Evaluation – Asks others for feedback.
4. Trial – Uses a sample, etc.
5. Adoption – Now a user/believer.

Diffusion Theory

There are five categories of people in diffusion theory:

1. Innovators
2. Early adopters
3. Early majority
4. Majority
5. Nonadopters (laggards)

Diffusion Theory

- Remember to be sensitive to customs and values—change is accepted when it supports these.
- Remain aware of how long the process can take.
- Use diffusion process to manage change.
- Learn to recognize where audiences are in the process.
- Understand what type of communication works best and when.