

What are Communication and Communication Cycle?

Communication is a fundamental part of all of our lives. There are many different methods of communication and we are gaining more and more all the time. Communication ranges from a note stuck on the fridge door, to video conferencing and phoning. The communication cycle is a structure that was thought up about how we communicate. Thus, it can be said that **Communication is expression of Ideas, transmission of Instruction, Information and thoughts.**

It suggests that we '*Aim*' what we want to say, how we'll say it, what we want the other person to do with the information. This is the stage in which we think particularly about how we will communicate the information and to who we wish to communicate with. Once we have organized what we want to say, who to say it to and how to say it, we have to consider social influences and other things that may 'change' what we want to say. This is the '*Encoding*' stage. We have to consider what language to say it in, what we assume of the receiver and are these assumptions correct? We also have to consider what the Receiver may be assuming about us. Their assumptions may hinder and change what we say. The next stage is vital in successful communication. This stage is the '*Transmission*' stage. We need to be able to transmit the message that we wish to communicate in right format and at the correct time. We need to consider if there will be any distractions to hinder our communication attempt, if we need to summarize and if we can add anything to increase the clarity of what we are trying to say. When we receive the information from someone, if they are speaking, we must take into account that we think 3 times faster than we speak, and therefore, it is much easier for a speaker's words to get muddled up with other thoughts and distractions. Reactions and questions must not happen until after the speaker has finished with what they were saying. This stage is called '*Receiving*'. The next stage in the Communication Cycle is called '*Decoding*'. This is the opposite of encoding. If the Sender has transmitted the information correctly and has given enough attention to what they are saying, including their body language and tone of voice, then you should be able to decode their message effectively. We may sometimes feel that some Senders are not approachable in certain circumstances, but we must remember, the meaning of the message is the responsibility of the Sender and not the Receiver. The last stage in the Communication Cycle is '*Responding*'. This gives the Receiver the chance to ask any questions and this also gives the Sender the chance to realize if they have missed out any stages in the Communication Cycle.

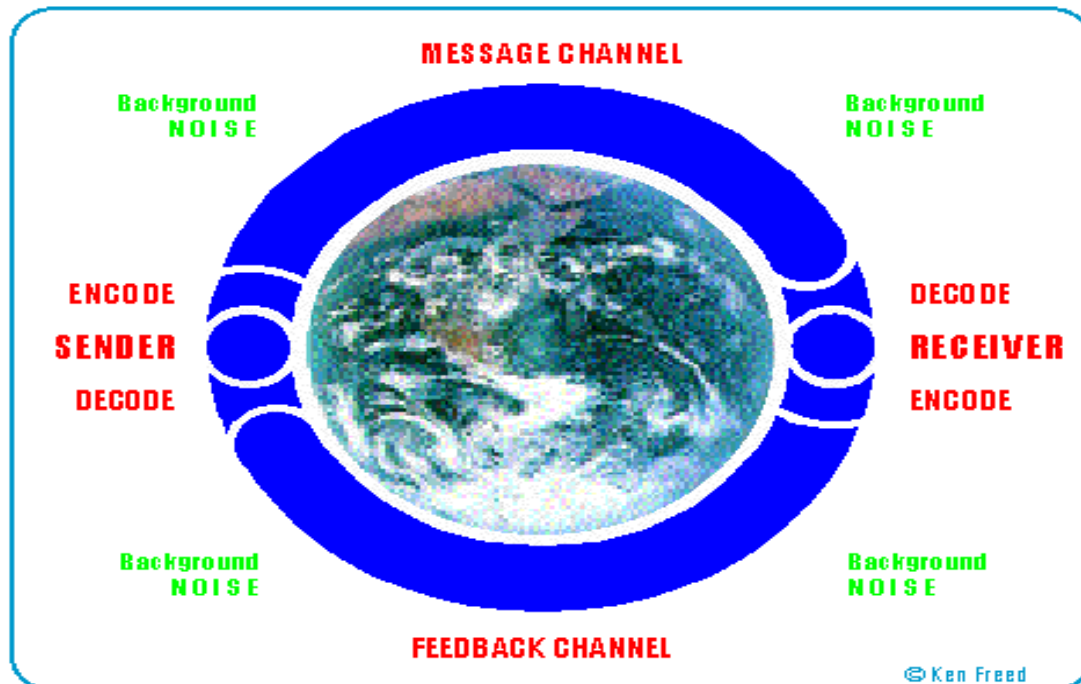
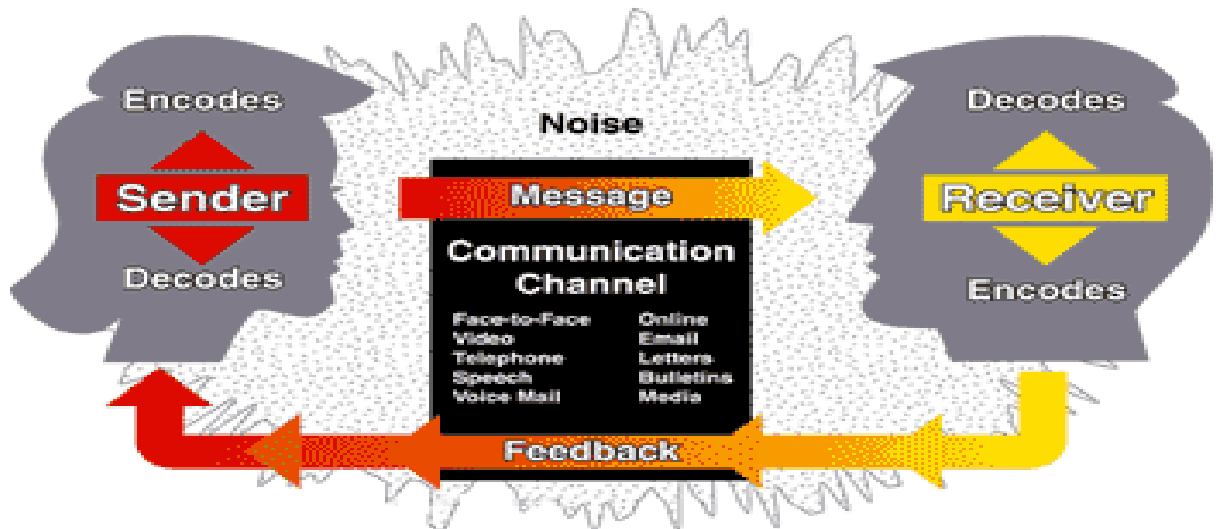
Communication Cycle down into five steps:

1. Messaging
2. Targeting
3. Distribution
4. Monitoring and measurement
5. Assessment

How is communication cycle completed?

Sender--Medium--Receiver—Feedback—Sender

The Communication Cycle



Barriers to Communication: A 'Barrier to Communication' is a problem that stops the communication flow between two human beings. It can cause a lot of problems as the best way to express one's ideas is communication and once the communication flow is broken the expression is subsided by miss-communication.

Few barriers are listed below:

1. **Muddled Message:** A muddled message refers to the unclear set of words giving confused meaning. Ex: "Please be here about 9:00 tomorrow morning is Independence Day celebrations" instead of "Please be here at 9:00 in the morning tomorrow to celebrate the Independence Day."
2. **Stereotyping:** Stereotyping of person, a group, an event or a thing on oversimplified conceptions, beliefs or options. This barrier restricts the communication process as people try to perceive the message beforehand.
3. **Wrong Channel:** The communication channel/medium plays a very important part in communication process. Saying "good morning" in written is less effective than when it is spoken with warmth.
4. **Language:** *Language is the tool of communication.* But if the sender is encoding the message in a language unknown to the receiver communication would never take place.

5. **Lack of feedback:** Communication is totally based on response and once the receiver fails to respond or does not send the *desired feedback/response* to the sender it is very hard for the sender to take the communication forward.
6. **Poor listening skills:** If the receiver suffers from poor listening skills s/he is never able to understand the true message the sender wants to communicate and hence the receiver may give awkward or false response.
7. **Interruption:** It refers to the problem of unwanted situation in the process of communication. A broken communication is always hard to understand.
8. **Physical Distractions:** It means the physical things directly intervening in the process of communication. A place of noise or a movement in the background or anything may result in making the sender or the receiver or both concentrate hard and posing physical barriers to communication process.
9. **Incomplete Sentences:** If the context is not clear an unfinished sentence or utterance causes great barrier to communication. The incomplete information or instruction or expression may cause hazards.
10. **Stress:** Stress is one of the major barriers to communication for many people. In order to satisfy the needs of the organization or meeting the deadlines employees face lots of stress that cause them loose their concentration and hence they are unable to receive the complete message leading to communication distortions.

COMMUNICATION FLOW:

Communication has been called the life blood of an organization. The success of an organization depends heavily on the performance of the communication. Every organization has its own and unique way of sending and receiving information or instruction or idea. An organization is a group of diverse people with diverse social, political and religious backgrounds and responsibilities. Organizational commitments compel the employees to hide or disclose the matters according to the situation. *Hence, communication flows in every organization in formal or informal ways.*

An organization uses the formal means of communication to inform, encourage and enrich the employees with the latest developments. But, there are certain limits beyond which information is revealed or concealed according to the situation. When information and ideas are exchanged within the organization it is called **Internal Communication** and when it is exchanged with any external body it is called **External Communication**. The functions of external communication include **responding to queries from outside; persuading customers to buy products; collecting bills; and replying to customer's claims and adjustments.**

Internal communication also has formal and informal forms. The formal form can be categorized as follows:

1. **Downward Flow:** When communication from higher authorities is sent to people of lower rank it runs downwards. Usually, IOMs notices, new announcements, instructions, orders and reminders come under this category. Proper caution must be taken in downward flow as it may hamper or halt the work.
2. **Upward Flow:** It comes from subordinates to their superiors and junior level employees to their bosses. Communication through this means aims at keeping the authorities informed on the performances of the subordinates that helps them in decision making and inform them of recent developments. This medium includes phone calls, SMSs, e-mails, reports and minutes of the meetings.
3. **Horizontal Flow:** It takes place between the same class and group of employees or people. It is used when an important decision is made. It can take place either at superior level or subordinate level. Decision regarding signing contract, employment and retrenchment, collaborations, passing new policies, enhancing or curtailing benefits and several group meetings come under this category.
4. **Diagonal or Crosswise Communication:** It signifies the interaction across different levels of an organizational hierarchy. Communication flows across different levels in an organization among people who may not have direct reporting relationships. It is used to speed up the flow of information. It makes effective efforts for achieving organizational goals.

Communication flow through informal medium is called **Grapevine**. It is less structured and can be between all groups and levels of people depending upon their relationships. Communication occurs in the form of casual conversation and whispers during official hours or even outside the formal settings. It is very important channel as it reveals many important information and secret before time. It is unethical but very powerful medium in the organization.

Effective Communication:

We may state that the following are the requirements of an effective communication:

1. **Simplicity:** In general and practical life communication has to be simple, direct and without ornamentation. You have to keep the level of understanding of the receiver in mind and mind-frame. To simplify, one may use tabulation, graphics, charts etc. keeping the words to the minimum.
2. **Face-to-face communication:** it is generally to the sender's advantage to get face to face with the receiver. This helps to get an immediate feedback and respond to it.
3. **Use of feedback:** the sender of a message should prepare himself to receive the feedback. Then he knows what reaction the message is producing in the target audience.
4. **Listening with understanding:** when you are at the other end of communication you have the responsibility as a listener and receiver of message. To grasp the message fully, you have to be attentive and make an effort to concentrate.
5. **Non Verbal Communication:** non verbal communication contributes around 75% to the whole communication. So, you must be aware of this trait when communicating effectively.

Benefits of Effective Communication:

1. Speed in solving problems
2. Improved stakeholder response
3. Enhanced professional image
4. Clearer promotional materials
5. Better decision making
6. Rise in productivity
7. Smooth working
8. More fruitful business bonds

Forms of Communication:

Communication can have only two forms

1. Verbal Communication
2. Non-verbal Communication

Verbal Communication: the word 'verbal' means 'connected with words and use of words'. Any communication that involves words is called verbal communication. It can be of two types:

- a. **Written:** when the communication is done in writing (letter, memo, notice, report, proposal etc). it is precise and accurate, easily verified, permanent record, suitable for lengthy communication, responsibility can be fixed easily and has got legal validity but at the same time is slower in communication process, has no flexibility, literacy is needed for it, has lack of comprehensibility by all etc. Even then it is very **formal way of communication**.
- b. **Spoken or oral:** when communication is done through spoken medium. It saves time, gets immediate feedback, saves paperwork, builds a healthy climate and is best tool during emergency but at the same time there are greater chances of misunderstanding, the speaker can be bad, is ineffective for lengthy communication, has lower retention rate, no legal validity and there are difficulties in fixing the responsibility. Hence, it is **informal way communication**.

Non-verbal Communication: apart from using words communication is done through various other ways that includes gestures, postures, hand movements etc. according to experts, it contributes around 75-80% in total communication. It can be of following types:

- a. **Kinesics:** it includes facial expressions, gestures, postures, tone and pitch of the voice, clothes, proximity, eye contact, silence etc
- b. **Paralanguage:** it means 'like language'. It includes voice, intonation, pitch, pause, volume variation, mixed signals, proper word and sentence stress and overall impression.
- c. **Proxemics or territory or space:** it means 'closeness' and is used with reference to space and territory. It is derived from 'proximity'. It can be classified as under intimate space, personal space, social space and public space.

TECHNICAL WRITING:

"Technical Writing aims to get work done, to change people by changing the way they do things"

-M. Jimmie Killingsworth & Michael K. Gilbertson

Overview: We have got a highly technical world around us. Our professional world as well as our personal world is dependent on technicalities to a great extent. Be it the Gas Tragedy of Bhopal or Coal Mine Accidents in southern

Bihar or major or minor train accident across India or many other unfortunate accidents—all were results of human failure. The human failure in most of the cases was a result of inability to express the technicalities in clear and objective language. So, it is high time that we understand the importance of technical communication along with the core of engineering.

Definition: A technical writing is a means desired to meet specific goals. The basic purpose of technical writing is **to inform, to instruct and to persuade.**

A technical writing is meant to be for some other end. It has got purely practical motives of informing others and it involves intellect. It deals with facts and figures. It must choose the commonest and the most accurate words though these may be jargons for a layman or non-technical people. It must be precise and direct and is always impersonal. The whole matter is ordered logically and the argument of ideas follows a rational system. It is a practical writing for carrying out job responsibilities like issuing documents, allotting responsibilities, defining roles in the organization etc. so, it must be achieved in the very beginning. It is not god gifted but can be mastered through practice.

Characteristics/Features of Technical Writing:

1. **Audience Specific:** The document is prepared keeping the role of the audience in view. A particular group of audience with a particular set of responsibilities needs specific details.
2. **Objective Language:** It is the pre-requisite of technical writing. Objective language means focused and impersonal use of language. If the language is simple, error free, focused and impersonal the reader/audience has no pains in understanding the information. The use of technical vocabulary gets reader's attention and furnishes the information without any hustle. An objective language is very persuasive.
3. **Presentational Organization:** The format of the writing must be easy to scan and understand. An effective presentation emphasizes on the matter to the point. It is always good looking and it is easy for the audience to find out the findings easily.
4. **Visual Aids:** In order to summarize the data different charts are used so as to give opportunity to the audience to find out the expressions from the data shown. A good use of visual aids provides many entry points into the discussion and hence engages the audience's expectations.

GENERAL OR LITERARY WRITING:

- It is based on third personal narrative
- It can be an end in itself
- It can have artistic, aesthetic and rhetorical aims
- It may merely delight and move
- It can be an affair of the heart
- It can use emotions and fantasy
- It can be vague, suggestive, equivocal, very plain or very elite in diction
- It can be expansive, inflated and roundabout
- It can be so personal that the expression of the personality of the author makes everything else irrelevant
- A story can begin at the end. An essay can begin with a startling statement and introduce the theme after having produced the desired effect.