

MODULE FOUR

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES (seven hours)

- **CHAPTER NINETEEN-*Communication* (two hours)**
- **CHAPTER TWENTY-*Decision Making*(two hours)**
- **CHAPTER TWENTYONE-*Leadership*(three hours)**

Reference:

1. **Organizational Behaviour, Stephen P.Robbins, Timothi A.Judge and Seema Sanghi, 12th ed, Prentice Hall India**
2. **Organizational behaviour-Human behaviour at work by John W Newstrom, 12th edition, McGrawHill**
3. **Organizational behavior and management by Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson - 7th edition, Tata McGrawHill**
4. **Organisational Behaviour by Steven L Mc Shane Mary Ann Von Glinow Radha R Sharma Tata McGrawHill**
5. **Organizational behavior by Don Hellriegel; John W. Slocum; Richard W. Woodman-8th edition, Thomson South-Western**

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Chapter Nineteen

Communication

Objectives:

To develop an understanding of:

- The Importance of Communication
- The elements of communication
- The Communication Process Model
- Types of Channels
- Channel Richness
- Communicating Within Organizations
- Communicating Externally
- Barriers to Effective Communication
- Improving Communication in Organizations

The Importance of Communication

Communications is defined as "the transmission of information and understanding through the use of common symbols."

Communication assists organizational members to accomplish both individual and organizational goals, implement and respond to organizational change, coordinate organizational activities and engage in virtually all organizationally relevant behavior. Organizational effectiveness is linked to communications. Serious problems arise when breakdowns occur and a pertinent question for managers is whether they will communicate well or poorly.

The Communication Process -The steps between a source and a receiver that result in the transference and understanding of meaning

The elements of communication:

1. **Communicator**—an employee with ideas, intentions, and a purpose for communicating.

2. **Encoding**—translating the communicator's ideas into a systematic set of symbols and language that expresses the communicator's purpose.
3. **Message**—the result of the encoding process (in a verbal or nonverbal form). The message can be intended or unintended.
4. **Medium**—the message carrier (e.g., telephone, group meeting, memos, reward systems).
5. **Decoding**—the receiver's thought processes that interpret the message in terms understandable to the receiver.
6. **Receiver**—recipient of the message.
7. **Feedback**—response from the receiver to the communicator that lets the communicator determine whether the message was received and produced the intended effect. It is provided in two-way, but not in one-way communication. It is provided in many forms (e.g., directly via verbal exchanges; indirectly via productivity declines, absenteeism increases).
8. **Noise**—factors that distort the intended message. May occur in each element of communication.

The Communication Process Model (Please see the exhibit from Organizational Behaviour, Stephen P.Robbins, Timothy A.Judge and Seema Sanghi, 12th ed, Pearson Education, pp 406)

Channel

The medium selected by the sender through which the message travels to the receiver

Types of Channels

Formal Channels

Are established by the organization and transmit messages that are related to the professional activities of members

Informal Channels

Used to transmit personal or social messages in the organization. These informal channels are spontaneous and emerge as a response to individual choices.

Choice of Communication Channel

Channel Richness

The amount of information that can be transmitted during a communication episode

Characteristics of Rich Channels

- Handle multiple cues simultaneously
- Facilitate rapid feedback
- Are very personal in context

Information Richness of Communication Channel

There are many different ways to communicate within an organization and externally to various constituents. The richness of communication involves how much information can be effectively transmitted. For example, face-to-face communications is high in richness because of verbal and nonverbal cues can be exchanged and observed and a memo to a general audience is low in richness. For details please refer to exhibit from Organizational Behaviour, Stephen P. Robbins, Timothy A. Judge and Seema Sanghi, 12th ed, Pearson Education, pp 420

Communicating Within Organizations

Communications should flow in four distinct directions: downward, upward, horizontal, and diagonal.

Downward communication: communication flows from individuals in higher-level positions to those in lower-level positions in the hierarchy. Most common forms are job instructions, official memos, procedures, manuals, company publications. These are often inadequate and inaccurate.

Upward communication: communication flowing from a lower level to upper-level jobholder. Most common forms are suggestion boxes, group meetings, appeal/grievance procedures.

It is difficult to achieve effective communication, especially in large organizations. Functions of upward communications: a. Gives managers feedback about current organizational issues and problems, which aids decision-making. b. Gives important feedback about effectiveness of downward communication. c. Relieves employees' tensions by letting them share relevant information with higher management personnel. d. Encourages participation and involvement, and therefore cohesiveness.

Horizontal communication: communication flowing from one position to another on the same hierarchical level (e.g., from the accounting department head to the marketing department head). Organizations usually offer mechanisms for horizontal communications, leaving it to individual managers. It can satisfy social needs.

Diagonal communication: communication flowing between an employee and higher level manager to whom she/he does not report, e.g., the marketing vice president communicating with a production foreman. It is the least-used communication channel. It is important when members cannot communicate effectively through other channels.

Communication within the organization can be at:

1) Interpersonal level

2) Group level

3) Organizational level

Interpersonal level- Communication that flows from individual to individual in face-to-face and group settings. It varies, from direct orders to casual expressions and influences how people feel about the organization.

Types of interpersonal Communication are:

- **Oral Communication**
 - Advantages: Speed and feedback
 - Disadvantage: Distortion of the message
- **Written Communication**
 - Advantages: Tangible and verifiable
 - Disadvantages: Time-consuming and lacks feedback
- **Nonverbal Communication-Nonverbal messages:** information sent by a communicator that is or may be unrelated to the verbal communication. It is sent via physical cues such as face and eye movements, posture, distance, voice tone, and gestures. Nonverbal message may differ from other forms of communication behavior in that they are difficult to suppress, more apparent to others than to the people who produce them and susceptible to multiple interpretations. Emotion type conveyed by nonverbal message is indicated by facial expressions, eye contact and eye movements and emotion intensity is indicated by physical cues such as distance, posture and gestures.
 - Advantages: Supports other communications and provides observable expression of emotions and feelings
 - Disadvantage: Misperception of body language or gestures can influence receiver's interpretation of message

Problems in communication with other people can arise from:

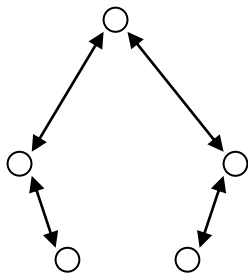
1. Perceptual differences.
2. Interpersonal style differences.

Group level

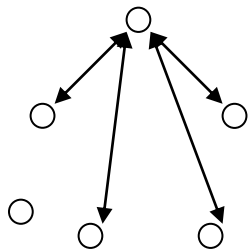
Three Common Formal Small-Group Networks and patterns of communication in it:

Small-Group Networks and Effectiveness Criteria

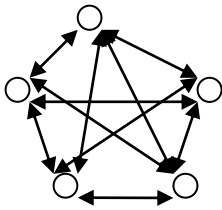
criteria	chain	wheel	All channel
speed	moderate	fast	fast
accuracy	high	high	moderate
Emergence of leader	moderate	high	none
Member satisfaction	moderate	low	high



Chain



Wheel



All channel

Informal network

Grapevine

Grapevine Characteristics

- Informal, not controlled by management
- Perceived by most employees as being more believable and reliable than formal communications
- Largely used to serve the self-interests of those who use it

Grapevine results from:

- Desire for information about important situations
- Ambiguous conditions
- Conditions that cause anxiety

Grapevine is an important part of any group or organizational communication network because:

- It gives managers a feel for the morale of the organization
- It identifies issues that employees consider important
- It helps to tap into employee anxiety
- It acts like a filter and feedback mechanism
- It translates the formal communication into the group's own jargon

Suggestions for Reducing the Negative Consequences of Rumors

1. Announce timetables for making important decisions
2. Explain decisions and behaviors that may appear inconsistent or secretive
3. Emphasize the downside, as well as the upside, of current decisions and future plans
4. Openly discuss worst-case possibilities—it is almost never as anxiety-provoking as the unspoken fantasy

Source: Adapted from L. Hirschhorn, "Managing Rumors," in L. Hirschhorn (ed.), *Cutting Back* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983), pp. 54–56.

Organizational level

There are new types of technological communications:

- The Internet and the Intranet.
- Electronic mail or e-mail
- Voice mail.
- Video conferencing and teleconferencing.
- Electronic meetings

Knowledge Management (KM)

Knowledge Management is a process of organizing and distributing an organization's collective wisdom so the right information gets to the right people at the right time

Knowledge management is important because Intellectual assets are as important as physical assets. When individuals leave, their knowledge and experience goes with them. A KM system reduces redundancy and makes the organization more efficient.

Communicating Externally

Typical external communication program includes four distinct programs: **public relations, advertising, promotion, and customer/client/patient surveys.**

Multicultural Communication-While the average European speaks several languages, the typical American speaks only English. The vast majority of the world's population does not speak nor understand English. International business requires foreign language training. Other barriers to effective international communication: a. **Ethnocentrism**—tendency to consider the values, norms, and customs of one's own country as superior. It may be implicit or explicit. b. **Cultural Insensitivity**: By not being sensitive to cultural differences we contribute to misunderstandings. Words and phrases, behaviors and other nonverbal expressions may mean different things across cultures.

Intercultural communications succeeds when communicators:

- Familiarize themselves with significant cultural differences.
- Try to abandon ethnocentric tendencies.
- Maintain a posture of "knowing they do not know."

Barriers to Effective Communication- Barriers exist either within individuals (e.g., frames of reference, value judgments) or within organizations (e.g., in-group language, filtering).

1. **Frame of reference:** People can encode/decode messages differently because of different frames of reference. It results from different individual backgrounds and experiences. It produces distorted communication and occurs even at different organizational levels.
2. **Selective listening:** A form of selective perception where individuals perceive only information that affirms beliefs and blocks out new and disconfirming information.
3. **Value judgments:** The receiver assigns an overall worth to the message based on his/her evaluation of the message's anticipated meaning, the communicator or previous experiences with the communicator.
4. **Source credibility:** Trust, confidence, and faith that the receiver has in the communicator's words/actions. Directly impacts message reception and reaction by the receiver.
5. **Filtering:** The communicator manipulates the information so the receiver hears it as positive ("telling the boss what she wants to hear"). It frequently occurs in upward communication. It occurs because the direction (upward) carries control information to management that may affect merit evaluations, etc.
6. **In-group language:** Language (jargon) developed by a particular group (e.g., researchers, engineers) that is meaningful/understandable only to the members; produces communication breakdowns when outsiders are involved.
7. **Status differences:** Can be perceived as threats by those lower in the organizational hierarchy and channel of communication who normally would be included.
8. **Time pressures:** Can produce short-circuiting wherein someone has been left out of the formal channel of communication who normally would be included.
9. **Communication overload:** People feel buried by information and data that they cannot adequately absorb. It occurs because of the deluge of information with which managers must contend. Overloaded, the manager cannot absorb/adequately respond to all messages which results in "screening out" (never decoding) many messages.

Communication Barriers Between Men and Women

Men talk to:

- Emphasize status, power, and independence
- Complain that women talk on and on
- Offer solutions
- To boast about their accomplishments

Women talk to:

- Establish connection and intimacy
- Criticize men for not listening
- Speak of problems to promote closeness
- Express regret and restore balance to a conversation

Barriers to Effective Cross-Cultural Communication

Semantics, Word Connotations, Tone Differences, Perception Differences

Communication Barriers and Cultural Context

- High-Context Cultures- Cultures that rely heavily on nonverbal and subtle situational cues to communication
- Low-Context Cultures-Cultures that rely heavily on words to convey meaning in communication

Improving Communication in Organizations

Effective communicators strive to be understood by others and to understand. Strategies include:

1. **Following up:** attempting to determine whether your intended message was actually received.
2. **Regulating information flow:** attempting to eliminate communication overload. Exception principle—regulating information quantity and quality by bringing only significant deviations from policies and procedures to the superior.
3. **Utilizing feedback ;** sent by receivers of your messages.
4. **Developing empathy:** placing yourself in the shoes of the receiver to anticipate how the message will be decoded. Essentially putting yourself in another's role and assuming their viewpoints/emotions.
5. **Repetition:** Introducing repetition/redundancy into communications to be sure that the message is understood. This is also an accepted learning principle.
6. **Encouraging mutual trust:** developing trust between managers and subordinates. Facilitates communication and makes follow up on each communication less critical.
7. **Effective timing:** Timing a communication so it does not compete with other messages being sent to a receiver.
8. **Simplifying language:** Encoding messages into words and symbols that the receiver understands.

9. Effective listening: Entails listening with understanding—removing distractions, putting the speaker at ease, showing that you want to listen, and asking questions.

10. Using the grapevine;Managers should know how to use it and increase its accuracy, as distortions traveling through the grapevine can be devastating.

11. Promoting Ethical Communications: Krep's principles guiding effective internal communications suggest that organization members: i. Should not intentionally deceive one another. ii. Should not purposely harm any other member. iii. Should be treated justly .Management in many instances says it has the right to gather intelligence on its employees, even spying if it is not illegal. There are any numbers of tools available for such monitoring of behavior. Competitive intelligence, a system for gathering information (all forms of communication) that affects a firm, analyzing the data, and taking action is becoming an accepted practice.

Questions:

1. What is the Importance of Communication in organization? Justify with examples
2. What are the elements of communication? Discuss the Communication Process Model
3. What are the types of Channels? Establish the relationship of Channel Richness with Communication effectiveness.
4. Discuss with suitable examples the different directions and levels of Communicating Within Organizations. Discuss the issues related with Communicating Externally.
5. What are the Barriers to Effective Communication. Discuss the ways of Improving Communication in Organizations. How can the organization promote ethical communication?

