



Effective Communication: A Need of Workplace

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Abstract: In the words of Ken Werner “*Communication is what many technical professionals need to do most and want to do least*”.

Communication is a need of the day-to-day world for all the students and professionals. The advent of new technologies has shrunk the world into a global village. But communication is the basic need since prehistoric times because no civilization can exist without communication, as nobody can sustain in isolation. From students, successful communication is required in their oral and written academic tasks; whereas professionals face the challenges of communicating effectively and efficiently in their workplace.

KEY WORDS: Communication, Work place, Organisational, Intrapersonal.

Introduction: In the academic environment, we encounter various situations involving speech or writing; conversation with friends, professors or colleagues to achieve various purposes; seminars, group discussion written tests and examination; and laboratory and project report submission on diverse topics. Likewise, at the work place, we interact with superiors and subordinates, converse with them face to face or over the telephone, read and write emails, letters, reports and proposal. Charles Darwin writes –

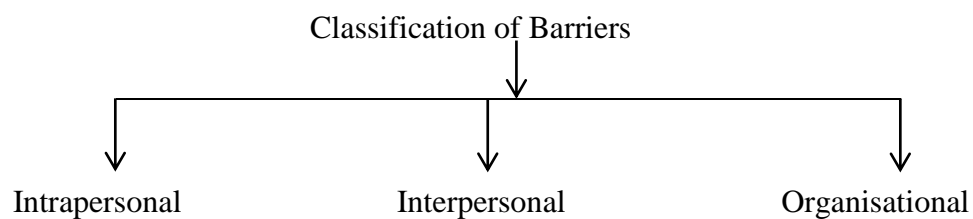
“A naturalist’s life would be happy one if he had only to observe and never to write.”

But for the survival of organisation, oral and written Communication is needed. All the activities and progress of organisation wholly depend upon the effective and efficient communication. The better are our communication skills the better are the chances of quick progress. For instance, one may have an excellent academic record but can’t be successful if he is unable to express his idea in an interview. In the similar way, if one organizes a good seminar but can’t write a good brochure or report he is not a good organizer. However Ken Werner, editor of the journal ‘Circuits and Devices’ warns those who dare to ‘write about how to write’ and says

“And (if) writing itself is unpleasant, reading about writing is torture.”

In this way this paper is only an attempt to present some of the aspects and guidelines of communication for the beginners, because in the present scenario everyone is asked to do more with less. It is truly said Communication works but for those who works at it.

Communication is effective only if it creates the desired impact on the reader and when this impact is not created it means that there is some barriers in Communication. Imagine you are a junior executive in a company and you want three days leave for attending your friends marriage. You go to your boss and starts for seeking permission. After speaking two-three sentences your head clerk comes to get boss' sign on some bills. You are silent while your boss is looking over the bills. After his departure you resume talking but you find that your boss is unable to grasp. You feel that intervention of headclerk led to lack of concentration of your boss. As a sender, you had patiently tried to send your wish but due to interruption the receiver, your boss, could not decode the message. Hence communication process was failed. A slight break in the flow of communication leads to a lot of misunderstandings. Many boss end up their meetings and presentations that nobody in the organisation understand them whereas many employees fail to listen attentively during meetings or send incomprehensible letters due to these barriers.



Intrapersonal

This form of communication is extremely private and restricted to individuals. Individuals are unique because of differences in perception, experiences education, culture and personality etc.

A common barrier is the **wrong assumptions**, made about the person to whom the message is being sent and sometimes about the message itself. In this situation these steps can solve the problem

- Identify the problem.
- Find the cause/barrier.
- Work on alternate solution.
- opt for the best solution.
- Follow up rigorously.

When we feel that message has not been conveyed or we don't get the desired feedback the first step is to identify the problem. For example your boss had given you to write biannually report of the company in the beginning of the year. June has passed and you are asked to submit the report about which you had not written a single line. The problem is that the meaning of biannually to your boss means twice in a year and for you once in two years. According to the dictionary both are right. To avoid differences in meaning "Mean what you say and say what you mean". After identifying the problem we have to find the cause and in this case it was the choice of words. The third step is to explore the possible solution. In this case one had to choose words that are specific in their meaning. After thinking on the alternatives, opt for the

best solution. So use simple words like twice a year for avoiding this situation and the last step requires that we implement the best solution properly.

Wrong Assumptions create many barriers. For example, if a manager asks a person, who has come to apply in the company to submit curriculum vitae, without knowing whether this person understands the word curriculum vitae He is creating barriers between them. Here the problem is created because the sender does not have enough knowledge of receiver's background. If the sender had put himself in the shoe of the listener the problem wouldn't have been existed.

Noise is the barrier to communication which does not mean sound but a break or disturbance in the communication process. The noise is unwanted messages and signals. It can be visual audio-Visual, written or psychological form. Technical noise can exist in the form of loud noise of machines or blaring noise of stereo etc. It doesn't create so many problems as it can be removed by correcting technological faults. But if the noise is due to human error, the parties involved in the communication process need to take corrective measures. They are termed as channel noise and semantic noise. Examples of semantic noise are ambiguous sentence structure, faulty grammar, misspellings and incorrect punctuation.

Difference in perceptions and backgrounds is another hindrance. Every person has varied perceptions and backgrounds due to education, culture, language. A professor from the rural background, always giving examples of some village or rural life during his lectures will be relished by only those students belonging to such background. To enhance communication skills, it is necessary to know the background of the audience. Empathy or Identification with another person is the solution to this barrier.

Wrong inferences, blocked categories and categorical thinking mars effective communication. Inference is the process of drawing a conclusion by applying heuristics (based on logic, statistics, etc.) to observation or hypotheses. Sometimes we fail to distinguish what actually exist and what we assume to exist and this gives wide scope for gossip and rumor to grow and develop and in this way we mar our communication. To avoid this use qualifiers such as 'evidence suggests' or 'in my opinion' to remind that what is communicated is not an established fact.

Sometimes, when we get some information's against our views, habits we react negatively. We try to reject, distort or avoid it and thereby give our reactions to unfavorable information. Similarly there are persons who can't accept any deviation from their point of view and are very rigid in their opinion. For example, one may think that male executives are only capable of taking quick decisions and such people are misoneists.

Contrary to this, some people are pansophists as they think that they 'know it all' and therefore need not to be updated. For example, in a general body meet of the university taken by Vice chancellor, Dean of Arts does not pay heed as he feels that whatever is going to be discussed he 'know it all' through personal secretary of V.C. Later he proposes some changes in evaluation process and finds himself embarrassed to know the topic has been discussed and decision has been taken.

Interpersonal

Interpersonal Communication includes verbal and non-verbal communication, as raised eyebrows, crossing arms, less eye contact. By these non-verbal communication, receiver interprets the potential meaning of that communication. Limited vocabulary, communication selectivity, poor listening skills are some other barriers that need to be acknowledged and addressed for the workplace productivity.

An efficient communicator is **compatible of verbal and Non Verbal messages** and adapts himself to the communication environment. Speaker's tone of voice, volume and pitch are some of the medium of verbal expression whereas non-verbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, body movement, timing, touch and anything else done without speaking and are noticed much by the listener. Imagine a CEO in a speech congratulates an executive of his company for his promotion. But while conveying this that he is very much delighted, the expression of his face shown just the opposite. And the clear difference between the verbal and non-verbal effect of communication makes his listeners confused. Beside this the good dressing sense, hair style physical appearance save communicator from the negative impression of Einstein. The personality and physical appearance of any person gives the first impression and thereby affecting the quality of communication.

Limited or Inadequate vocabulary leaves the communicator at a loss of words to convey the right message. The words have different connotative and denotative meanings. The communicator needs to know them clearly in order to use them with clarity and precision. Words stand not only for their meanings, but they are also charged with actions and emotions. On the other hand, merely having a wide vocabulary is of no use unless the communicator knows how to use it.

Emotional outburst are mental walls that keep person away from openly communicating thoughts and feelings to others. They prevent a person from being himself and living his life to the fullest. Individual with emotional barriers tend to be extremely reserved, cautious and insecure. A moderate level of emotional involvement intensifies communication by making it making personal whereas excessive emotional involvement creates hindrance in communication. Imagine, you are distinguished alumni and you are invited as a chief guest of that college. While addressing the audience you become so much emotional to see your teachers that tears flow from eyes and you are unable to speak a single word and thus leaving a poor impression upon your audience.

Interpersonal communication fails also due to **cultural variations**. In the world of globalization, European, American, Asian firms have expanded their business horizons through partnerships, collaborations and affiliations. In America people communicate freely and that is a part of their culture. In Germany, an Indian who is used to being very indirect with his communication might find their direct way of speaking rude. Being direct is part of the German culture and it is reflected in the way they communicate. Communication shapes culture and culture shapes communication. Success of a professional lies in knowing the business practices

social customs and etiquettes of the particular culture one is dealing with. Gender Differences

Male and female work together but due to **gender differences**, their different communicating style sometimes work against them. Gender policy advisor Dee Norton says “It is important to promote the best possible communication between men and women in their workplace. As we move between the male and female cultures, we sometimes have to change how we behave (speak the language of the other gender) to gain the best results from the situation, Clearly, successful organisation of the future are going to have leaders and team members who understand, respect and apply the rules of gender culture appropriately.”

Poor Listening skills in communication distort the message. Listening is a key to interpersonal skill and a prerequisite to many other communication skills-by learning to listen more effectively one can improve the quality of professional as well as personal life. Even if we are not formulating a response whilst listening, we may still be thinking of other things. During a conversation how often thoughts such as, “what important work I have to do after lunch”, “who is going to see off my boss to airport” crossed our minds. In this way we are unable to give full attention to what is communicated and we are distracted.

Organisational

Every organisation has its own communication techniques, and each nurtures its own communication climate. All organisation have their own communication policies through which protocol to be followed and the complexity of protocol distorts the message. Too many transfer stations, fear of superiors, use of inappropriate media and information overload are some of the organizational barriers.

Several layers of communication channels distort the message in huge organisations. No doubt transfer stations do serve a purpose but having too many of them is counter-productive. If three or four persons are involved in this channel there is a chance of distortion or filtration because it is a person tendency to leave out part of the message. It may be due to the poor listening or lack of concentration.

Superior – subordinate relationships in a formal organizational structure inhibit flow of communication. Some believe that maintaining distance with their subordinates is necessary and thus loses the essence or two-way communication.

The major problem of the workplace today is the decrease of efficiency resulting from manual handling of huge amount of data. **Information overload** refers to excessive transmission of information. When the receiver gets too much information beyond his mental capacity he will be unable to understand, analyze and act upon. This will result in making errors in processing excessive information.

Marshall McLuhan the famous Canadian writer and speaker said “The medium is the message.” While choosing the medium for a particular occasion, the advantage, disadvantages and potential barriers to communication must be considered. While choosing the medium, factors such as time, type of message, cost and intended audience must be considered. If your audience requires e-mail or a personal letter and

you choose twitter or another social media system to try to contact them, it will be of no usage. So **use of Appropriate Media** is a must for efficient communication at the workplace.

Conclusion

Communication holds the key at the workplace. Poor communication skills and voice modulation, low confidence level, improper gestures have resulted in many a youngster losing job race or their work efficiency at the workplace, although they may have sound technical knowledge I want to sum up by these quotes.

The art of communication is the language of leadership. -James Humes

Communication the human connection – is the key to personal and career success. -

Paul J. Meyer

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