

Organizational Behavior

communication

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example: Air Traffic Control Miscommunication (Tenerife Disaster)

In 1977, two Boeing 747 jumbo jets (KLM Flight 4805 and Pan Am Flight 1736) collided on the runway at Tenerife Airport. The disaster occurred due to a miscommunication between the KLM captain and air traffic control (ATC).

The KLM pilot, anxious to take off due to weather conditions, misinterpreted ATC's clearance message and began the takeoff sequence without explicit permission. The ATC's message was vague and subject to misunderstanding, a major flaw in the encoding of the message. Additionally, the noise on the radio interfered with the decoding process for the pilots, leading to fatal misinterpretation.

Communication Issue: Improper encoding (lack of clarity in instructions), noise in the communication channel, and failure in the feedback loop (incomplete confirmation of takeoff clearance).

(Weick, 1990)

question: Tenerife Disaster

In the Tenerife disaster, what specific actions could the air traffic controllers or pilots have taken to avoid the miscommunication? What role does feedback play in this context?

Follow-up Question: How could clearer encoding of the message have changed the outcome?

communication: definition

communication

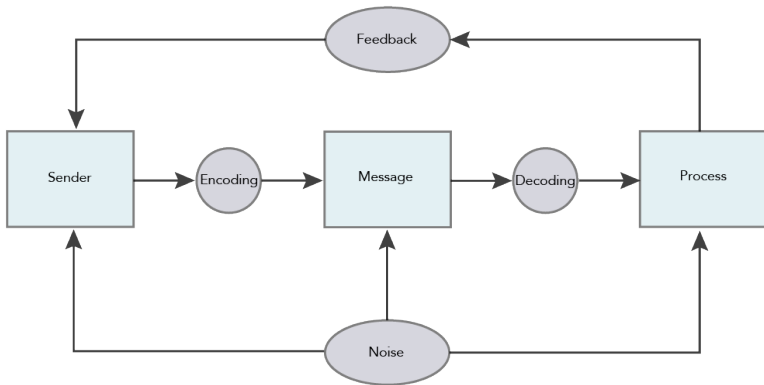
Communication refers to the process of transmitting and understanding meaning.

communication process: definition

communication process

The communication process defines the steps between the source and the receiver that leading to the transmission and understanding of meaning.

basic model of social communication



(Lumen Learning, 2008)

example: Google's OKRs (Objectives and Key Results)

Google utilizes the OKR framework to keep employees aligned with the company's goals. OKRs are clear, measurable goals set by teams and individuals. Feedback is provided frequently through progress updates and quarterly reviews. The OKRs create a structured feedback loop, allowing employees to adjust their work based on the clarity and specificity of the feedback received.

Communication Issue: Continuous feedback ensures that employees are not only progressing towards their objectives but are aware of challenges and can adjust based on clear, actionable information from managers.

(Doerr, 2018)

functions of communication

- management
- feedback
- sharing emotions
- persuasion
- exchange of information

management

- hierarchy and rules
- job description and principles
- problematic communication activities

feedback

- objectives
 - What is needed?

- progress
 - How is it going? Where are the difficulties?

- evaluation/rewards
 - How to improve?

sharing emotions

- satisfaction
- frustration
- social needs

example: Pixar Studios' Emotional Communication

At Pixar, employees are encouraged to openly share their emotional responses during production meetings. This emotional transparency is critical for creativity. For instance, when working on *Toy Story 4*, animators shared their frustrations when certain scenes didn't meet expectations, which led to creative solutions.

Communication Issue: Emotional communication fosters creativity, but it requires an environment where employees feel safe sharing both positive and negative emotions without fear of judgment.

(Catmull & Wallace, 2014)

persuasion

- trying to change attitudes
- without unambiguous valence
(negative/positive)
- CSR (corporate social responsibility)

example: Patagonia's CSR Campaign: "Don't Buy This Jacket"

In 2011, Patagonia launched a bold CSR campaign with the tagline "Don't Buy This Jacket" during Black Friday. The goal was to persuade customers to think critically about their purchasing habits and promote sustainability. While it seemed counterintuitive, it successfully positioned Patagonia as a leader in environmental responsibility.

Communication Issue: Patagonia's message was persuasive because it challenged conventional consumer behavior through a transparent and socially responsible narrative. The campaign used the ****central route of persuasion**** by making customers think deeply about their actions.

(Patagonia, 2011)

question: Persuasion and CSR Campaigns

After learning about Patagonia's CSR campaign "Don't Buy This Jacket", what makes such a counterintuitive message persuasive? How does it differ from traditional advertising messages?

Follow-up Question: Can you think of other examples where a company used a similar persuasive approach to shift consumer behavior?

rationality or persuasiveness

- own vs. general
- examples and stories
- recognition of differing views vs. assertion of one's own
- openness
- speed

exchange of information

- data acquisition
- clarification
- ...

question: Functions of Communication

Consider the different functions of communication (e.g., management, feedback, persuasion). Which function do you believe is the most important in a high-stakes work environment (e.g., emergency response or corporate decision-making), and why?

Follow-up Question: Can you give an example where failure in one of these functions led to problems in your workplace or studies?

formal channels: definition

formal channels

Formal channels refer to the communication channels established by the organisation for the purpose of transmitting messages related to members' work activities of the organisation.

informal channels: definition

informal channels

Informal channels refer to communication channels that are created spontaneously and emerge as a result of individual decisions.

choice of channel: criteria

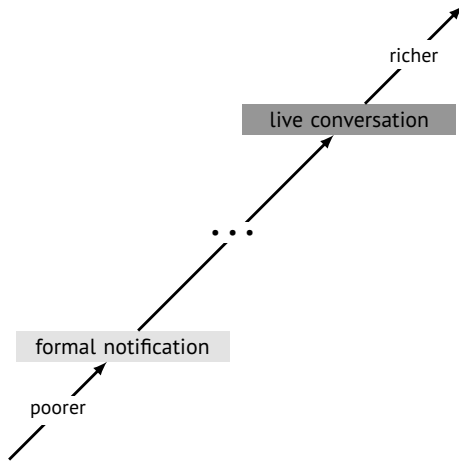
- question of the recipient
 - individual, group, ...
- question of the nature of the message
 - routine vs. unusual
 - secret, private, public, ...
 - nature of the information

channel capacity: definition

channel richness

Channel capacity refers to the amount of information that can be transmitted during a single communication act.

communication channel capacity



written communication

- complex assignment
- need for precise language
- need for protection
- ...

oral communication

- fast and more reliable feedback
- possibility to complement
- ...

oral and written communication

oral	written
meetings	letters, emails, SMS
telephone	social networks and apps
conferences (video and audio-)	websites, blogs
...	...

example: Non-Verbal Communication in Diplomacy

During a meeting between President Barack Obama and Queen Elizabeth II, non-verbal communication was key. Obama's respectful bow, eye contact, and measured posture conveyed his respect and acknowledgement of cultural norms without the need for verbal explanations. These non-verbal signals helped maintain diplomacy and mutual respect.

Communication Issue: In diplomatic contexts, non-verbal cues such as body language, posture, and eye contact are essential for effective communication, especially when language or protocol constraints exist.

(Glenn, 2010)

question: Non-Verbal Communication

In the example of non-verbal communication between President Obama and Queen Elizabeth II, how can non-verbal signals impact international diplomacy? Can you think of situations where non-verbal communication might lead to misunderstanding?

Follow-up Question: How do non-verbal communication norms differ across cultures, and how should this be managed in a global context?

non-verbal communication

- mime
- haptics
- kinesics and gestures
- eye contact (visuals)
- postural
- proxemics
- chronemics

example: Apple's Communication Channels

Apple balances formal communication channels, like official memos for product launches, with informal channels such as hallway conversations or Slack for team collaboration. During the development of the iPhone, quick feedback through informal channels allowed teams to innovate more efficiently, whereas formal memos were used to communicate major decisions.

Communication Issue: Informal channels facilitated creativity and quick feedback, while formal channels ensured important information was distributed consistently and officially.

(Isaacson, 2011)

top-down communications

- purpose
 - identify the target, provide instructions, ...
- problems
 - one-way, formality, ...
- recommendations
 - give explanations ...

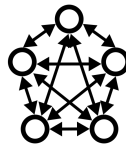
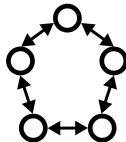
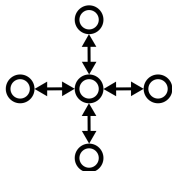
bottom-up communication

- purpose
 - inform about progress, provide feedback,...
- problems
 - unidirectionality, formality, ...
- recommendations
 - conciseness, comprehensiveness, explanation, ...

lateral communications

- purpose
 - inform about progress, time saving, ...
- problems
 - possible formal constraints, higher risk of dysfunctional conflicts, ...
- recommendations
 - openness, principle of publicity, ...

small group communication networks



speed		leader function
accuracy		member satisfaction

grapevine: definition

grapevine

A grapevine refers to an informal communication network in an organization.

grapevine: purpose

- possibility of obtaining formally unavailable or hard to reach
- e.g.
 - about mood,
 - about morale,
 - personal problems,
 - ...

grapevine: problems I/II

- gossip and rumours
- disturbance of work ethics
- disruption of the work environment
- possible ethical problems
- ...

grapevine: problems II/II

- sharing
- explaining
- answering
- invitation

persuasion: definition

persuasion

Persuasion is a specific form of communication aimed at influencing the mental state of the recipient in an atmosphere of free choice.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

(Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)

Under what conditions is it likely, that a person will or will not think deeply about the arguments?

ELM model: routes

(Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)

- PERIPHERAL ROUTE
 - without deeper consideration, "irrational" reasons

- CENTRAL ROUTE
 - consideration of reasons

ELM model: determinants

(Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)

- MOTIVATION
 - interest, need for cognition

- ABILITIES
 - knowledge, presence of distractors

persuasive communication: dual processing theory

- automatic processing
 - little controlled (superficial)
 - time-consuming and generally inexpensive
 - easy to trick

- controlled processing
 - sequential evaluation and control of information
 - time-consuming and generally more demanding
 - avoidance of errors

persuasive dialogue: definition

persuasion dialog

Persuasive dialogue refers to persuasion that takes place in a mutual communicative interaction.

persuasion dialog: types I

■ SQUABBLE

- personal conflict
- verbal attack
- all (?)
- to reveal the deeper reason for the conflict

■ NEGOTIATION

- conflict of interest
- profit
- persuasion, bargaining
- settlement / compromise

persuasion dialog: types II

- INFORMATION SEEKING / DISCOVERY
 - need for information / explanation
 - obtain information / evidence
 - empirical evidence
 - exchange information / confirm or refute a hypothesis

- DEVELOPING
 - practical choice
 - coordination of objectives and actions
 - emphasis on practicality
 - decide on the best course of action

persuasion dialog: types III

- CRITICAL DISCUSSION
 - difference of opinion
 - to persuade an opponent / resolve a conflict of opinion
 - arguments
 - resolving a difference of opinion

ideal critical discussion phases

van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans (2002)

- CONFRONTATION
 - A difference of opinion is identified.
- OPENING
 - Starting points, positions, and tools are established.
- ARGUMENTATIVE
 - Arguments are presented.
- CONCLUDING
 - The discussion, strength of the arguments, and defense of the thesis are evaluated.

example: Uber's Cultural Communication Barriers in France

When Uber expanded its operations to France, it faced significant pushback from local taxi drivers and regulators. This conflict arose partly because Uber did not properly consider the cultural norms and communication practices of the French market. Their direct, tech-centric approach clashed with the more traditional and unionized French taxi industry, leading to protests and boycotts.

Communication Issue: The company failed to account for cultural differences in how messages about their business model were perceived. This led to a breakdown in communication between Uber, the taxi industry, and the public.

barriers to effective communication

- **filtering**
- selective perception
- information overload
- emotions
- language
- silence
- **communication apprehension**
- lying

cultural barriers

- semantics (denotatives and connotatives)
- tonality
- tolerance for conflict - ways of expressing oneself
- ...

cultural barriers: IKEA Product Name Fartfull



Work bench

FARTFULL

\$109.00/ pieces

(price reflects selected options)

website prices may vary from store prices.

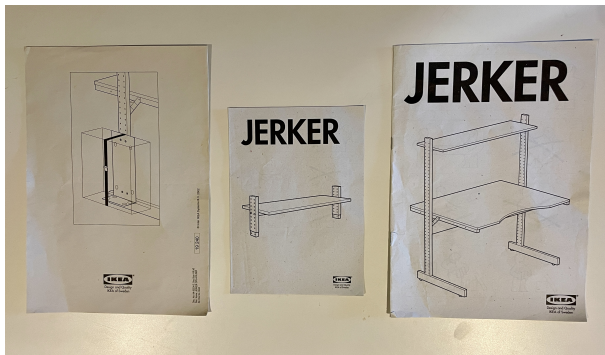
- ▶ Storage space for games and accessories under the seat.
- ▶ Mouse pad both for right-handed and for left-handed people.
- ▶ Seat part with handle; castored to be easy to move about.
- ▶ The metal front doubles as a magnetic board.

designer: Lisa Norinder

IKEA released a children's workbench called **Fartfull** in 2004. While the name means "speedy" or "full of speed" in Swedish, it was met with humor in English-speaking countries due to its unfortunate resemblance to the word "fart". This incident illustrates how product names can be interpreted differently across cultures, resulting in unintended consequences.

(Sabo, 2024)

cultural barriers: IKEA Product Name Jerker Desk



The **Jerker** desk, although a highly functional and popular computer desk, raised eyebrows in English-speaking countries due to its name, which can have unfortunate connotations. The name was eventually discontinued, but not before it became notorious for its unintended meaning.

(Staff, 2023)

question: Cultural Barriers (IKEA)

From the IKEA product name examples, how could IKEA have better prepared to avoid these missteps in different markets? What steps should international companies take when launching products globally to avoid cultural miscommunication?

Follow-up Question: Can you think of another product or brand that faced a similar issue with cultural or language barriers?

conversational maxims

(Grice, 1975)

■ QUANTITY

- The contribution should be informative as required.
- The contribution should not be more informative than required.

■ QUALITY

- The paper should be truthful.
 - Do not say something that you believe is false.
 - Do not say something for which you do not have good reasons.

■ RELATION

- Be relevant.

■ MANNER

- Contribution to the conversation should be clear, understandable.
 - Avoid vague expressions.
 - Avoid ambiguity.
 - Be concise.
 - The contribution should have a clear structure.

question: Emotional Communication

At Pixar, employees openly shared their emotional responses during production meetings. How can emotional communication improve or hinder decision-making in a team?

Follow-up Question: How can a leader balance emotional openness with maintaining professional boundaries?

basics for communication

- knowing yourself
- knowing the addressee
- knowing the message
- choice of form
- choice of response
- values
- respect and fairness
- "facts"not assumptions
- differences and differing perspectives
- own identity

communication analysis: options

- content
- spokesperson
- environment/context
- impact
- discursive
- rhetorical
- argumentative
- formal

Zdroje I

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