

WeAreTheCity
**Effective
Communication
Process**



Workbook

Learning Log

<u>Section of Session</u>	<u>Key Learning Point</u>

Action Plan

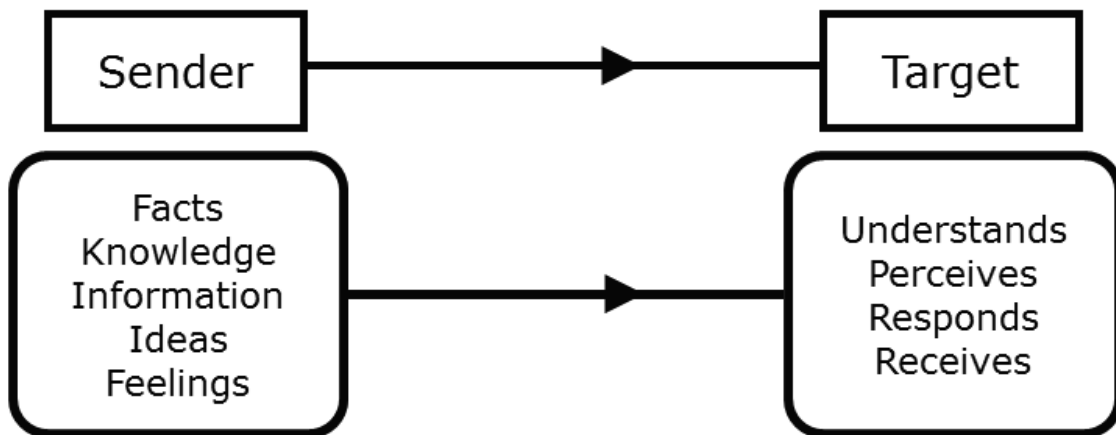
<u>Action</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>When by?</u>

Introduction

Good communication skills play a vital role in imparting information to ensure that colleagues and customers understand messages important to your organisation and ourselves. It also enables us to build good relationships with those same colleagues and customers.

Communication

Communication is the process of conveying information (knowledge, facts, ideas and feelings). One person (communicator or **Sender**) makes their ideas, information, knowledge known to the others (receiver or **Target**).



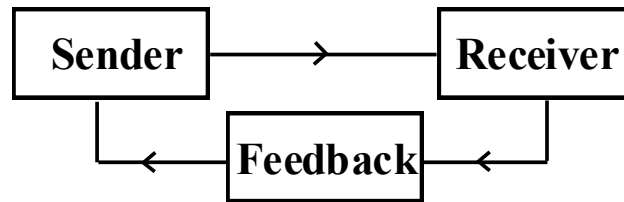
This method is one way (telling), it does not guarantee successful communication, as your target may not receive the information, take any notice of it or understand it.

So, critical to successful communication is ensuring that your message is conveyed in a way that it is received and understood by the target. The sender should know:-

- with whom they need to communicate
- how much and what kind of information needs to be imparted
- what methods need to be employed and are best suited
- the target audience

In fact, tailoring the messages as appropriate to suit different audiences increases the likelihood that the message is both received and understood. For example, front-line employees may need practical and specific information on how to complete a task, whereas a senior manager may require information on policy and the process for taking on new work.

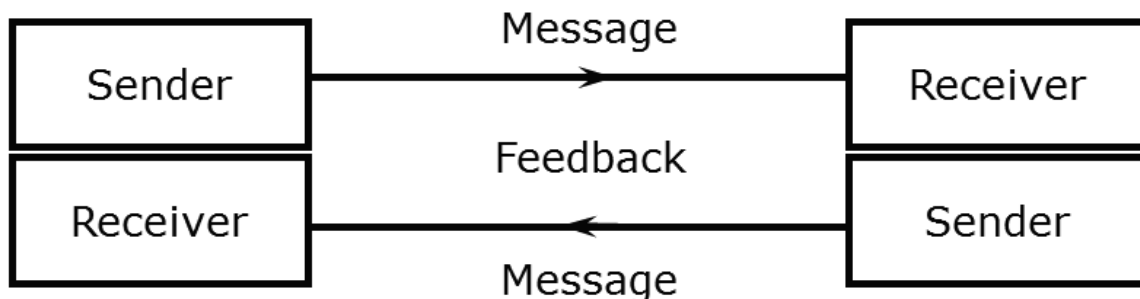
This can be further improved by checking and testing the understanding of the receiver through feedback.



This checking and testing of understanding greatly improves the likelihood of successful and effective communication through firstly conveying the information and then checking reception and understanding through feedback from the intended receiver.

This level of communication is still primarily one way with the receiver usually limited to giving feedback on the effectiveness of the initial communication.

In full communication the receiver's response is not limited to feedback on the initial message, it will convey the receiver's ideas and feelings and so become a message in its own right.



This two way process is essential to good communication with the sender and receiver reversing roles, so ensuring that the message is received and understood.

Why Do We Communicate?

Communication is about influencing other peoples understanding, attitude or behaviour. When we do communicate we must decide **what is the purpose of the communication**, that is, what do we want the receiver(s) to do. So are we:

- Informing
- Instructing
- Motivating
- Persuading
- Achieving joint understanding
- Reaching decisions
- Encouraging
- Obtaining information
- Sharing ideas/thoughts/feelings
- Conveying multiple messages
- Developing relationships

The list is by no means exhaustive. By understanding why we need to communicate we can ensure that we do so in the right medium, knowing that the message has been understood. We also need to consider the type of feedback or response required from receivers to indicate successful communication.

How Do We Communicate?

There are three main methods for communicating information, knowledge, facts, ideas and feelings, these are:

- Verbally
- In Writing
- Non-Verbally

The choice of the best method is critical to conveying the message effectively, and depends upon who the message is for, how much and what level of information is best suited to this target audience.

The following lists detail ways in which we communicate and include examples of visual and computerised communication.

Verbally	In Writing	Non- Verbal (Body Language)	Visual	I.T.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meetings • telephone • interview • answer phone • radio • video • training sessions • team briefing • conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • memos • letters • manuals • instructions • policies • notices • post-it-notes • newspapers • press releases • briefings • e-mail • facsimile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gestures/hands • eye contact • facial expressions • stance/posture • tone of voice • actions/by example • attitude • leadership style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • video/film • overhead projector • LCD projector • graphs/charts • photographs • slides • television • posters • diagrams/ maps • models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-mail • facsimile • graphics • databases • Internet • Intranet • e-learning • CD-ROM/CBT

Verbal Communication

Verbal Communication is direct and is the most commonly used. It allows instant interchange of views through feedback. The receiver is allowed to participate and the sender is able to persuade and convince. It can be both formal and structured or informal and impromptu, and can take the following forms:

- Face to face conversation (one-to-one or group)
- Interview (one-to-one or group-to-one)
- Group Meetings
- Briefing/Instruction
- Telephone (with individual or group conferencing)
- Conference/Training Sessions/Presentations

Invariably there is no written record of what was said, this can lead to disputes or disagreements. It is therefore important to keep records of attendees at these verbal communication events, so that a skills register or recipient list of the training or briefings sessions etc. is kept.

Written Communication

The written word is an indirect form of communication, and lends itself to telling rather than two way communication. There is a written record of the message, but ideas may be misinterpreted. The sender cannot receive immediate feedback, and is not even sure that the target has received the message.

It can take the following forms:-

- memos/discussion papers
- letters
- manuals
- instructions
- policies
- notices on notice boards
- post-it-notes
- newspapers
- articles in magazines etc
- press releases
- briefings
- e-mail
- facsimile
- newsletters
- suggestion in suggestion box
- reports/documents - abstract or précis
- minutes of meetings etc.

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is very important as often it is not **what you say** that counts, but **how you say it**. The success of communication can be adversely affected by actions, tone of voice and body language.

If used well and selectively, non-verbal communication can reinforce verbal communications.

Types of non-verbal communication are:

Non- Verbal (Body Language)		Visual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gestures/hands • eye contact • facial expressions • stance/posture • tone of voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actions/by example • attitude • leadership style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • video/film • overhead projector • LCD projector • graphs/charts • photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slides • television • posters • diagrams/maps • models

Active Listening

Do I:	Usually	Often	Rarely
Use positive body language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain eye contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summarise to demonstrate understanding and clarify information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give my full attention to the individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Feedback

Feedback is an essential feature of any good communication for it should show that:

1. The message has been **received**
2. The message has been **understood**
3. The message has been correctly **interpreted**
4. The receiver is **ready for the next part**.

Feedback is the checking and testing of understanding and greatly improves the likelihood of successful and effective communication.

With good feedback the receiver's response is not limited to comments on the initial message, it can convey the receiver's ideas and feelings and so become a message in its own right.

Feedback may be positive such as a nod, smile, written answer etc. or it may be negative as a yawn, restlessness, disinterest etc.

This feedback gives the sender an indication that they are pitching the message successfully or that they need to change their style to be more effective.



Paths of Communication

Vertical This is the principal channel for routing directives and policies from the top of the organisation to the people below, who implement them. This usually follows the organisation's lines of authority. There is a corresponding flow of information from the bottom to the top.

Problems arise if the flow from top to bottom becomes too great. This may overwhelm the people at the operating level causing lower morale, dissension and reduced productivity. There is also a greater risk of Chinese whispers.

Lateral The most frequent communication takes place between people who operate at the same level (any level) within an organisation. This communication may be casual dialogue or it may be an essential interaction for the efficient running of the organisation.

This is a relatively easy form of communication because individuals are less affected by the "chain of command" barriers. Problems arise here because of jealousy or rivalry within groups or because of geographical location of individuals.

Diagonal Where tasks span departments with no obvious lines of authority an individual may have to communicate with others but have no authority over them or vice versa.

In each case the receiver has less obligation than someone in the sender's own department. This kind of communication relies heavily on goodwill and co-operation between departments.

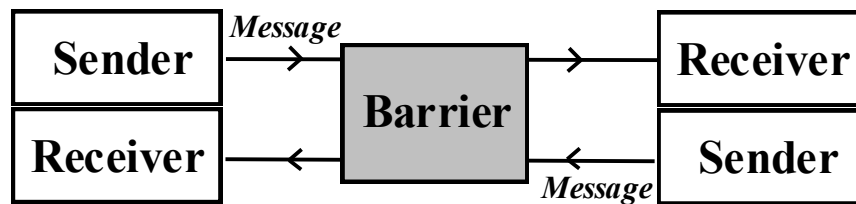
Types of Communication

- Formal** Routed through official channels, such as written memoranda, dissemination of information to all departments etc.
- Informal** Passed on by word of mouth, spontaneous meetings etc. There may be limitations on this type of information that will be passed on this way e.g. information relating to a particular group will most likely remain within the group (need to know?).
- Grapevine** Unofficial communication system used by people who have overheard private discussions, started rumours which generate **Chinese Whispers**, or seen confidential letters, which contain information likely to be of interest to the rest of the work force.

The Grapevine tends to contain inaccuracies as individuals often put their interpretations on messages before passing them on.

Barriers to Communication

As well as understanding the how and why we communicate you need to understand the barriers to good communication. Communication is not always successful because of the barriers that lay in-between the sender and the receiver.



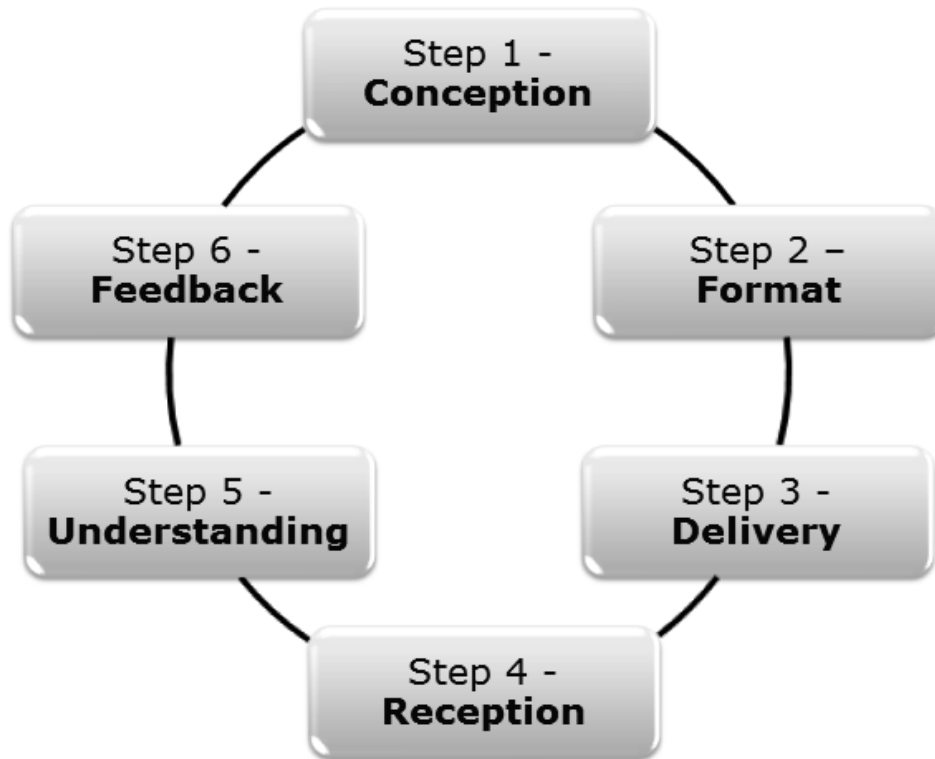
There are many barriers that can prevent people from communicating effectively. Some of the barriers are:-

- uncertainty of message
- faulty presentation
- limited capability of target
- unstated assumptions
- incompatible views
- deception
- lack of commitment/not a priority
- poor body language
- cultural differences
- prejudice
- not being clear on what message you want to get across
- interference
- lack of channels
(poor communication infrastructure)
- cumulative distortion
(Chinese whispers)
- choice of language or tone
- time
- wrong method/medium
- not listening
- personal issues/problems
- nerves



The Process of Communication

The process of communication may be considered in six steps.



- Step 1** **Conception** - the sender conceives the message
(Generated by Internal/External stimuli)
- Step 2** **Format** - The appropriate form for message chosen
(Written/Spoken Formal/Informal)
- Step 3** **Delivery** - The message is conveyed to target
(Use of suitable language/jargon/level)
- Step 4** **Reception** - The message is received by target
(Target receives the information and takes notice of it)
- Step 5** **Understanding** - The message is comprehensible
(Interpreted and useful to target)
- Step 6** **Feedback** - checking and testing of understanding
(ready act on message or receive the next part)

Summary

Good communication skills play a vital role in imparting information, to ensure that colleagues and customers understand messages important to the organisation and ourselves. It also enables us to build good relationships with those same colleagues and customers.

