

WEEK 10



After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Describe the communication process
2. Contrast the advantages and disadvantages of oral versus written communication
3. Compare the effectiveness of the chain, wheel and all-channel networks
4. Identify the factors affecting the use of the grapevine
5. Discuss how computer-aided technology is changing organizational communication
6. Identify common barriers to effective communication
7. Describe the potential problems in cross-cultural communication

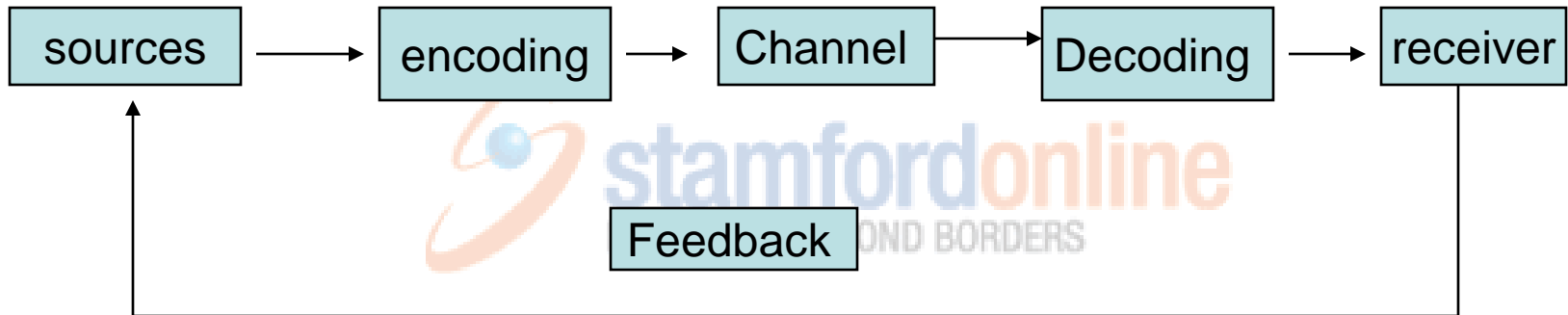
Communication

- Communication must include both transference and understanding the meaning
- Perfect communication, if there were such a thing, would exist when a thought or an idea was transmitted so that the mental picture perceived by the perceiver was exactly the same as that envisioned by the sender

Functions of Communication

- **Control**
 - Organizations have authority hierarchies and formal guidelines that employees are required to understand the first time they communicate any job-related grievance
 - Employees may need to communicate with their boss, to follow their job description, or compliance policy
- **Motivation**
 - By clarifying how well they have done the job
 - What can be improved regarding their performance
- **Emotional expression**
 - Express the feelings like frustration, gladness, fulfill social needs
- **Information**
 - Individuals and groups need to make decisions by transmitting the data to identify and evaluate alternative choices

The Communication Process Model



Direction of Communication

- **Downward** - flows from one level to a lower level
 - o It is used by the group leaders and managers to assign goals, provide job instructions, inform employees of policies and procedures, point out the problems that need attention, and feedback about performance
 - o When the manager sends letters to employees' home to advise them of the organization's new sick leave policy, it is using downward communication

Direction of Communication (cont')

- **Upward** - flows to a higher level
 - o It is used to provide feedback to higher-ups, inform them of progress toward goals, and relay current problems
 - o It keeps a manager aware of how employees feel about their jobs, co-workers, and the organization in general
 - o A manager relies on upward communication for ideas on how things can be improved
 - o The example of upward communication - suggestion box, grievance procedure, employees attitude survey
- **Lateral** - between people at the same level
 - o It takes place among members of the same work group, same level
 - o It is necessary to save time and facilitate coordination

Interpersonal Communication

- **Oral communication**
 - o Speeches, formal one-to-one and group discussions, informal rumours, grapevine
- **Written**
 - o Memos, letters, electronic mail, fax transmissions, organizational periodicals, notices placed, bulletin boards in words and symbols
- **Non-verbal**
 - o Body movements (rubbing the nose to show puzzlement, clasping arms to protect ourselves, lifting eyebrows to show disbelief, winking eye for intimacy)
 - o Facial expression (along with intonations, can show arrogance, fear, shyness)
 - o Physical distance

Intonation

Place of the emphasis	What it means
Why don't I take <u>you</u> to dinner tonight!!	I was going to take someone else
Why don't <u>I</u> take you to dinner tonight!!	Instead of the guy you were going with
Why <u>don't</u> I take you to dinner tonight!!	I am trying to find a reason why I should not take you
<u>Why</u> don't I take you to dinner tonight!!	Do you have a problem with me?
Why don't I <u>take</u> you to dinner tonight!!	Instead of going on your own
Why don't I take you to <u>dinner</u> tonight!!	Instead of lunch tomorrow
Why don't I take you to dinner <u>tonight!!</u>	Not tomorrow night

Oral Communication

- Advantages
 - Speed - conveys fact message
 - Feedback - response received in a minimal time
- Disadvantages
 - Potential for distorted message when passed through a number of people
 - Content at destination may be different from the origin (each person interprets the message differently)



Written Communication

Advantages

- Provide a tangible and verifiable record
- Record can be stored for an indefinite period of time (marketing plan of new product may need several months to compare and find out the deviation)
- Physically available for later reference
- More likely to be well thought-out, logical, and clear

Disadvantages

- Time consuming (to draft, write and correct)
- Lack of feedback (no built-in feedback mechanism)
- No guarantee how reader will interpret it (depends on reader's skills and qualifications)

Non-verbal Communication

- Two most important messages that body language conveys are:
 - the extent to which an individual likes another and is interested in his or her views (your boss may glance at the wristwatch frequently when you talk about the budget)
 - the relative perceived status between a sender and the receiver
- Meaning of words change with intonation, facial expression and physical distance

The Grapevine

- Not controlled by management
- Perceived as being more believable and reliable
- Largely used to serve self-interest
- Rumours emerge as a response to situations that are **important** to us, where there is **ambiguity** and under conditions that arouse **anxiety**
- Information on events of general interest tends to flow between the major functional groups (production, sales) rather than within them
- There is no evidence surfaced to suggest that any one group consistently acted as liaison, rather different types of information passed through different liaison persons

The Grapevine (cont')

- Rumours emerge as a response to situations that create **anxiety**
- When there is ambiguity and under conditions that arouse anxiety
- The secrecy and competition that typically prevail in large organizations - around issues such as the appointment of new bosses, the relocation of offices, downsizing decisions, and the realignment of work assignments - create conditions that encourage and sustain rumours on the uncertainty underlying the rumour until they are fulfilled or until the anxiety is reduced

Suggestions for reducing the negatives

- consequences of rumours

1. Announce timetables for making important decisions
2. Explain decisions and behaviours that may appear inconsistent and 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

Computer-aided Communication

- **E-mail (Electronic mail)** - uses the internet and enriched by computer-aided technologies
- **Intranet** - are private, organization-wide information networks that look and act like a Web site but to which only people in an organization have access
- **Extranet links** - that connects internal employees with selected suppliers, customers, and strategic partners (e.g. an extranet allows GM employees to send electronic messages and documents to its steel and rubber suppliers as well as to communicate with its dealer)
- **Video-conferencing** - an extension of intranet or extranet systems, it permits employees in an organization to have meetings with people at different locations

E-Mail

- Can be quickly written, edited and stored
- Can be easily distributed to many people with a click of a mouse
- Can be read at the convenience of the recipient
- Cost is lower than printed form (easy to duplicate and distribute a comparable letter or brochure)
- Can be impersonal (waiting for response, junk mail, irrelevant messages)
- Lacks emotional cues (lack of tone of voice, face-to-face message)



Intranet and Extranet Links

- Intranets give access only to employees and are used to communicate internal messages
- IBM recently brought together 52,000 of its employees online for what is called a WorldJam, using the company's intranet. IBMers everywhere swapped ideas on everything from how to retain employees to how to work faster, without undermining quality
- Extranets link employees with selected suppliers, customers and strategic partners to facilitate communication
- Wal-Mart vendors are linked into its extranet system, allowing Wal-Mart buyers to easily communicate with its suppliers and for suppliers to monitor the inventory status of its products at Wal-Mart stores

Videoconferencing

- Permits employees to conduct interactive meetings without being present physically in the same room
- Live audio and video images allow them to see, hear, and talk with each other
- Videoconferencing was basically conducted from special rooms equipped with TV camera located at company's facilities
- More recently, cameras and microphones are being attached to individual computer, allowing people to participate in videoconferences without leaving their desk
- Becoming more accessible to desktops with new technology

Barriers to Effective Communication

- **Filtering** - A sender's manipulation of information so that it will be seen more favourably by the receiver
- For instance, a manager tells the boss exactly what his boss wants to hear
- **Selective Perception** - It appears again because the receivers in the communication process selectively see and hear based on their needs, motivations, experience, background, and other personal characteristics
- **Information Overload** – A condition in which information inflow exceeds an individual's processing capacity
- With e-mails, phone calls, faxes, meetings, and the need to keep current in one's field, more and more managers and professionals are complaining that they are suffering information overload

Barriers to Effective Communication (cont')

- **Emotions** - How the receiver feels at time of receipt of a communication will influence how he/she interprets it (normally influenced by the anger, depression or happy mood)
- **Language** - Age, education and cultural background are the more obvious variables that influence the language a person uses and the definitions he/she gives to words (jargon, bombastic words)
- **Communication Apprehension** - Undue tension and anxiety about oral communication, written communication or both
- E.g. orally apprehensive people may find it difficult to talk with others face-to-face. They become extremely anxious when they use the phone. As a result, they may rely more on e-mail or faxes

Current Issues in Communication

1. Communication barriers between women and men
2. “Politically Correct” communication
3. Cross-cultural communication



Communication Barriers between Women and Men

- Men speak and hear a language of status, power and independence
- For many men, conversations are a means to preserve independence and maintain status
- Women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy
- For many women, conversations are negotiations for closeness in which people try to seek and give confirmation and support

Communication Barriers between Women and Men (cont')

- Men frequently complain that women talk on and on about their problems, and criticize men for not listening
- What is happening is that when men hear a problem, they assert their desire for independence and control by offering solutions. Many women view telling a problem as a means of closeness
- Many women present the problem to gain support and connection, not to gain advice
- Women tend to be less boastful than men
- Men see the apology 'I am sorry' as a weakness. For women, 'I am sorry' does not mean weak, it is an expression of understanding and caring about other people's feelings

“Politically Correct” Communication

- In an increasingly diverse workforce, we must be sensitive to how words might offend others
- But eliminating words reduces options for conveying messages in the cleanest and most accurate form
- For instance, most of us have cleansed the words *handicapped, blind and elderly* from our vocabulary - and replaced them with terms like *physically challenged, visually impaired and senior*
- The terms like *death, garbage, quotas and women are* replaced by negative *patient outcome, post consumer waste material, educational equity, people and gender*
- When we further replace these words with new terms whose meanings are less well understood, we have reduced the likelihood that our messages will be received as we had intended them

Cultural Barriers

1. Semantics - words mean different things to different people
2. Word connotations - words imply different things in different languages (e.g. negotiation between American and Japanese executives are made difficult because the Japanese word 'hai' translates as 'yes' but its connotation may be 'yes, I am listening', rather than 'yes, I agree.')
3. Tone differences - in some cultures tone changes depends on the context
4. Differences among perceptions - different world views (e.g. Thais perceive 'no' differently than do American because the former have no such word in their vocabulary)

Cultural Context

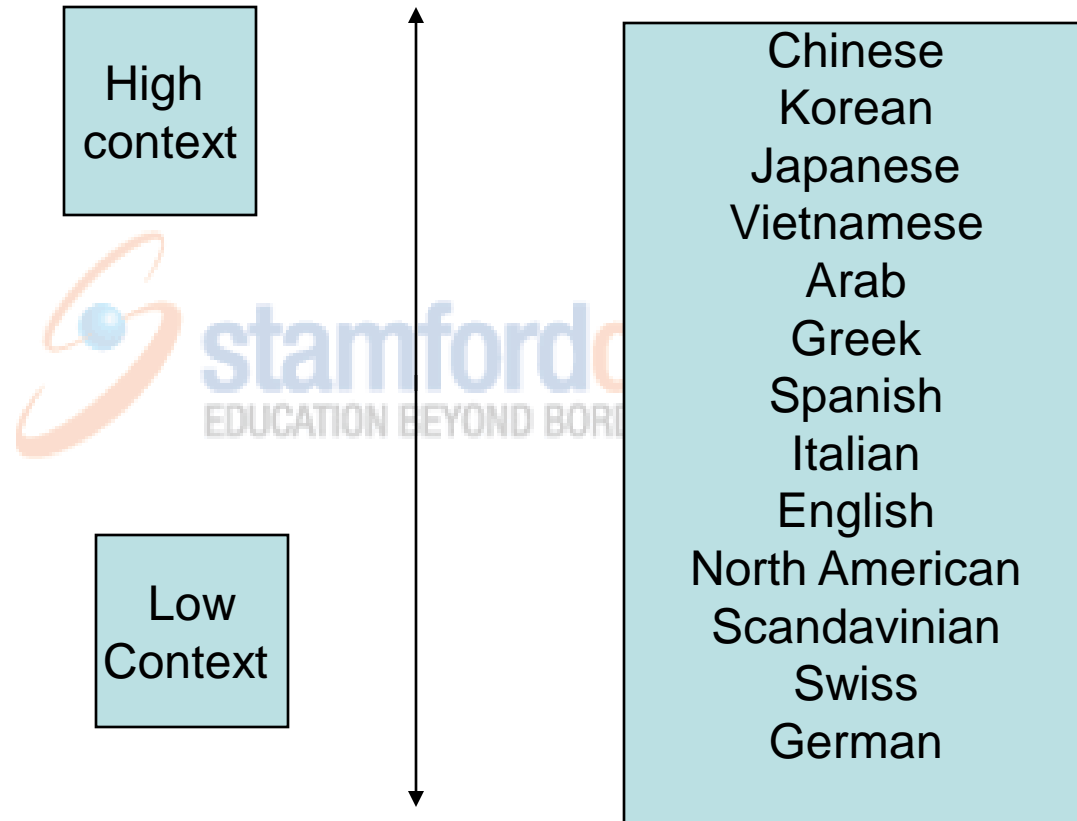
High-context cultures

Rely heavily on nonverbal and subtle situational cues when communicating with others

Low-context cultures

Rely essentially on words to convey meaning

High- VS Low-Context Culture



A Cultural Guide

1. Assume differences until similarity is proved
2. Emphasize description rather than interpretation or evaluation (it is based on the observer's culture and background than on observing and interpreting the situation from differing point of view)
3. Practice empathy
4. Treat your interpretation as a working hypothesis (carefully assess the feedback provided by recipients to see if it confirms hypothesis)

Implications for Managers

- Greater certainty leads to greater satisfaction:
 - Use multiple channels
 - Be consistent with verbal and non-verbal
- Effective communication improves productivity and motivation
- Convey honest and accurate information during hiring process to reduce turnover

Summary

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