

SAMPLE

Introduction

Lesson Aim

Explain the communication process.

Communication is essential for humans to express our feelings: interpret information: inform others and to avoid confusion that can lead to future problems. It also allows us to keep order and to control otherwise potentially disastrous or dangerous situations.

What is Communication?

Communication is about passing messages from one to another. Messages can take place via a medium, such as a phone or email.

One way communication is when the receiver cannot respond.

Two way communication is when the receiver can respond to the message.

There are a number of different forms of communication that should be considered.

Consider the following two definitions of communication:

"The process by which information is passed between individuals or organisations, by means of previously agreed symbols."

from Communications in Business by Peter Little (Longman 1974)

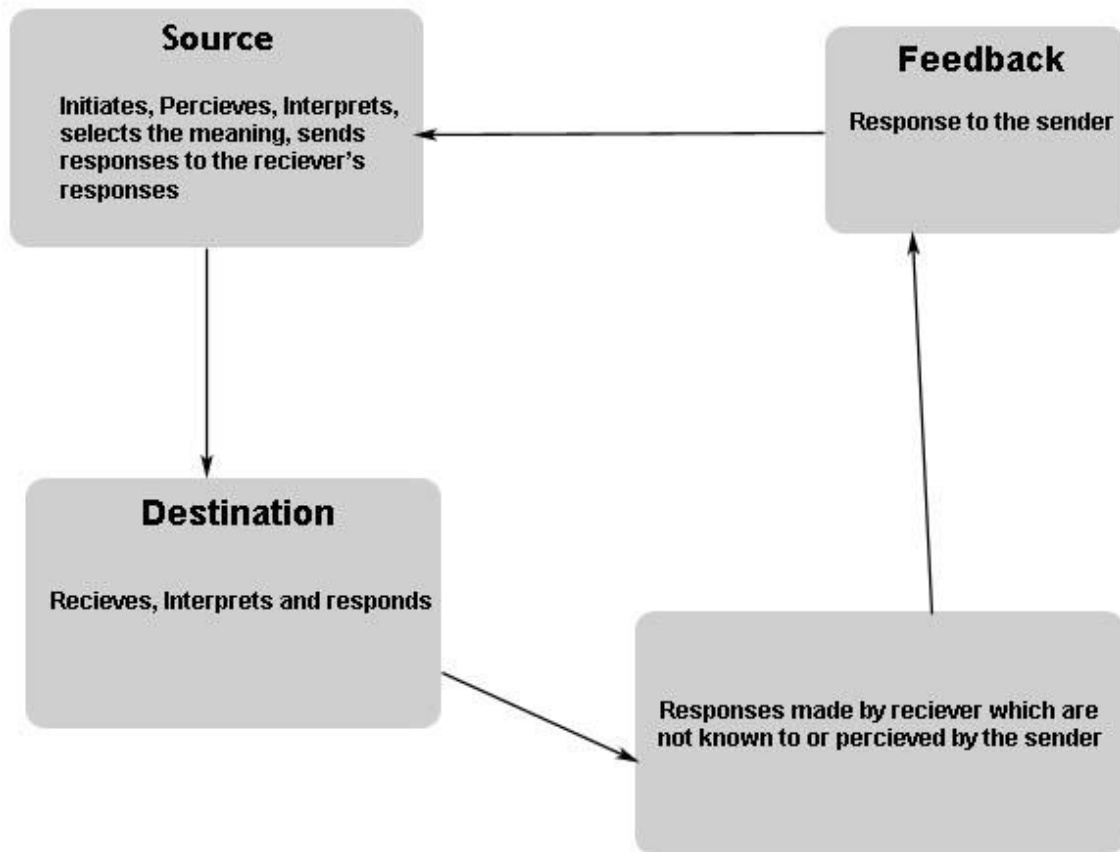
"Communication is the process of detecting, assigning and organizing meanings and values. It frequently involves an attempt to transfer such meanings and values to other people in ways which will develop response and affect behaviour. It is thus, very often, a relating and interacting process."

from Handbook of Communication Skills by Tolmie and Tolmie (PrenticeHall)

There are some basic things we can say about communication:

- It never occurs in a vacuum.
- There needs to be both someone who gives the message and someone who receives the message.
- The giver and the receiver deal with personal perceptions.
- They may perceive or interpret the same thing (this is effective communication) or they may perceive or interpret the message to be other than what was intended (this is ineffective communication).
- Items of communication never have fully developed meanings.
- There are an infinite number of ways something can be communicated.
- The meaning will change (or develop) as a message is explained more fully, utilising more of the ways it can be communicated.
- Good communication involves interaction. It is not just "A" telling "B"; it should also involve "B" responding, then "A" replying to the response. In other words, there should be feedback.

The following diagram explains the basic pathways involved in communication.



There are two main forms of communication –

- Verbal Communication
- Non-verbal Communication

Verbal communication is communication that makes

use of words and sounds, such as –

- Speaking
- Mmms/ahs etc

Whereas non verbal communication relies on –

- Symbols (words, symbols, road signs)
- Gestures (nod, shake of head, wave of hand)
- Facial expressions (frown, smile, raised eyebrow etc)

Non-verbal behaviour may confirm or repeat what is being said during the counselling process. Studies show that between 65% - 95% of a message can be shown non-verbally. Body language may also emphasise what is being said, add intensity to what is being said or be used to control or regulate what is being said. There is little agreement on where the boundary between verbal and non-verbal communication can be drawn. This is especially so for non-word utterances such as clearing our throat.

As with other cultural factors, non-verbal communication can be interpreted by the recipient of the message. The interpretation and recognition of non-verbal messages can be subconscious and misleading in intercultural situations.

Whenever trying to understand non-verbal cues, we must exercise caution. The context in which it takes place provides a key to understanding.

For example, matching a person's body language is a great way to build rapport with them, and this can obviously be very useful when trying to develop a working relationship with a business client. Matching a client's behaviour may include

Matching non-verbal behaviour (however, if the client adopts a defensive posture, such as folding their arms and crossing their legs, then you may not wish to adopt this stance, but rather maintain a more open posture that signifies openness toward the client)

- Physical proximity (leaning forward towards one another represents involvement, whereas slouching back represents disinterest or boredom)
- Use of movement
- Facial expression
- Eye contact
- Posture
- Physiological responses

(e.g. crying, sweating, trembling. A calm, accepting stance should be taken when physiological responses are expressed)

Non-verbal information can be used to get in tune with the client.

There are two main types of non-verbal communication –

Active behaviour – consciously controlled.

Passive behaviour – unconsciously displayed.

There are eight further main categories of non-verbal communication, these include:

Kinesics is nonverbal behaviour related to movement of part or the whole body. It is the most obvious form of nonverbal communication, but it can be the most confusing as it can have various meanings. Kinesics can be subdivided into five categories –

Regulators	These are non-verbal signs that regulate and maintain the flow of speech in a conversation, such as nodding your head, eye movements and so on. They give feedback that the person has understood a message, but may be confusing.
Emblems	Nonverbal messages that have a verbal counterpart. For example, in Britain putting the forefinger and middle finger erect can mean victory if your hand is one way round, or an insult if the hand is another way round. In America, it may just mean the number 2. In Australia, it may be seen as insulting.
Adapters	These include posture changes, movements at a low level of awareness to make us feel more comfortable.
Illustrators	These are less linked to specific words, but consciously illustrate what is being said. For example, holding your hands wide apart shows that something is big. However, use of illustrators depends on cultures. Some cultures will use more illustrators than others.
Affective Displays	These are body or facial movements that display a certain emotion. For example, showing anger. They can be subconscious, so this can be bewildering across different cultures.

Occulesics – This is the way the eyes are used during communication. This can be maintaining or avoiding eye contact. Occulesic movements are also associated with kinesic movements. For example, raising your eyebrow when looking at another person. Use of occulesics will again depend on culture. Lowering a gaze in some cultures may convey respect, but in others may be insulting. Length of eye contact is also different across cultures. In some cultures extended eye contact may be thought rude.

Haptics is touching behaviour. Touching can occur in different circumstances during a conversation. Some cultures touch a lot, whilst in other cultures, touching may make people feel uncomfortable. Haptics can be hostile (hitting, kicking) or show the degree of intimacy. Such as whether a relationship is professional, polite, warm, loving or sexual. In a counselling situation, it will be important for the counsellor to maintain a physical distance to avoid any misunderstandings in relation to physical contact.

Proxemics is our personal space and how it is structured. Personal space is the distance away from other persons and is a powerful non-verbal tool. The further an angry person is away from us, the less threatening we may perceive them to be, for example. If an angry person gets closer, the expression of anger may seem more threatening.

Use of Voice

When we speak it is not just what we say that conveys a message, but also how we say it.

When seeking to create an empathic relationship it is important to bear in mind the effects of:

- Tone of voice (this can convey happiness, sadness, anxiety and so on)
- Clarity and volume (clients may speak less clearly and more quietly about issues of concern, and loudly when expressing anger and so on)
- Speed (some clients may rush through topics that are distressing to them)
- Word spacing, pauses and emphases also offer valuable clues as to what is of importance to the client

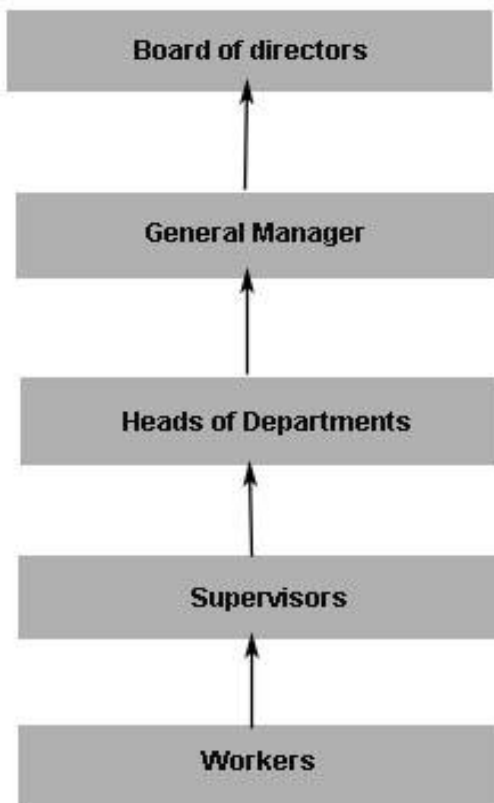
It is perhaps most important in the creation of an empathic relationship to try to match the response of the client. That is, if the client talks fast, you talk slightly faster. Going against the client may only serve to upset them and make them feel that you are against them, rather than on their side. By doing this you can eventually dictate the pace by convincing the client that you are there for them.

Communication in a Work Situation

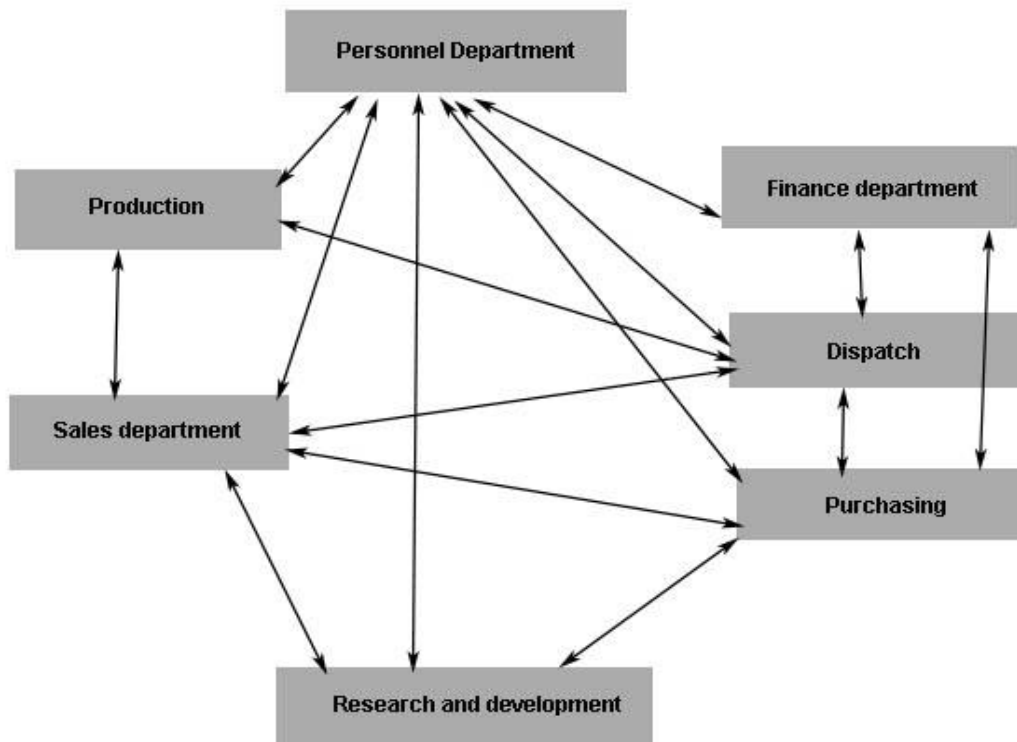
In a work situation - without communication skills, little co operation would occur between management and employees; in management and supervision, good communication skills are therefore essential.

Term	Definition
Vertical Communications	Messages sent between staff belonging to different hierarchies within an organisation. Eg. An office junior to a manager.
Horizontal Communications (see below)	Communications between staff on the same level. Eg. Manager to manager.
Internal Communication (see below)	Takes place within in the same business.
External Communication	Communications between the business and outside organisations and individuals.
Formal communications	These are official messages within an organisation, such as company memos or reports.
Informal communication	These are unofficial or informal messages within an organisation eg. Office gossip.
Communication Channel	The path taken by a message.

Vertical Internal Communications in a business



Horizontal Internal Communications



It is important in any organisation to define the roles of both individuals and groups. If responsibilities are clearly defined/delineated, communication becomes much easier and more effective.

Communication can have a big impact on the efficiency of a business. Effective communication can mean that –

- Staff understand their role, responsibilities, tasks, deadlines and so on.
- Staff are motivated, as managers listen to their suggestions and respond.
- Customers enjoy a good relationship with their business. There is effective communication and complaints are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Poor communication can generate problems which in the work place can lead to:

- Loss of income
- Loss of time - production
- Accidents
- Loss of respect
- Loss of employees
- Loss of customers

When you are communicating effectively you are making your message understood without confusion.

Communication is a two-way process i.e. a person is sending a message and another is receiving it.

Communication is not effective if it is one-way i.e. the information is sent but not understood by the person receiving it: or the receiver does not indicate that they do not understand the message.

The communication process is not just restricted to the communicator relaying a message to the receiver. It also involves the receiver of the message relaying information back to the sender and includes any other person that also needs to receive and understand the information given.

Confusion is avoided if the sender understands the process of clear and concise communication and checks to ensure that the receiver has understood the message.

In the work place the manager or supervisor has the responsibility to ensure that the process of communication is constantly taking place and that the most effective method of communication is used. This means that they will be taking into account the receiver and the environment in which the communication is taking place.

What are the Barriers to Effective Communication?

When understanding is blocked communication becomes ineffective resulting in the kinds of problems listed earlier. There are many barriers to communication including:

- Using unnecessarily complicated language or words.
- Using jargon – not everyone will understand jargon that may be industry specific or regional.
- Language difference – it is important to ensure that the receiver has understood your message.
- Your meaning – make sure that both you and the receiver of your message both understand what you are trying to convey. Poorly expressed communication can alter the meaning. Also do not assume that the receiver will know the importance of your message. Communications fail when the receiver does not understand what the sender is trying to say. This can also occur when the sender uses jargon not understood by the receiver.
- Preconceptions - don't presume that the receiver of your message automatically knows what you are trying to communicate; or that they will let you know that they do not understand.
- Fear or anxiety - nervous receivers may be concentrating more on how they are feeling than the communicator if they feel anxious.
- Overload – giving too much information at once, making it impossible to absorb. Excessive communication can lead to information overload. Too much paperwork or too many emails can lead to inefficiency and miscommunication. For example, members of staff receiving hundreds of messages via email each day.
- Whereas, insufficient communication – if staff are not told what is going on, they can feel “left in the dark” and demotivated. It is about finding the balance between overload and insufficient communication.

- Physical barriers – i.e. when using telephones or other such forms of communication poor reception can result in the message not being heard.
- Unrealistic demands- don't presume that the receiver is more capable than they actually are.

All of this can result in higher costs and inefficiency, so more resources are needed to achieve the same results. Training staff to ensure they use an appropriate medium and send accurate, clear messages can help communication throughout an organisation.



Remember the **Who, What, When, Where** and **How** of the communication process:

1. Who do you want to communicate to?
2. What do you want to communicate?
3. When is it best to communicate?
4. Where is it best to carry out the communication?
5. How is the communication best undertaken?

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Giving orders and instructing are very different processes. An order tells someone what to do. Instructions tell a person what to do and how to do it. In most communication situations, it is better to give instructions, as that process is focused on making your requirements more clear and ensuring understanding.

Workplace Procedure For Giving Verbal Instruction

1. Ensure you have the person's attention
2. State the job and its objective
3. Check the person's existing knowledge
4. Explain the importance of the job.
5. Give the instructions in the order they are to be carried out
6. Repeat or emphasise the key point.
7. Have the person explain the task back to you
8. Clarify the expected standards and desired outcome

9. Encourage questions

10 . Repeat or clarify as needed.

If the instructions are not correctly carried out

1. Tell the person what was wrong or not done.

2. Ask why the task was not done or done correctly.

3. If he/she just didn't get to it, explain again the importance of the task.

4. If he/she was not sure how to do it, or to what level, go over instructions again.

5. Invite any questions and answer them.

6. Ask the worker to explain the job fully before doing it.

7. State again the personal responsibility of the worker.

8. Allow questions

9. Get the person's verbal agreement to do the task within the given time.

Evaluation Sheet For Giving Instructions

Use this sheet to evaluate your own or someone else's skills in giving instructions. Complete the sheet after observing the person giving instructions in a workplace situation, or after you have practiced giving instructions.

Behaviours to be rated	Rating		
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Very good
Introduction - Did the person giving instructions take steps to gain the other person's attention? Did he/she explain why the instructions were important?			
The instructions - Were the instructions given clearly? Was a desired outcome specified? Were steps presented in the order to be carried out?			
Tone and attitude - Did the person giving instructions speak respectfully? Was the other person able to ask questions comfortably? Did the person giving instructions give the other person time to think about the instructions and remember them?			
Create interest - Did the person giving instructions emphasise any exciting, challenging or beneficial aspects of the job to be done? Did the person try to gain the other person's cooperation, rather than just give orders?			
Confirm understanding - Did the person giving instructions invite the listener to ask questions or discuss possible difficulties in carrying out the instructions? Did the other person seem confident or not confident of his/her ability to carry out the instructions? Was additional information given as needed to ensure the instructions were correctly understood?			
Summarise to help recall - Did the person giving the instructions clearly repeat the key steps and stages to the other person. Did he/she give any additional tools to help the other person remember (such as saying, Remember, there are three main steps).			
Clarify expectations - Did the person giving the instructions clearly state the desired outcomes? Did he/she specify the quality expected and give the other person a way of knowing when that standard is reached?			
Conclude - Did the person summarise the main steps and goals of the task to be done? Was the other person encouraged to ask further questions?			

SET TASK

Look at the evaluation sheet on giving instruction. If you have a job, take note of the way orders are given by a manager or a supervisor at your work, over the period of a week.

If you don't have a job, find a friend or family member who does and get that person to role play a workplace situation with you (e.g. he or she can pretend to be a boss giving orders, and you can pretend to be the worker taking the order). Fill out the assessment sheet on the next page, and think about how the order giving might have been better done.