

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION FOR MANAGERS

SECOND EDITION



 Pearson

PAYAL MEHRA

Business Communication for Managers

Second Edition

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Business Communication for Managers

Second Edition

PAYAL MEHRA

Indian Institute of Management Lucknow



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Preface

The value of communication, particularly in business situations, cannot be overemphasized. It is the bedrock on which all important organizational functions are based. It facilitates interaction at personal, interpersonal, and team levels for the fulfilment of organizational goals and objectives.

The second edition is an improvement on the first edition in that short cases have been added to each chapter (except chapter 2 and 14). This would enable the readers to have practical insights on the realities of communication at the workplace. The second edition also includes interviews and comments of seasoned professionals, on “what constitutes effective communication at the workplace”. I hope that you enjoy reading the second edition; feel free to pen down your comments and suggestions to me at: payal@iiml.ac.in

COMMUNICATION IS EVOLVING RAPIDLY

Communication has evolved over the years. Face-to-face interactions of the past have given way to technology-driven channels of communication in present times. Communication audit, crisis communication, financial communication, communication beyond boundaries, and corporate communication are the new buzzwords in the language of business.

It is not difficult to predict the new frontiers of business communication. In a borderless world (well, almost), technology will dictate the form of communication, making it necessary for us to revisit the norms of direct and indirect communication. A few experts also predict the gradual demise of face-to-face interaction in business situations. Whatever the case may be, the message—with its focus on what is to be said, how and when it is to be said, and at what cost—is becoming the uncrowned king of business communication. Regardless of the channel, form, and language used, designing messages to achieve the objective of the organization is the crux of business communication. This is why it is imperative for management students to learn how to communicate effectively in a business environment. For this to happen, management students need to understand and appreciate the concepts that underlie workplace communication, and this book is an endeavor in this direction.

Business Communication for Managers, aimed at all MBA students, begins by briefly analysing the various theories of communication because I believe that a sound theoretical knowledge always helps to improve one’s grasp over the practical aspects of communication. It demonstrates methods of effective communication through examples, real-life scenarios and role-plays. It adopts a multi-dimensional and integrative approach to solve communication dilemmas at the workplace and touches upon the thoughts related to attention, perception, empathy, and professionalism.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Chapter 1, “Introduction to Business Communication”, introduces students to the value of communication in the business world and talks about barriers to the same.

Chapter 2, “Theories of Interpersonal and Organizational Communication”, presents the various theories associated with communication, and discusses why it is good to have a sound knowledge of communication theories in order to communicate effectively.

Chapter 3, “Interpersonal Communication”, explores the complexity of interpersonal communication as well as the key issues about relationships that influence the same.

Chapter 4, “Analysing Transactions: The Units of Communication”, deals with the analysis of transactions and differentiates between healthy and unhealthy interactions.

Chapter 5, “The Language of Persuasion”, talks about persuasion and how it differs from influence. It also instructs students on how to write persuasive documents.

Chapter 6, “Communication in a Diverse Work Environment”, discusses the role of culture in shaping perspectives as well as methods to communicate effectively across cultures.

Chapter 7, “Crisis Communication Strategies”, distinguishes crisis communication from crisis management and talks about effective communication measures during crisis. It also provides insights about organizational communication strategies to be implemented during and after a crisis.

Chapter 8, “Business Meetings and Negotiations”, describes the key attributes of a successful meeting and teaches students a host of things like creating an agenda for a meeting and taking down minutes.

Chapter 9, “Preparing and Delivering Presentations”, captures the difference between presentations, student lectures, and talks. It offers tips and suggestions about presenting with confidence and chutzpah. With the help of numerous examples and illustrations, this chapter emphasizes preparation, delivery, and style as keys to an effective presentation.

Chapter 10, “Introduction to Business Writing”, introduces business writing and emphasizes the value of writing. It talks about the essentials of business writing, particularly business grammar.

Chapter 11, “The Writing Strategy”, deals with the formulation of a writing strategy and provides ways of organizing and arranging the information to be communicated.

Chapter 12, “Business Letters, Memorandums, and E-mails”, talks about the anatomy of business documents and, with the help of numerous pertinent examples, discusses the art of writing business letters, memorandums, and e-mails.

Chapter 13, “Planning, Composing, and Writing Reports”, discusses the principal considerations in drafting a report and creating a structured as well as persuasive report and proposal.

Chapter 14, “Employment Communication”, describes employment communication strategies and ways to influence recruiters. This chapter prepares the student in all the important areas of employment communication—from writing a cover letter to facing interviews

FEATURES OF THE BOOK

Learning objectives

After completing these chapters, you should be able to:

- Understand the value of communication in the business world.
- Appreciate the role of technology in shaping business communication.
- Appreciate the significance of maintaining lines of communication.
- Learn about the barriers to communication and their influence on organizational and personal communication.
- Understand the role played by the internal communications department in facilitating effective communication.

The **learning objectives** include a set of salient points that students need to focus on while going through the chapter.

Communication Bytes

Communication Bytes provide additional information regarding the topic being discussed in the text.

 **Communication Bytes 1.1**

The advisory firm Corporate Executive Board (CEB) conducted a survey that revealed that, in order to retain talented people, a company should direct its employees towards the right goals through proper communication. Just 21 per cent of the surveyed employees were found to be completely aware of, and working towards, the company's goals. Poor communication and an incompetent manager might be the reason behind this. If the manager-led approach doesn't work, then the Town Hall approach, in which the senior management engages directly in a dialogue with employees, might be successful. The survey also revealed that employees who were more engaged in the process of job design were likely to be more satisfied with their jobs.

A major Indian IT company recently caught an employee in the finance department embezzling funds. In order to avoid such cases, it is always important to improve employee confidence in the organization. The top managerial rung should be consistent in behaving ethically and dealing decisively with misconduct. It is also important for the management to recognize the emotional toll that recession takes on employees and to ensure that communication regarding finances is always frank and focused on employee concerns.


Source: Adapted from Mahima Puri, "High Performers Head for Exit During Economic Recovery," *The Economic Times* (March 15, 2010), available at: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/jobs/High-performers-head-for-exit-during-economic-recovery/articleshow/5683778.cms>, accessed on January 4, 2011.

Point/Counterpoint

POINT	Good communication can only be in proper English.	Good communication requires clarity of message, irrespective of the language used.	COUNTERPOINT
	Communication occurs when the message is sent.	Communication occurs when the message is received.	
	Communication is a natural process.	Communication is an acquired/learnt process.	
	One cannot change one's basic style of communication.	Communication can always be improved, depending on the feedback one gets or takes.	
	Good communicators are excellent orators.	Good communicators speak and listen equally well.	
	Communication is about maintaining relationships within an organization.	Communication is also about getting a task done in the minimum possible time and within a reasonable cost.	
	Communication is abstract.	Communication can be measured.	

Point/Counterpoint lists the pros and cons of a specific debate. This helps students understand both sides of an argument.

Information Bytes

 **Information Bytes 1.1**

Job applicants at a certain multinational fast food joint in Japan are asked to describe their most pleasant experiences. Managers then evaluate applicants by matching their facial expressions with the experiences they recount. If the smile is perceived to be hypocritical, they are not recruited for customer service.

Information Bytes provide additional, and sometimes anecdotal, information about a specific topic in order to make it more interesting for students.

Exhibits within the chapter range from simple figures and illustrations to sample letters, e-mails, notices, and memos that help students have a better understanding of business communication.

Exhibits

Exhibit 12.8

Example of a Letter to a Client

Megatel Corporation Limited
MEGATEL! MEGA DEAL! MEGA OFFER!

Dear Pankaj,

What would you do if we were to offer you a mobile phone as well as two software packages of your choice along with every laptop you buy? We know that you would jump at the offer! Well, this is not a dream, but a reality, a never-before combination from Megatel—the quality service company.

Our company boasts of the finest brands. Nowhere else will you find the coveted big five—Apple, HCL, Compaq, Sony, and Toshiba—under one banner. Not only that, the cherry on the cake comes from our offer of giving away any one cell phone set with this deal. These are not ordinary phones, but the top-of-the-line Nokia 3456 and Motorola 2567 phones. You'll be spoilt for choice!

This is a special offer for our most valued customers on the occasion of our tenth birthday. Look at the benefits it gives you:

- We have 25 accredited service centres. This ensures that you'll always have a service centre nearby.
- We have the latest software of your choice. We have something for everyone in your house—from games and educational software to SPSS.
- We give you personalized attention. We're just a call away at our toll-free number: 05223-333-0033. Call us for prompt service!

So book your laptops right away. Search for details on our Web site www.megatel.org, or call our service representative Ashutosh at our toll-free number.

With regards,

Sirish Sahni,
Area Manager
Megatel Corporation Limited

Address the recipient as friend. Ask a question that would result in you listing the main benefits of your offer.

Answer the question in one or two sentences.

Explain why your product or service is essential or superior to other similar offerings. Address doubts.

Use easy-to-read bulleted points to point out why your product stands out.

Close by guiding the customers to action.

Summary

The **Summary** captures the main topics covered in the chapter for a quick review.

SUMMARY

- Technological advancements, diversity, globalization of business, growth in legal issues, and time constraints have made communication a key skill in the knowledge economy.
- Communication is rather complex. This is because everyone has their particular mental frames that guide their speech. Sensitivity to the “otherness” of others improves communication considerably.
- Barriers to communication can be resolved by knowing what, how, when, and where to communicate.
- First impressions are usually based on the visual impact, followed by the verbal impact. It is thus important to control one's body language and build a positive perception about oneself.
- Internal communications plays a key role in organizational communication systems by regulating the flow of information through communication media. New media are being harnessed to create links between employees.
- The proposed model of effective communication strategy at the workplace emphasizes “measurement” among other factors. Communication initiatives must be measurable with a proper “audit.” This is bound to give them the respectability they deserve.

Assess Your Knowledge

ASSESS YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Describe the process of communication. Do you think that the process has undergone a radical transformation with the introduction of newer forms of communication?
2. In what way can mental barriers hinder communication?
3. How do you distinguish between synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication? Do you agree with the statement that face-to-face communication has declined over the years? Give reasons for your view.
4. Distinguish between internal and external communication in an organization.
5. What are the benefits of internal communications? How has Google crafted its internal communications strategy?
6. What are the benefits of keeping the lines of communication open in an organization?
7. Write short notes on the following:
 - The human moment at work
 - Blogs as tools for organizational communications
 - Mental filters
 - How to make others *listen* to you

Assess Your Knowledge consists of review questions designed to assess one's understanding of the topics discussed in the chapter.

Use Your Knowledge

USE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Hari is proposing a reduction in travelling expenses and the entertainment budget for client meetings. To assess the reaction of the 23 sales representatives and ask for their suggestions on how to reduce expenses, he decides to call a meeting. This would be on a Monday, when all the sales professionals touch base at the company headquarters. Additionally, Hari wanted to bring up a few issues relating to discipline and filing of weekly sales reports. Also, there is a conference scheduled for sales professionals in Singapore, for which he wanted to invite two nominations. Based on this information, answer the following:
 - Frame an agenda for the meeting.
 - How would the manager prepare a mental frame to deal with opposition to the proposal?

Use Your Knowledge comprises questions requiring students to apply their knowledge of business communication to real-life situations.

Web-based Exercises

Web-based Exercises

contains analytical as well as comprehensive questions that students have to answer with the help of information from various Web sites and online resources on business communication.

WEB-BASED EXERCISES

1. Visit <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/body-speaks.htm>. Explain the differences in body language across countries.
2. Visit <http://eqi.org/summary.htm>. What does the author mean by "being emotionally literate." What kind of semantics are used when one uses language that is high on emotional intelligence?

Further Reading

provides a list of various books and articles students can look up in order to enhance their knowledge of business communication.

Further Reading**FURTHER READING**

- Eric Berne, *Games People Play* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964).
- Thomas A. Harris, *I'm OK. You're OK* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1967).
- C. Steiner, *Scripts People Live: Transactional Analysis of Life Scripts* (New York: Grove Press, 1971).
- D. Tannen, "The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why?" *Harvard Business Review* (1995) Prod.# 95510-PDF-ENG, 138–148.

Appendices 1 to 6**Appendices 1 to 6**

provide examples of various documents related to business communication, including samples of a long report and a proposal.

SUMMARY					
Meeting topic	Topic name				
Date	Date/month/year	From	hh:mm	To	hh:mm
Location	Location details	Note taker	First name Last name	Duration	00:00 hrs

AGENDA	
Time	Topic
15 mins	1. Topic name and brief description
35 mins	2. Topic name and brief description
10 mins	3. Topic name and brief description

PARTICIPANTS				
#	Name	Position	Present?	Reason for absence
1	First name Last name		Y	
2	First name Last name		Y	
4	First name Last name		N	Out sick

MEETING NOTES	
1	Mention significant points of the meetings in third person and using bullets.
2	Mention significant points of the meetings.
3	Mention significant points of the meetings.

MAJOR DECISIONS TAKEN			
#	Task	Person responsible	Due date
1	Brief description	Department name or First name Last name	Date/Month/Year
2	Brief description	Department name or First name Last name	To be decided
3	Brief description	Department name or First name Last name	Date/Month/Year

Appendix 7

The Missing Assistant Manager

You are a senior manager in World Works Ltd., a company producing customized software for leading business clients. One morning, you want one of the assistant managers, Rajeev, to handle an emergency. However, you learn that he has still not reached the office. You are informed that Rajeev was working late the previous day. Even then, you are annoyed at his unpunctuality. You had noticed Rajeev coming late to office on several previous occasions. When Rajeev eventually reaches the office in the second half, you decide to talk to him.

Identify a fellow student to play the role of Rajeev. List the key points that you would like to convey to Rajeev. As the senior-most member of the team, what steps will you take to ensure that such a situation does not arise in the future?

Chapters to go through before attempting this: Chapter 2, “Theories of Interpersonal and Organizational Communication”; Chapter 3, “Interpersonal Communication”; Chapter 4, “Analysing Transactions: The Units of Communication”.

Appendix 7 includes several role plays designed to help students apply their theoretical business communication knowledge to practical workplace situations.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PACKAGE

The complete teaching and learning package, available at www.pearsoned.co.in/payalmehra, includes PowerPoint slides and an extensive instructor’s manual.

- **Instructor’s manual:** The instructor’s manual provides a chapter overview as well as hints to the relevant chapter-end problems and the role plays which are part of Appendix 8.
- **PowerPoint slides:** Detailed lecture slides provide an overview of the various important concepts discussed in each chapter. They are also a handy teaching tool.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The book owes its existence to many conversations and collaborations with students, professors, and mentors. I would particularly like to acknowledge the learning that I have gleaned from discussions with my mentors Mathukutty M. Monipally and Asha Kaul from IIM Ahmedabad, and Renu Luthra, J. V. Vaishampayan, and Nina David from the University of Lucknow. All of them are teachers of considerable eminence and standing, and have been instrumental in shaping my thoughts as a teacher.

The book has been in the making for quite some time and many people have contributed towards its completion. The role-plays have been contributed by my students at IIM Lucknow in the form of an assignment on an experience in miscommunication. I converted these select experiences into themes for role plays. The sample of a long report as part of Appendix 5 has also been created by my students. I am indeed thankful to all of them for their selfless contribution.

I would like to thank my publisher, Pearson, for facilitating completion of this project, Bimbabati Sen for her painstaking editing, and Praveen Tiwari for getting everything started. For the second edition, special thanks are due to G. Sharmilee, Senior Production Editor for her patience and suggestions to improve the book.

I am grateful to my family for their whole-hearted support in all my endeavours—to my husband Sanjay for always being patient and understanding, to my parents and parents-in-law for their support and encouragement, and my lovely daughters Rhea and Aarushi for just being there! Papa, you proudly showed the book to everyone who visited our house—and that means everyone—when it was first released in 2012. The second edition is dedicated to your memory. I miss you... Last, but certainly not the least, I thank my employer IIM Lucknow for giving me all the support for writing the book. It has been a long but fulfilling journey.

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About the Author

Payal Mehra currently serves as Associate Professor at the Indian Institute of Management Lucknow (India). AMBA accredited and an AACSB member, IIM Lucknow has recently been rated as the fourth best management institution in India by NIRF 2016—the national ranking framework for educational institutions in India. Payal has close to 20 years of industry, teaching, research, and training experience in the field of business communication. Prior to joining IIM Lucknow she worked in a private management institute for 10 years after a brief stint in industry.



Payal Mehra's academic interests cover all aspects of managerial communication including interpersonal communication, effective presentation skills, communication beyond boundaries, and ways in which technology influences communication. In 2004, one of her papers titled "Stress Levels in Organizations and Impact on Employee Behaviour" was awarded the Kamla Award by the Indian Society of Training and Development. The Kamla Award is given out each year to the best woman writer of an article published in the *Indian Journal of Training and Development*. As of 2016, she has published close to 40 articles in numerous national and international journals in well known, peer reviewed category publications of Sage, Emerald, Inderscience, World Scientific, amongst others. Her second book titled "Communication beyond Boundaries", was recently released by the New York based publisher in 2014 to the world market. Her writings have earned her five Publication Awards at IIM Lucknow.

A dedicated teacher, researcher, and trainer, she believes that teaching is more than just a job—it's something that nurtures the pursuit of wisdom with love, care, and compassion.

Apart from academics, she loves to read and travel as she believes that travel affords an education that no book can. She also loves to observe human behaviour in different settings in order to understand better why people behave the way they do. For more information on her academic profile, please visit the IIM Lucknow website link: http://payalmehra.com/payal_cv%20UPDATED.pdf

For feedback and comments you are welcome to write to payal@iiml.ac.in

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the value of communication in the business world.
- Appreciate the role of technology in shaping business communication.
- Appreciate the significance of maintaining lines of communication.
- Learn about the barriers to communication and their influence on organizational and personal communication.
- Understand the role played by the internal communications department in facilitating effective communication.

“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across, your ideas won’t get you anywhere.”

Lee Iacocca¹

All activities involve some form of communication. Discussions with one’s boss and co-workers, conversations with peers, interviews, meetings, presentations, memos, letters, faxes, and telephone exchanges are all forms of communication that take place in organizations. Regardless of one’s official designation, if one is managing or even interacting with people, then communication is an essential part of one’s job.

Effective communication requires competence in five major areas: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and non-verbal communication. Writing and speaking are transmission skills (sender-related skills), and listening and reading are reception skills (receiver-related skills). Skill in non-verbal communication is the “fifth dimension of communication.” Effective communicators are able to use non-verbal messages for a broader impact.

A manager’s responsibility is to coordinate, train, control, and review the performance of others and to oversee results. In the process of doing so, they interact with others in meetings, interviews, and interpersonal exchanges, as well as via reports, business proposals, and presentations. Managers have to learn to manage their own communication (personal communication), their communication with others (interpersonal communication), and their communication within an organizational context (group communication) to achieve the desired results.

Five factors have contributed to the growing importance of effective interpersonal communication at the workplace:

- **Technology:** E-mail, voice mail, text messages, and online chats are some of the means through which technology has pervaded our lives. Technology has affected the workplace to such an extent that face-to-face communication has been sharply declining over the years. The demands of technology have made it imperative that communication be quicker and easier to understand. This means that the language has to be simpler, sentences shorter, and paragraphs coherent and concise. It also becomes imperative to convey emotions and sensitivity even when messages are short and crisp. This requires effective communication.
- **Diversity:** Organizations are employing more diverse people than ever before. Differently abled employees as well as employees belonging to different cultures mingle and work together. Effective communication at the workplace must therefore employ both sensitivity and tact.

- **Dispersal and decentralization:** Most global organizations are geographically dispersed today, in order to better manage the scale of operations and achieve greater efficiency. This places new demands on one's communication skills, since the traditional top-down communication is ineffective in such organizational setups. When communication is not centralized, organizations must develop a comprehensive corporate communication strategy.
- **Time constraints:** Executives are increasingly pressed for time. With time as a premium, communication needs to be more crisp, focused, and precise. This requires excellent analytical skills and the ability to express oneself clearly and succinctly.
- **Legal liability:** As organizations grow more professional, legal issues need to be kept in mind. The written or spoken word is susceptible to misinterpretation. Messages must therefore be carefully crafted to carry home the point without harming, defaming, or maligning the reputation of the recipient.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential for the survival and progress of a business concern. Managers use effective communication skills to get work done. This includes crafting meaningful and persuasive messages and business correspondence and using new media to get messages across.

Communication is effective when it produces the desired action in the reader or audience. Effective communication means the message is understood and acted upon, and not merely sent to the recipient. The ability to communicate effectively is essential for a business executive. As Lee Iacocca pointed out in the opening quote of this chapter, a person may be immensely knowledgeable or skilled, but if their ideas are not communicated properly, those ideas are as good as absent.

Successful communicators build immense goodwill. They have a positive impact on the stakeholders within the organization, including employees, supervisors, seniors, customers, suppliers, and associates. Effective communicators also build goodwill for the company they represent. Successful communicators are also good planners and possess the skills to transfer their knowledge and ideas to the people whom they work with at all levels of the organization.

Successful communication is the foundation of a cordial and pleasant working relationship between workers and the management, between subordinates and supervisors, and between customers and suppliers. Efficient internal and external communication policies result in cordial relations and willing cooperation among employees.

Ineffective communication systems, by the same logic, result in mismanagement. They can destroy trust and engender ill will, depending on the context. A poorly worded message may result in a communication breakdown. On the other hand, good communication contributes to better service, removes misunderstandings and doubts, builds goodwill, promotes the business, and earns favourable references.

When a group of industrial engineers were asked in a study in 1990 how they might improve productivity, communication concerns drew the strongest responses. More than 88 per cent of the engineers surveyed stated that the lack of communication and cooperation among different components of a business leads to reduced productivity.²

CEOs have also recognized the importance of communication. A study by A. Foster Higgins and Company, an employee-benefit consulting firm, found that 97 per cent of the CEOs surveyed believed that communicating with employees positively affects job satisfaction. Furthermore, the survey found that 79 per cent think that communication benefits the bottom line; but surprisingly, only 22 per cent communicate with employees weekly or more frequently.³



Communication Bytes 1.1

The advisory firm Corporate Executive Board (CEB) conducted a survey that revealed that, in order to retain talented people, a company should direct its employees towards the right goals through proper communication. Just 21 per cent of the surveyed employees were found to be completely aware of, and working towards, the company's goals. Poor communication and an incompetent manager might be the reason behind this. If the manager-led approach doesn't work, then the Town Hall approach, in which the senior management engages directly in a dialogue with employees, might be successful. The survey also revealed that employees who were more engaged in the process of job design were likely to be more satisfied with their jobs.

A major Indian IT company recently caught an employee in the finance department embezzling funds. In order to avoid such cases, it is always important to improve employee confidence in the organization. The top managerial rung should be consistent in behaving ethically and dealing decisively with misconduct. It is also important for the management to recognize the emotional toll that recession takes on employees and to ensure that communication regarding finances is always frank and focused on employee concerns.

Source: Adapted from Mahima Puri, "High Performers Head for Exit During Economic Recovery," *The Economic Times* (March 15, 2010), available at: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/jobs/High-performers-head-for-exit-during-economic-recovery/articleshow/5683778.cms>, accessed on January 4, 2011.

GOALS OF COMMUNICATION

Organizational communication is purposeful. There are three objectives to such communication:

- **To inform:** When the objective is to inform, the speaker is merely elucidating facts, instructions, rules, guidelines, explanations, and examples.
- **To persuade:** When the intention is to persuade, the speaker aims to change both perception and mindset. The communication is intended to bring about a change in the target, from the current to a desired state, through a series of planned statements.
- **To mobilize:** When the intention is to mobilize the recipient of the message, the speaker focuses on an action the target should take. Communication is considered complete when the target has received the message and understood it, and agrees to act upon it.

POINT	Good communication can only be in proper English.	Good communication requires clarity of message, irrespective of the language used.	COUNTERPOINT
	Communication occurs when the message is sent.	Communication occurs when the message is received.	
	Communication is a natural process.	Communication is an acquired/learnt process.	
	One cannot change one's basic style of communication.	Communication can always be improved, depending on the feedback one gets or takes.	
	Good communicators are excellent orators.	Good communicators speak and listen equally well.	
	Communication is about maintaining relationships within an organization.	Communication is also about getting a task done in the minimum possible time and within a reasonable cost.	
	Communication is abstract.	Communication can be measured.	

ONE-WAY AND TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Communication may be considered one-way when no reply is expected or desired. For example, a public notice outside a room stating “Trespassers prohibited” is a command or order that does not require a response. In organizations, most communications are two-way, with some **feedback** or response desired from the receiver.

If an official response were desired to a sign prohibiting entry to a particular location, a different means of communication would have to be used. Instead of putting up a notice, a **memorandum** or brief e-mail message would have to be sent to the heads of all departments informing them that entry was prohibited to that particular room. The sender could ask for the message to be acknowledged or for the heads of the departments to report what action they were taking to put the order into effect. If the sender wanted to make the message more persuasive, a reason for the request could be given—for example, the need to preserve security in a sensitive zone.

DIRECTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Within any organization, the characteristics of a particular piece of communication vary based on whether the message is going vertically (top-down or bottom-up) or sideways. *Vertical communication* involves movement of a message from superiors to subordinates and vice versa. *Horizontal* or *sideways* communication involves movement of a message between employees of equal rank. This is illustrated in Exhibit 1.1.

The main uses of vertical downwards communications are:

- To give orders or instructions
- To provide or ask for information

The main uses of vertical upwards communication are:

- To describe the results of actions
- To provide information that has been requested
- To make requests or appeals

The main uses of horizontal, or sideways, communication are:

- To keep equals informed of actions taken or results achieved
- To seek the counsel or opinion of peers
- To discuss problems
- To chat informally

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

There are three main channels of communication:

- **Spoken:** This channel includes meetings, presentations, oral instructions, chats, discussions, and so on.

Top-down	Bottom-up	Sideways
Circulars	E-mails	E-mails
Newsletters	Proposals	Chat
Memos	Applications	Intranet communications
E-mails		
Meeting agendas		

Exhibit 1.1
Directions of Organizational
Communication

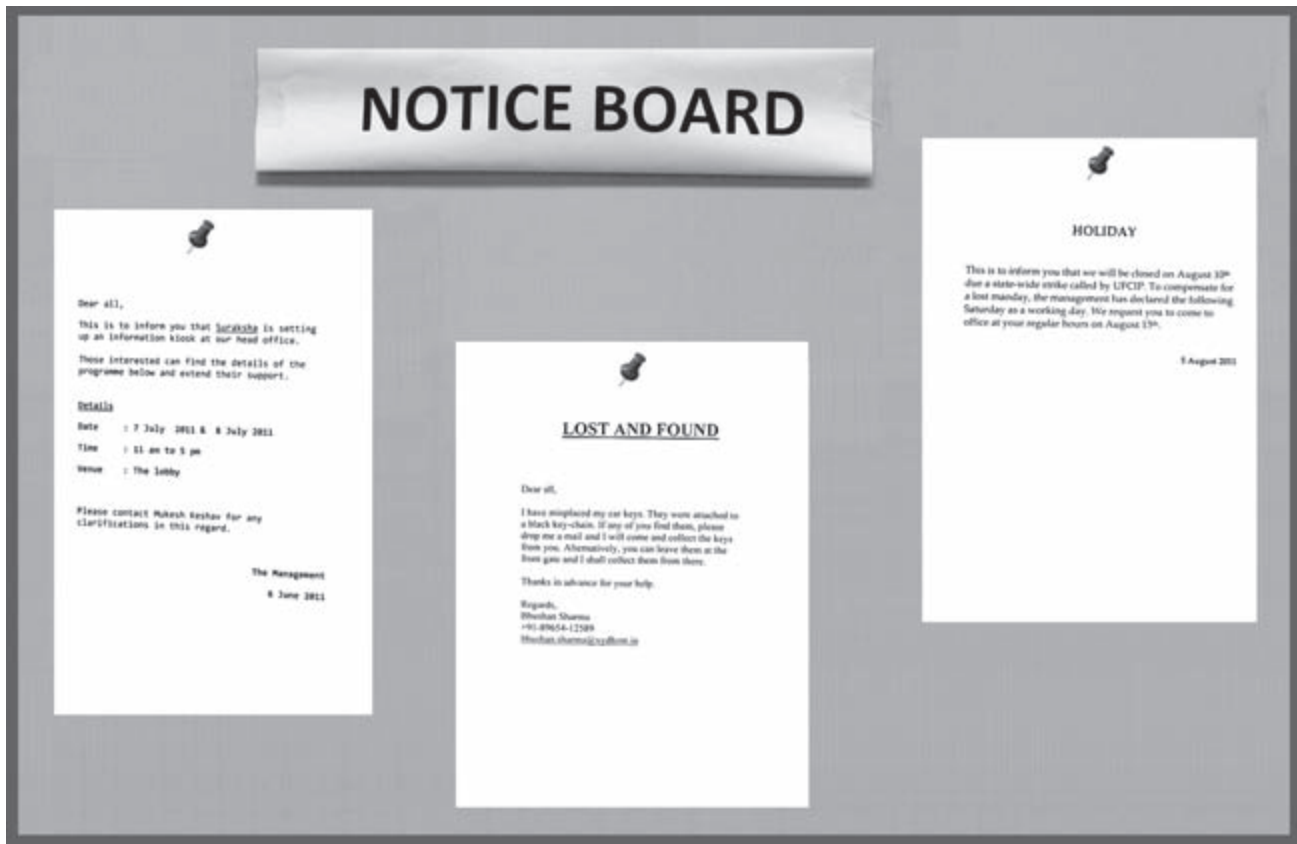
- **Written:** The written form of communication includes bulletin board notices, circulars, letters, memoranda, reports, proposals, and notes.
- **Electronic:** This method includes e-mail, instant messaging, video conferencing, phone messages, voice mails, and blogs.

Visual aids such as charts, graphs, diagrams, photographs, and other illustrations are often used to support messages. They summarize information and present it in a striking manner.

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

A variety of methods are used in each of the three channels. Some methods are used mainly for internal communications, while others are used mainly for external communications.

- **Meetings:** Face-to-face communication offers opportunity for discussion and immediate feedback. The sender and receiver can catch the cues and clues that they receive from each other and modify the message according to this immediate feedback. But face-to-face meetings are sometimes costly to arrange in terms of time and money. Essentially designated as communicative events, meetings involve the framing and coding of the agenda, determination of participation criteria, channel-selection, and identification of the norms of speaking and interaction.
- **Presentations:** Managers, often accompanied by members of their staff, use presentations to explain a project or plan to colleagues and persuade them to accept the presenter's point of view. Visual aids such as transparencies projected onto a screen are often used to illustrate points. Presentations are also given externally to clients or potential clients. For example, an advertising agency might make a presentation of its advertisement campaign. Presentations allow a large amount of complex information to be communicated to a large number of people at the same time. They also provide opportunities for feedback and discussion.
- **Written Messages:** Formal business communication is written. This allows for a permanent record to be created and used for later reference. Written communication results in delayed feedback, however, as it usually takes time for messages to reach their targets.
- **Public notices on bulletin boards:** Public notices on bulletin boards are easy and cost-effective methods to communicate the same information to a large number of people. However, there is no way to ensure that notices are read and registered; even if they are read, they might be ignored.
- **Memoranda:** A *memorandum* or *memo* is a top-down form of written internal correspondence. Nowadays, memos are sent through e-mail and are also called *e-memos*. Memoranda are still one of the main means of communication within a business. Used to disseminate information, they are useful for making arrangements or requests and sending confirmations.
- **Reports:** Reports are widely used in business. They are the written equivalent of presentations. Visual aids such as charts and photographs are often used to illustrate reports. There is generally a standard format for a report. Most reports include the name of the author(s), a title, a brief introduction, headings or subheadings for each section, a conclusion, and a list of recommendations.
- **Staff bulletins or magazines:** Many big firms publish bulletins or larger—often richly illustrated—magazines to give employees information about the company, to make them feel they are part of a team, and to increase their morale.
- **Electronic messages:** In this day and age of electronic communication, information has to be disseminated quickly, and electronic methods provide the means to do just that. Economical and efficient, they allow for speedy transmission of information. Feedback is usually quick, and messages are nearly always recorded. However, electronic systems are not easy to install. And in order to avoid “crashes,” high levels of maintenance are required.



Public notices via bulletin boards are easy and cost-effective methods to communicate the same information to a large number of people.

- **Telephone conversations:** One of the earliest and most widely prevalent means of communication, telephones are used for both internal and external exchanges. Mobile telecommunication using Short Message Service (SMS) is now in vogue.
- **Communication through computers:** The personal computer (PC), which processes data at enormous speed, has revolutionized communication as well as many other aspects of business. By using different kinds of software, PCs can perform a variety of tasks, including word processing for letters and documents, storing information on a database, and making financial calculations using a spreadsheet.
- **Communication through local area networks:** Firms can connect all computers in the same building to form a local area network (LAN). Linked computers can communicate with each other and also share common facilities, such as printers. The PCs are all linked to a more powerful computer or server, which stores a vast amount of information and can send relevant parts of a business plan to computers in different departments. A LAN makes it easier for managers to access information from other departments and also monitor the work within their own department. By using a modem, messages can be sent along telephone lines. This enables the computer to become part of a wide area network (WAN), which links it to other computers anywhere in the world.
- **Video conferences:** Video conferences are online communication tools that facilitate interaction between two or three geographically dispersed units of a global firm. Communication is synchronous and the speaker is able to see and interact with the people at the other end.
- **Fax:** A fax or facsimile machine can send an exact copy of a document to another fax machine anywhere in the world. The sender places the document in a fax machine, dials the fax number of the recipient, and the fax machine at the other end prints a copy of the document automatically. Letters, plans, diagrams, and drawings can all be transmitted in this way.

- **E-mail:** The Internet provides electronic mail or e-mail service to users all over the world, and is much quicker and cheaper than the traditional postal service. The service provider stores the message in an electronic mailbox until the receiver views it.

Exhibit 1.2 discusses the various ways in which people might communicate within an organization.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

The line of communication proceeds in two directions and moves back and forth. It is a systematic means of keeping in touch with a business partner. Frequently, people assume that communication evolves on its own, but this is not the case. This is especially true in cases of international negotiations, where contact and correspondence are critically important to understanding the other side's needs and viewpoints.

Maintaining an open line of communication is important for two main reasons. First, it affects the degree and quality of the relationship that has been created with the partner during negotiations. Second, it creates a positive impression on the partner regarding the seriousness of one's intent and helps to build a strong, long-term business relationship.

COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Communication channels are linked in a number of ways to form communication networks. A *communication network* demarcates the positions of the senders and recipients of information in a communication loop. It affects the quality of team decisions as well as team dynamics. The questions that need to be resolved while setting up a communication network are:

- Who should be a part of a particular network?
- What channels of communication should be devised to carry the information forward?
- Who are the primary and secondary recipients of the information?
- Who controls or regulates the flow of information from one point to the other?

There are two types of communication networks: centralized and decentralized. In *centralized networks*, information is stored and retrieved from a central pool or repository. The information has to pass through multiple links to reach the intended audience. This type of network values power over parity and centralized decision-making over a democratic process.

Type	Internal	External	Form
Formal	Memoranda, circulars, notices, newsletters, pre-printed forms, short reports, proposals	Letters, press releases, reports, proposals	Written
Formal	Voice calls	Faxes, voice calls	Electronic
Formal	Face-to-face departmental or company meetings, voice calls, presentations	Presentations, negotiations, sales calls	Spoken
Formal	Decision support systems, e-memos	Video conferences, audio conferences, decision support systems, e-mails	Electronic
Informal	Instant messaging, blogs, links to Web sites	Instant messaging, blogs, social networking sites	Electronic

Exhibit 1.2
Ways to Communicate in Organizations

Though decision-making is quicker in this type of network, member satisfaction is low. On the other hand, in a *decentralized network*, information is made available to everybody in the network. Decision-making is consultative and participative, and everybody has a stake in the information-processing and decision-making processes. This is particularly useful when task complexity increases and creative solutions are required to make effective decisions.

Chain networks, hairpin networks, and wheel networks are types of centralized networks, whereas star-shaped and circular networks depict decentralized networks. Exhibit 1.3 illustrates circular, wheel-shaped, and chain networks.

NEW COMMUNICATION MEDIA

In these days of the so-called Thumbing Generation, when the Internet is easily accessible and very popular, there are over a dozen different channels of communication. Exhibit 1.4 provides an overview of these new media.

Social media is a channel that facilitates dialogue between employees, the organization, and external sources. Previously, people could get in touch with each other through an e-mail, a telephone call, or a voice mail. However, the new media offers communication at different levels. Contrary to popular belief, it is more a facilitator of communication than a marketing tool. It employs modern media much like an e-mail to connect to employees, customers, and clients in an engaging and ongoing manner. Recruiters, customer service professionals, potential clients, and press may actively get in touch with an individual or a company through social media to engage them in meaningful ways. Networking for referrals, sharing information about one's organization, easy monitoring of customer complaints, and compliments are a few benefits of utilizing social media in organizations. Thus, social media allows us a wider reach than a telephone, e-mail or voice mail.

There was a time when a face-to-face conversation was the starting point of all relationships. However, things have changed today. Relationships might also start through the public interactions facilitated by Twitter and Facebook. Short, crisp messages can be sent via Twitter and people can widen their social networks with the help of Facebook. Thus, social media is an open and transparent medium to share and elicit public responses from individuals, organizations, and brands. Once a preliminary contact has been established, formal or informal communication may follow.

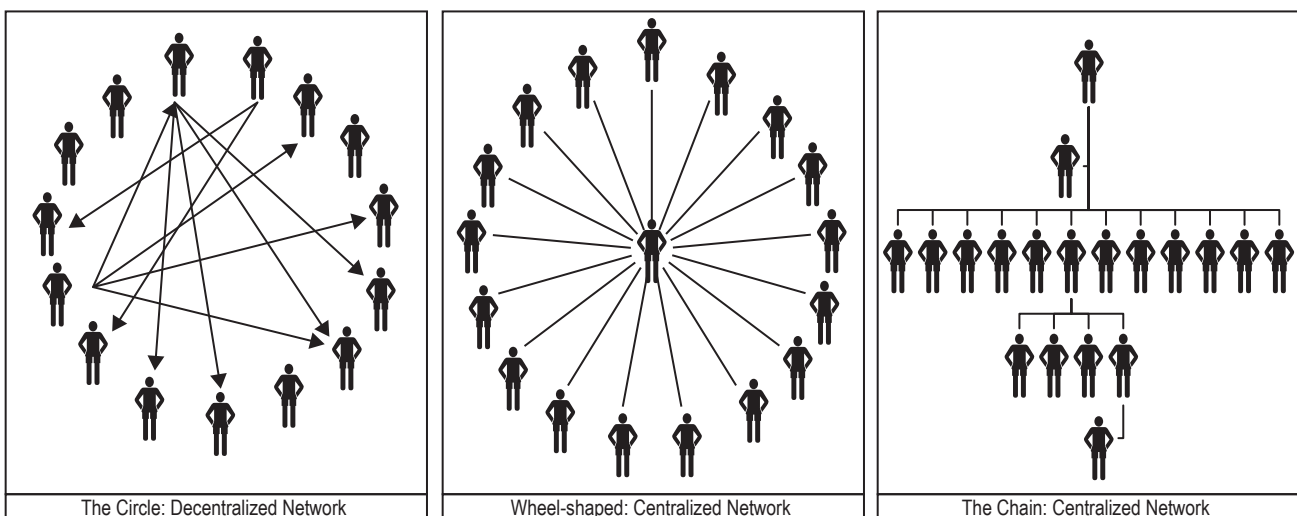


Exhibit 1.3 Some Communication Networks

Exhibit 1.4 New Communication Media

Different kinds of communication	Blogs	Instant messaging	Podcasts	Smartphones	Short message service (SMS)	Twitter	Webcasts	Wiki
Description	Online journal or commentary with reader responses	Real-time chat	Online radio show	Cell phones with inbuilt computers	Very short text	Social networking and microblogging Web site	Online conferences that are usually interactive	Web page created by group collaboration
Content	Text	Short text	Audio only, with no live interaction	Usually audio	Text message that is less than 160 characters	Text messages (called tweets) of up to 140 characters	Audio and video	Online Web page (text)
Media	Computer to computer	Computer to computer	On MP3 players or iPods	Cell phone to any phone or computer	Cell phone to cell phone	Computer to computer	Computer to computer—can be viewed on a larger screen if many people are involved	Computer to computer
Uses	An internal blog enhances a sense of community and helps express an individual's personal opinions. Externally it helps in branding and public relations.	Instant messaging is like a conference call. It can be used for finalizing agreements and decisions.	Podcasts can be used as audio tours and to update everyone on meetings and company issues.	Smartphones are used for sending and receiving e-mails and accessing the Internet on the go.	An SMS is for sending and receiving short messages.	Twitter can be used to express personal feelings and emotions or to make an informal public announcement.	Webcasts can be used to broadcast annual meetings or discussions, and to communicate messages from the top management.	Wikis are used behind firewalls as collaborative software and a means of communication.

Source: Adapted from Mary Munter, "What are They Talking About," published in *Proceedings of the Association for Business Communicators (ABC) National Convention at Lake Tahoe, Nevada (2008)*.