

Effective Communication



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Components of Communication Process

The main components of communication process are as follows:

1. Context
2. Sender / Encoder
3. Message
4. Medium
5. Recipient / Decoder
6. Feedback

Oral Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Limitations

- Oral communication implies communication through mouth.
- It includes individuals conversing with each other, be it direct conversation or telephonic conversation.
- Speeches, presentations, discussions are all forms of oral communication. Oral communication is generally recommended when the communication matter is of temporary kind or where a direct interaction is required.
- Face to face communication (meetings, lectures, conferences, interviews, etc.) is significant so as to build a rapport and trust.

Oral Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Limitations

Advantages of Oral Communication

- There is high level of understanding and transparency in oral communication as it is interpersonal.
- There is no element of rigidity in oral communication. There is flexibility for allowing changes in the decisions previously taken.
- The feedback is spontaneous in case of oral communication. Thus, decisions can be made quickly without any delay.
- Oral communication is not only time saving, but it also saves upon money and efforts.
- Oral communication is best in case of problem resolution. The conflicts, disputes and many issues/differences can be put to an end by talking them over.
- Oral communication is an essential for teamwork and group energy.
- Oral communication promotes a receptive and encouraging morale among organizational employees.
- Oral communication can be best used to transfer private and confidential information/matter.

Oral Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Limitations

Disadvantages/Limitations of Oral Communication

- Relying only on oral communication may not be sufficient as business communication is formal and very organized.
- Oral communication is less authentic than written communication as they are informal and not as organized as written communication.
- Oral communication is time-saving as far as daily interactions are concerned, but in case of meetings, long speeches consume lot of time and are unproductive at times.
- Oral communications are not easy to maintain and thus they are unsteady.
- There may be misunderstandings as the information is not complete and may lack essentials.
- It requires attentiveness and great receptivity on part of the receivers/audience.
- Oral communication (such as speeches) is not frequently used as legal records except in investigation work.

Written Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Disadvantages

- Written communication has great significance in today's business world.
- It is an innovative activity of the mind.
- Effective written communication is essential for preparing worthy promotional materials for business development.
- Speech came before writing. But writing is more unique and formal than speech.
- Effective writing involves careful choice of words, their organization in correct order in sentences formation as well as cohesive composition of sentences.
- Also, writing is more valid and reliable than speech. But while speech is spontaneous, writing causes delay and takes time as feedback is not immediate.

Written Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages of Written Communication

- Written communication helps in laying down apparent principles, policies and rules for running of an organization.
- It is a permanent means of communication. Thus, it is useful where record maintenance is required.
- It assists in proper delegation of responsibilities.
- While in case of oral communication, it is impossible to fix and delegate responsibilities on the grounds of speech as it can be taken back by the speaker or he may refuse to acknowledge.
- Written communication is more precise and explicit.
- Effective written communication develops and enhances an organization's image.
- It provides ready records and references.
- Legal defences can depend upon written communication as it provides valid records.

Written Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Disadvantages

Disadvantages of Written Communication

- Written communication does not save upon the costs.
- It costs huge in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in writing/typing and delivering letters.
- Also, if the receivers of the written message are separated by distance and if they need to clear their doubts, the response is not spontaneous.
- Written communication is time-consuming as the feedback is not immediate.
- The encoding and sending of message takes time.
- Effective written communication requires great skills and competencies in language and vocabulary use.
- Poor writing skills and quality have a negative impact on organization's reputation.
- Too much paper work and e-mails burden is involved.

Communication Barriers - Reasons for Communication Breakdown

Following are the main communication barriers:

- 1. Perceptual and Language Differences**
- 2. Information Overload**
- 3. Inattention**
- 4. Time Pressures**
- 5. Distraction/Noise**
- 6. Emotions**
- 7. Complexity in Organizational Structure**
- 8. Poor retention**

Use of Body Language in Communication

- **Kinesics** or study of body language must be understood by all. Whether it is an interview or a presentation, one must be aware of how to use body language effectively.
 1. Eye Contact
 2. Hand Shake
 3. Crossing your Arms
 4. Sitting Posture
 5. Gesture
 6. Facial Expression

Seven C's of Effective Communication

- Think of how often you communicate with people during the day.
- You write emails, facilitate meetings, participate in conference calls, create reports, devise presentations, debate with your colleagues... the list goes on.
- We can spend almost our entire day communicating. So, it stands to reason that communicating clearly and effectively can boost productivity.
- This is why the 7 Cs of Communication are helpful. The 7 Cs provide checklist for making sure that your meetings , emails , conference calls , reports , and presentations are well constructed and clear - so your audience gets your message.

Seven C's of Effective Communication

According to the 7 Cs, communication needs to be:

1. Clear.
2. Concise.
3. Concrete.
4. Correct.
5. Coherent.
6. Complete.
7. Courteous.

1. Clear

- When writing or speaking to someone, be clear about your goal or message. What is your purpose in communicating with this person? If you're not sure, then your audience won't be either.
- To be clear, try to minimize the number of ideas in each sentence. Make sure that it's easy for your reader to understand your meaning. People shouldn't have to "read between the lines" and make assumptions on their own to understand what you're trying to say.

1. Clear

Bad Example

Hi John,

I wanted to write you a quick note about Daniel, who's working in your department. He's a great asset, and I'd like to talk to you more about him when you have time.

Best,

Skip

What is this email about?

Well, we're not sure. First, if there are multiple Daniels in John's department, John won't know who Skip is talking about.

1. Clear

Good Example

Hi John,

I wanted to write you a quick note about Daniel Kedar, who's working in your department. In recent weeks, he's helped the IT department through several pressing deadlines on his own time.

We've got a tough upgrade project due to run over the next three months, and his knowledge and skills would prove invaluable. Could we please have his help with this work?

I'd appreciate speaking with you about this. When is it best to call you to discuss this further?

Best wishes,

Skip

This second message is much clearer because the reader has the information he needs to take action.

2. Concise

- When you're concise in your communication, you stick to the point and keep it brief. Your audience doesn't want to read six sentences when you could communicate your message in three.

Ask yourself:

- Are there any adjectives or "filler words" that you can delete?
- You can often eliminate words like "for instance," "you see," "definitely," "kind of," "literally," "basically," or "I mean."
- Are there any unnecessary sentences?
- Have you repeated the point several times, in different ways?

2. Concise

Bad Example

Hi Matt,

I wanted to touch base with you about the email marketing campaign we kind of sketched out last Thursday. I really think that our target market is definitely going to want to see the company's philanthropic efforts. I think that could make a big impact, and it would stay in their minds longer than a sales pitch.

For instance, if we talk about the company's efforts to become sustainable, as well as the charity work we're doing in local schools, then the people that we want to attract are going to remember our message longer. The impact will just be greater.

What do you think?

Jessica

This email is too long! There's repetition, and there's plenty of "filler" taking up space.

2. Concise

Good Example

Hi Matt,

I wanted to quickly discuss the email marketing campaign that we analyzed last Thursday. Our target market will want to know about the company's philanthropic efforts, especially our goals to become sustainable and help local schools.

This would make a far greater impact, and it would stay in their minds longer than a traditional sales pitch.

What do you think?

Jessica

3. Concrete

- When your message is concrete, your audience has a clear picture of what you're telling them.
- There are details (but not too many!) and vivid facts, and there's laser-like focus. Your message is solid.

Bad Example

Consider this advertising copy:

The Lunchbox Wizard will save you time every day.

A statement like this probably won't sell many of these products. There's no passion, no vivid detail, nothing that creates emotion, and nothing that tells people in the audience why they should care. This message isn't concrete enough to make a difference.

3. Concrete

Good Example

How much time do you spend every day packing your kids' lunches?

No more!

Just take a complete Lunchbox Wizard from your refrigerator each day to give your kids a healthy lunch and have more time to play or read with them!

- This copy is better because there are vivid images. The audience can picture spending quality time with their kids - and what parent could argue with that? And mentioning that the product is stored in the refrigerator explains how the product is also practical. The message has come alive through these details.

4. Correct

- When your communication is correct, your audience will be able to understand it. And correct communication is also error-free communication.

Make sure your message is correct by asking yourself the following questions:

- Do the technical terms you use fit your audience's level of education or knowledge?
- Have you checked your writing for grammatical errors? (Remember, spell checkers won't catch everything).
- Are all names and titles spelled correctly?

4. Correct

Bad Example

Hi Daniel,

Thanks so much for meeting me at lunch today! I enjoyed our conservation, and I'm looking forward to moving ahead on our project. I'm sure that the two-week deadline won't be an issue.

Thanks again, and I'll speak to you soon!

Best,

Jack Miller

- If you read that example fast, then you might not have caught any errors. But on closer inspection, you'll find two. Can you see them?
- The first error is that the writer accidentally typed conservation instead of conversation. This common error can happen when you're typing too fast. The other error is using weak instead of week.
- Again, spell checkers won't catch word errors like this, which is why it's so important to proofread everything!

5. Coherent

- When your communication is coherent, it's logical. All points are connected and relevant to the main topic, and the tone and flow of the text is consistent.

Bad Example

Traci,

I wanted to write you a quick note about the report you finished last week. I gave it to Michelle to proof, and she wanted to make sure you knew about the department meeting we're having this Friday. We'll be creating an outline for the new employee handbook.

Thanks,

Michelle

- As you can see, this email doesn't communicate its point very well. Where is Michelle's feedback on Traci's report? She started to mention it, but then she changed the topic to Friday's meeting.

5. Coherent

Good Example

Hi Traci,

I wanted to write you a quick note about the report you finished last week. I gave it to Michelle to proof, and she let me know that there are a few changes that you'll need to make. She'll email you her detailed comments later this afternoon.

Thanks,

Michelle

- Notice that in the good example, Michelle does not mention Friday's meeting. This is because the meeting reminder should be an entirely separate email. This way, Traci can delete the report feedback email after she makes her changes, but save the email about the meeting as her reminder to attend. Each email has only one main topic.

6. Complete

- In a complete message, the audience has everything they need to be informed and, if applicable, take action.
- Does your message include a "call to action," so that your audience clearly knows what you want them to do?
- Have you included all relevant information - contact names, dates, times, locations, and so on?

6. Complete

Bad Example

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to send you all a reminder about the meeting we're having tomorrow!

See you then,

Chris

- This message is not complete, for obvious reasons. What meeting? When is it? Where? Chris has left his team without the necessary information.

6. Complete

Good Example

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to remind you about tomorrow's meeting on the new telecommuting policies. The meeting will be at 10:00 a.m. in the second-level conference room. Please let me know if you can't attend.

See you then,

Chris

7. Courteous

Courteous communication is friendly, open and honest. There are no hidden insults or passive-aggressive tones. You keep your reader's viewpoint in mind, and you're empathetic to their needs.

7. Courteous

Bad Example

Jeff,

I wanted to let you know that I don't appreciate how your team always monopolizes the discussion at our weekly meetings. I have a lot of projects, and I really need time to get my team's progress discussed as well. So far, thanks to your department, I haven't been able to do that. Can you make sure they make time for me and my team next week?

Thanks,

Phil

- Well, that's hardly courteous! Messages like this can potentially start office-wide fights. And this email does nothing but create bad feelings, which can lower productivity and morale. A little bit of courtesy, even in difficult situations, can go a long way.

7. Courteous

Good Example

Hi Jeff,

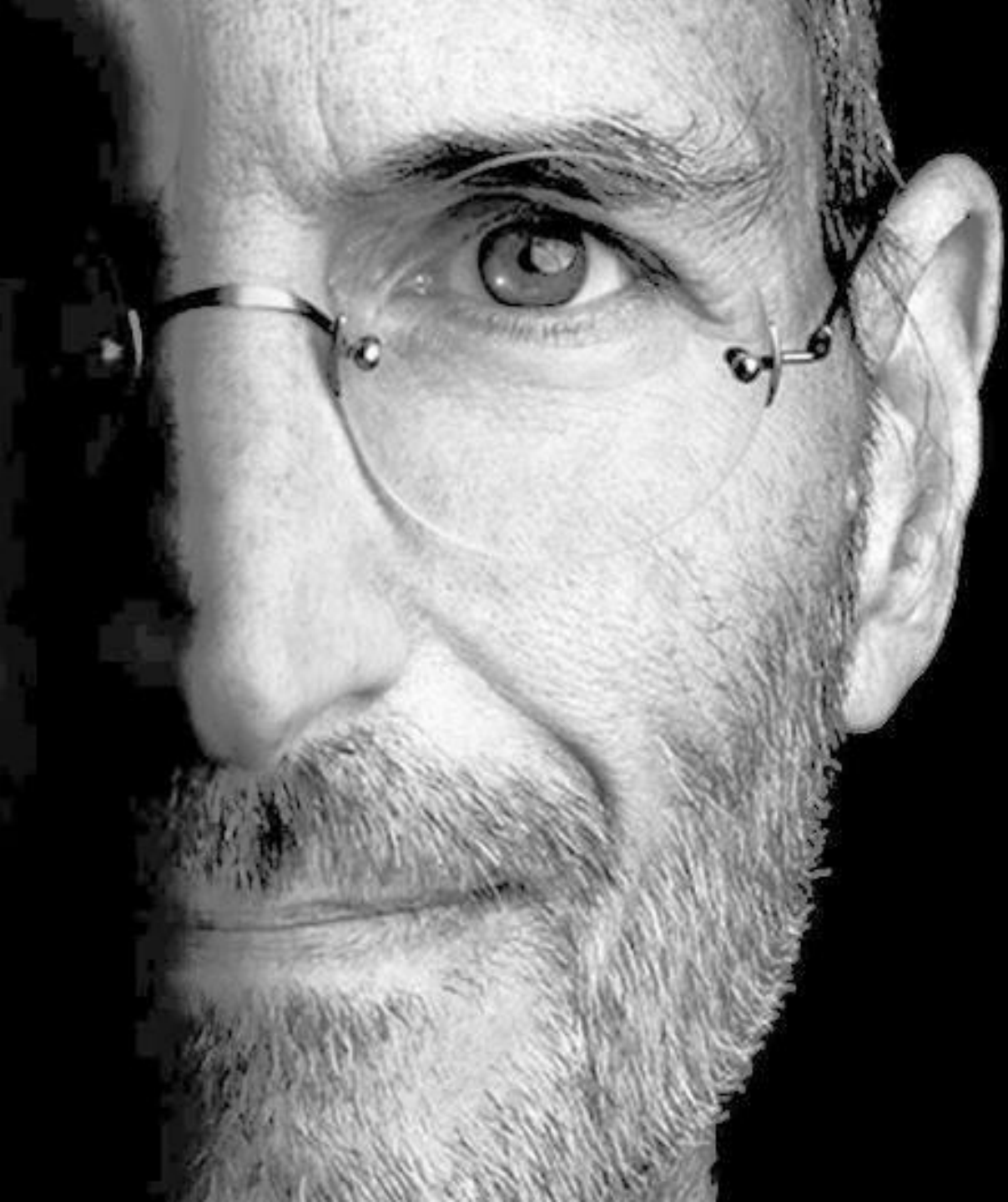
I wanted to write you a quick note to ask a favour. During our weekly meetings, your team does an excellent job of highlighting their progress. But this uses some of the time available for my team to highlight theirs. I'd really appreciate it if you could give my team a little extra time each week to fully cover their progress reports.

Thanks so much, and please let me know if there's anything I can do for you!

Best,

Phil

- What a difference! This email is courteous and friendly, and it has little chance of spreading bad feelings around the office.



"You can have the greatest idea in the world,
but if you can't communicate your ideas, it
doesn't matter. "

-Steve Jobs