

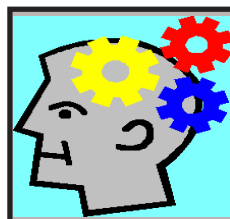
ENGLISH MANUAL



CHAPTER 05

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION





TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

FORMAL AND INFORMAL

Communication, very broadly, is classified into the following two categories:

- **Formal communication**
- **Informal communication**

FORMAL COMMUNICATION

Formal Communication is that, which takes place in an organisation, in a formal manner.

This type of communication has the following variations:

Downward Communication

Upward Communication

Sideward (or horizontal) Communication

Downward Communication



Downward communication moves downwards in an organisation, from the top management to middle and lower level managements.

Such communication is imperative for organisational purposes. Mostly it consists of communicating plans and policies of the organisation to lower level managers; and in particular, issuing orders and instructions to subordinates for initiating actions.

Issuance of orders and instructions is the heart of downward communication. Some of the guiding principles for top management in this regard are suggested as follows:

❖ **Orders and instructions must be complete, in all respects:** so as to leave minimum doubts requiring subsequent clarification.

❖ **Orders and instructions must be issued in a clear language:** so as to impart a full understanding of these to recipients. Moreover, the language used must not be harsh or offensive; which might create human relations problems.

❖ **Orders and instructions must be timely.** Orders issued much in advance of their time of implementation, carry a likely danger of their being forgotten by the recipients, at the right time. Delayed orders lose much of their utility; as the recipients might not have ample time for their execution.

❖ **Orders and instructions must be rational** i.e. in the context of the organisation and for purpose of achieving the organisation objectives. Orders issued for making subordinates do 'some personal work' of superiors must be absolutely discouraged and discarded.

❖ **Orders and instructions must be capable of implementation:** in view of the availability of organisational resources and the competence of subordinates.

❖ **Orders and instructions must preferably be in writing:** so as to avoid any controversies about them subsequently i.e. controversies as to their authenticity, validity, etc. It is easier and possible also to keep records of written orders for future reference.

❖ **The purpose behind issuing orders must be explained to subordinates:** so as to seek their co-operation towards their execution or rather elicit commitment from them.

❖ **Orders and instructions must be brief and to the point.** This will not only save the time of the recipients; but also induce them towards immediate action.

Upward Communication

This type of formal communication is really a feedback to downward communication. Upward communication proceeds upwards in an organisation from the lower level management to middle and upper levels of management.

Upward Communication, usually, takes the following forms:

- ❖ Reports by subordinates to superiors on work-performance.
- ❖ Grievances, problems, difficulties of subordinates forwarded to superiors, at appropriate levels.

- ❖ Suggestions and ideas of subordinates to upper management levels, for consideration and appropriate implementation.
- ❖ Clarifications sought by subordinates from superiors as to the orders and instructions issued by the latter i.e. superiors.

☑ **Sideward (or horizontal) Communication**

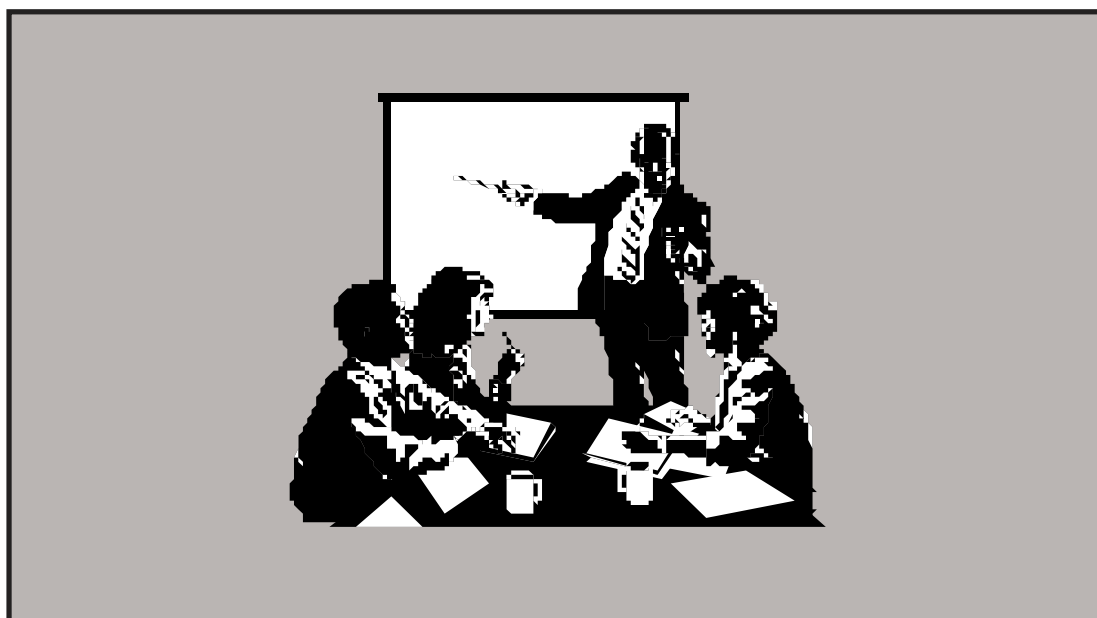
This type of formal communication takes place among managers, placed at the same rank, in the organisation. It is necessary for achieving co-ordination of actions of individuals, doing similar type of work, under managers of equal ranks. A communication between assistant production managers is an instance of horizontal communication.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

Informal Communication, also called grapevine communication, takes place through informal groups, existing inside or outside the formal organisation structure.

This communication has no formal manner of routing. It might spread from any person to any person, in any manner and in any direction, like the structuring of a grapevine.

In fact, the basic cause behind the formation of many informal groups is the necessity for a mutual exchange of information related to organisational matters or social or personal matters of individuals comprised in informal groups. Hence the need for informal communication.



A comparison between formal and informal communication.

Formal and informal types of communication could be compared with each other in the following manner:

Basis of Distinction	Formal Communication	Informal Communication
1. Speed	Formal communication is slow. The rate of slowness is because of the strictly defined positions and protocols an organisation might have. This type communication is not suitable in emergency situations.	Informal communication is very fast. It spreads like an epidemic; as it might proceed from any person to any person in any manner and in any direction. As such, this type communication is highly suitable for transmitting useful information, in emergency situations.
2. Authenticity	Formal communication is mostly authentic.	Informal communication is least authentic: A possibility of spreading rumors is often alleged to be associated with this type of communication.
3. Nature	Formal communication is impersonal and official.	Informal communication is personal and unofficial. It is sociopsychological in nature.
4. Planning	This type of communication is pre-planned. It helps people understand their jobs; and is the basis of smooth organisational life.	This type of communication is wholly unplanned.
5. Feedback	Feedback to communication may or may not be there. In fact, people at lower levels might not be able to express themselves freely on many issues.	Immediate feedback is there. People can freely express their opinion about informal communication, without fear or favour.
6. Control	Formal communication is controllable by management. In fact, people at lower levels might not	Informal communication is wholly uncontrollable.

Basis of Distinction	Formal Communication	Informal Communication
7. Distortion	Distortions in formal communication are not possible; specially when it is in writing.	There are distortions in informal communication according to the whims and prejudices of individuals.
8. Record-keeping	Formal communication is mostly written. Records of communications could be kept for future reference.	Source of communication is not easily traceable; rather it may be untraceable as to who initiated the communication process.
9. Fixation of Responsibility	As the source of communication is known, responsibility for communication could be fixed on individuals.	As the initiation of the communication process becomes untraceable, responsibility for communication cannot be fixed on any individual.
10. Resistance	Formal communication being official, usually meets with resistance, on the part of the subordinates.	Question of resistance to this type of communication does not arise, as it is social and personal in nature.
11. Secrecy of confidential matters	Confidential information does not leak in the formal system of communication. Formal communication in regard to confidential matters, could be kept restricted.	Confidential information could not be kept confidential, as the information spreads in a grapevine manner, like an epidemic.
12. Rigidity or flexibility	Formal communication is based on the plans, rules and policies of the organisation which are quite fixed, at least, in the short-run. It is rigid in nature.	Informal communication is quite flexible, as it is based on the personal likes and dislikes of individuals, which are ever changing.
13. Mutual support	Formal communication is done only for organisational purposes. It does not support informal communication.	Informal communication support the formal communication. It, in fact, fills in gaps of formal communication.