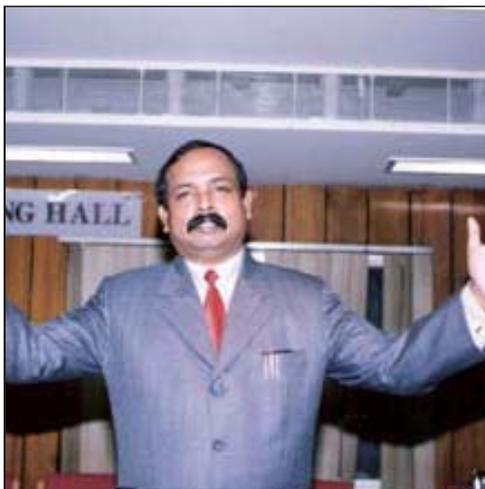


ENGLISH MANUAL



CHAPTER 07

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION





BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

- ❖ Communicating messages, news, etc. through **notices displayed on notice boards.**
- ❖ Communicating through **publications in house journals, magazines, bulletins, etc.**

Though communication is regarded as providing a basis for the operational life of the enterprise, many-a-times, there are barriers to communication, which tell upon its effectiveness. All attempts must be made by the management to overcome these barriers; as otherwise, the basic purpose of communication might meet with frustration.

For the sake of clarity and comprehension, barriers to communication have been departmentalized into the following categories:

Organisational barriers

Linguistic barriers

Barriers on the part of the sender of communication

Barriers on the part of the recipient of communication

Miscellaneous barriers

While describing barriers to communication under various categories; remedies for over-coming those barriers are suggested alongside.

Organisational barriers

Some of the organisational barriers to communication are:

❖ **Rigid Protocols**

When the scalar chain which is the basic route of travelling for all formal communications is too lengthy, communication gets unduly delayed.

SOLUTION - Cut short the scalar chain in emergency situations.

❖ **Vaguely clarified authority - responsibility relationships**

When authority - responsibility relationships among superiors and subordinates are not clearly

defined, superiors and subordinates, both, might be confused as to whom to contact and convey their problems, suggestions, etc.

SOLUTION- Management must design a compact and well-defined organisational structure; wherein authority - responsibility relationships are most clearly defined, preferably, by means of an organisational chart displayed at various organisational points.

❖ **Too wide a span of management**

Where, in an organisation, the span of management is too wide the superior might not be able to effectively communicate with an unduly large number of subordinates.

SOLUTION - The span of management must be reduced to the optimum level by the top management in view of the requirements of communication between the superior and his subordinates.

❖ **One-way communication system**

When, in an organisation, the communication system is only an one-way track i.e. only from the top management to lower levels grievances do develop on the part of subordinates - owing to lack of feedback to communication.

SOLUTION - Design and maintain a two-way communication network; so as to allow upward communication i.e. from lower level management to upper levels, to get the necessary feedback to downward communication, and plan suitable reaction to such feedback.

❖ **Irrelevant and out of context communication**

The situation accounting for irrelevant and out of context communication usually emerges when organisational objectives are not clearly defined and organisational policies are imperfect.

SOLUTION- Objectives of the organisation must be properly and clearly defined; possibly in numerical terms. Further, organisational policies must be perfected by concerned higher authority; so as not to let subordinates exercise unnecessary discretion while implementing those policies.

❖ **Tensed organisational atmosphere**

If, in an organisation, atmosphere is full of tension, either because of external environmental pressures or internal organisational conflicts and disturbances simple and genuine communication

involving innocent remarks might give way to wrong interpretations by the recipients. Thus there is a danger of spoiling human relations, under tensed organisational atmosphere.

SOLUTION- Steps should be taken to normalize the organisational atmosphere, by over-coming external environmental pressures and reconciling or resolving internal organisational conflicts and disturbances.

❖ **Lack of adequate communication facilities**

Sometimes, in many organisations, adequate communication facilities like-telephone, intercom, peons, messengers, photostat or typing facilities etc., are not available. As a result, communication delays or bottlenecks arise, impairing with a free-flow of communication.

SOLUTION- Management must see to it that requisite facilities for communication are provided to needy personnel in the organisation, who require such facilities off and on.

Linguistic barriers

Some linguistic (i.e. relating to language of communication) barriers to communication are as follows:

❖ **Poor or harsh language**

When the communication - whether oral or written - is expressed in a poor or harsh language, the sentiments of the recipient are emotionally affected and resistance (or reaction) to such communication is invited on his part.

SOLUTION - The sender must use polite and dignified language so as not to hurt the sentiments of the recipient.

❖ **Vague language**

When language used in drafting a communication is vague (i.e. the same word meaning differently to different individuals) the communication lends itself to manifold interpretations creating confusion in the minds of the recipients as to the real meaning proposed to be conveyed by the sender.

SOLUTION- The messages should be drafted through careful selection of words, better would it be to clarify the meaning of words which might become a source of confusion for the recipients.

❖ **Technical language**

Sometimes, the sender of communication might use technical language e.g. regarding production engineering or financial management etc., while drafting his communique - so as to create a problem for the ordinary recipient to get at the meaning of such communique. In such cases, the purpose of communication is frustrated.

SOLUTION - Use of technical language must be avoided, as far as possible. However, where the use of technical language is inevitable, the technical terms must be explained or translated into the layman's language.

❖ **Faulty or misleading translations**

Sometimes managers, especially at middle levels, receive communication from the upper levels which have to be translated by them into some other simpler language for use of subordinates and operators.

Managers poor at translation might distort the original communication. Faulty or misleading translation not only creates confusion to the recipients, but also frustrates the very purpose of communication.

SOLUTION - Only such managers who are adept in translation work must be permitted to translate messages into required languages. Further, the sender originally making the communication must review the communication after it has been translated into some other language.

Barriers on the part of the sender of communication

Some of the barriers to communication arising on the part of the sender of communication are as follows:

❖ **Unplanned communication**

Sometimes, the sender of communication never cares to plan for communication either because of laziness or because of pressure of work. When communication is rough and casual recipients get only a half hearted and hotchpotch idea of what the sender really intends to convey to them.

SOLUTION - The sender must communicate and make it a point to plan communication, before putting it into a course of transmission to recipients.

❖ **Badly expressed messages**

Sometimes, the sender, even though getting ready to communicate is not in a position to make an effective communication because of one or more of the following lacunae making for what are called badly expressed messages.

- ▲ **Poor organization of ideas**
- ▲ **Lack of co-ordination**
- ▲ **Inadequate vocabulary**
- ▲ **Repetition**
- ▲ **Awkward sentences**
- ▲ **Careless omission, etc.,**



SOLUTION - The sender must take care of the above aspects of drafting messages especially looking for co-ordination of ideas using adequate vocabulary and avoiding the use of awkward sentences. In short, the sender must be adept at drafting. Otherwise, he must seek services and consultation of experts in the art of drafting without hesitation. In any case, the drafted message must look integrated and be a compact-piece of communication.

❖ **Unclear assumptions or too many assumptions**

This barrier has much to do with the state of mind of the sender while making a communication sometimes unclear assumptions in the message create confusion for the recipients or there may be too many assumptions assumed by the sender which puzzle the recipients.

SOLUTION - The sender must clarify assumptions by inserting footnotes to the communication, explaining or clarifying assumptions. Further, too many assumptions must be avoided and only relevant assumptions must be made which must subsequently be clarified.

❖ **Distrust**

Many superiors sending communications are distrusted by subordinates because the former might be alleged for countermanding or modifying the communication according to their own whims and prejudices. In such situations, even the genuine and honest communications by such superiors are not taken seriously by the subordinates who might throw such communications in the waste-paper basket.

SOLUTION - The superiors must resist themselves from the tendency of countermanding or unduly modifying original communication and gradually try to build their image of trust and confidence in the minds of subordinates.

❖ **Superiority-complex**

Many superiors have superiority complex, and would not like to talk to subordinates or communicate with them. In such situations, not only does the work of the organization suffer but also the subordinates feel frustrated and degraded.

SOLUTION- The superiors must give up their superiority-complex as a sign of psychological health; and communicate with subordinates freely and in friendly manner.

❖ **Egoistic communication**

Some superiors make egoistic communications to subordinates; just to satisfy their false ego and impress subordinates with their power, status and authority in doing so. Such communication merely waste the time of both the sender and the recipients and make no meaningful contribution to organizational objectives.

SOLUTION- Superiors must resist themselves from making egoistic communications. They must regard their own ego as merely subordinate to the organisation and its basic objectives.

❖ **Failure to communicate**

Some times, superiors fail to communicate even important messages or news with subordinates either because of 'information overload' or assuming that which they intend to communicate to them has already been infomed. Such situations give rise to what is known as 'communication-gap', leading to serious organizational and operational problems.

SOLUTION- Superiors must as their job-duty make requisite communication to subordinates; even though some of the latter know what is being communicated. Despite 'information overload', they must spare time for making relevant and required communications.

❖ **Fear of challenge to authority**

Some superiors might be reluctant (or hesitant) to make even important communication to subordinates fearing that any feedback or reaction to their communication might challenge their authority. Under such psychological situations, they better prefer to avoid making any communication whatsoever. This again invites organizational problems.

SOLUTION- Superiors must be bold enough to tolerate criticism of their communications on the part of subordinates. They must gradually gain self-confidence and make better communications in future.

❖ **Untimely communication**

Sometimes, communication by superiors may be untimely; much in advance of time or just in the risk of time. Both these variations of untimely communication result in serious problems. In the former case, the subordinates might forget the communication at the time when it requires action on their part; and in the latter case, subordinates might find it difficult to act upon the communication because it is high time already.

SOLUTION- Superiors must only make timely communications; neither before time nor unduly delayed.

Barriers on the part of the recipient of communication

Some of the barriers to communication arising on the part of the recipient are as follows:

❖ **No attention**

Many recipients of communication pay no attention to it either because of tension created by personal and family problems or because of being overburdened with other emergent issues. In such situations the very purpose of the sender in making a communication is wasted.

SOLUTION- Communication must be made short simple and attractive to gain the immediate attention of the recipient. Moreover recipients must consider it their honest and moral duty to pay attention to communication in the interest of the organization.

❖ **Premature evaluation**

Many recipients go in for a premature evaluation of the communication, even before the communication is completed. In such cases, misunderstandings and grievances do develop.

SOLUTION- The recipients must make it a point not to go in for a premature evaluation of communication. They must wait for the sender to complete the communication. This only requires patience on the part of the recipients.

❖ Individual perceptions

Many recipients have their own perceptions and interpret message in their own way of thinking and to their own advantage. In such cases, communication becomes lop-sided and 'self-interest centered'. In any case, the real intentions of communication in making the communication is frustrated.

SOLUTION- Recipients must have a broad outlook and appreciate the viewpoint of the sender in making the communication.

❖ Fear of superiors

Some recipients give a wrong or misleading feedback to communication owing to fear of superiors or out of their sheer inferiority complex. In such a situation, the process of communication remains imperfect or defective.

SOLUTION - Subordinates must impart a free and impartial feedback to communication. Superiors too, on their part, must allay the fears of subordinates - by praising them for fearless comments.



FUN IN ENGLISH

There is no egg in the eggplant,
 No ham in the hamburger
 And neither pine nor apple in the pineapple.
 Boxing rings are square
 And a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.
 If writers write, how come fingers don't fing?
 If the plural of tooth is teeth
 Shouldn't the plural of phone booth be phone beeth?
 If the teacher taught,
 Why didn't the preacher praught?
 Park on driveways and
 Drive on parkways.