



CHANNELS & OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Organizational communication, broadly speaking, is to facilitate achieving the objectives of an organization.
- ▶ The primary goal of any organization is to grow, which can only happen when the organization produces quality output.
- ▶ Managements must communicate effectively with the workforce to ensure that the quality of output is maintained.
- ▶ The workforce should understand that survival of an organization depends on efficiency of individuals and groups, and produce actions that will achieve these goals.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

- ▶ These goals may range from completing a task or mission, to creating and maintaining satisfying human relationships.
- ▶ The aim of communication within an organization is to lead to actions that fulfill organizational goals.
- ▶ Organizations are concerned with two types of communication: external and internal.
- ▶ Most organizations have a hierarchy, levels of authority and power within the ranks.
- ▶ Organizations transmit messages with the help of formal and informal networks that exist within its structure.

FORMAL COMMUNICATION



- ▶ Messages that move along predefined and regulated pathways comprise formal communication.
- ▶ Formal communication may be verbal or written, and may be in the form of letters, telephone calls, computer messages or memos.
- ▶ At times, a gesture may communicate as effectively as writing or speaking.
- ▶ Messages convey decisions and can be transmitted personally, or in writing, or by machines.
- ▶ From the sender, the messages move along designated routes to designated receiver/s, who must act on these messages.

FORMAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ As a general rule, all formal communication is recorded and filed and becomes a part of the organization's record. File copies are retained by the sender and the receiver.
- ▶ **Examples** of formal communication: work orders, notices, accounting records/reports, inventory and sales reports, policy statements, job descriptions, work-method protocols.
- ▶ Communication in an organization serves several purposes. It provides a road map for senders and receivers who must know about the planned action, work in progress, and work results.
- ▶ Formal Channels of communication that constitute the formal network of communication in an organization.



DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION

- ▶ In Downward Communication, top management of an organization transmits decisions taken by it, along with its intended goals, vision, culture and ethics through various levels of authority.
- ▶ All decisions taken by the top management are passed down the ladder of authority for their implementation.
- ▶ The messages that flow through this channel are orders, memos, rules, practices, procedures, circulars, regulations.
- ▶ As it proceeds from superiors to the subordinates, this communication is also called Top-Down communication.



DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Downward Communication is needed
 - To get the work done
 - To prepare the workforce for challenges
 - To tackle misinformation and suspicion arising out of it
 - To create A feeling of pride & confidence in the workforce in order to motivate them and to boost their morale.
 - To transmit work ethics and the organization's culture.

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ This type of communication demands complete obedience and ensures disciplined, orderly implementation of orders.
- ▶ It leads to efficient functioning of the organization and eliminates dissent.
- ▶ Tasks and positions of authority are well defined.
- ▶ This brings clarity in the minds of people who are responsible for taking action, thus avoiding confusion.
- ▶ It helps in uniting different levels of authority and brings in team spirit.

ADVANTAGES

- ✓ **For Example - an American or British crisis management team in action, or the NSG commandos in action in Mumbai during the terror attack, illustrate how downward communication ensures effective implementation of ideas. Many family-run business houses, too, work efficiently for this reason.**

REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ **It is important that the decisions are taken after due deliberation.**
- ▶ **The vision of the authority must be effectively percolated, so that it correctly and completely reaches the last person in the chain.**
- ▶ **The authority must set a good example so as to inspire confidence in the subordinates and win their co-operation.**

DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ **Being one-way communication, it can have some glaring disadvantages.**
- ▶ **Lack of vision and arbitrary decision-making can prove detrimental and harmful to the organization.**
- ▶ **Balance in sharing information is important, so is judicious use of discretion.**
- ▶ **Unnecessary information leaks can jeopardize organizational goals.**
- ▶ **A reticent authority, unable to share necessary details with subordinates, could prove equally harmful.**

DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ A hierarchical transmission of information delays implementation of decisions.
- ▶ Similarly, oral communication leads to information loss, distortion and lack of accountability.
- ▶ Absence of a feedback mechanism at the subordinate level leads to frustration.
- ▶ As a result, subordinates develop lack of trust in the authority, and feel exploited, leading to a tense relationship.

UPWARD COMMUNICATION



- ▶ Communication from lower levels of an organization to the top is called upward communication.
- ▶ An organization needs suggestions and feedback from its employees on its routine work, and this system of obtaining employee reactions is known as upward communication.
- ✓ Upward communication is needed to forward employee-feedback
- ✓ To report on official matters

UPWARD COMMUNICATION



- ✓ To give voice to the difficulties, grievances, dissatisfaction and work-related demands of employees
- ✓ To invite suggestions, creativity and participation in problem-solving .
- ✓ To create a sense of belonging through participation .
- ✓ Suggestion Schemes, Complaints, Grievance-procedures, Counselling, open Door Policy, Exit Interviews are some of the common modes of this communication.

REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ If an organization wants upward communication to be effective, it has to cut down the lines of authority and allow subordinates an easy access to the top management.
- ▶ It has to make the atmosphere in the organization conducive for upward communication.
- ▶ This involves training executives to listen to communication from employees with empathy and respond to the communication promptly.
- ▶ Emergence of the Business Processing Units (BPOs) to address customer complaints and queries is precisely for this purpose.
- ▶ Such mechanisms are needed within the organization as well.

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ **It completes the communication chain, as it is essentially a two-way process.**
- ▶ **Employees feel valued as part of organizational decision-making, and their participation becomes constructive.**
- ▶ **There is trust, and emotional bonding between management and employees, along with understanding and co-operation. The authority earns subordinates' cooperation.**
- ▶ **When managements invite employees to play their specific roles in achieving the larger organizational goals, they respond with enthusiasm.**
- ▶ **It benefits from the suggestions and feedback on the decisions taken, helps in evaluating the decisions and modifying them wherever necessary.**

DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ It must be admitted that no mode of communication is fool proof, and this mode, too, is no exception.
- ▶ Upward communication may not fetch results if subordinates fail to take initiative and participate in the decision making.
- ▶ Long lines of authority, inability of the seniors to listen or to act, create further barriers.
- ▶ Delays due to slow transmission, distortion of communication further hamper the process.
- ✓ Employees often fail to understand and handle upward communication.
- ✓ For instance, if the employees feel that the management is incapable of taking decisions without their help, or that it is lenient, it might lead to indiscipline and an attitude of noncooperation in the organization.

↓ VERTICAL COMMUNICATION ↑

- ▶ Most organizations follow a vertical pattern of communication — a healthy mix of Downward and Upward Communication. While decisions are finally taken by the top management, there is room for employee feedback.
- ▶ Communication, wherein the management interacts with employees, invites their participation in decision making, creates mechanisms to address their concerns without compromising on its measures of control, is called vertical communication.
- ▶ Such a model of communication avoids the disadvantages of both downward as well as upward communication, and tries to gain from the advantages of both.
- ▶ Also , in such a model, there are two channels of vertical flow, one through the organization and the other through the department.

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ Enables internal communication
- ▶ It enables the upper level management to convey their suggestions, complains and recommendations to the subordinates.
- ▶ It enables superiors to collect authentic and dependable information from subordinates with ease
- ▶ There is a systematic flow of information so a good relation can be developed between the superior and subordinate
- ▶ Since duties and responsibilities are delegated among departments through vertical communication, decentralization becomes possible.

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ It facilitates job assignment and job evaluation of the employees.
- ▶ It ensures maintenance of better discipline as it involves the usage of official channels
- ▶ Helps generate documentary evidence as a record for use in future.
- ▶ It enables providing proper directions to subordinates regarding official policies and procedures so that proper implementation of official functions can take place.
- ▶ Since it ensures coordination among employees, it increases efficiency.

DISADVANTAGES



- ▶ As it follows the official channels it is a time consuming process
- ▶ As it does not permit flexibility it is unable to cope with the changed situation
- ▶ There is no scope for creativity in employees as they function in a mechanical manner
- ▶ In repeated communication from one to the other, sometimes there is a loss or distortion of information.

DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ In this communication, loss of information may also take place if superiors neglect to send messages to their subordinates
- ▶ Subordinates may lose respect for seniors due to the senior's ability to project any originality in dealing with demanding situations
- ▶ The multiple channels of communication put an increased burden on middle management. They have to receive, interpret and pass on information to the subordinates and pass communication coming from lower levels to the superiors.

HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION



- ▶ Since an organization is not an arrangement of vertical levels of authority alone, and the nature of work requires team effort, it is imperative that employees at the same level of authority exchange official information.
- ▶ Horizontal communication is communication that takes place between employees belonging to the same or comparable status. Communication between two marketing managers, or between two directors, is horizontal communication.

HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Meetings, seminars, inter-office-memos, e-mails are some of the modes of this communication.
- ▶ Horizontal Communication is needed
 - to exchange official information
 - to create understanding and team-spirit among members 28
 - to solve difficulties
 - to seek and extend co-operation
 - to save time when quick decisions have to be made.

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ Horizontal communication helps in clarifying doubts, taking quick decisions and eliminating mistrust that may hamper the pace of work in an organization.
- ▶ It brings about better coordination, builds team spirit and ensures faster implementation of decisions.
- ▶ It also checks the grapevine.
- ▶ **Requirements:**
 - For horizontal communication to be successful, employees must learn to extend cooperation and work towards achieving collective goals.
 - The authority should delegate responsibilities to subordinates in order to quicken the pace of work.
 - Horizontal communication, however, needs to be monitored, as its uncontrolled transmission can invite problems for the organization.

DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ Ungoverned horizontal communication disrupts the lines of vertical communication, which in turn leads to indiscipline.
- ▶ Employees also tend to waste precious time arguing and debating over issues and decisions.

REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ For diagonal communication to be effective, the organization needs to create an atmosphere of trust and transparency.
- ▶ Proper training or orientation to employees to handle this system of communication can lead to their wholehearted participation in the communication process without any reservation or resistance.

DIAGONAL / CROSSWISE

- ▶ Diagonal or crosswise communication takes place when individuals from different levels interact with one another, outside their reporting relationships.
- ▶ An example of diagonal communication is when a purchase manager, instead of communicating with the assistant purchase manager, or the sales manager, communicates directly with the assistant sales manager.
- ▶ In a complex and multilayered organization Diagonal Communication
 - ✓ Speeds up the flow of information
 - ✓ Creates healthy work relationships
 - ✓ Brings in proper co-ordination among different sections
 - ✓ Makes problem-solving easy
 - ✓ Controls distortion and dilution of message because of direct, inter-level communication.

DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ Diagonal communication, though useful, has the basic disadvantages of psychological resistance and leakage of information
- ▶ It is likely to bypass the vertical chain of commands. This may create doubts in the minds of by-passed superiors.
- ▶ For example, an Area Marketing Manager taking a report from the assistant production manager, or sales, or purchase manager, will make their immediate heads/bosses suspicious.
- ▶ It may be seen as interference.
- ▶ It may create doubts about the superior's accountability and co-operation.
- ▶ Decisions thus taken may be resisted by the by-passed authority, and could vitiate the atmosphere of the organization
- ▶ Thus, diagonal communication could lead to a break down of vertical lines of communication and cause complete chaos, or anarchy in the organization

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ While formal communication channels provide structural direction for transmission and storage of messages required in operations of an organization, it is often unable to meet entire organizational requirements.
- ▶ This gap between the needs of the formal system and that of the total system is **bridged by an informal communication system.**
- ▶ This system exists along with the formal system and comprises messages, bits of information, opinions, and expressions chosen for convenience and necessity rather than for propriety, or conformity with formal communication patterns.
- ▶ Without these informal pathways it would be difficult to accomplish work.
- ▶ Similarly, meeting the Technological, Social, Economic and Psychological needs would be difficult in the absence of this alternative system of communication.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Leon Festinger, [Informal Social Communication, Psychological Review] in reporting the results of a number of studies on social communication, found that there are **three general sources of pressure that generate informal communication in human groups**
- ✓ People need to share and agree on important opinions and attitudes to feel that they belong to a group.
- ✓ Hence, much information is exchanged unofficially within an organization and among members of subgroups, which satisfies the need to conform and to share positions on various issues
- ✓ People need to share their hopes and ambitions with superiors. These communications arise from forces to —locomote|| within a group.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

- People need to express emotions such as joy, anger, hostility, and the like as a means of “blowing off steam”.
- A fourth source of informal communication could be added and is related to the rigidity of the formal bureaucratic structure: the need to bypass “official channels” for the sake of expediency in getting and giving information about performance on the job.
- ▶ The different patterns of informal communication network are:

GRAPEVINE

- ▶ This is a major informal channel of communication network found in any organization.
- ▶ This is personal communication which is transmitted between individuals or groups and comprises personal interpretations, opinions, gossip, reactions, hearsay, half-truths.
- ▶ It is an unofficial circulation that makes the rounds in an organization and, though it lacks credence, the receiver finds it hard to resist.
- ▶ This kind of communication travels the fastest and has a vast reach.

GRAPEVINE

- ▶ The contents, because of its immense personal appeal, are readily believable. Since, more often than not, negative information, half-truths, personalized accounts of events, gross distortions are passed on by the sender and taken as true by the receiver, and **poses a big challenge to any organization.**
- ▶ It often leads to lack of motivation and morale of employees. Management could face greater challenges to maintain trust and factual positions between itself and its employees.
- ▶ Managements must be fully aware about the potential power of the grapevine. This can often fail formal communication, as it is difficult to trace its origin and is difficult to control or stop completely

HOW DOES MANAGEMENT TACKLE THE GRAPEVINE?

- ▶ Since it becomes active in the absence of correct and complete information, the grapevine takes over when official channels fail to function properly.
- ▶ Therefore, management must circulate information that is accurate and strengthen upward channels of communication. To avoid unnecessary grapevine, the organization must take prompt note of communication from employees.
- ▶ Moreover, if employees feel confident about the management, instances of grapevine will reduce. Management, therefore, must delegate responsibility and entrust employees with specific responsibilities to strengthen trust between itself and its employees.
- ▶ Some measures to control the grapevine are inviting suggestions, forming grievance and redressal cells, publishing house journals, making effective use of bulletins, notice-boards and an array of employee welfare schemes.
- ▶ Finally, the management has to be alert and take note when the grapevine becomes active. It has to cut the grapevine with official communication. Or, use the grapevine itself to circulate official information.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Having understood the official and unofficial directions in which communication flows in an organization, the next step is to understand what is communicated, the nature of official messages, the reasons for their circulation, and their objectives.
- ▶ According to Keith Davis, “Communication is involved in all human relations. It is the ‘nervous system’ of any organized group, providing the information and understanding necessary for productivity and morale.”
- ▶ It can be claimed that the two fundamental objectives of communication are ‘to survive and to prosper’. The next step is to understand how management uses messages to boost productivity and morale. The following are the objectives of communication.

INFORMATION



- ▶ Keeping employees informed about various developments within the organization and the milieu in which it operates is the key objective of organizational communication.
- ▶ Equipping employees with the right kind of information helps to empower them. Employees need to know many things about the organization.
- ▶ They need to know its culture, its rules and regulations. They need to know about the decisions that require action, about the job, about the prospects, about how the organization is faring in the market, about their own performance.
- ▶ Management must provide information that helps employees understand these issues. To achieve this, both verbal and non-verbal means of communication must be used, and the information circulated should be adequate, correct and complete,.

ADVICE & COUNSELLING

- ▶ Providing guidance is yet another objective of downward communication.
- ▶ Apart from information, employees also need guidance to effectively handle various assignments.
- ▶ Seniors, experts, experienced persons need to help employees with troubleshooting and crisis management, assisting them in solving problems can forge bonds between employees and the management.
- ▶ At times, difficulties in work or on the personal front, may interfere with the performance of employees.
- ▶ Providing counseling by a professional who can help the employee handle such problems is the responsibility of management.

ORDER & INSTRUCTIONS

- ▶ Another objective of downward communication is giving directions to the workforce.
- ▶ Any authoritative communication issued by a superior in order to monitor/govern the behavior of a junior is known as an 'order.'
- ▶ When an order is split further to meet specific issues, it becomes an instruction. Orders and instructions are directives that spell out the expected behavior of an employee.
- ▶ These act as measures of discipline and control in the organization. While orders are broad, instructions are detailed and specific.
- ▶ Efficacy of this communication depends on how it is spelt out. It should be precise and easily comprehensible, so that it answers all the questions that may arise in the mind of the receiver.

SUGGESTION



- ▶ To suggest is to put forth an idea as a possibility or an alternative. Instead of communicating to inform or advise, management could choose to make suggestions to its employees.
- ▶ This can help in reducing the distance with the employees, especially because orders and instruction create distance.
- ▶ Suggestion, however, is used as an objective of mobilizing upward instead of downward communication.
- ▶ In order to bring in employees' constructive participation, their involvement in the organization, managements implement programmes like suggestion schemes.

SUGGESTION



- ▶ Under this programme, employees are invited to put forth their suggestions on the systems of governance and processes within the organization.
- ▶ Suggestion Boxes are installed at various places.
- ▶ Employees are invited to forward their suggestions in writing.
- ▶ They can choose other means, like e-mails, to forward their ideas.
- ▶ These suggestions are scrutinized, tested and, if found practical, the one who suggests is given a reward in cash or kind.

ADVANTAGES OF SUCH A PROGRAMME

- ▶ Besides employee- participation and involvement, such programmes encourage creative thinking and give an exposure to employee talent.
- ▶ Employees feel valued and develop a sense of belonging, as well as responsibility towards the organization.
- ▶ Managements benefit by being able to pool in ideas that help in the strengthening of its functioning.
- ▶ Such schemes also help in bringing management and employees closer to enable them to work as a team.

PERSUASION

- ▶ Persuasion is an effort to influence the mind, belief system or attitude of a person and to bring about the desired change in his behavior.
- ▶ Forcing people to accept change does not help, Change has to come from within.
- ▶ Managements have to persuade the public to buy their products and services.
- ▶ They also have to persuade their workforce to adapt itself to the changing demands of the work.
- ▶ Pace of change is tremendous in today's world. Technology, knowledge is changing constantly, and therefore it becomes imperative for managements to persuade their employees to accept change.

PERSUASION

- However, changing people is very challenging. People are reluctant to accept changes. They feel threatened and become defensive when their accepted ways are challenged.
- A management has to **adopt a strategy while introducing any change**. To start with, it has to prepare the mind of the employees.
- This has to be done subtly by winning their confidence and demonstrating how the change will ultimately serve their own interest.
- Persuasion works only when it appeals to the receiver's sense of reason, and when he is convinced of the sender's sincerity. A sincere appeal to self-interest impels people to perceive things differently.
- Finally, management can adopt gentle tactics, instead of using hard reasoning to bring about the desired outcome.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- ▶ Training the personnel and educating them to take up the responsibilities of a given job becomes one of the major objectives of downward communication.
- ▶ Educating employees is a continuous process in an organization and is meant for all the levels of authority.
- ▶ Discarding outdated techniques, technologies and installing more efficient systems has become imperative in the current age.
- ▶ Training the workforce to update their knowledge and skills is a challenge to every management.
- ▶ Organizing workshops, demonstration lecturers, film-shows, and seminars are done on regular basis to meet this objective.
- ▶ Apart from the work-front, education on the personal front – on grooming, manners, and etiquettes – is imparted to employees to enhance the image of the organization.

MOTIVATION

- ▶ Management has to motivate its employees to ensure highest levels of quality.
- ▶ Motive is a powerful force, an inner drive that energizes an individual to make a focused effort to achieve her/his goal.
- ▶ To motivate is to appeal to this force, so that dedication towards a particular job is at the highest level. It is not possible to achieve this by either coaxing or commanding.
- ▶ Motivation means “that inner state that energizes, activates, or moves and which directs or channels behavior towards certain goals.”
- ▶ Self-motivation involves drive and effort on the part of an employee.

MOTIVATION

- An employee takes up a job to earn her/his livelihood, to win recognition, to reach the peak of her/his/ abilities, to achieve excellence, to establish satisfying relationships, to earn job satisfaction.
- If management could appeal to this strong aspirational force and channelize it to fulfill organizational goals, it can achieve wonders.
- **Motivating employees by creating conditions so that their potential is maximized becomes one of the major strategies of communication.**

MOTIVATION

- An employee feels demotivated when his effort goes unnoticed and unrewarded, when s/he is unable to fulfill personal goals, when there is no support from the management, when there is a lack of communication between her/him and the management.
- Such a worker discharges her/his duties in a listless manner, and is not particularly bothered about the quality of her/his output.
- The corporate world cannot afford to work with a bunch of demotivated employees. Motivating employees is a continuous process.
- The first task of management is to help employees set goals [personal as well as organizational] and create conditions that will help them to reach these.

MOTIVATION



- Setting up the right kind of justice and reward system and inviting the employee's participation in decision-making is yet another way of motivating the employees.
- While managements have to work towards creating external conditions for motivating employees, they also have to work towards creating conditions that self-motivate the employees.
- It can **work towards creating the right kind of emotional environment**, where there is clear communication between itself and the employees, and where employees feel free, trusted and secure.

RAISING THE MORALE

- ▶ Morale, as commonly seen, is the mental strength of an individual.
- ▶ The state of morale impacts work performance of the individual.
- ▶ If morale is high, quality of work is high. If morale is low, the quality of work is poor. Morale is that factor which gives the individual confidence.
- ▶ Employee confidence is high when there is adequate infrastructural support, facilities for training, opportunities for growth; where systems of rewards and punishment are in place, and there is a strong leadership that generates a sense of direction and control.
- ▶ In such an atmosphere employees learn to view their work positively.

RAISING THE MORALE

- ▶ Poor morale results from distrust in management on account of its failure to provide basic work standards, such as lack of facilities for training, absence of prospects, absence of systems of governance, lack of direction on the part of top leadership, and lack of trust in management on account of its poor communicating skills.
- ▶ Since the state of morale adversely affects the work performance of the organization, boosting the morale of the employees is one of the most important objectives of communication.
- ▶ Management can boost the morale of its employees by giving basic infra-structural support, creating systems that reward effort, strengthening its official channels of communication, encouraging upward communication, controlling the grapevine, and taking measures to earn the trust of the employees

WARNING & REPRIMAND

- ▶ Management, at times, has to issue a warning to an erring employee.
- ▶ To warn is to inform a person of unpleasant consequences, When all other alternatives fail, warning the erring employee becomes imperative.
- ▶ Management uses this form of communication sparingly, and only when it desperately needs to control, or modify certain behavior that interferes with the organizational norms and discipline.
- ▶ Management begins by bringing a misdemeanor to the notice of the employee concerned.
- ▶ S/he is asked to change her/his behavior; but if the employee fails to do so, the management issues a soft, oral warning.

WARNING & REPRIMAND

- Reprimands to warning is how managements proceed to discipline an employee.
- This gives the erring employee an opportunity to correct himself.
- If the employee ignores this opportunity and keeps repeating the improper behavior, he is given a warning in writing.
- Normally, after two such memos are issued, the service of the employee is terminated.
- The employee can always answer a memo and explain.
- A written memo makes the employee aware of the seriousness of his offence, and he can choose to correct his ways.
- A written communication gives the management an opportunity to build a case or charge-sheet against such an employee.
- This facilitates taking any subsequent legal action against him at a later stage.