

Effective Communication Processes: A Panacea for Organizations' Success

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Abstract

The dynamic and global environment demand effective communication for successful business operations. This paper focused on effective communication processes: a panacea for organizations' success. An organization may have all the necessary resources to run its business (e.g. employees, machines, technology, money etc) but without a proper communication process in place, it will be difficult for that organization to run smoothly and succeed. The appropriateness of the encoding process plays a significant role in the success or otherwise of message sent and could affect the use of the message received. Irrespective of the intentions of the sender, it is what is received that determines the actions of the receiver hence performance. Medium used in transmission of message plays significant role in protecting the content of the message and interpretation thereafter. Feedback not only confirms receipt, it confirms proper interpretation and understanding of message sent. It further reinforces the sender's confidence in the idea generated, the encoding, the medium used, and the decoding ability of the receiver. The implication is that if communication process is faulty, organizations' success will be negatively affected. This is because both encoder and decoder will be interested in listening to respond rather than listening to understand. This paper concludes that the level of employees' performance which will ultimately lead to organization's success is significantly dependent on the communication processes (message sent, medium used, receiver and feedback), regardless of gender, position and qualification. This paper recommends that, since messages sent significantly impact on employees' contributions, managers dealing with employees should have the receiver of message in mind while generating the idea and encoding the message.

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I. Introduction

The Meaning of Communication

Today's workplace is dynamic as globalization, economic uncertainty, information and communication technology (ICT) changes, social scene, political scene, and financial institutions continue to change drastically in response to the demands of the time. Given that the forces in the workplace are increasingly complex in addition to the forces of global competition, organizations certainly will depend on effective communication processes to achieve their set objectives. Abba, Anazodo and Okoye (2004) opine that communication is one of the often talked about forces that stimulates changes in management field and organizations. However, it is seldom clearly understood. In real work situations, effective communication is a primary pre-requisite in achieving the objectives of the organization but modern management has experienced serious problems in this area.

An effective organizational communication is where the intent of the sender is achieved. All effective communication processes tightens the connections in an organization and customers, staff stakeholders etc. The customers, staff and stakeholders are those groups of people affected in one way or the other by the organization's actions - employees, shareholders, customers, the community, and the general public. When message sent is misunderstood or misinterpreted, it can result to time wasting and even inability to attain goals. Organizations are giving more attention to work diversity – everything that makes the individuals that work together different, for example sex, age, education, ability, culture, exposure, religion, work experience including skills. Bovee and Thill (2013), assert that these different categories of workforce could produce an obvious advantage over competitors. However, that would require a conscious communication approach. It is obvious that communication plays a key role which ensures effectiveness in management and organization. An effective communication is where the intent of the sender is achieved. To Bovee and Thill (2013), the search for relevant talents globally, the right customers, and resources are on the rise, which has caused information to evolve too. Companies in virtually every industry rely heavily on effective communication processes for set goals to be achieved. When directives are given by top management, instructions are issued by the middle

management and subordinates complain and the receiver of the message understands it at the level of the intention of the sender then effective communication has taken place. Adler and Elmhurst (2002) assert that everybody in the work communicates. Long years of experience, skills and qualification cannot replace communication process in any organization. It is very vital. Chand (2014) posits that there is communication anywhere there is life. Once, a message is effectively sent and received; communication has taken place and a process used. Communication and its process are as old as life, and human beings cannot relate effectively without communication and its process. Organizations succeed with and through communication process. Man expresses his feelings, and emotions, through communication and information is received or exchanged through it.

In organizations, communication is key tool which individuals within the organization use to understand and achieve set objectives. It makes interpersonal relationship possible, easy and enjoyable. It also builds relevant bridges between the organization and the general public. Relevant ideas, attitudes, emotions, information, and desired behaviours are communicated and enforce only through communication process. Inejji as cited in Ezeali and Ewulonu (2011), state that communication involves too many processes and cannot be understood without defining its parameters. This includes the following: (i) Communication is a dynamic behaviour meaning it is capable of changing human behavior when perceived and responded to both verbal and non-verbal. (ii) Communication is a symbolic behaviour: to make meanings, we use symbols to express ideas and feelings. (iii) Communication elicits a response: communication is an intentional behaviour. The source encodes information, which is delivered through a channel to a decoder. The receiver has to be there to elicit the desired response. (iv) Communication is a receiver phenomenon: the message is encoded by the source to the receiver expecting that, he would attach meaning to the message based/depending on how the message was understood. (v) Communication is complex: there are a lot of activities that take place in the communication environment. All of the above points to the fact that communication is very important and everyone depends on effective communication in other to perform better.

Objective of the study

Disseminating information that requires immediate action and expecting the desired action is a concern in organizations. The concern arises from the fact that a good idea may be initiated but the expected results are not achieved because of faulty communication processes. In essence the voice of the idea originator and/or the actual idea is lost either in the process of encoding the idea (message), the medium used in conveying the message, the disposition of the sender or receiver and as well the nature of the feedback mechanism. How this can be corrected is what this study is about.

The broad objective of the study is to examine organizational communication processes.

Theoretical Framework

This paper takes its theoretical base from Weick (1969) Organizational Information Theory as cited by Pugh and Hickson (2007). Organizational Information Theory (OIT) by Weick has been noted as a strong and reliable theoretical framework that explains organization's ability to make use of required information necessary for organizations success. Organization Information Theory draws from other theories to explain how organizations receive input from others. Weick (1969) critically explains the need for human interaction as a critical point in information processing. Communication is therefore at the centre of the theory. The theory assumes that organizations, although with structures, are always transforming and changing through the interaction of its members. That is only possible by the instrumentality of communication process. This theory therefore, emphasizes the process of communication as central and very important more than communication itself. It is the process that explains how members of the organization engage in collaborative efforts which translate into organizational success. Simply, Organizational Information Theory is primarily concerned with how organizations process information to make sense of it. It explains how individuals within organizations communicate vital information in order to guarantee success and efficiency in their environment.

Communication processes

Processes are series of work steps directed to a particular end or output. Communication processes is the process by which ideas and intentions are transmitted from the sender through a medium of choice to the receiver. Ideas are generated, encoded, transmitted, received, and then decoded to generate meaning (Nickels et al 1999). Effectiveness or otherwise of communication process depend on the quality of the stages in the communication process. If information available to the person who is generating the idea or intentions is wrong, the process will be affected badly. If the encoding is improperly done or language used is alien to the receiver, understanding and interpretation will be affected negatively. In the same way, if the medium used in the transmission of the message is faulty or distorted, the facts of the message will be affected and interpretation

could be far from the intended. Finally, if the receiver is not in the picture of the entire process, he may not understand the relevance of the message and the reasons behind it.

There are several things that can be done to improve organizational communication process. Stoner et al (1998) recommends that in order to overcome differing perception which is one of the problems in the process, there is a great need for the receiver to confirm to the sender that understanding took place. Receivers can also be requested to ask questions in any area of confusion in the message received. Alternative ways of phrasing messages to sooth receivers and circumstances should be taken seriously. Minor restatements can be very helpful to the receiver. Messages will be interpreted and understood more properly if there are minimal or no inconsistencies in verbal and nonverbal communication. Non verbal actions or factors like where and how we stand when we communicate, the types of cloth we wear and how our face look when we communicate could influence messages sent, and interpretation of received messages. Movement of the eyes and body while communicating could also influence the process of communication. Once inconsistencies are identified, they should be avoided because they could reduce proper understanding or give entirely a different meaning than the one intended. Another problem that could affect organizational communication and messages sent is mistrust on the part of the encoder (sender) or the decoder (receiver). The degree of acceptance of message sent by the receiver is largely dependent of the trust he has on the sender. The history of work relationship comes to play when trust or mistrust are considered. If history of the work relationship has been good mistrust is minimized but if it has been bad mistrust is increased. It is stated that the realization of effective communication is guided and largely dependent on the process. It is the process that actually delivers ideas that are shared. If the process is faulty, then meaning would be affected and understanding hampered. If the process is good, then it would deliver what is sent correctly. Sanchez (2013) opines that the process of communication is made up of four elements. These elements are encoding the idea, selecting the medium and transmission, decoding the idea and feedback. However, the most important figures in a communication process are both the sender and the receiver. Without any of them, there cannot be a message. The next in the level of importance is the medium.

Communication is complex on its own; however, the four key components listed above helps so much in understanding of the process. Once the process and its key elements are properly understood, communication itself is understood. Because the components are closely related, what affects one of them can easily affect the other and that could distort both meaning and understanding. Once understanding is reduced, there will be confusion. Confusion would certainly affect employee performance negatively. The objective of communication can hardly be achieved when any of the key elements are affected negatively because of their interrelatedness.

Organizational communication processes such as sender, medium/channel, receiver and feedback are steps needed to achieve a set goal, providing responsibilities to the employees, and organizing the employees in the type of structures considered suitable in the organization or its parts. This would result to an effective organization which harmonious relationships exist and task to be performed are very clear and properly delivered. It creates conducive working environment where employees are happy to be in and where confusion, too much stress and frustration are non-existence. When work processes are effective, employees' spend their time in activities that most create impact and value. They also understand their role in the process, and how it contributes to the ultimate or final output. All work related activities are well defined step by step. They have the required skills and the resources to do their work. There is also a provision of a system to measure the quality of final output, provide feedback and opportunity for improvement. The researcher is interested in studying communication processes, which is the source of organization success.

Pillai and Bagavathi (2003) define communication as the process through which facts, opinions, emotions and ideas are exchanged between persons for mutual understanding to be created. It involves the use of various means that could be used in the transmission and it also involves people in different places in the world. Adler and Elmhurst (2002) say that elements of communication are irrespective of the number of people involved in it. The important elements of the communication process include the followings as given by Alder and Elmhurst (2002): (a) SENDER/ENCODER: The encoder who is the sender thought of the message to be sent and put it in the most proper manner so that it can be sent. All of this is done bearing the receiver in mind. (b) MEDIUM: The medium is form messages can be coded. Messages may therefore be in form of a letter, one on one discussion or even gestures or signs. (c) CHANNEL: The channel or medium is the means of delivery of the message form. (d) RECEIVER/DECODER: Receiver or the decoder has the duty of bringing out meaning from what is sent and received. He should also send a feedback to confirm understanding. (e) FEEDBACK: is a confirmation from the receiver that understanding of what was sent was made. It confirm the success or otherwise of the process. (f) CONTEXT: Communication does not take place in a vacuum. The context of any communication act is the environment surrounding it. This includes, among other things, place, time, event, and attitudes of sender and receiver. The communication process is dynamic, continuous, irreversible, and contextual. It is not possible to participate in any element of the process without acknowledging the existence and functioning of the other elements.

Communication's role in every human organization is highly essential and cannot be done without. It is like the life wire of an organization. Communication is sharing our feelings, ideas and opinions with others. This can be intellectual, personal, spoken or written in nature. It is a two-way process. Communication motivates, informs, suggests, warns, orders, changes behavior, and create reliable and desired relationships to ensure constant interaction and understanding of desired information. Andersen (2001) says performance can be influenced with improved capabilities in communication such capabilities can be decision making and implementation in many strategic ways. Communication is essential for close, sympathetic relationships in the society and for transformation of men, material and thoughts from one place to another. Communication involves transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages. Communication is a means of transmitting information and making oneself understood by another or other- (Kristina and Yesenia 2005). Communication is essential in management because, it is through that means that information necessary for the efficient and effective running of the organization is made. Without it, interpersonal relationship would not hold, performance would be difficult and success would not be achieved in an organization.

Factors Affecting Employees' Behaviour in the Workplace

We are considering effective communication processes: a panacea for organizations success. The communication processes in the organization that is not understood by the employees' would affect their physical and mental well being which in turn will affect the organization. Therefore a quick look at some of the factors that affect the behaviour is necessary. The behavior of an employee in an organization would determine his performance level. There are various within and without factors that affect the behavior of the employees. One of it is leadership - managers and leaders play a key role in influencing the behavior of employee at the workplace. The leader has the responsibility to set a direction for his team members and stand by the team at all times, guide and help them in daily activities. Also, he should help them get new skills in order for their knowledge to be updated. A leader should be a strong source of inspiration for the employee. Any step he takes will be copied by the employee. If a leader strictly adheres to the organizations' rules and regulations, the employee would do likewise.

The second one is effective communication - a manager needs to effectively communicate with workers. Any time workers feel abandoned, they no longer have interest in the task. They should be allowed to contribute and make suggestions in the organization's decisions. This will help them to express their opinions/views and discuss their difficulties. This will lead to quick conflict and grievance resolution. The third one is job responsibilities - where employee is over burden, he would be confused and weighed down. Employee should do only what best he can perform. Due to technology advancement, employee should also be encouraged to upgrade his knowledge and skills regularly.

The fourth one is work culture – culture here is a way of life in the organization. If the workplace is not culturally favourable for good communication and performance, goals may not be achieved. The fifth one is job security- this is the probability or assurance that an employee's job status is not threatened. Job security ensures relaxed and confidence performance and determined workplace behaviours. A leader must stand by him at the times of crisis. The sixth one is relationship at work – in order to avoid frustration and stress at the workplace, employees should be allowed to interact with fellow colleagues freely. It is important that they have friends to talk to discuss and share experience. Technology is an important element within the workplace environment that can negatively or positively affect the behavior of an employee. Although it can make procedure and methods simpler, it could be stressful to learn the use of a new technology while continuing with production. The dynamism in technology makes frequent training, improvement in work procedures and documentation essential, (Richards 1980).

The Communication Process Model

Models of communication are conceptual models used to explain the human communication process. There are various models of the communication process that exists. Few of them are considered to buttress the discussion on the communication processes as it applies to employees' performance which leads to organizational success.

Berlo (1960) expanded Shannon and Weaver's (1949) linear model of communication and created the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) model of communication.

This SMCR model of communication separated the model into parts as shown in figure 1.

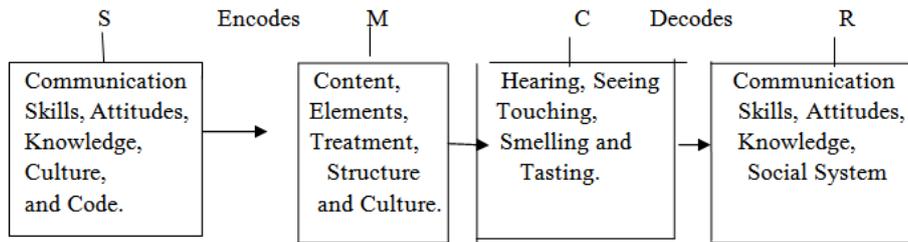


Figure 1: SMCR Model.

Source: Berlo (1960) (Source, Message, Channel and Receiver -SMCR) model of communication process.

This model can apply in all forms of communication. This model leaves a number of elements under each of the components which are explained as follows:

Source: Source here means the originator of the message, communication skills, is the ability of the sender to encode his ideas very well, while knowledge is the extent to which the sender knows what to communicate. Knowledge here is not a general one. It is specifically about the subject matter to be communicated. In the model, social system is an aspect of the society that could influence communication like culture, beliefs, values, religion and the society's level of understanding. Communication level cannot be higher than the level of understanding in a particular society. Culture is part of a social system and communication is an aspect of culture of the people.

Message - Content: the beginning to the end of a message comprises its content. Elements: it includes various things like language, gestures, body language etc, so these are all the elements of the particular message. Content is accompanied by some elements. Structure: Structure of a message is the arrangement of content, context, medium, and channels in a way as to allow very clear understanding. Structure could determine whether a message is good or bad. Code: Coding which is how it is sent could also be through gestures, music, culture or even body language. If the code is not suitable, the message will have problem and effective communication will not take place.

Channel: Channel could be any means through which the message is sent and received. It can be through any of the human senses. Communication can be done through hearing, seeing, feeling, mouth, or smelling. Even though a particular medium is not called it is believe that communication is done through all the human senses.

Decoder: The person who receives the message is to decode the message. Being the receiver of the message he will have to interpret it in the way he understands it. Everything that is needed by the sender to encode a proper message applies to the receiver to interpret correctly. The illustration of the above model shows that the communicators must be able to understand themselves clearly for the communication to be effective. The both must have good listening skills, ability to speak etc. If the sender is more educated, he should come down to the level of the receiver for proper understanding.

Criticism of Berlo's (1960) SMCR model of communication: It is observed that there is no feedback in this model, which means the communication process is incomplete. Feedback gives the information whether the message sent achieved its purpose. This model did not mention barriers to communication. This model did not also indicate that there is always noise in every communication environment. The model is also complex. It is a linear model of communication. In an organization setting people cannot be on same level for communication to occur.

This next model is by Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr, (2009).

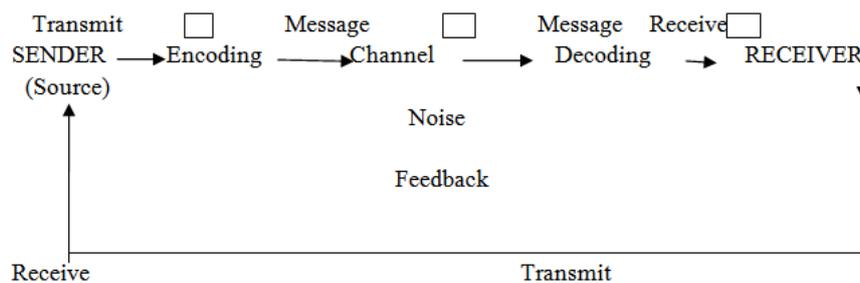


Figure 2: A model of the Communication Process.

Source: Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr. Management (2009:552)

The communication is thought of and initiated by the encoder (sender). In an organization, the one or group that sends message is the one with necessary ideas, problems, and needs, purposes that would assist the organization when the receiver receives and uses the message received. This can be in form of memorandum, or circular or oral directive. Encoding is the translation of ideas or information into understandable symbols. Encoding makes transmission from the sender to the receiver possible. Decoding on the other hand is the interpretation of the coded information into understandable facts. The process is double edged where the receiver anticipates message from the sender. Channel, is the formal medium of communication between a sender and a receiver. Noise, is any factor that disturbs, confuses, or otherwise interferes with communication. Feedback is a reaction from a receiver indicating that the message is understood or not understood. Without a feedback, there will not be a confirmation from the receiver that he received or understood the message sent by the sender. The essence of feedback is simple and understandable; it is the sure confirmation that communication was effective and communication process efficient, such assurance is necessary in every communication process. The entire process is straight forward because the sender sends the information through an acceptable or agreed channel of communication; the decoder receives the coded information, interprets it, and supply feedback to the sender. In verbal, one-on-one interaction, the process of feedback is different because all of the actions happen at the same time (simultaneously) or side by side. Feedback occurs only in two-way communication. The two-way communication process involves messages or information coming from the superior through the agreed channel and response of the message, be it ideas or feelings are been conveyed back to the superior. Feedback controls, reinforces and stimulates the process of communication.

This next communication process model by (Weihrich, Connice & Koontz 2010) still reorganizes the same elements mentioned earlier in this paper. They include sender, channel and receiver. This is shown in a slightly modified model below:

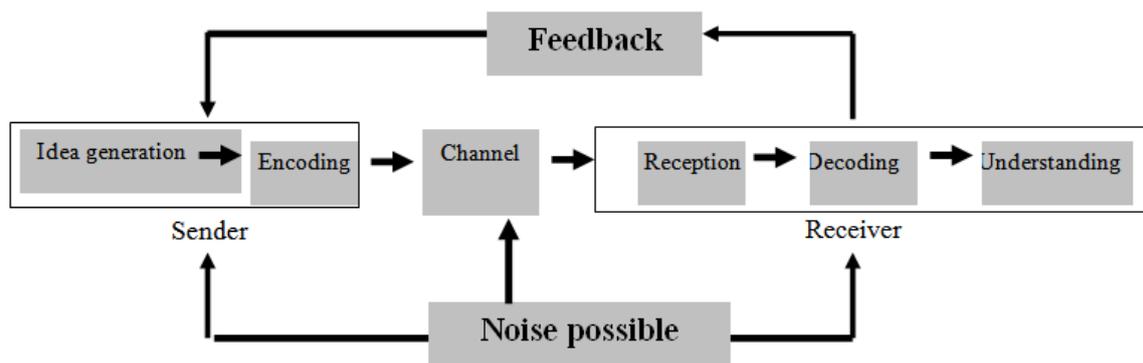


Figure 3: A Communication Process Model.

Source: Weihrich, Connice& Koontz (2010:393). Management: A Global and Entrepreneurial Perspective

Originator (Sender) of the message – All messages starts with the originator. He puts his thoughts or ideas, in a format that is clear to him and will be understood by the receiver. An appropriate channel is used to convey the message. The message may best be delivered orally or in writing. It all depends on the content and the urgency. One may choose two or more channels to transmit message, for example after a phone conversation is concluded and the parties reach an agreement, a letter may be written to confirm the agreement. Every channel has its good and bad; therefore a careful consideration of the appropriate channel to be used is essential in other for the communication to be effective.

Message recipient – Message recipient should anticipate a message in order to interpret it when he gets it. Interpretation or decoding is the conversion of the decoded information into useable thought or information. Communication is usually said to be accurate when the sender and the receiver are operating in the same level of meaning of symbols used. Communication can only be complete when understanding occurs. The sender and the receiver both have understanding in their mind. An open mind is needed for complete understanding of a message. Noise - Noise is any unwanted thing in any part of the process of communication. Such unwanted thing could be with or around the sender during encoding, transmission, use of wrong channel, decoding by the receiver or sending wrong feedback. All these have to be checked to have effective communication. Feedback in communication – This is a necessary conformation for one to be sure that what was sent was received and the process was effective. It also indicates that change has taken place in the individual or organization because of the communication, (Weihrich, Connice and Koontz 2010).

Criticism of (Weirich, Connice and Kontz 2010) communication process model: A careful study of the model shows that the receiver needs understanding to decode the message. This should also apply to the sender, for he equally needs understanding to encode his thoughts. All that applies to the sender applies also to the receiver.

Another model of communication is by Guffey and Lowely (2013). Communication is the process message transmission from an encoder to a decoder in an understanding manner- Guffey and Lowely (2013).

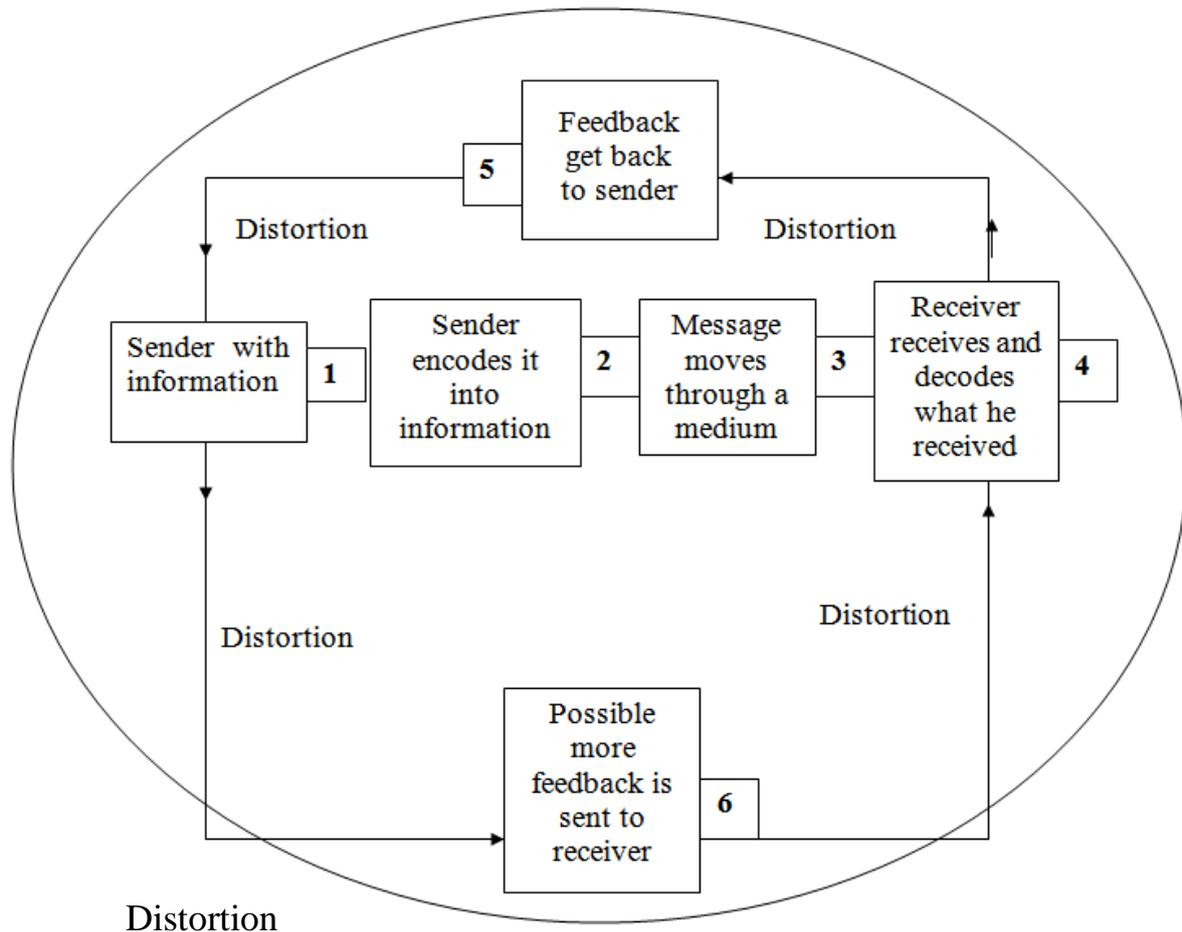


Figure 4: The Communication Process Model

Source: Guffey and Lowely. *Essential of Business Communication* (2013:10).

From the communication process model in figure 4, the communication process consists of six key steps which are explained below.

(1).The sender (this could be an individual, group or organization) is the person who initiates a message by putting his/her thoughts together.

(2). Encoding is the second step in the communication process. Its means the sender's thoughts and ideas are converted into words and/or gestures with the aim to carry its meaning to the receiver. Robbins (1999) asserts that this involves four things - skill, attitude, knowledge and social-cultural system. Our attitudes influence our behaviour. We hold predisposed ideas on numerous topics, and our communications are affected by these attitudes. Our communicative ability may be restricted by the extent of our knowledge of a particular topic. You cannot communicate what you don't know. You are also influenced by your position in the social-cultural system on which you belong. Because your beliefs and values are all part of your culture, act to influence you as a sender.

(3) The message moves through a channel. The encoded message is sent to the receiver through the communication channel. The channel could be oral, written etc. The effectiveness and efficiency of various channels depends on the characteristics of a communication. Oral communication channel gives immediate feedback. While written communication channel will reach wider audience and record purposes. The following will determine the channel to be used - urgency and the need for immediate feedback needs, documentation need, and whether the receiver posses oral or written communication skills.

(4) The receiver decodes the message by translating it into a form that he/she can understand. The receiver is equally restricted according to Robbins (1999) by his/her skills, attitudes, knowledge and social-cultural system. Just as the sender must be skillful in writing or speaking, the receiver must be skillful in reading or listening and both must be able to rationalize well. The knowledge, attitude and cultural background of the receiver could affect his ability to receive. Communication can only be successful where the meaning of the message sender is exactly understood by the receiver.

(5) Feedback is the confirmation and proof that the original intention of the sender's message was achieved. Feedback is very important element of the process of communication, for it gives the encoder room to check that the message was interpreted correctly by the receiver or not. (6) Possible additional feedback to the receiver. If there is any new information that the receiver should know about, then it can be included here.

Noise is indicated in the above model, although, it's not part of the six key elements in the process. It is good to state that noise will always be there in the communication environment. There is always a sender, message, channel and a receiver in all forms of communication. The format or pattern of a message conveyed will greatly affect the meaning. The sender initiates a message, and the receiver interprets it. As earlier stated, noise is in every communication environment and it complicates the process for both the sender and the receiver. It is a fact that there is no noiseless communication. There is basically an element of noise penetrating the process of the communication. Any distortion of the meaning and misunderstanding of information is a kind of noise. Our culture, values, state of being etc can disrupt supposedly smooth communication.

Criticism: Guffey and Lowely (2013) communication process model has six steps as indicated in figure 4. A careful study of the model shows that the sixth step (possible additional feedback to receiver) was not necessary because all that the sender needed was whether the message was understood by the receiver and the aim was achieved. Where the feedback from the receiver states otherwise, the message has to go through the necessary steps again.

The next model we will consider now is by Bovee and Thill (2013). Bovee and Thill assert that seeing communication as a process would guides and leads to proper indication of steps that are needed to enhance and increase one's success. Although this model varies according to authors, the eight steps below will further increase our understanding of communication process.

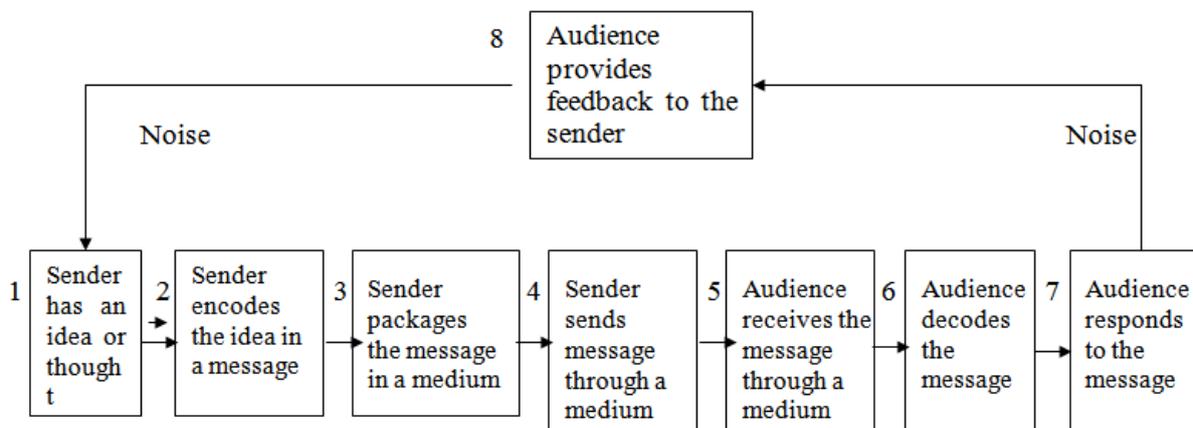


Figure 5: The Basic Communication Model

Source: Bovee and Thill Business Communication Today (2013:48)

Bovee and Thill (2013) opine that the above state steps show the movement/flow of the sender's ideas to the receiver. This model gives a simplified access of a complicated and delicate process, although it gives a good underlying basis that creates meaningful clear communication. (1) The idea is initiated by the encoder. An effective communication begins at the point of the organization of the idea. Any idea that would improve the organization of time and money then the communication is of value to your receiver. But if your communication is only complains, it means nothing to the receiver. (2) The encoding process is where the ideas are put in a proper order. (3) Then, is sent through an acceptable medium by the sender to the audience intended to receive the message. (4) The channel is the medium used to transmit the ideas or information. The channel can be one on one discussion, the electronic media, any form or system suitable to convey message. (5) The intended group gets the message only if the channel does not have any issues that would affect the smooth flow of the process and also that the intended group would take action in noticing, understanding and give correct interpretation of the message. (6) The decoding of the message is a very crucial stage because the interpretation

given will determine the success level. (7) The intended group responds to the received message. A message that is directly beneficial to the receivers would have a timely and quick response. It is the responsibility of the receiver to (a) remember the message clearly (b) decide to take action on it, and (c) be willing to respond as expected. (8) It is expected that the intended group would give a conformation/acknowledgement of the received message back to the sender. The group members' feedback would enable the sender to weigh the level of the success made. Feedback could be sent either verbally or nonverbally. This means, the use of speech or writing and the use of gestures, facial expressions, or other signal etc, or both. The decoding process is also important because all that is required for a successful encoding is also required for a successful decoding.

Noise is part of every communication process. Considering the complexity of the above process, noise is one barrier and distraction that stand between the sender and the receiver.

Bovee and Thill (2013) opine that observing the complicate nature of the communication process and the obstacles and the on foreseen circumstances that often hinders the flow of communication between the sender and the receiver is the cause of not getting the intended objectives of the sender. It is not surprising that communication efforts often fail to achieve the sender's objective.

Criticism: It is observed that Bovee and Thill (2013) basic communication model has eight steps which seem too many and complex.

Barriers in the Communication Environment

Guffey and Lowely (2013) and Bovee and Thill (2013) and others acknowledge that there are many barriers to communication that could be seen within the environment that could disrupt communication. Such barriers include distraction, competing messages, noise, channel breakdown and filters. Bovee and Thill (2013) mentioned some barriers that can block or influence message in the channel are (1) distraction and noise. External distractions can be un-conducive environment, poor illustrations, crowded room, large shouting and seat dragging. Distractions that are considered internal have to do with the idea creation, emotions, thing processes that are influenced by the other things. (2) Competing messages. Creating a 100% attentive audience is difficult. This is because the mine eyes and eyes of human beings can hardly be controlled. They are at liberty. (3) Filters. Messages can be stopped or distorted by the audience or by the technology interventions on the sender and the receiver. Filtering could be done intentionally (like deliberately obstructing incoming messages because of the sender or content) or unintentional (like mistakenly deleting legitimate emails). The structure and culture of an organization can also inhibit the flow of vital messages. People you rely on to deliver your message can distort it or filter it to meet their own needs. (4) Channel breakdowns. Sometimes the channel simply breaks down and fails to deliver your message at all.

There are still more barriers such as: language which could still be a barrier to communication or message sent. Where individuals communicate using same or similar language, some terms used may act as barriers to receiver. The psychological mode of the individuals may affect how he sends the message and how it is received and perceived. Psychological barrier – this is caused by the physical state of the receiver.

Physical barrier – where the sender and receiver are far apart from each other there is bound to be some form of hindrance because of the distance in between which is a barrier. Systemic barriers- this type of barrier may in framework, environment, or organization with inadequate or wrong information system. In such systems, understanding of roles of communication may be lack or non-existence. In organizations like that employees are often not sure of the roles of communication process and their own roles too. Attitudinal barriers -these are barriers caused by individuals and not the external environment which prevent communication process from being effective. Such attitudes like pride, arrogance, nasty, slandering, poor dressing either real or perceived could affect the process of communication.

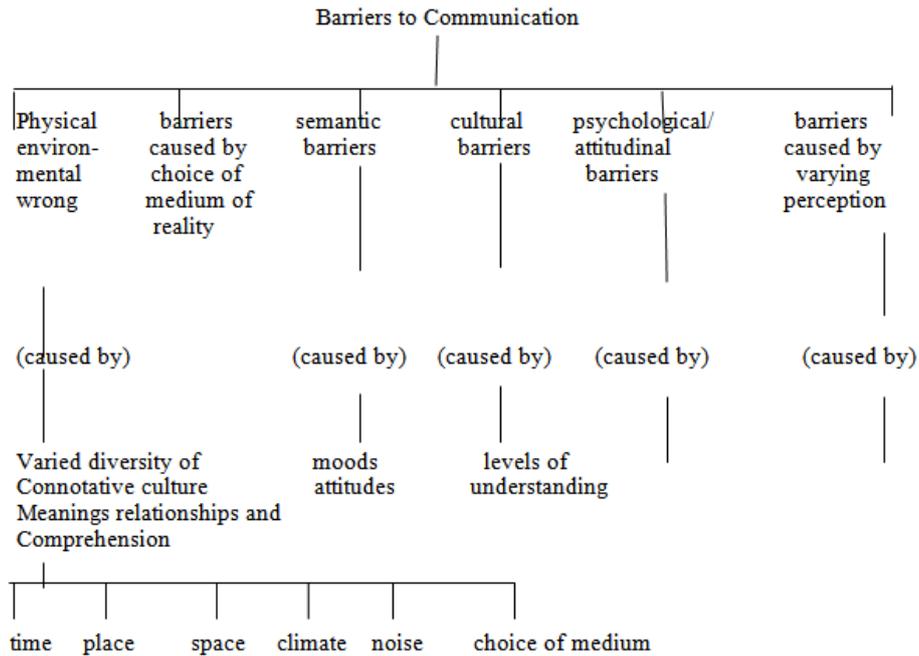


Figure 6: Barriers to Communication

Source: (Retrieved 04/08/2016 from <http://communicationtheory.org/barriers-to-communication>)

Organizations are not immune to the above noted barriers; therefore, every effort should be made to minimize these barriers and distractions in order to have a successful communication. Every communicator should try to discover barriers between him and the receiver and try to prevent it/them. Bovee and Thill (2013) suggest that managers should watch out for communication barriers in an organization to ensure that there is free flow of communication. Without preventing or reducing distortions drastically, communication will be hampered; performance of the employees obstructed and organization suffers

Overcoming Communication Barriers

It is the heart beat and longing of people to effectively communicates but do not have a keen appreciation of the hindrances in the communication process. Managers that are competent have developed an awareness of the hindrances and able to cope/manage with them. To overcome whatever barriers as discussed earlier, one must discover its source. Identification of the source of any type of barrier should be followed by reasonable steps to correct it. Some of the barriers like noise may not be completely eradicated but it can be drastically controlled by both the sender and the receiver when they are aware of its existence. A good feedback mechanism is a sort of control measure.

Selecting a suitable medium or media for the communication is very important. It is evident that one medium may work better than another. Whatever be the case, a combination of media may be used for effective function of the communication. One particular channel or medium of communication is not sufficient to serve the different operational and individual difficulties of the dynamics in an organization. Therefore, the medium one selects for communication in a certain situation should correlate with the feedback needs. All people involved in communication should do their best to reduce these barriers in the communication process, probably some of them may be eliminated and performance will be enhanced in the workplace.

Flow or Direction of Communication

Communication flows through defined paths in the workplace. These paths are known as the communication channels. There exists the formal and the informal channels. Management established the formal (official) channels which they use to communicate with their employees and others, connected with their business. The informal (unofficial) channels, also known as the grapevine are where messages that are not official passed through in an organization. Formal communication is encouraged in every organization in order to avoid rumours or grapevine. Ojukwu (2004) asserts that the flow of communication in organizations may be classified into vertical (downward and upward), horizontal and diagonal channels as shown in the diagram below.

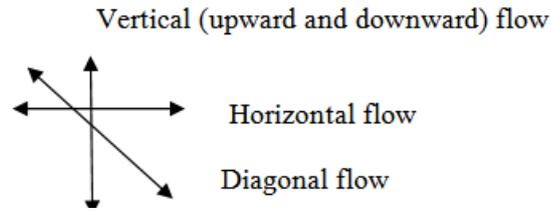


Figure 7: Communication Flows in Organization.

Source: Ojukwu (2004) Business Communication.

According to the Ojukwu, vertical communication flows downward and upward. It recognizes that within an organization information may flow from superior to a subordinate and vice versa. In the downward communication, messages come from the superior (management) to the subordinates in the organization hierarchy. This information may include order, job instructions, rules, directives, promotion, discipline etc from the superior to the subordinate. Responses come from the subordinates to the superior (management) in upward communication. The information may include suggestions, reports, grievances, recommendations, and thoughts and so on.

Robbins (1999), states that bottom-up communication helps managers to know the feelings of their subordinates in the organization. It also assists them in getting fresh ideas on how to improve things. This form of communication enables the management to get feedback on the activities of the organization. Adler and Elmhurst (2002), opine that virtually every organization claims to seek out upward messages, but many aren't as open to employee opinions as they claim. Horizontal (lateral) communication consists of messages between members of an organization with equal power e.g. heads of departments or specialist, members of the same department etc. Diagonal communication is the flow of information between individuals at different levels and does not have official relationship of reporting in an organization. In every organization, these three patterns of communication exist. A formal channel of communication is a means of communication that is established and controlled by managers. It could be through newsletters, memos and reports, staff meetings and so on. Informal communication is communication within an organization that is not officially allowed or approved. Stoner, Freeman, and Gilbert (2009), state that the grapevine inside the organization is as a result of many unofficial communication connections which overlaps or intersects at different points. Grapevine circumvents position (hierarchy) and brings workers from different directions within the organization.

This next model of communication flow in the organization is by Wehrich, Cannice and Koontz (2010). The various kinds of communication flows are shown in figure 8. Communication flows in diverse ways: downward, upward, horizontal and diagonal in effective organizations.

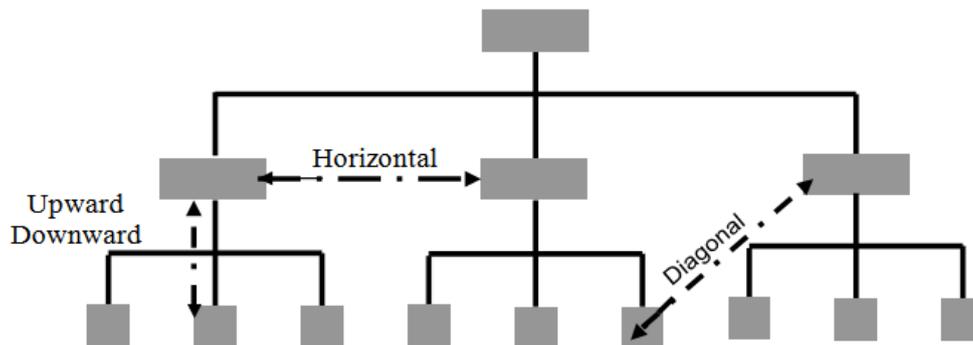


Figure 8: Information flow in an organization

Source: Wehrich, Cannice and Koontz (2010: 396) Management: A Global and Entrepreneurial Perspective

In organizations, communication flows downward, upwards horizontal and diagonal. The downward communication flows from superiors to the subordinates in the lower hierarchy. This kind of communication commands authority. It is used for instructions, meetings, promotion, policies, procedures etc. Sometimes, messages are misplaced or distorted when it passes through the various level of command. Top management's issuance of policies and procedures does not ensure communication. The reason is that, numerous instructions are not comprehended or even read, Wehrich, Cannice and Koontz (2010).

Downward communication from the various stages in the organization wastes a lot of time. As a result some superiors would prefer to send to information directly to the individual(s) who needs it. Upward communication - This type of communication moves from the subordinates to the superiors. Wehrich, Cannice

and Koontz (2010) say in this type of communication, the movement is often obstructed by superiors in the communication line, who filter the information and do not transmit all the information, mostly unfavorable news to their superiors. Upward communication is primarily nondirective. This means of communication is used to pass information such as grievance, complaint, an appeal etc. Upward communication can only be effective in an environment in which employees are willing to communicate freely. Horizontal Communication flows within employees who are on the same ranks. While diagonal communication occurs between employees at different ranks and have no direct reporting relationship with each other. This kind of communication is used to hasten message movement, to enhance clarity, and to regulate efforts for the organizational objectives to be achieved.

Grapevine in the Organization

Nwachukwu (1988) asserts that grapevine exists in every workplace. The grapevine is very common in use and it is quite easy to get management information quickly through grapevine. Rumour is pedal and information is distorted as a result of grapevine therefore, organizations resent the use of grapevine. Though, it shows how dire the employees urgently seek information. Grapevine is also used by the management to obtain information that would be beneficial to the organization. A management member can casually drop information without any seriousness and employees who have a feeling for importance now circulate the information of management to others. Management uses this strategy to get feedback on the reaction of employees on that information to make decisions. Agha (2011) posits that grapevine could be used to help managers to maximize information flow to employees. Nwachukwu (1988) states that the more organizations tried to stop grapevine communication the more grapevine activities increases. The same goes for rumour. Basically, both grapevine and rumour are outside the official communication channel but could be useful. The disadvantages of grapevine communication could be eradicated only if correct information is disseminated promptly. Reducing grapevine, rumour and distortion of information could only be achieved through fairness, openness and timely dissemination of needed information to the employees.

Organizational Communication and the Employee

Organizational communication is a complicated process that is essential for an organization to succeed in a drastically changing global business environment (Berger 2001). Human beings are very complex and managing them effectively have been a serious concern to management discourse. In all situations, it is difficult to sincerely understand the communications that occur in the organization between managers, among employees, or both. Every problem in the organization is seen or considered as failure of the communication process (Berger 2011 citing Lukazewski 2006). Berger (2011) in a work titled "employee communication: let's move from the knowing to doing" defines employee and organizational communication as interactive communication among and within organization members. Harris and Nelson (2008), assert that communication is one of the most dominant and important activities in organizations. Fundamentally, relationships grow out of communication, and the functioning and survival of organizations is based on effective relationships among individuals and groups. Communication helps individuals and groups coordinate activities to achieve goals, and it's vital in socialization, decision-making, problem solving and change-management processes. Communication helps to motivate, build trust, create shared identity and spur engagement; provides a way for individuals to express emotions, share hopes etc. Communication is vital because it is the means by which people either collectively or individually understand their organizations purpose and objectives. There are two main goals of communication. To create understanding that could improve productivity or quality of service and to transmit management decisions and directives to employees. Communication is very essential for moving/sending, receiving and using information in the organization.

Principles of Organizational Communication

Berger (2011) gave some principles of successful organizational communications. Berger opines that there exist communication principles which can be practiced and they are capable of making organization communication successful. Other principles that can make it successful: (1) using trusted channels to provide information timely with relevant content helps good understanding. In content, the context and rationales for relevant changes and new additions and subtractions are made. (2) Channels used depend on the type of message and urgency. It is the decision of the communicators to choose the type of channel that is ideal for their purpose. Some consider face-to-face communication as a very rich medium to use because of its advantages. It is quite appropriate to use for the resolution of conflicts or crises, communicate major changes and also celebrating accomplishments. The actions and reactions of the communicators are open to everyone. Leaders must be willing and give attention to all issues by listening carefully and providing solution and making improvements in the workplace. It is important to appreciate other communication media also to enhance the flow of information without undue pressures because the world is now driven with advanced technology. This

new technologies help to improve relationships both internally and externally. The organization is also in better position to achieve its goals as expected. (3) Employees should be allowed to participate in the decisions that affect them. This will help their commitment level, build rapport and improves the general communication climate. Employees want to be recognized as people who are contributing their best for the organization. (4) Leadership roles – superiors are the one to drum support for effective within communication. This will ensure peaceful co-existence and progress made. They must be true to their words and actions. A credible and honest leadership will breed dedicated and trust worthy employees.

II. Conclusion

This paper concludes that the level of employees' performance which will ultimately lead to organization's success is significantly dependent on the communication processes (message sent, medium used, receiver and feedback), regardless of gender, position and qualification. This paper recommends that, since messages sent significantly impact on employees' contributions, managers dealing with employees should have the receiver of message in mind while generating the idea and encoding the message.

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