



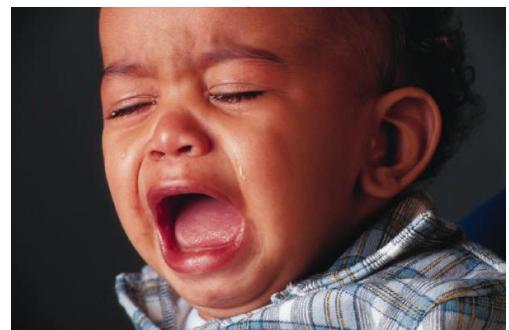
Communications

An overview

What is ‘communication’?

It is the process of sharing information between two or more people to achieve a desired outcome.

The word ‘communication’ comes from the Latin word, *communicare*, which means to impart or participate. Its root word means common.

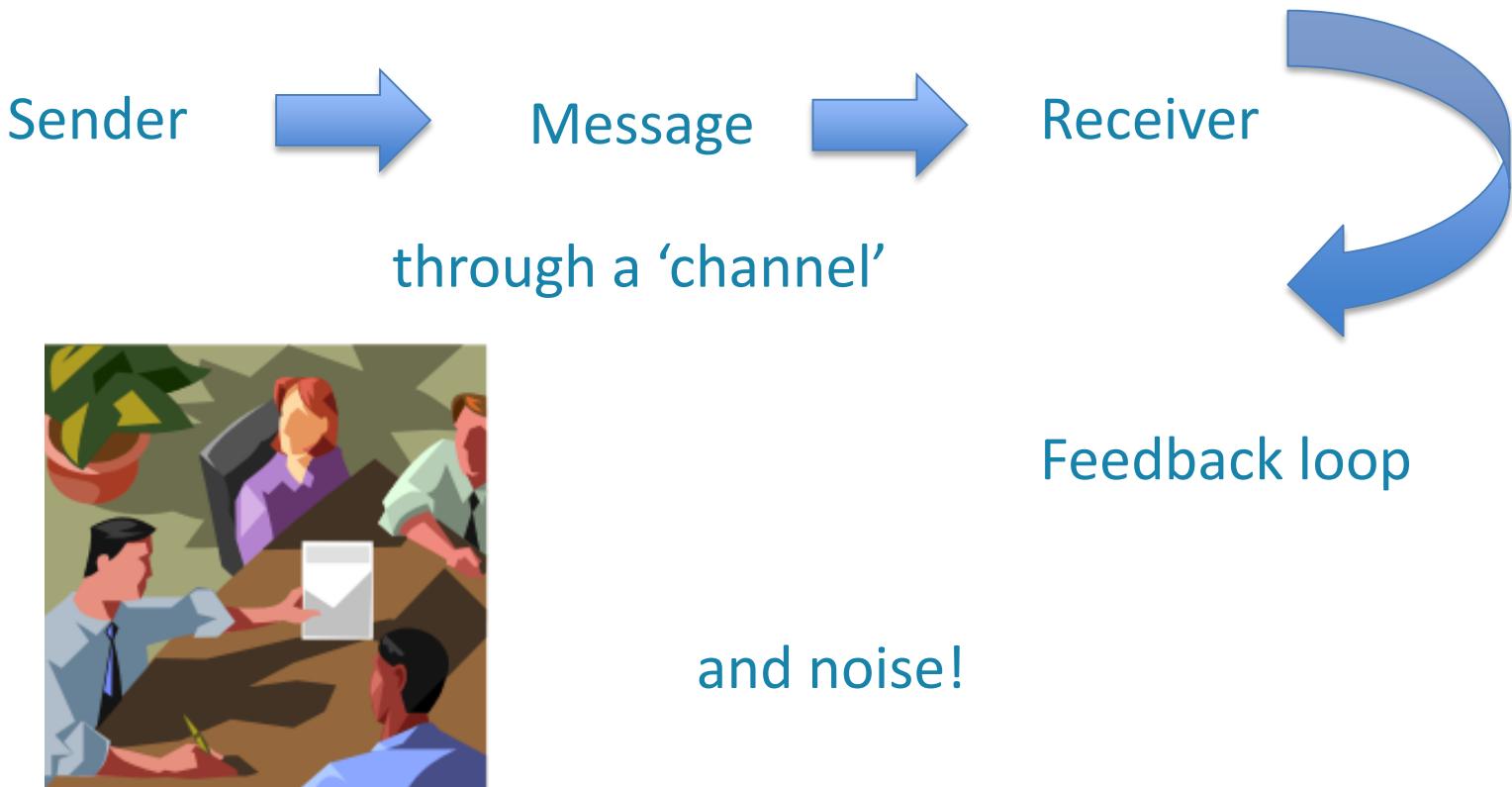


Why do we communicate?

It is suggested we communicate for three primary reasons:

- to make or maintain relationships
- to share or receive information
- to persuade (to act, to change a behavior, to shift an attitude or belief, etc.)

A simple communications model



Concept of ‘noise’

‘Noise’ refers to things that affect how well we send or receive information. It includes:

- *physical* noise (actual noise, too cold/hot, interference in transmission, etc.)
- *psychological* noise (distracted, biases, prejudices, etc.)
- *semantic* noise (different meanings attributed to words, use of technical terms or jargon, etc.)

Effectiveness in communications

- To be effective, the information shared must be sent and received without the desired meaning being distorted or changed by ‘noise’.
- Ensuring a feedback loop is essential to effective communication

Starts with knowing one's audience

- The better we understand our audience's current knowledge, perceptions, values and beliefs *before* we communicate, the better the chances that our communications will be effective.
- Asking for input, consulting and/or collaborating with a member(s) of audience beforehand to inform our communication efforts enhances effectiveness

Selecting appropriate channel

Communications can be:

- one-to-one, one to small group or one to many
- interpersonally or via mass and social media
- passive (one way flow of information) or interactive (inviting input and feedback)
- face-to-face (meetings, presentations); written (reports, newsletters, emails, etc.); and/or using audio/visual means
- controlled (we have control over what is said and to whom) or uncontrolled distribution (via mass and social media)

Each has advantages, disadvantages depending on your purpose

Other considerations . . .

In addition to knowing one's audience and selecting appropriate 'channel', other considerations include:

- message purpose, content, format and tone
- timing
- location
- appropriate 'spokesperson'
- possible effect of influencers, gatekeepers
- incorporating a feedback loop

Communication is about more than talking . . .

Adults spend an average of 70% of their time communicating.



Of this, an average of 45% is spent listening compared to 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing. (Adler, R. et al. 2001).

Listening



“If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear.” Mark Twain

Listening is a key to effective communication. It involves:

- listening not only to what is said, but to what is left unsaid or only partially said.
- observing body language, noticing inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages.
- empathizing – trying to understand the other person’s point of view
- listening for ideas; not just words
- we listen at about 450 words/minute, speak at between 125 – 175 words/minute; mustn’t use ‘idle’ time to daydream, prepare our response

Effective communication requires:

- Planning and preparation
- Skills and abilities
- A *desire* to communicate
- Sincerity and openness
- Building of trust
- Willingness to deal with ‘elephants in the room’
- Frequent, open, honest communication efforts
- Appealing to multiple senses; use of visuals improves comprehension, increases speed of transmission, triggers emotion, enhances retention
- Inviting and responding to input and feedback

Organizational communication

- Key responsibility area, usually at senior management level
- Responsible for branding, marketing, social media, internal and external communications;
- Also community relations, public relations, media relations, and investor or government relations; note emphasis on *relationships and relationship building*
- Develops strategies and action plans to learn about, understand and influence knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices of stakeholders, wider public vis a vis the organization's mission and goals

Effective communications takes *time!*

- Building trust in the relationship takes time
- Building skills and abilities takes time
- Frequent, open, honest communication efforts take time
- Consulting, inviting input into process takes time
- Planning for, inviting feedback takes time
- Adapting to input and feedback takes time
- Repetition of message/adapted message takes time
- It is a dynamic process, changing constantly



Questions?



Thank you!