

Chapter 10: Communication

Overview

The importance of effective communication cannot be overstated. Therefore it is discussed in more than one of the CAP publications. Students should be able to apply the information learned in this chapter in both personal and professional situations.

Lecture Notes

A. Understanding Communication

Communication is the successful transmission of a message between a source and receiver. There are many factors to be considered in the process and many different types of communication.

1. **The Communication Process**
 - a. The source is most often a human speaker, but it can be signals from a machine. The sender is responsible for encoding the message (putting it into a form or code that can be understood by the receiver).
 - b. The message is the physical form given to the information. It can travel through three different types of channels (oral, written, nonverbal); each of the channels has its advantages and disadvantages.
 - c. The receiver is the target of the message; he or she is responsible for decoding the message (listening or reading). The context of the message can change its meaning.
 - d. Feedback is the acknowledgement the receiver provides to the sender to let him or her know the message was received.
2. **The Goals of Communication** must be understood by the receiver.
 - a. Personal communication occurs when people are acting as individuals, and organizational communication involves the goals of the organization.
 - b. Four goals may include convey information, direct and control action, motivate, and express feelings.
 - c. *The goals* affect both the sender and receiver.
3. **Two Basic Factors in Shared Communication** help determine the amount of information shared and received.
 - a. Common ground includes the assumptions we make about each other: mutual interest, shared values, and awareness of one another's interests. It is very useful because it keeps the speaker from having to account for every detail.
 - b. Cooperative principal is the belief that someone speaking is making an honest attempt to be understood. Because it occurs naturally, its value is best seen when it is violated because someone in the group is unwilling.
 - c. Common ground and the cooperative principle are critical aspects that occur nonverbally.
4. **Listening** is the primary role of the receiver.

- a. The critical nonverbal role of receiver is seen in effective management (where careful listening is required). Because listening takes more effort than talking, it requires practice and training. It is also critical for effective communication to take place.
- b. Active listening vs. passive listening makes a difference too. Active listeners devote complete attention to the speaker and take responsibility for understanding the message. They may take notes, restate points, or ask questions for clarity.
- c. Characteristics of active listening include intensity (focus on the message), empathy (take speaker's point of view), acceptance (non-judgmental), and taking responsibility for completeness (hearing entire message).
- d. Improving listening skills takes work. It might include things like eye contact, paying attention to feelings, responding to message, asking questions, and providing feedback.
- e. Feedback to the speaker completes the communication process; it informs, controls, motivates, and expresses feelings regarding the message.

B. Managerial Communication

The process changes and increases in complexity as a manager moves up in the organization. Supervisors use more verbal communication, while middle- and upper-management need to be excellent writers.

1. **Features of Managerial Communication** include:
 - a. Time and communication are important—90% of a manager's time involves communication.
 - b. Choosing the best channels for communicating different information is important to make the information most available.
 - c. Nonverbal communication is continuous, whether or not the manager is aware of his or her behavior.
 - d. Communicating ethics and behavior is done verbally and through behavior. A manager is responsible for modeling the expected behaviors.
 - e. Communicating across cultures requires knowledge, and it is necessary due to globalization.
2. **Types of Managerial Communication** can be classified into different categories.
 - a. Formal communication may be downward (from higher levels to lower levels), upward (from workers at lower levels to managers at higher levels), lateral exchanges (occur between people on the same level), grapevines (move in any direction), or diagonal (form of lateral).
 - b. Formats of communication vary depending on the message and situation. Written formats include reports, forms, notices, and email. Verbal directives include work instructions, daily announcements, PA messages, feedback, and praise. Interpersonal supervisory discussion and coaching include training, interviews, and feedback.

3. **Nonverbal Communication Channels** accompany almost all types of oral communication and most forms of written communication.
 - a. Paralanguage includes nonverbals that accompany verbal communication: gestures, facial expression, voice inflection, and eye contact. It can be used to intensify the message.
 - b. Body language includes the position of our body as we speak or listen. For example, crossed arms or legs demonstrates dislike, while open, relaxed posture communicates comfort.
 - c. Gestures and facial expressions may be a complete message; they may convey the meaning without a spoken or written word.
 - d. Personal space involves different zones and varies from culture to culture. The study of personal space is called proxemics.
4. **Qualities of Nonverbal Communication** include
 - a. Powerful—initial impressions are based on nonverbal cues.
 - b. Ambiguous—usually have more than one meaning.
 - c. Express Attitudes and Feelings—means by which emotion and feelings are conveyed.
 - d. Reflects Culture and Ethnicity—have a style and quality that is shaped by culture; may be specific to a culture.
5. **Verbal vs. Nonverbal Communication** can be a hard thing to separate; the channels may be working together.
 - a. Precision and clarity can come from the verbal communication while nonverbal may be vague. Verbal messages can be vague or incomplete (intentionally or unintentionally), but it is difficult to be precise with nonverbal messages.
 - b. Nonverbal can convey a hidden message, and it may not necessarily mean to be shared. Controlling nonverbal messages is difficult.
 - c. Written communication can have nonverbal components as well, like the tone of a letter. A reader must be alert to notice these nonverbal elements.

C. Presentation Techniques

1. **Hierarchy Affects Communication**; as you move up in the organization, the communication tasks will vary.
 - a. Supervisors conduct most communication in a downward manner to direct employees and guide work. There is also some upward communication as far as preparing reports and problem-solving.
 - b. Mid-level managers communication both ways. Written communication more common than at the supervisory level; they will be responsible for reports and communication with external clients.
 - c. Upper and top-level managers communicate with a larger audience. They write more, but it is less routine and more analysis-based. Oral

communication is more abstract and less detailed than at previous levels. These are also the people that address the public.

2. **Presentations** are given by managers to internal and external audiences. Clear, well-designed presentations are an important part of a manager's responsibilities.
 - a. Types of presentations may be internal or external, persuasive or informative, or selling to clients.
 - b. The roles of the presenter will be numerous, and he or she is responsible for a smooth, successful presentation. The presenter must also be able to establish clear objectives and be fully informed on the topic.
 - c. Preparing the presentation includes development, organization, review, and PRACTICE. It shows in the final presentation.
 - d. Effective delivery requires confidence and control of nonverbal expression; ineffective delivery can have negative consequences.
 - e. Responding to questions is a good way to close a presentation.
3. **Remove Barriers to Improvement** to enhance communication within the organization.
 - a. Create an open climate to establish trust; establish an open-door policy with top-level managers.
 - b. Develop information-sharing systems, including the initiation and maintenance of the system; long-term.
 - c. *Improve interpersonal communication* by improving listening techniques, eliminating stereotyping, and treating employees equally. Training can be very helpful in this area.
 - d. *Managers can improve communication* by knocking down barriers: psychosocial differences and selective perception.

Additional Resources for Students

Recommended readings (no texts should be more than two years old)

- Boone, Louis E. and David L. Kurtz. *Contemporary Business Communication*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Bovee, Courtland L. and John V. Thill. *Business Communication Today*. McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Guffey, Mary Ellen. *Business and Administrations Communication*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Himstreet, William C. and Wayne M. Baty. *Business Communication*. Kent Publishing Co.
- Lesikar, Raymond V. *Basic Business Communication*.
- Ober, Scott. *Contemporary Business Communication*.
- Wolf, P. and S. Kuiper. *Effective Communication in Business*.

Current issues of periodicals or business publications are also an excellent resource. Some of the following periodicals have an accompanying Web site.

<i>Current Periodical</i>	<i>Web Address</i>
<i>Gregg Reference Manual</i>	
<i>IAAP Complete Office Handbook</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/products/handbook.htm
<i>Modern Office Technology</i>	
<i>OfficePro</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/officepro/toc.htm
<i>The Office</i>	