Speaking with a Brick Wall

How to Deal with Problematic Personnel

Introductions

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Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- ❖ Differentiate the types of communications and how they are used in Research Administration
- ❖ Identify biases in our communication's mode
- ❖ Understand the difference communication's styles that exist between generations
- ❖ Develop skills to anticipate and avoid identifiable issues
- ❖ Leave with tips and tricks for effective communication
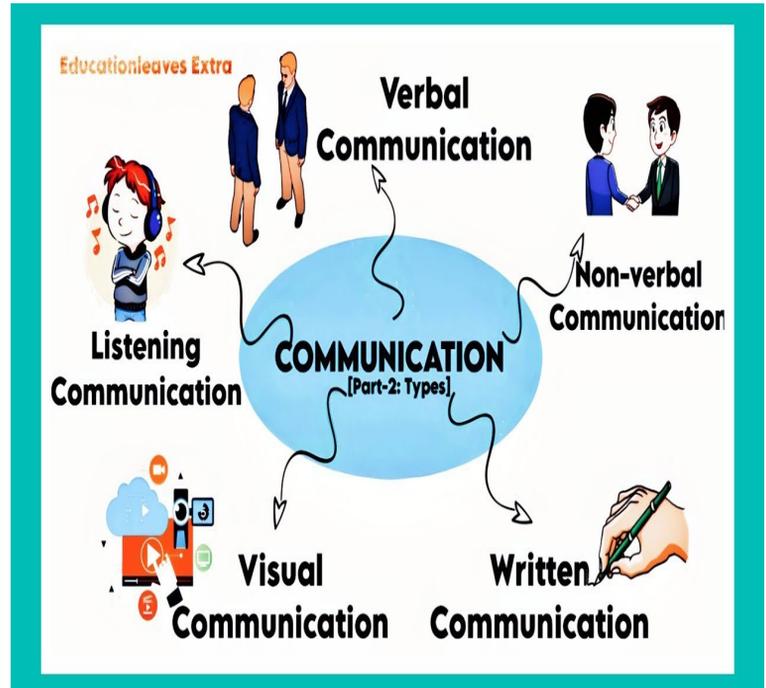
What is Communication?

- Communication is the process of exchanging information between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.

- Communication can be one-on-one or between groups of people. It can occur face-to-face or through communication devices.

Learning Why is Communication important?

- Communication allows people to transfer their thoughts or an encoded message.

- Effective communication is key factor to ensuring that a situation is resolved in a respectful manner

- How Research Administrators communicate with the various stakeholders can make or break a situation

Types of communications?

- ➢ **Verbal**
- ➢ **Non-verbal**
- ➢ **Visual**
- ➢ **Written**
- ➢ **Listening**

Principles of Communication

Communication Modes for Research Administrators

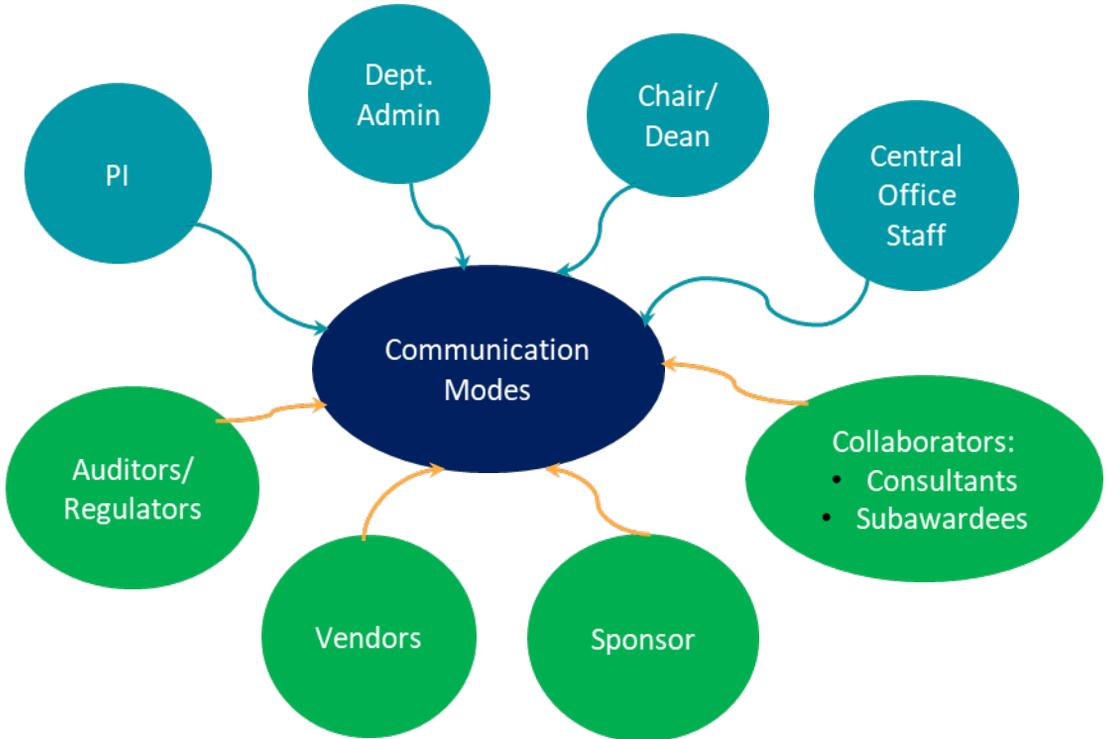- **Traditional**
  - Email
  - Phone
  - Face to Face
  - Inter Office Mail

- **Modern**
  - Text Messages
  - Web based: Zoom, Teams, Webex

Communication Stakeholders

Internal:

PI
Dept. Admin
Chair/ Dean
Central Office Staff

Communication Modes

External:

Auditors/ Regulators
Vendors
Sponsor
Collaborators:
- Consultants
- Subawardees

SRA
INTERNATIONAL

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Communication Style: do you know your own strengths?

❖ What is your preferred communication method?

❖ What is your preferred response time?

❖ Do you allow a cool-off period after contentious communication?

Communication Style: Stakeholders preferred method?

- What is the identified stakeholder preferred communication method?

- Do they care about the information being passed along?

- How do they best receive information?

How do we communicate effectively?

Start with a foundation of trust

Trust takes time to build but can erode quickly!

- Provide reliable information
- Be transparent
- Invest time
- Remain professional
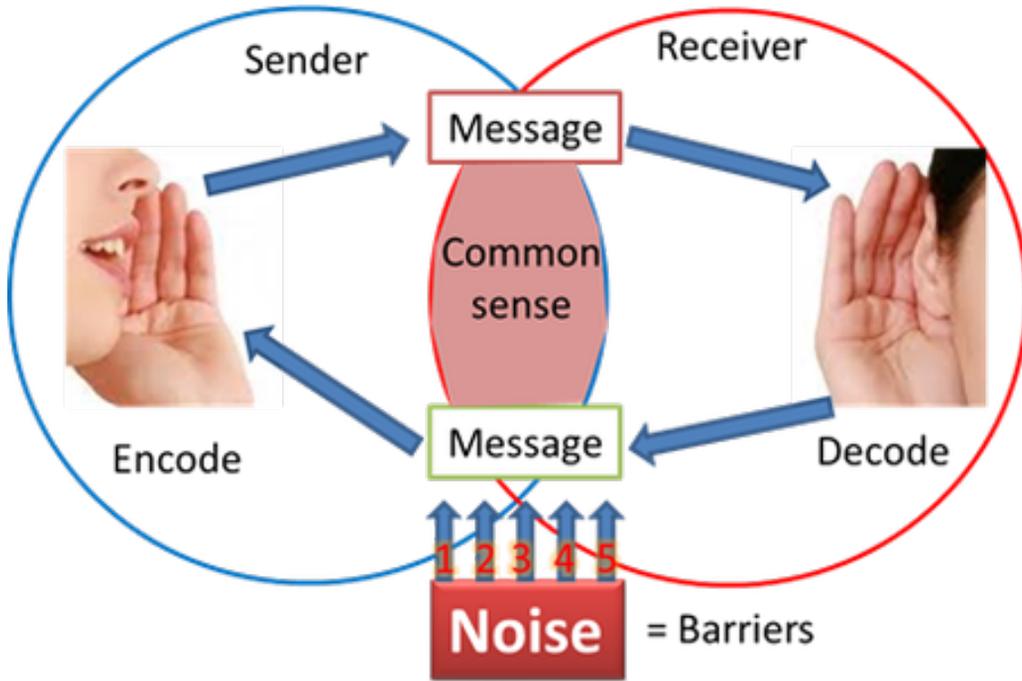- Be aware of how your communication is received by stakeholder

Be Adaptable

- Learn stakeholders preferred communication mode
- Find the compatible way to communicate with them

Communication & Comprehension

Think about received and perceived communication

- Listening vs reading to respond or to understand

- Tone or language of the response

- Biases

Consistent Practices

- Can help ease communication between faculty and Research Administrators

- Standard procedures allow us to infer what a PI is thinking

- Learn the practices of your collaborators

Importance of Point of Contact (POC)

- Lead to efficient communication

- Prevent disinformation (the telephone game)
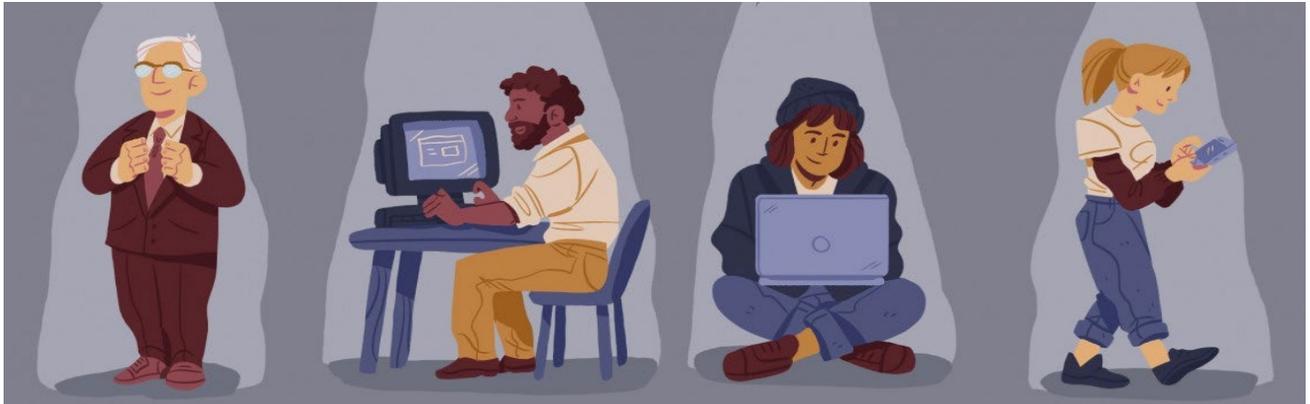
- Reduces correspondence

Speaking the same languages and culture

The Rosetta Stone

- Is the same verbiage used?

- Do we have the same understanding of the words used?

- Is the message received as intended?

Generational Communication

Baby Boomer

- Born 1946-1964
- Prefers face-to-face communication
- Starting to embrace modern digital technology
- Social Media Preferences: Facebook & LinkedIn

Generation X

- Born 1965-1979
- Prefers email communication
- Comfortable with technology
- Social Media Preferences: Facebook & Twitter

Millennial

- Born 1980-1994
- Prefers email or text
- First "digitally native" generation
- Social Media Preferences: Not loyal to any particular social media outlet

Generation Z

- Born 1995-2012
- Likes written communication, but in-person meetings in the workplace
- Expects quick responses
- Social Media Preferences: Instagram & Snapchat

The Brick Walls of Research Administration

What causes the brick wall?

- ➢ Different cultures among stakeholders
- ➢ Use of different languages (acronyms)
- ➢ Conflicting priorities and expectations
- ➢ Knowledge of rules and regulations
- ➢ The right contact person
- ➢ Conflicting authority

Communication Through award life cycle

Inter-office Communication: Pre-award level

- Do you understand what documentation is needed for proposals?

- Do you understand the regulations that applies?

- Do you need any clarifications?

- Do you know who to contract with specific questions?

- Can you identify preferred method of your stakeholder?

- Have you taken opportunity to train the department staff on standard practices?

- Are institutional policies documented and explained to the community?

- Do you know the department preferred mode of communication?

Inter-office Communication: Post-award level

- Do you understand the deadlines and requirements laid out in the contract?

- Do you understand the invoicing and closeout process?

- Do you need any clarifications?

- Do you know who to contract with specific questions?

- Can you identify preferred method of your stakeholder?

- Have you received and read the agreement?

- Do you understand the terms and conditions (sponsors T&C as well as university policies) that govern the award?

- Do you understand the government regulations that apply to sponsored projects?

- Do you have knowledge of the university procedures in place?

- Do you need additional training

Inter-office Communication: Compliance offices

- Is there any protected Intellectual Property?

- Are there any foreign entities or individuals involved?

- Is the country on the Office of Foreign Assets list of sanctioned countries?

- Are there any Human subjects?

- Are there any Animals involved?

- Does this project involve any hazardous materials?

Operating as One – How to Work as a Team

DEFINING TEAMWORK

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."
--Andrew Carnegie

TEAM CHARACTERISTICS

❖ **OFFENSE**

  ❖Principal Investigator

  ❖Departmental Staff

❖   **DEFENSE**

  ❖   Contracts & Grants Accounting

  ❖   Sponsored Programs

❖ **SPECIAL TEAMS**

  ❖Education Personnel

  ❖Internal Auditors / Compliance

  ❖IRB / IACUC

  ❖Compliance

  ❖Patent/ Commercialization Office

Case Study

An award has just come in that did not have a proposal that was routed and approved through the proper institutional channels. The study is for a USDA award that centers around releasing the American gopher tortoise back into a small rural community know for high volumes of traffic.

The PI wants to study the interaction humans will have when encountering tortoises in these high traffic areas. The PI will be tracking the tortoise migration using GPS and recording interviews with members of the community to see what age and sex are most likely to assist the animal in the high traffic areas. The PI does not have an animal or human protocols in place. The tortoises were released this morning.

What is your first step in rectifying this situation, so you are in compliance with your institution and the sponsor?

Barriers to Effective Communication

- Generational
- Cultural
- Language (ESL)
- Science

- Compliance/ RULES!
- Competing Interests (internal & external)

QUESTIONS?

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