

13.2: Introduction



Figure 13.1: (Credit: UC Davis College of Engineering/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

1. Understand and describe the communication process.
2. Know the types of communications that occur in organizations.
3. Understand how power, status, purpose, and interpersonal skills affect communications in organizations.
4. Describe how corporate reputations are defined by how an organization communicates to its stakeholders.
5. Know why talking, listening, reading, and writing are vital to managing effectively.

EXPLORING MANAGERIAL CAREERS

John Legere, T-Mobile

The chief executive officer is often the face of the company. They are often the company's North Star, providing guidance and direction for the entire organization. CEOs usually take more reserved and structured approaches with stakeholders such as shareholders, suppliers, regulatory agencies, and customers. One CEO who stands out is John Legere, the CEO of T-Mobile. The unconventional CEO of the self-proclaimed “un-carrier” hosts a Sunday morning podcast called “Slow Cooker Sunday” on Facebook Live. Where CEOs appear on television interviews in standard business attire, Legere appears with shoulder-length hair and is dressed in a magenta T-shirt, black jacket, and pink sneakers. Whereas most CEOs use well-scripted language to address business issues and competitors, Legere refers to T-Mobile’s largest competitors, AT&T and Verizon, as “dumb and dumber.”

In the mobile phone market, T-Mobile is the number-three player competing with giants AT&T and Verizon and recently agreed to merge with Sprint. Of all the consolidation sweeping through the media and telecommunications arena, T-Mobile and Sprint are the most direct competitors. Their merger would reduce the number of national wireless carriers from four to three, a move the Federal Communications Commission has firmly opposed in the past. Then again, the wireless market, as does the administration in power, looks a bit different now.

John Legere and other CEOs such as Mark Cuban, Elon Musk, and Richard Branson have a more public profile than executives at other companies that keep a lower profile and are more guarded in their public comments, often restricting their public statements to quarterly investor and analyst meetings. Likely, the personality and communication style that the executives reveal in public also affect how they relate to their employees. The outgoing personality of someone such as John Legere will motivate some employees, but other employees might see him as too much of a cheerleader.

Sometimes, Legere's unscripted comments and colorful language can cause issues with employees and the public. For instance, some T-Mobile employees in their call center admonished Legere for comments at a press event where he said Verizon and AT&T were “raping” customers for every penny they had. Legere’s comments caused lengthy discussions in online forums such as Reddit about his choice of words. Legere is known for speaking his mind publicly and often uses profanity, but many thought this comment crossed the line. While frank, open communication is usually appreciated and leads to a clearer message, senders of communications, whether in a public forum, an internal memo, or even a text message, should always think through the consequences of their words.

📌 Sources

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We will distinguish between communication between two individuals and communication amongst several individuals (groups) and communication outside the organization. We will show that managers spend a majority of their time in communication with others. We will examine the reasons for communication and discuss the basic model of interpersonal communication, the types of interpersonal communication, and major influences on the communication process. We will also discuss how organizational reputation is defined by communication with stakeholders.

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