

25.9: Effective Communication and Barriers

Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of effective communication within an organization
- Describe common barriers to effective communication

Importance of Effective Communication



The simplest model of communication relies on three distinct parts: sender, message, and receiver. More complex models add a fourth element: the channel used to send the message. We'll talk more about channels later in this module, but for now, you can think of the channel as the medium, or form, of the message. Channels can take verbal, nonverbal, and written forms. Emails, conversations, video conferences, television ads, and Web site publications are all examples of specific communication channels.

In business, the sender and receiver roles can be filled by many people within and outside of the organization: For example, a manager (sender) holds a meeting with an employee (receiver) to discuss the employee's performance. The marketing department (sender) publishes a product launch announcement to reach potential customers (receivers).

There is also an enormous range in the kinds of communication that take place within and to and from an organization. For example, business communication is used to promote products, services, or an organization; relay information within a business; or deal with legal and similar issues. It encompasses a variety of topics including consumer behavior, advertising, public relations, event management, corporate communication, research and measurement, and reputation management. Business communication may also refer to internal communication.

In a large company, for instance, a communications director may be in charge of managing internal communication and crafting the messages sent to employees. From an HR point of view, effective communication within an organization is vital to building trust and job satisfaction among employees.

Practice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14447>

The following short video touches on some additional benefits of good communication in the workplace:



You can [view the transcript for “Workplace Communication” \(opens in new window\)](#).

Barriers to Effective Communication

Failures of human communication can become amplified in professional settings. In business transactions, especially those involving large amounts of money, a small miscommunication can have devastating effects. Or, if a company fails to lay out a clear, comprehensible set of objectives, the employees tasked with meeting them will probably also fail. If a business makes inaccurate or misleading claims about its products, that can have damaging consequences, as well—possibly causing it to lose customers or, worse, find itself in a lawsuit. For these reasons and many more, it’s important for businesses to communicate clearly, consistently, and honestly. It’s also important to be informed about the things that get in the way of communication and seek to overcome them. The following is a list of common barriers to communication:

- **The use of jargon:** The use of unfamiliar, overcomplicated, or technical terms can generate confusion and obscure meaning of the sender’s message. The solution is to use clear and concise messages that are easy to understand.
- **Withholding information:** Within an organization, some information is kept confidential due to company policies. Make sure the information that is needed is readily available and easily accessible.
- **Chain of command:** The maintenance of an organization’s hierarchy is essential, but its very presence can reduce the flow of communication. To counteract that tendency, it’s important to reduce unnecessary hierarchical levels and increase departmental interaction and communication.
- **Lack of trust:** In companies with a competition-driven culture, there may be a lack of trust among employees, which can hamper communication. Companies should strive to involve their employees in decisions, emphasize the importance of sharing information, and communicate openly and honestly.
- **Physical barriers or disabilities:** Hearing, vision, or speech problems can make communication challenging. Organizations need to be aware of accessibility issues for both internal and external communication.
- **Bias:** Preconceptions or prejudice can lead to stereotyping or false assumptions. Using care to choose unambiguous, neutral language and explain things clearly can help reduce bias.
- **Filtering:** People may hear what they expect to hear or want to hear, rather than what is said. Because filters are present in every system of communication, the message that the receiver receives is rarely the same as the one the sender sends. Some distortion of the message is almost inevitable.
- **Language and cultural differences:** Language use and social norms vary enormously from culture to culture. Companies need to educate themselves about cultural sensitivities and gear their messages to their audiences.

? PRactice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.com/assessments/14448>

In the next section, we'll look more closely at the patterns and uses of business communication—who sends the messages, who receives them, and the different types of messages businesses typically use.

Contributors and Attributions

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision and adaptation. **Authored by:** Linda Williams and Lumen Learning. **License:** [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)
- Practice Questions. **Authored by:** Robert Danielson. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** [CC BY: Attribution](#)

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Message in the Bottle. **Authored by:** Dasha Bondareva. **Located at:** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/funtik/1175522045/>. **License:** [CC BY-NC: Attribution-NonCommercial](#)
- Elements of Speech Communication. **Provided by:** Boundless. **Located at:** <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-communications>. **License:** [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)
- Introduction to Business Communications. **Provided by:** Boundless. **Located at:** <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-business/>. **License:** [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](#)

25.9: Effective Communication and Barriers is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.