

## 11.1: Section 1-

### exploring managerial careers

#### **John Legere, T-Mobile**

The chief executive officer is often the face of the company. He or she is often the North Star of the company, providing guidance and direction for the entire organization. With other stakeholders, such as shareholders, suppliers, regulatory agencies, and customers, CEOs often take more reserved and structured approaches. One CEO who definitely 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, and where most CEOs appear on television interviews in standard business attire, Legere appears with shoulder-length hair 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 came to an agreement to merge with Sprint. Of all the consolidation sweeping through the media and telecommunications arena, T-Mobile and Sprint are the most direct of 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 looks a bit different now, as does the administration in power.

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. It is likely that the personality and communication style that the executives reveal in public is also the way that they relate to their employees. The outgoing personality of someone such as John Legere will motivate some employees, but he might be seen as too much of a cheerleader by other employees.

Sometimes the unscripted comments and colorful language that Legere uses 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 have. Legere’s comments caused lengthy discussions in online forums such as Reddit about his choice of words. Legere is known for speaking his mind in public and often uses profanity, but many thought this comment crossed the line. While frank, open communication is often appreciated and leads to a clarity of message, senders of communication, be it in a public forum, an internal memo, or even a text message, should always think through the consequences of their words.

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.

Sources: Tara Lachapelle, “T-Mobile’s Argument for Sprint Deal is as Loud as CEO John Legere’s Style,” *The Seattle Times*, July 9, 2018, [www.seattletimes.com/business/sprint-deal-is-as-loud-as-ceo-john-legeres-style/](http://www.seattletimes.com/business/sprint-deal-is-as-loud-as-ceo-john-legeres-style/); Janko Roettgers, “T-Mobile CEO John Legere Pokes Fun at Verizon’s Go90 Closure,” *Variety*, June 29, 2018, <https://variety.com/2018/digital/news/john-legere-go90-1202862397/>; Rachel Lerman, “T-Mobile’s Loud, Outspoken John Legere is Not Your Typical CEO,” *The Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 2018, [www.chicagotribune.com/business/sns-tns-bc-tmobile-legere-20180430-story.html](http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/sns-tns-bc-tmobile-legere-20180430-story.html); Steve Kovach, T-Mobile Employees Speak Out and Call CEO’s Recent Rape Comments “Violent” and “Traumatizing,” *Business Insider*, June 27, 2014, <https://www.businessinsider.com/t-mobile-comment-2014-6>; Brian X. Chen, One on One: John Legere, the Hip New Chief of T-Mobile USA,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2013, <https://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/...-t-mobile-usa/>.

#### 1. Understand and describe the communication process.

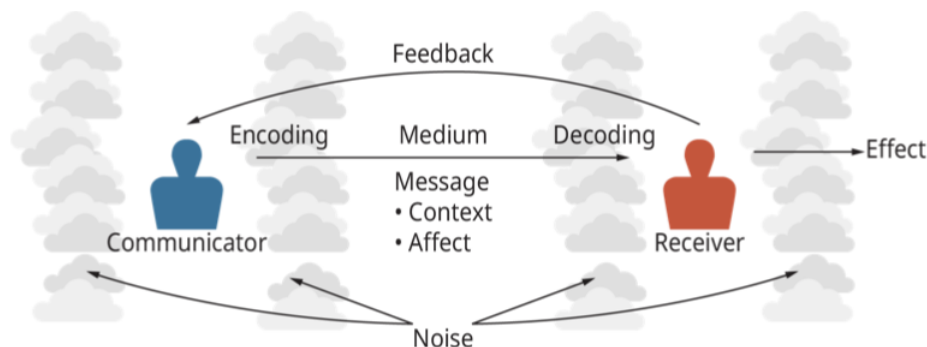
Interpersonal communication is an important part of being an effective manager:

- It influences the opinions, attitude, motivation, and behaviors of others.
- It expresses our feelings, emotions, and intentions to others.

- It is the vehicle for providing, receiving, and exchanging information regarding events or issues that concern us.
- It reinforces the formal structure of the organization by such means as making use of formal channels of communication.

Interpersonal communication allows employees at all levels of an organization to interact with others, to secure desired results, to request or extend assistance, and to make use of and reinforce the formal design of the organization. These purposes serve not only the individuals involved, but the larger goal of improving the quality of organizational effectiveness.

The model that we present here is an oversimplification of what really happens in communication, but this model will be useful in creating a diagram to be used to discuss the topic. **Exhibit 11.2** illustrates a simple communication episode where a **communicator** encodes a message and a **receiver** decodes the message.<sup>1</sup>



0. **Exhibit 11.2 The Basic Communication Model** (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

## Encoding and Decoding

Two important aspects of this model are **encoding** and **decoding**. Encoding is the process by which individuals initiating the communication translate their ideas into a systematic set of symbols (language), either written or spoken. Encoding is influenced by the sender's previous experiences with the topic or issue, her emotional state at the time of the message, the importance of the message, and the people involved. Decoding is the process by which the recipient of the message interprets it. The receiver attaches meaning to the message and tries to uncover its underlying intent. Decoding is also influenced by the receiver's previous experiences and frame of reference at the time of receiving the message.

## Feedback

Several types of feedback can occur after a message is sent from the communicator to the receiver. Feedback can be viewed as the last step in completing a communication episode and may take several forms, such as a verbal response, a nod of the head, a response asking for more information, or no response at all. As with the initial message, the response also involves encoding, medium, and decoding.

There are three basic types of feedback that occur in communication.<sup>2</sup> These are informational, corrective, and reinforcing. In informational feedback, the receiver provides nonevaluative information to the communicator. An example is the level of inventory at the end of the month. In corrective feedback, the receiver responds by challenging the original message. The receiver might respond that it is not her responsibility to monitor inventory. In reinforcing feedback, the receiver communicated that she has clearly received the message and its intentions. For instance, the grade that you receive on a term paper (either positive or negative) is reinforcing feedback on your term paper (your original communication).

## Noise

There is, however, a variety of ways that the intended message can get distorted. Factors that distort message clarity are **noise**. Noise can occur at any point along the model shown in **Exhibit 11.2**, including the decoding process. For example, a manager might be under pressure and issue a directive, "I want this job completed today, and I don't care what it costs," when the manager does care what it costs.

### concept check

- Describe the communication process.
- Why is feedback a critical part of the communication process?
- What are some things that managers can do to reduce noise in communication?

---

This page titled [11.1: Section 1-](#) is shared under a [CC BY](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [OpenStax](#).