

PART : 1

(Commercial Correspondence)

1

Meaning of Communication and its Methods

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1 1 Introduction

Interaction with others or communication is not only an activity consciously undertaken, but also a basic need for every living being. In order to express one's feelings and exchange of ideas, it becomes imperative to come into and remain in contact with others. In this chapter we shall learn about communication and also the difference between routine communication and commercial communication. We shall logically and chronologically understand the process of communication. We shall also consider in detail different methods of communication that we use, their characteristics and limitations.

In various fields, for the process of communication, different means of communication are employed. If we take the case of social, cultural, commercial and literary fields, one element that draws our attention is that the activities undertaken for different purposes are somewhat similar and to some extent different. There are specific modes and styles for different types of communications. Their skills and methods differ from one another. It becomes necessary to maintain this variety and peculiarity and also to incorporate it with conscious efforts. Thus the process involving particular styles, skills and appropriate means and employed for exchange of information is known as the process of communication. The word 'communication' in English is derived from the Latin word '**communicare**', meaning 'to share', 'to interact', 'to exchange' and 'to participate'.

1 2 What is Commercial Communication ?

The process of communication undertaken for commercial purpose is called **Commercial Communication**. A businessman has to remain in contact with two different groups. The manufacturer and the seller of the goods form one group and their customers form another group. In order to remain in constant contact, the letter turns out to be an important tool, both these groups acting as their representative or messenger with. Thus the basic activities of business like purchase, sale, advertising and marketing are carried out through letters, it is called commercial communication.

1 3 The Process of Communication

‘Information’ remains the common denominating factor whether we refer to communication in general or commercial communication. Technically speaking, the agencies taking part in the process of communication get involved harmoniously and exchange information, thought, concept, emotions or message. As part of the process of communication, an individual or a group attempts to convey information/message to another individual or group wherein different mediums and tools are used. At the end of the process of exchange of ideas, feedback is received from the other end (Receiver). Let us now understand the whole procedure of communication as per its different stages.

The process of communication is successfully carried out through the following stages :

1 3 1 Speaker/Sender/Transmitter : The sender or speaker, with the intention of sending information/message, initiates the process of communication.

1 3 2 Encoding It is a process undertaken by the speaker/sender. He arranges/changes the concept/idea using appropriate language, diction, sound, medium so that the receiver; individual or group can sense communication.

1 3 3 Message The speaker/sender, employing various devices, tools, means and medium properly formulates concept/idea which is called information/message.

1 3 4 Channel/Medium The devices or tools such as language, pictures, sound or letters used to transmit information/message are called medium. The speaker/sender selects appropriate medium keeping in mind the requirement and the situation.

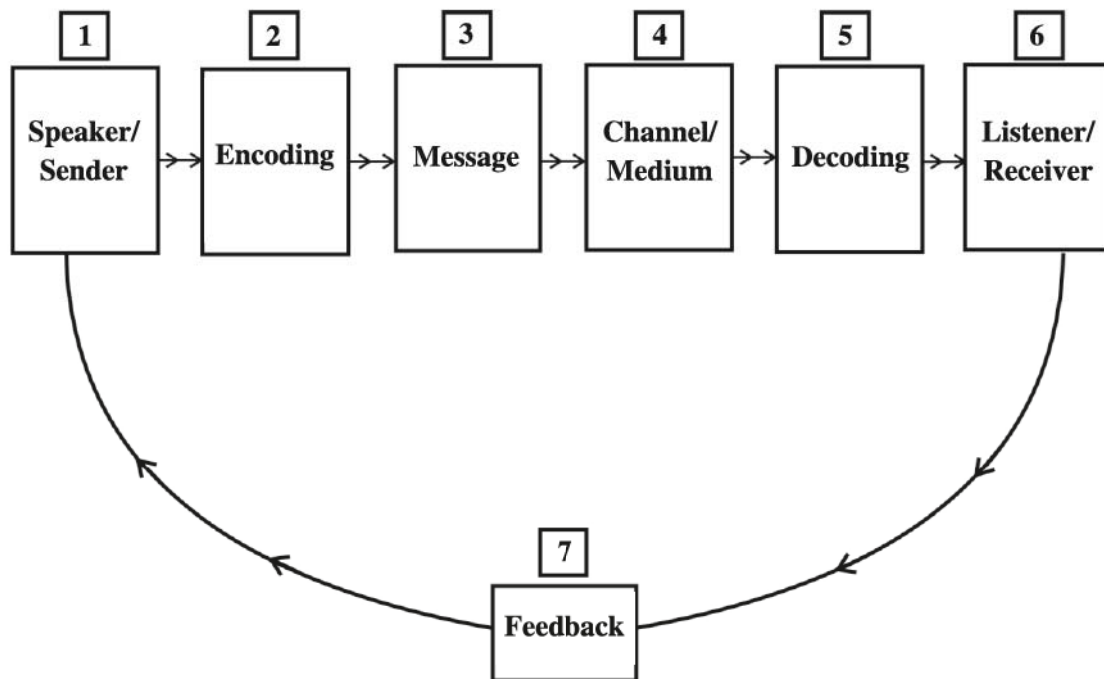
1 3 5 Decoding The process of understanding the coded information/message that the speaker/sender has sent, using particular form, tools/medium is called decoding. It is done by the receiver using the same tools/medium.

1 3 6 Listener/Receiver The person who receives information/message sent by the speaker/sender is called the listener/receiver. The process of communication is undertaken keeping in mind the receiver.

1 3 7 Feedback The process of communication thus proceeds further and ends with response from the receiver which is called feedback. The feedback from the receiver is very important as it determines the success of the process.

If the sender is satisfied with the feedback from the receiver, the attempt is considered fruitful and the process, successful. If there is partial misunderstanding or lack of understanding, then it results into complete failure of communication. In that case, the sender/speaker has to make further attempt, employing a different channel/medium. It should be noted, at this point, that language, words, script, symbols, pictures are known as channels and presentation through oral, written, expressions or acting, these several means are considered as medium. The process of communication can be explained through the following figure :

The Process of Communication



1 4 Methods of Communication

As seen earlier, medium and channel play an important role in the process of communication. Appropriate methods of communication are used for different types of communication. The method of communication in which only two persons are involved will be different. Communication between an individual and group; where there is one speaker/sender and many receivers, e.g. classroom, in that case the process of communication will remain long or short or complex and the method would change. Contrary to it when communication takes place between a group and an individual; where the speakers/senders are many and receiver only one, e.g. press conference, then in that case the process and method of communication would change. In addition to this, when the communication is between two groups, e.g. group discussion, then in this case too, the process and method of communication would vary. Also in case when the speaker and receiver; whether individual or group, are at one place, face to face, e.g. classroom, then the process of communication, selection and implementation of channel, medium would be of a particular type. Whereas when the speaker and receiver; whether individual or group, are not at the same place, and/or connected through some means of mass communication, e.g. telephone, then the process of communication would vary. Communication using channel and medium/means of mass communication has become easy and within reach, removing a geographical distance. The Methods of Communication can be understood in the following way :

1 4 1 Oral Communication The communication undertaken by way of speaking using language/words well-suited to information/message is known as oral method of communication. In this method, clarity of pronunciation and loudness of sound are essential features. Talk, discussion, forum, lecture, group discussion etc. are the examples of this method of communication.

1 4 2 Written Communication The communication undertaken by way of writing using script, language/words well-suited to information/message is known as written method of communication. In this method, style of writing and selection of words are essential features. Literature, books, letter writing, manuscript, e-mail, newspapers, periodicals, advertisements/hoardings, handbills-leaflets etc. are the examples of this method of communication.

1 4 3 Visual The communication taking place in the form of reading or looking at signs, symbols, pictures, charts or maps etc. With or without the use of words; spoken or heard is called visual method of communication.

1 4 4 Audio Using language/words and making different sounds; even if the speaker and listener are not face to face, the audio process of communication takes place by listening to what they convey. Radio, telephone, CD, tape-recorder are the examples of this mode of communication.

1 4 5 Audio-visual It is that method of communication where the activities of watching and listening take place simultaneously. Motion pictures, DVD, television, computer are the examples where with the help of devices/appliances, both activities take place side by side.

1 4 6 Silence It is that method of communication where even in absence of words; spoken or written, message is conveyed through silence. Communication is possible without words. Silence generally, conveys consent but at times shows disagreement. Empathy can be conveyed through silence. Pauses in verbal communication catches attention and at times also makes communication emphatic.

Among various methods of communication, oral and written methods are popularly used. They simplify interaction of thought, concept, feeling and information and make formal and commercial communication successful. Let us now examine their characteristics, advantages and limitations.

1 5 Oral Communication

Language is the most useful tool and channel for communication. Any language can be learnt, understood and mastered by way of four skills. These four skills are : listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The nature of oral communication includes the speaker tries to communicate by way of speaking loudly, using proper language/diction and sentence patterns that the listener can understand. As per the requirement, he uses facial expressions and gestures. This method is used for communication between two individuals, between individual and group and also between group and group. Talk, debate, dialogue, forum, lecture, group discussion etc. are different forms of oral discussion.

1 5 1 Advantages of Oral Communication

- (1) This method of communication is extremely simple, within reach of everyone and especially most commonly used.
- (2) Tools like pen and paper are not required.
- (3) Generally takes place face to face. Here the speaker receives prompt feedback from the listener and therefore if any confusion arises solution can easily be sought.
- (4) Quick feedback from the listener motivates the speaker.
- (5) In this method of communication, because the speaker gets prompt feedback from the listener, he can make changes in a channel/medium as per requirement. As a result, failure remains a remote possibility.
- (6) Communication becomes possible even if the listener is illiterate.
- (7) This method saves time.

1 5 2 Limitations of Oral Communication

- (1) The forms of oral communication like dialogue and discussion may, sometime turn into unhealthy debate and in that situation oral communication proves to be unsuccessful.
- (2) In case of above circumstances, time and energy are wasted.
- (3) The information given, spoken, heard or narrated is always less reliable.
- (4) In absence of written proof, oral communication is not considered reliable.
- (5) In case of a detailed and comprehensive information, the speaker does not get expected results.

(6) Oral information is difficult to be remembered for a longer period of time for the speaker as well as the listener.

(7) Information loses its original form.

(8) If the speaker is not good in oratory and presentation skills, the meaning may get distorted in oral communication.

(9) The speaker has to be careful before uttering any words as the words which are spoken cannot be taken back.

1 6 Written Communication

Language, script and printing were invented as part of human evolution. This made way for other method of communication i.e. written communication which makes interaction possible between individual, between individual and group, group and individual and also between groups. Various forms like manuscript, literature, letter writing, e-mail, dailies, periodicals, advertisements/hoardings, handbills-leaflets etc. are the examples of written method of communication. These days written form is the most important form for any system. It is considered to be the most official method for commercial communication. Thus, written method of communication is that process wherein appropriate words are arranged in well-organised manner in selected language and script.

1 6 1 Advantages of Written Communication

(1) Without any restrictions of place and time, communication is possible through this method.

(2) This method is not free of cost but economical depending upon tools and gadgets.

(3) Proper arrangement and filing of information is possible.

(4) Arrangement and filing of information makes it possible to quote and refer.

(5) Written communication is considered legally authorized and therefore can be used as proof.

(6) Written communication provides ample time for expression of information; as a result conscious efforts can be made to make the expression better, correct, effective and perfect.

(7) After finding a suitable person, he can be assigned the duty of written communication. Thus, he/she can be made responsible for mistakes and thus accountability can be established.

(8) Written communication endows uniformity to the communication done by a particular firm.

(9) It is written communication that helps to create independent image of the firm.

1 6 2 Limitations of Written Communication

(1) Written communication is not possible without pen and paper and therefore it is costly to extent.

(2) Gadgets/tools required for modern written communication create added responsibility of their purchase and maintenance.

(3) Well-organised presentation of thought in written form requires human hours and thus it is time consuming.

(4) Since written method is not direct but indirect, feedback from the receiver may be delayed.

(5) Because of the above circumstances, questions may arise about the success of communication.

(6) The success of written communication depends on the understanding and command over the language and ability to express on the part of the speaker.

(7) Written communication, whether in a letter or e-mail form, needs time.

(8) Literacy is essential for written communication.

What did you learn in this chapter ?

Everythough the process of communication is routine and regular in nature, is also a procedure undertaken with conscious efforts and therefore proper care should be taken at all stages; speaker/sender/transmitter, encoding, message/information, medium, decoding, listener/receiver and feedback.

As per the requirement of the situation, oral or written methods are to be employed prudently. It should be noted that both the methods have their own advantages and limitations. Formal Communication taking place for the purpose of business and commerce, written method is used always. For different types of letter writing, it becomes necessary to obtain guidance regarding planning of basic information, its presentation, conciseness and correctness of language and should be employed as and when required.

Exercise

1 Select appropriate option from the options given :

- (1) The activity of developing business through letters is called –
(A) Communication (B) Exchange of ideas
(C) Spread of business (D) Expansion of thought
- (2) By which of the following points can the success of communication be determined ?
(A) Speaker (B) Feedback
(C) Listener (D) Medium

2 Answer the following questions in one sentence each :

- (1) From which Latin in word is the English word 'communication' derived ?
- (2) What is oral communication ?
- (3) Why is oral communication not considered authentic ?
- (4) Why does feedback remain delayed in written communication ?

3 Write in brief on :

- (1) Nature of oral communication.
- (2) Different forms of written communication.
- (3) Among various methods of communication, give examples of audio-visual method.

4 Write to the point on :

- (1) Methods of communication.
- (2) Different stages of communication.
- (3) Advantages of oral communication.

5 Write in detail on :

- (1) Explain the process of communication with its diagram.
- (2) Explain the varions methods of communication with examples.
- (3) Explain the advantages and limitations of written communication.
- (4) Explain the limitations of oral communication.