Barriers to Effective Communication

There are so many reasons why inter personal communication may fail.in many instances communication message may not be received exactly the way sender intended. It’s important that the communicator seeks feedback to check whether their message is clearly understood.

There are skills which help for effective communication like active listening, reflection and clarification but communicator needs to be aware of the barriers to effective communication and how to overcome them. There are many barriers to effective communication and they may occur to any stage in the communication process. These barriers may lead to distorting of message and there is risk of wasting of time by causing confusion and misunderstanding. Effective communication involves overcoming of these berries and conveying clear message.

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Commination is not always successful. Several things can prevent the message from reaching the intended recipient or from "having the desired effect on the recipient.

Physical barriers: Obstacles that prevent a message from reaching the intended recipient may be outside and beyond the control of the persons concerned. Some can be controlled by the management; some cannot be controlled because they are in environment. These physical barriers include . Noise, it is any disturbance which occurs in the transmission process. In face-to face communication which is carried by air vibration, the air may be disturbed by noise such as traffic, factory work, or people talking. In a factory, oral communication is very difficult because of the noise of the machines. Organizations that can afford sound-proof rooms can

Information overload:When there is too much information, some of it is blocked in transit and may not reach the intended audience. Advertising and sales information is an example of overload; so much communication about products floats through so many media that a good deal of it-does not reach the potential buyer. Another one is sematic barriers. Semantic means pertaining to or arising from the different meanings of words or other symbols. First of all, many words have multiple meanings. Just look into a good dictionary and see how many meanings you can find for some commonly used words like "charge", "spring", "check", "suit", "ring". The meaning that comes to your mind first depends on your occupation.

Organization barriers: Editing and filtering: A great deal of loss of information occurs as a message moves from senior management to lower levels. Each person through whom it passes edits it, filters it, and simplifies it for the understanding and needs of the next person who is to receive it. Loss or distortion of information as it moves downward may be caused by misinterpretation, lack of understanding, and neglect of messages by some of the members of the organization. Editing and filtering: A great deal of loss of information occurs as a message moves from senior management to lower levels. Each person through whom it passes edits it, filters it, and simplifies it for the understanding and needs of the next person who is to receive it. Loss or distortion of information as it moves downward may be caused by misinterpretation, lack of understanding, and neglect of messages by some of the members of the organization.

Over-dependence on written communication: Too much dependence on written communication is one of the reasons for communication gaps. Circulars, bulletins, notices and even letters are not always read carefully. Many employees are unable to read and understand long messages. Even better educated persons at higher levels do not always give proper attention to all written communication. Oral communication has to be used to supplement written communication when the message is important.

Cultural barriers: When we join a group and wish to remain in it, sooner or later we need to adopt the behavior patterns of the group. These are the behaviors that the group accepts as signs of belonging. The group rewards such behavior through acts of recognition, approval, and inclusion. In groups which are happy to accept you and where you are happy to conform, there is a mutuality of interests and a high level of win-win contact. Where, however, there are barriers to your membership of a group, a high level of game-playing replaces good communication.

Socio-psychological barriers: People have personal feelings, desires, fears and hopes, likes and dislikes, attitudes, views and opinions. They form a sort of emotional filter around the mind, and influence the way we respond to messages that we receive and to new experiences. Factors like the time, the place and the circumstances of a particular communication also influence our understanding and response. Problems of understanding, interpretation and response to communication arise partly from our socially-learnt attributes and partly from our personal attributes. These are called socio-psychological barriers.

Selective Perception: we see, read or hear selectively according to our own needs, interests and experience may not perceive some of the aspects and information content of the message.

Status block: A "boss" who is conscious of status finds it difficult to receive any suggestions from subordinates as they feel that they know everything about how to run the business. They do not agree that a junior may have some good ideas and many good ideas are wasted only because they come· from junior employees who are considered to be too young and inexperienced. Social distance sometimes makes workers too shy or frightened to speak to their seniors.

Overcoming Barriers to Effective communication

Persons in positions of authority, as well as subordinates, can be helped to overcome these barriers by training in effective communication. Periodical review and reorganization of communication networks is also needed to ensure that information reaches people in time.

Health centers: Many organizations provide medical aid, gymnasiums and recreation for the staff in an effort to keep down stress levels. Regulations like compulsory vacation after a certain number of months/years are also meant to ensure that employees avoid stress and fatigue.

You have to cultivate all the communication skills including getting feedback and non-verbal communication. The Management should ensure the channels must be kept in good working condition; the intercoms, notice-boards, information on meetings must be kept up-to-date. Many companies which can afford it, maintain soundproof rooms for meetings and take steps to reduce the noise level in the office.

Semantic and language barriers can be overcome only by being careful with the use of language, and by using words which have clear meaning, by using short and simple sentences, and also by using visual aid whenever possible. Whenever possible, feedback must be got and given to ensure that there is common understanding of a message

To reduce cultural barriers, it is better not to assume similarity with those from other cultures until, you are sure. It is safer to assume difference till you are sure of similarity. Depend on description rather than evaluation or interpretation; persons from different cultures evaluate and interpret differently. Personal barriers can be overcome only "by making a conscious effort, and by training for better communication.

## References

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