**QUESTION: HOW DO YOU DISTINGUISH BETWEEN BUSINESS CHANNELS**

Business communication is the process of sharing information between people within the workplace and outside a company for the purpose of doing businesses

Business communication channels are ways through which businesses convey messages either internally or externally, the following are identified business communications that co-exist in business environments;

1. Business to business (B2B)

In the context of communication, business-to-business refers to methods by which employees from different companies can connect with one another, such as through social media

1. Customer to customer (C2C)

Customers’ communication refers to brands exchanging information with their customers across various channels. Typically, customer communication skills are important for support, marketing, and sales teams. But with changing times, everyone in a company has a part to play in engaging customers.

The following business communication can be done in different ways as discussed below

**1. Internal Business Communication**

Internal Business Communication means communication that occurs within the members of the organization. This communication includes both **formal** and **informal** communication. Also, different departments that transmit communication by different means to employees come under internal communication. Internal communication should be effective as it is a vital source of viewing and representing organizational issues. Effective internal business communication may increase job satisfaction level, productivity, the efficiency of employees by decreasing their turnover and grievances and helps in increasing profits.

We’ve thoroughly explained the Internal Business Communication in a separate article here

Internal communication is an entire process within an organization. It includes how information is shared up and down communication channels, as well as laterally, in order to achieve the organization's goals. Communication is shared in various forms (verbal, written, and digitally), within teams and company-wide.

This type of business communication occurs between businesses to business that have common interest.

### External communication

**Meaning:**External communication moves information from the inside of the organization to outside parties, such as prospects, customers, investors, vendors, partners, sponsors, lawmakers, regulatory bodies, the media, consultants, or the general public.

**Applicability: A** press release is deployed to inform the media about a new product coming out. Example

A sales proposal is presented to generate interest from investors.

**Advantages**

* When performed successfully, external communication has a positive impact on the company’s public persona and reputation, making it more desirable to stakeholders and customers.
* External communication is also directly tied to customer communications and the ability to create and maintain those relationships, so the quality of this kind of communication is of the utmost importance.
* External communications are how outside businesses, customers, partners, investors, and the rest of your audience perceive your business and get to know it. Ensuring that every piece of external communication is carefully curated takes time, but when done right it is a significant attribution to company growth.

**Disadvantages**

* When poorly executed, external communications can present customers with conflicting messages that tarnish the company’s reputation.
* One wrong piece of data, a missed target audience, or careless quote can sink an entire marketing campaign and have a lasting negative impact on a company’s ability to succeed, so each piece of externally-facing communication needs to be carefully curate and analyzed. .

**3. Lateral business communication**

**Meaning:**Lateral communication moves across departments and employees or managers of equal status within the organization.

**Applicability in business places: in context business;** a team communicates back-and-forth via emails.

Coworkers participate in a team chat to resolve an issue.

Managers coalesce for a brainstorming session.

 A member of the marketing team discusses modifying an ad campaign’s design with a web designer on the technology team.

**Advantages of lateral communication**

* It is often necessary for information sharing, problem solving, and task coordination.
* It is especially vital for large-scale enterprises that rely upon interdepartmental coordination.
* It tends to synthesize organically, without the need for upper-level approval, serving as a rapid and morale-boosting mode of communication.
* Misunderstanding and conflict can often be nipped in the bud while simultaneously strengthening teamwork.

**Disadvantages of lateral communication**

* Employees may communicate in a more casual, unprofessional tone, causing potential squabbles.
* Can create an “us vs. them” culture if no other interdepartmental/hierarchical communication channels are properly established.
* Teams may grow territorial about the tasks they’re working on and resent interjections from other departments, thereby undermining collaborative efforts.

**4. Upward Business communication**

 **Meaning**: communication comes from a direct report to a manager and from a manager to a top-level executive or owner. Upward communication allows those in charge to keep a finger on the pulse of what’s happening on the ground floor.

**Applicability:** A data specialist prepares a marketing report containing website analytics to feed decision-making at the top level.

Employee surveys provide the basis for executives to make changes to daily operations to improve productivity and satisfaction.

**Advantages**

* Information received from team members helps management remain responsive to the needs of their employees. In contributing in this way, employees who feel valued will be more inclined to provide their best efforts at their jobs.
* Management can identify issues early before they escalate.
* Easy access to management allows employees to share their creativity and innovate, which could motivate company progress to be leaps and bounds faster than if business teams were completely soloed.
* Businesses with upward communication are typically known for fostering a friendly, harmonious atmosphere.

**Disadvantages**

* The accuracy of employee-supplied information can be limited or skewed depending on their comfort level with communicating with their supervisors.
* Subordinates may be unwilling to share information with management, particularly if they feel like no action will be taken or there will be consequences.
* Upward communication can only be successful if there is a clear, accessible, and swift chain of command all the way to the top.

**N/B;**Managers play the leading role in driving successful upward communication, so they will need to do the following:

* Keep an open-door policy.
* Engage employees in regular conversation.
* Listen to employee concerns while displaying empathy.
* Use multiple communication channels to ensure easy accessibility to all workers.
* Create an available, inclusive environment.
* Provide anonymous suggestion boxes, surveys, Q&A sessions, internal chat forums, or email chains to capture as much honest feedback as possible.

**5. Downward Business communications**

**Meaning:**Downward business communication flows from management to direct reports. Messages flow through a predetermined hierarchy, from the top down.

**Applicability:** Leadership informs employees of a new operational procedure, safety requirement, or individual expectation through a company memo.

A manager communicates project information to the team.

 The CEO holds a meeting to cover the previous year’s performance numbers and discuss next year’s goals.

**Advantages of Downward business communication**

* Necessary information (instructions, explanations of complex issues, and operational details) can be quickly disseminated in a downward flow.
* There’s an easier delegation of key responsibilities.
* Managers are empowered to take on appropriate authority.
* Company-specific standards, rules, and disciplinary consequences can be easily reinforced to uphold compliance.
* Disadvantages of upward business communication
* It can be a slow process, especially when information must flow through multiple levels of hierarchy.
* Like the game of “telephone,” the information can also become distorted or lose detail on its way through the chain of command.
* Heavy reliance on a downward communication style can make employees feel unimportant, frustrated, or unenthusiastic about their work.

**How to improve downward business communication**

* Keep leadership visible, approachable, and trustworthy.
* Provide a schedule of communication to ensure that employees will value and prioritize your messages, rather than feel overwhelmed or irritated.
* Management should utilize approachable body language, maintain a friendly disposition, ask employees how they’re doing, and keep their office doors open.
* Management should invite a healthy blend of upward *and*downward communication that can serve the workplace well.
* Management should keep detailed notes about employees, allowing them to add a personal touch to their communications whk2en addressing individual employees.

###  REFERENCES

Guffey, Mary Ellen. *Essentials of Business Writing.* Ohio: SouthWestern College Pubg., 2000.

Hasson, Gill. *Brilliant Communication Skills.* Great Britain: Pearson Education, 2012.

Monippally, Matthukutty, M. *Business Communication Strategies*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Ltd., 2001.

Raman, Meenakshi & Sangeeta Sharma. *Technical Communication*: Principles and Practice. Second Edition. New Delhi: Oxford University,press,2011