# Chapter 1: Communication Foundations

## Communication Connects

Learning Objective 1.1: Identify the forms and types of communication, and describe the communication process

### Review Questions 1.1

1a ‘Communication is an interactive process.’ Explain briefly.

Communication is the process of sharing ideas, knowledge, information, attitudes, feelings and perceptions. By definition, sharing involves an interaction between people. In the communication process, the sender encodes and transmits messages and the receiver decodes and sends feedback.

1b How is a communication orientation likely to support a graduate in their career?

A communication-oriented graduate can work with others in a purposeful, supportive and flexible manner. His/her focus is on achieving the intended outcome of communication. A communication orientation will help him/her make connections and build ongoing relationships. He/she is able to demonstrate professionalism and ethical behaviour, empathy and awareness and concern for others. He/she uses good listening skills to understand his/her own concerns and needs. He/she is able to apply his/her skills to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, experiences and cultures; organise and share ideas and knowledge and information; present his/her ideas and information accurately and persuasively and use communication technologies efficiently and effectively.

2a Define and give an example of verbal, nonverbal and graphic communication.

Verbal communication can be defined as any communication between two or more people encoded in spoken or written words. For example, a speech and a letter both have verbal elements.

Nonverbal communication can be defined as any message not encoded in words. For example, a sneer, a hand gesture, a smile and a wave of the hand are all examples of nonverbal communication. Aspects of nonverbal communication include ‘body language’ or kinesics, physical characteristics, environmental factors, proxemics, the use of artefacts, paralanguage and touching behaviour. Nonverbal communication is culturally determined and should not be narrowly interpreted.

It is important to understand that messages have verbal and nonverbal elements and that together these elements form the total message.

Graphic communication represents ideas, relationships or connections visually with shapes, diagrams and lines. An arrow showing direction or a ‘stop smoking’ sign that uses an image of a cigarette rather than words are examples of graphic communication.

2b Identify four different types of communication and give an example of each.

The four types of communication are: intrapersonal, interpersonal, public and mass communication. Intrapersonal communication is communication within the individual. It involves the processes of thinking and feeling. The prefix ‘intra’ means ‘inside’ or ‘within’. Interpersonal communication is communication between two or more people. The prefix ‘inter’ means ‘between’. Public communication is communication originating from one source which is transmitted to a number of receivers, inside and outside an organisation, at the same time. It requires some audience analysis by the sender to maximise the potential of the message being understood by the target audience. Mass communication involves communication with the organisation’s public and often involves the use of mass communication media (e.g. newspapers, television broadcasts and electronic media).

An example of each type of communication includes:

intrapersonal—personal thought

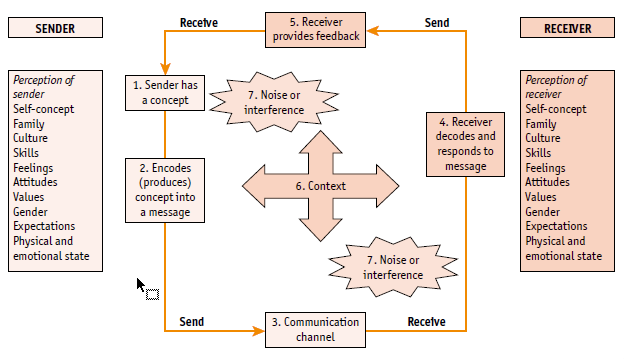
interpersonal—staff instructions

public—staff newsletter on the intranet

mass communication—annual reports.

3a ‘Communication begins with the sender.’ What are the remaining six variables at work in the communication process?

Communication begins with the sender but the other six variables that influence the effectiveness of communication are: message, receiver, feedback, channel, context or setting and noise or interference. See Figure 1.1 .



3b Define the term ‘context’ and give examples of ways in which the context can affect the message.

Context refers to the multidimensional setting in which communication takes place. Similar messages transmitted in different contexts may convey different meanings. For example, if a chairperson appears nervous before and during a meeting, it may transmit the message to other meeting participants that the chairperson may not be confident and effective in the role. However, if a seminar presenter appears nervous before a presentation, it may be perceived as expected behaviour before a public speaking event.

3c Write a short note explaining what is wrong with this statement: ‘The sender of the message has full control over how it is received and understood.’

The sender should maximise the potential for a message to be understood by: analysing the audience and choosing the most appropriate way to encode the message; choosing the most appropriate channel to transmit the message; and anticipating and preventing barriers and planning for feedback.

However, communication is an interactive process. The sender does not have ‘full control’ over how the message is received and understood. The communication process can be affected by noise at any stage of the process and distortion can occur. How a message is received and understood will also depend on the receiver’s perception of the message. The receiver will place his/her own meaning on the message.

## Communication Models and Theories

Learning Objective 1.2: Differentiate between communication theories

### Review Questions 1.2

1 Explain the four elements in Berlo’s model of communication.

Berlo’s (1960) S-M-C-R model consists of four elements: a communication source or generator of messages (S), the message as the central element (M), the channels through which the sender encodes and the receiver decodes the message (C) and the receivers as the target of communication from the source (R).

2 What are the implications of Dance’s helical model of communication?

The implications of Dance’s (1967) helical model of communication are that communication is continuous, unrepeatable and accumulative from all past experience. What has occurred before contributes to what is happening now with no fixed beginning, no break in the action and no closure. The model implies that communication is an integrated, evolving process that enhances learning, growth and discovery without isolating the key variables and relationships.

3 Distinguish between the creator role and the consumer role in Foulger’s ecological model of communication.

Foulger (2004) suggested that, when engaged in the process of communication, people act in two distinct roles: creator and consumer. The creation role is associated with the instantiation of representations of meaning. The consumption role is associated with the interpretation of representations of meaning.

### Apply Your Knowledge

#### Work individually

1a Write short notes to differentiate between intrapersonal, interpersonal, public and mass communication. Provide examples of each type of communication.

1b In your notes, reflect on this statement: ‘One of the most important skills that any person within an organisation needs is the ability to communicate. Without communication, your other skills are less useful.’

Answer:

This is a self-reflection/group activity and learner responses will vary.

2 Write a short note that explains the interaction of the three fundamental constructs—message, language and media—in Foulger’s ecological model of communication.

Answer: Foulger’s ecological model of communication focuses on the relationships between people (creators and consumers), the construction of messages using language within media and the consumption and interpretation of messages from media using language.

#### Work in groups

3 This activity demonstrates the importance of each element in the communication process.

3a Work in pairs. Stand back-to-back and conduct a conversation for two minutes. When the two minutes are up, discuss how easy or difficult it was to speak in this way.

3b Comment on the way nonverbal communication can help two people to talk with and understand one another.

3c Suggest how knowledge of communication models and theories enables individuals to interact more effectively in their work.

3d Make a joint verbal presentation of your findings to the group.

Answers:

3a Answers will vary.

3b Nonverbal communication, such as facial expressions and body language, can help facilitate the transmission of a message when barriers of verbal communication exist between a sender and a receiver.

3c Because communication is a dynamic and interactive process, knowledge of communication models and theories can help boost understanding of the variety of ways people use their intellectual, emotional and psychomotor skills to respond to communication.

3d Answers will vary.

4a Discuss Berlo’s model of the process of communication. In your discussion, identify the focus of the theory and its underpinning assumptions.

4b What conclusions could a manager draw from the theories about workplace communication?

4c Report your findings to the large group.

Answers:

4a In Berlo’s model, a person or group of people are responsible for communication. Berlo sees the message as being translated into a code or language—a systematic set of symbols structured to achieve meaning. In Berlo’s model, the channel is related to the five senses. He also suggests that words do not mean the same thing to all people.

4b The conclusions a manager could draw about communication in business are that it is a two-way process that takes place in various situations for different reasons with the potential for many interpretations.

4c Answers will vary.

5 Use Dance’s model of the communication process as a spiral or helix of cumulative experiences.

5a In your group, brainstorm and list experiences that have allowed you to become more knowledgeable and skilled communicators.

5b Explain, drawing on some of your listed past experiences, how communication in past experiences can influence a person’s future.

Answers:

5a Answers will vary.

5b Students’ past experiences will vary, but they should be able to synthesi se their past experiences with Dance’s model. Dance’s model of the communication process as a spiral explains that a person’s communication experiences are cumulative and influenced by the past. The model suggests that present experiences inevitably have an influence on a person’s future.

## Impacts on Business Communication

Learning Objective 1.3: Discuss factors impacting on business communication today

### Review Questions 1.3

1a Describe the characteristics of employees who are able to communicate across and between cultures.

Employees need to do more than communicate in a homogeneous culture. They need to:

• understand how to collaborate and communicate with those from other cultures

• acknowledge the impact of culture on verbal and nonverbal communication

• know how to engage in virtual communication using current technologies

• be able to share common meanings across cultures through an understanding of the knowledge systems, beliefs, values and behaviours of other cultures.

1b Explain how one can transcend cultural conditioning.

Identifying and managing workforce diversity requires organisations and their people to transcend ‘cultural conditioning’ by moving beyond stereotypes and premature judging and by avoiding ethnocentric behaviours.

2a Provide examples of digital communication tools.

Digital communication tools comprise all of the technologies, including email, instant messaging, organisational social media tools, internet, intranets and portals, staff use to do their jobs. The different platforms enable consistent, productive performance of core business applications across the organisation.

2b Identify four affordances made possible by the new digital technologies.

Four affordances made possible by new digital technologies are visibility, persistence, editability and association.

2c What behaviours are affected by these affordances?

Behaviours affected include socialisation, information sharing and power processes.

3a Provide examples of internal and external sources of change.

Internal sources include: changes in the organisation’s structure due to mergers or takeovers, changes in its vision or strategy and management decisions, changes in senior staff and new appointments, and implementation of new processes and procedures.

External sources include: technological advancements, new or changed legislation and regulations, and community demand for environmental care.

3b What should be communicated to staff when an organisation is introducing and implementing change?

Staff should receive communication regarding why change is required, how the change will occur, and how the implementation will happen enables people to understand the implications for them, the organisation and other stakeholders.

4 What are the advantages gained from flattening management structures?

Flatter organisational structures mean fewer lines of decisions, enabling more flexible and faster decision making. There is a greater emphasis on cross-functional teams, teamwork and employee engagement and empowerment.

## Ethical Behaviour

Learning Objective 1.4: Discuss the principles of ethical communication

### Review Questions 1.4

1 What does a code of ethics typically provide guidance on?

A code of ethics is a formal statement of an organisation’s values and ethical rules. A code of ethics provides guidance on what is expected of individual behaviour, how to avoid unlawful or improper behaviour that will harm the organisation and how to treat customers.

2a Give examples of the type of documents organisations use to address ethics and conduct issues.

The types of documents business use to address ethics and conduct issues include what is expected of individual behaviour (e.g. OH&S compliance and dress standards); how to avoid unlawful or improper behaviour (e.g. policies on confidentiality); and how to treat customers (e.g. provide accurate, factual information).

2b Identify four behaviours characteristic of both ethical communicators and ethical organisations.

Professionals and organisations concerned about the ethics of their communication practice need to constantly look beyond the rules and contemplate issues such as: equality, reciprocity, truth and authenticity.

3a Identify five common ethical traps.

The false necessity trap, the doctrine-of-relative-filth trap, the rationalisation trap, the self-deception trap and the ends-justify-the-means trap.

3b How does the four-step framework for analysing ethical dilemmas help avoid these ethical traps?

The four-step framework helps to analyse ethical dilemmas after you have identified a possible course of action. The steps are:

– Step 1: Identify the legal implications of the alternative and determine whether the alternative adheres to contractual agreements and company policy.

– Step 2: Determine whether the alternative violates any company or professional code of ethics.

– Step 3: Use ethical principles and theories to assess whether the alternative judged to be legal (Step 1) and in compliance with the code of ethics (Step 2) is ethical.

– Step 4: Implement the alternative and communicate the decision to the appropriate individuals inside or outside the organisation.

### Apply Your Knowledge

#### Work individually

1 Develop a briefing paper titled, ‘What is diversity and inclusion?’ In your paper:

• Define diversity, and discuss the characteristics of a diverse culture.

• Define inclusion, and discuss the characteristics of an inclusive culture.

• Explain why diversity and inclusion matter and their benefits.

• Identify the main barriers to inclusive work practices.

• Discuss communication methods that can be used to promote inclusion across an organisation.

Answer:

Personalised answer required.

2 Assume you have been invited to speak at a local conference on the topic ‘Factors impacting on communication in today’s workplace’. Develop a detailed outline of your presentation.

Answer:

Personalised answer required.

3 Assume you are the financial manager. One of your supervisors enters your office to ask you for reimbursement for expenses of $180 incurred for entertaining a client last night. He submits receipts for $180. However, at morning tea you overhear the supervisor telling a team member about celebrating a birthday with an old friend last night. What do you do?

Answer:

Personalised answer required.

4 Write a short reflection paper focusing on what you have learned about the purpose of communication, and its forms and types in your chosen profession.

Answer:

Personalised answer required.

#### Work in groups

5 Organisations are increasingly using the Web 2.0 collaborative technologies to engage with customers. These transactions require customers to provide personal information.

5a In your small group, assume you are the manager of a travel agency supplying airline tickets to customers online. As the manager, you must work within the ethical constraints of privacy, accuracy and accessibility of information.

5b Work together to answer the following questions:

• What information will the agency need to hold about clients?

• How can the agency ensure the information is correct?

• Who owns the information? Can it be transferred? If so, how?

• Who is allowed to access this information about clients, and under what conditions?

5c Combine with three or four other small groups and present your answers.

5d What similarities (if any) did you find between your answers?

Answers:

5a– 5d: Personalised answer required.

### Activities and Questions

#### Work individually

1 Find an article in the business press or general news about a recent incident involving a company—for example, launching a new product, a crisis, a scandal, a merger or an acquisition.

a What types of communication will the company be likely to use in this incident?

b What kinds of messages need to be conveyed to the company’s intended audience(s)?

c Who are the company’s intended audience(s) likely to be?

d Which channels of communication would you recommend the company use in response to the incident?

e Briefly explain the types of noise or interference that could distort the company’s intended message?

Answers:

1a– 1e: Personalised answer required.

2 Reflect on an interaction you have had with another person today.

a Identify at least two stimuli or cues that were caused by the environment (i.e. outside your control or the control of the other person). What was their impact on the transaction?

b Identify the cues in your message (verbal and nonverbal) and in the response of the other person (i.e. under the control of the sender and receiver). What was their impact on the message?

Answers:

2a– 2b: Personalised answer required.

3a In what ways can understanding of the propositions underpinning Foulger’s ecological model of communication help a business owner manage business relationships?

b An understanding of proposition nine helps a business owner realise the importance of creating a positive image and relationship with clients or customers. Reflect on one of the businesses you frequent. Write a short comparison of the ways that business communicates with you and the ways in which you communicate with the business.

Answers:

3a– 3b: Personalised answer required.

4a Construct a three-column table. In column one, list the activities or functions you carry out on the internet, in column two the activities or functions you carry out on social media, and in column three the activities or functions you carry out on your tablet or smartphone.

b Keep a log for a day of your smartphone or computer-aided activities. Record the sites, how long you were on them, and how many people you interacted with on each site.

c Compare your log with others in your course to determine the most common uses of the internet, social media, and tablet or smartphone.

d From your findings, create a typical media profile of a millennial.

Answers:

4a-4d: Personalised answer required.

5 Many factors can determine your choice of action to take when you face various ethical dilemmas. Assume you face the three dilemmas here.

*Scenario 1:* You are a teacher with a student who must work to attend university. However, the job is interfering with the student’s performance and several assignments have not been handed in. You have decided that a fail is all the student’s last essay warrants, when a counsellor informs you that the student needs a pass to qualify for an academic scholarship. What do you do?

*Scenario 2:* In your position as a real estate agent, a couple from out of town call you to list their deceased parent’s home in Townsville. They are not sure what it is worth, but say they will be happy to get $450 000 for the home. Looking at the home you feel it is worth at least $600 000 and realise it would be perfect for your cousin. What do you do?

*Scenario 3*: Your direct supervisor has asked you to ignore problems in the current project when you write the project progress report on Friday. You know that your supervisor is due to conduct your next performance review in two weeks’ time. What do you do?

Write a memo to your team leader explaining the action you will take for each dilemma. In the memo:

* analyse your response to each ethical dilemma against the decision points in Lehman and Dufrene’s four-step framework for analysing ethical dilemmas (legality and compliance with contractual agreement and company policy, consistency with company or profession’s code of ethics, and conformance to ethical principles)
* identify alternative solutions and outline actions to implement them.

Answer: Personalised answer required.

#### Work in groups

6 Think of a situation when you tried to communicate with another person, or when someone tried to communicate with you, and it failed. Think about the barriers that interfered with the communication.

a Outline the situation to the group and tell them why you think it failed.

b List all the reasons for failure identified by your group.

c Come together as a large group and share the barriers identified by each group.

Answers:

6a –6c: Personalised answer required.

7a Discuss at least three ethical constraints or ‘traps’ that may affect communication in an organisation.

b Brainstorm the reasons for a professional association such as the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) developing a code of ethics for professional communicators.

c Review the discussion of obstacles to ethical decision making on pages 17–18.

Identify two common obstacles to ethical decisions and explain how knowledge of the three decision points based on the illegality of an action in Figure 1.6 help an individual overcome these obstacles to ethical behaviour.

Answers:

7a– 7c: Personalised answer required.

8 Assume your group is the Learning and Development team for a large national coffee chain. The human resource director has requested your group provide an outline of the communication skills and knowledge required to enable the workplace success of the next group of trainees. The human resource director will use the outline to develop a communication training program for the trainees.

The human resource director suggests that:

* the first part of the program should explain the elements in the communication model
* the second part should focus on skills that are important for teamwork
* the third part should focus on skills that are important for customer service.

a Develop an action plan to identify the objectives, responsibilities of individual group members and deadlines.

b Brainstorm and list the skills that are important for teamwork.

c Brainstorm and list the customer service skills the trainees will require.

d Create an outline of the communication skills and knowledge required to enable the workplace success of the next group of trainees. The title of the outline is ‘Trainees—Communication and Workplace Success’. Note that the introduction to the outline should identify the elements in the communication process.

Answers:

8a– 8d: Personalised answer required.

### Case Study

#### Holiday Central

1 Communication is only successful when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information as a result of the communication. Explain how knowledge of the main elements in the communication process facilitates connection and understanding between the sender and the receiver.

When both the sender and the receiver understand the main elements of the communication process, the likelihood of communication barriers occurring will be reduced.

2 Discuss the implications of poor communication for:

• Discuss the implications

• Discuss the implications of poor communication

Answers will vary.

3 Develop a dot point list of guidelines that Paul Irving can use to guide Holiday Central employees in their future communication with clients.

Answers will vary.