

“COMMUNICATION BARRIERS”

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Abstract

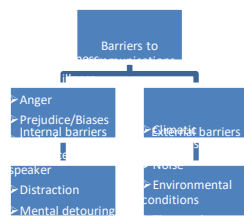
“Half the world is filled with people who have something to say and can't say it and the other half of the people who have nothing to say and keep on saying it”

- Robert Frost

Communication is an exchanging of ideas, thoughts, and feelings between two or more entities. We share our thoughts with our friends and family members and co-workers. A barrier is an obstacle which prevents the flow of speech and communication. Miscommunication can originate at three levels: level of the transmitter, level of medium and level of the receiver. There are two types of barriers to communication. Those are internal barriers of communication and External Barriers of communication. Internal barriers of communication include Physical illness, mental illness, anger, prejudice/biases, lack of confidence in the speaker, distraction, mental detouring, and faulty transmission. External barriers of communication include Climatic conditions, noise, environmental conditions, time and distance, wrong choice of medium and semantic barriers. By following careful guidelines we can overcome form miscommunication like planning the speech, by knowing the receiver, listening more and speaking less, by taking care of our tongue and seeking feedback.

Keywords: communication, barrier, thoughts, miscommunication, feedback etc

What is communication? According to experts communication is an exchange of ideas, thoughts, and feelings between two or more entities. We communicate our thoughts and feelings to family, friends, co-workers, and strangers every hour of every day. Communication is an action, blossoms and interacts. What is the barrier? The barrier is an obstacle which hinders your flow of speech and which prevents your careful listening. Barriers arise between sender and receiver. Miscommunication can originate at three levels: level of the transmitter, level of medium and level of the receiver. Technically anything that stops the free run of communication is called noise or we may consider it as a barrier to communication. Here in this paper, we consider some of the major barriers and ways to overcome them.



Barriers of communication are of two types. There are internal barriers and external barriers. Internal barriers are present within us. These internal barriers are mostly either health-related or emotional in nature. Some of the internal barriers are related to Physical illness, mental illness, anger, prejudice/biases, total lack of confidence in the speaker, distraction, mental detouring and daydreaming. The external barriers are related to climatic conditions, Noise level conditions, Environmental conditions, Time and distance, etc

Physical illness: to keep the person in effective communication, one should be fit physically well. For that, he should follow some health tips. So that he could communicate well with his fellow beings.

Mental illness: A cheerful countenance and an optimistic and positive outlook in life can help in countering mental illness like depression, minor complexes and thus ensure smooth communication. Personal attitude and opinions often simulate as a blockade to efficient communication. If information agrees with our opinions and attitudes, we tend to receive it favorably. Anything contrary automatically turns us off.

Anger: this is one of the biggest obstacles to effective communication. Anger has to be channeled in the right direction to do it a productive force. If the sender is perplexed, worried, excited, afraid, nervous, his thinking will be blurred and he will not able to organize his message properly. His emotions of the receiver will also affect the communication progression. If he is angry or upset, he will not take the message in the proper light.

Prejudice or biases: These can be overcome by having an open mind and understanding of the fact that all human beings are born equal. He deeply ingrains prejudice. Such people never listen to the words of others. He is the kind of a person who always says, "Look, my mind is made up, I know what I know."

Total lack of confidence in the speaker: Even if this were so, there is no harm in listening to him/her with an open mind. There is always a possibility that they might have something new to convey that you were not yet aware of. But if this attitude continues, never, we benefit from the communication. This leads to a lot of misunderstanding.

Distraction: Physiologists say that it is very easy to be distracted from a conversation that it is almost inevitable. This can be prevented by paying full attention to forcing ourselves to be interested in the subject.

Mental detouring: Mental detouring is simply going off at a tangent while communicating with somebody. The detour could be glittered off by a possibility observation by the speaker which could have reminded us of some other incident. The solution is to quickly get back to the speaker and the conversation at hand.

Daydream: All of us daydream from time to time. Though a creative activity, this invariably leads to a break in communication. Hence be prudent in your indulgence. People often become inattentive while receiving a message, in particular, if the note consists of a new thought. The adult human mind usually resists change, for change makes things uncertain.

Faulty transmission: A message is by no means corresponded from one person to another in its entirety. This is true in particular of an oral message. If a decision has been taken by the board of directors, it must be in the form of a lengthy resolution. This declaration cannot be surpassed on to the factory workers in the same form. It has to be translated in an easy language so that they may be easily understood that. External barriers are easy to tackle than internal barriers. They can also be eliminated. Some of the external barriers are:

Climatic conditions: Excessive heat or cold often disrupts the normal functioning of a person. Climatic conditions can be removed by the use of conditioning and room heating. Air-conditioning has the added advantage of removing excessive noise also.

Noise level conditions: Noise is quite often a barrier to communication. In factories, oral communication is rendered intricate by the strident of machines. This kind of electronic noise like blaring often interferes in communication by telephone or loudspeaker system. A noisy environment or a room near a market place, it is very difficult to listen actively. Well, oiled doors hinges and soundproofing can be considered.

Environmental conditions: Environmental provisions are like the stuffy, congested room, a stinking environment or uncomfortable seating also act as major barriers to active listening. Solution to bad room odor is room fresheners. Seating must always be in such a way as to provide maximum comfort to the person. Chairs used must not be too hard or too soft.

Semantic barriers: under semantic barriers interpretations of words, bypassed instructions, denotations and connotations play a major role. Some other barriers are cultural barriers, social barriers, perceptual, emotional barriers, language barriers, gender barriers etc. some of the semantics barriers are related to language i.e. jargons, slang etc. use of slang and jargons are biggest barriers of communication.

Time and distance: Time and distance also simulate as barricades to the flat gush of communication. The use of telephone and computer technology has made communication very fast and overcome the space barrier. Sometimes mechanical breakdowns deliver these opportunities ineffective. In such circumstances, the distances between the transmitter and the receiver become a mighty barrier. Some of the factories run in shifts. There is a communication gap between persons accomplishing in different swings. Faulty arrangements of seating in the room can also suit a barrier to effective communication; they definitely want eye contact with one another. Poor timing: sending a communication at a wrong moment considerably reduces its effectiveness. In particular, if a communication is sent close to a deadline, it evokes resentment and fails to deliver the message.

Wrong choice of medium: Whenever we want to communicate something, we have a variety of media to choose from - Oral, Written, Visual, Audio-Visual, Computer-based etc. but all these media have merits and limitations. While a properly selected medium can add strength to the effectiveness of communication, an unsuitable medium may act as a barrier to it.

The following situations may be considered as ----

If he writes a long article incorporating the information or talks on the phone, he may fail to communicate anything. He should present the figure in a tabular form or make a bar diagram. An employee wants to express his sorry to his superintendents over his misbehavior. In this type of case written explanation alone may prove to be ineffective. His supervisor will be satisfied.

Interpretation of the narration: Communication in all the contexts, carried on through words, may be spoken or written. But the words are more effective incapable of communicating a variety of meanings. It is quite possible that the receiver of a message may misunderstand if he doesn't know the meanings of the words. The little word "run" has 71 meanings in Murphy and Peck's book "Effective Business Communications"

Bypassed instructions: if the sender and the receiver of a message attribute different meanings to the same word or use different words for the same meaning. Here is a right example; an office manager handed to a new assistant one letter with the instruction, Take it

to our stockroom and burn it. In the office manager's mind {and in the firm's jargon} the word burn means to make a copy on a company machine which operated by a heat process. But however, the newly employed was puzzled, afraid to ask questions, burnt the letter.

Denotation and connotations: Words have two types of meanings. There are denotations and connotations. The literal meaning of a word is called denotative meaning. Some of the words like table, book, accounts, and meeting are denotative. In contrast, connotative meanings arouse qualitative judgment and personal reactions. Honest, competent, cheap, sincere etc are connotative words.

We should prefer words which are recognizable to the recipient in the explanation we wish to give them. If we want the receiver to give an unfamiliar sense to a familiar expression within the circumstance of our message, we should make it amply clear the first time we avail it. Whenever feasible, we have to choose words with positive rather than negative implications.

General guidelines for overcoming barriers:

Some hints on how to overcome communication barriers have been included in the above discussion. Here are some general guidelines.

Plan your communication carefully: It means one should choose the right medium and send the communication at the most appropriate time. It also means using words that will generate prosperity and understandable in the receiver's mind. Right medium makes the receiver to understand well but the sender should understand the level of the receiver.

Know the receiver: this basically suggests a clear perception of the receiver's frame of reference. What is his level of education, his age, his experience, his status in the organization he belongs to? What is his cultural background? This knowledge will help the sender or the speaker to avoid several barriers.

Listen more; speak less: listening more and talking less is the formula to understand others. We should remember that we give our tongue when we speak to other but we give two ears when we listen to others. When someone speaks, in order to understand the concept we should have patience and endurance.

Take care of your tongue: How we present is more important rather than what we present. Never speak harshly or sarcastically. Try to put up a positive outlook with whomever you communicate. So, we should be careful when we speak to others.

Seek feedback and get clarifications: the process of communication would be effective when we get good feedback from the receiver. It will help the speaker to eliminate defaults and misunderstandings.

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