

WAYS OF OBTAINING COMMUNICATION EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

Effective communication can help people accomplish various established goals as well as avoid failure during any kind of interpersonal relations. Effective communication depends on the people involved in conversation, especially on the one who leads the way. The environment, the scope of the meeting and the expertise and experience of the public relation expert and leader play a significant role in achieving effectiveness in interpersonal communication. Effective communication is necessary for all individuals. Public relation experts and leaders cannot be proficient in their jobs if they do not possess the significant communication skills of transmitting vision and messages in order to influence other people. Any individual who wants to effectively communicate with the others must follow the advice of the experts in this field. He should get involved in a process of learning, experience active listening, solve problems and conflicts, and have a positive and understanding attitude towards other peoples' needs. Also, he should smile and display a tactful behaviour.

Keywords: *language, nonverbal communication, influencing people, active listening, positive attitude, understanding others.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This article does not aim to approach the field of efficient interpersonal communication from an exclusively theoretical perspective. My goal is, on the basis of some of the best well-known theoretical approaches in the field, to offer the reader the possibility to assess the connection between theory and the way in which it is or it should be implemented in order to obtain efficiency in interpersonal communication.

Taking into account the great variety of points of view belonging to well-known specialist in the field on the subject of communication efficiency, as well as the large number of situations in which their recommendations should be applied, I shall try to achieve an approach to the field that may apply to various types of relationships between people who carry out their activity in different entities of the human society.

2. THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS - DEFINITION AND CONTENT

Encyclopaedia Britannica presents the British I. A. Richards as the author of the first definition on communication, in 1928: “Communication takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced, and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind, and is caused in part by that experience.” (George T. Gordon). The communication process was influenced in the development of the human society, especially by the gathering of knowledge and skills, but especially by the appearance of the informational age and of computer science. Different scholars developed communication models that correspond to the technological level reached by the society. One of the first models is the **linear** one, developed by Claude Shanon și Warren Weaver (IACACT, n.d.).

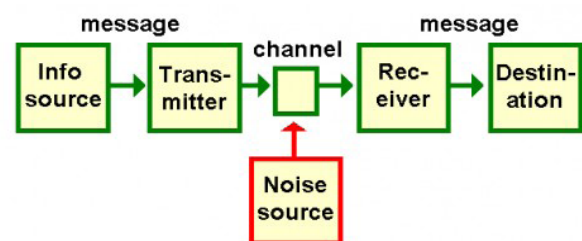


Fig. 1. The linear model of communication (COMMUNICATION STUDIES, n.d.)

The linear model was followed by the **cybernetic** one, developed by Norbert Wiener (Norbert Wiener Issues “Cybernetics”, the First Widely Distributed Book on Electronic Computing, 1948 (HISTORY OF INFORMATION, n.d.). Another model that describes communication belongs to the American

Theodore M. Newcombe (CONVERSE, 1994). It is called the "ABX Model" and the "Triangular Model" (The Newcomb's Model, Communication Theory) and it is appreciated because it can be applied to various fields of human activity.

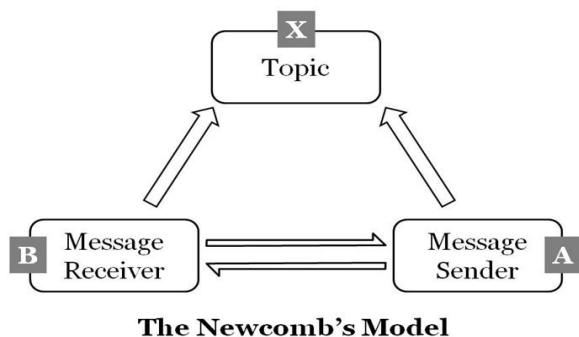


Fig. 2. The Newcomb's Model
(COMMUNICATION MODELS, n.d.)

Later on, in the '60s, the Canadian Marshall McLuhan persuaded a large part of the world that human society is, from a cultural point of view, in the process of passing from the "print" to the "visual" stage (MCLUHAN, 2008).

Robert T. Craig, in the article "Communication Theory as a Field," published in 1999 stated that "although there exist many theories of communication (...) there is no consensus on communication theory as a field" (AMUDAVALLI, n.d.). This statement is argued, among others, by the fact that each of the existing communication models, including those previously mentioned, presents applicability limitations. This situation determined the American psychologist Jurgen Ruesch to state that there are at least 40 different approaches to the communication process, which reflect points of view belonging to psychologists, anthropologists, politicians, economists, sociologists, architects, artists, aestheticians etc. Therefore scholars also developed other communication models, such as: "SMCR Model of Communication. The Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver Model of communication separated the model into clear parts and has been expanded upon by other scholars," Lasswell's model (The five who), constructionist and transactional models (IACACT, n.d.).

One of the shortest definitions of communication that can be applied in almost every field of human activity is offered by Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Communication, [is, author note] the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols" (GORDON, n.d.).

Scholars consider that the communication process presents various components (HEATHFIELD, 2017):

- a) **the sender and the receiver** (in interpersonal communication the parties engaged in communication are, in turn, the sender and the receiver);
- b) **the message transmitting method:** verbal, non-verbal, written (letter, telegram, document etc.), electronic (email, instant message, video recording, audio recording, social media etc. (HARTMAN, n.d.), fotogafii, telefon, radio etc.;
- c) **the content of the message:** (personal, official, emotional etc.);
- d) **the context** (KING, 2000): *psychological aspects* (emotions, desires, needs, values, personality manifestations etc.); *relationship aspects* (the way in which each communication participant manifests: gestures, emotions etc.); *cultural aspects* pertaining to communication participants (race, ethnicity, sex, age, political and religious beliefs, the level of training, etc.); *situational aspects* (the purpose of communication, the goals of the communication participants etc.); *the environment* in which communication takes place (atmosphere, geographic setting, season, the duration of communication etc.);
- e) **the communication channel:** physical, virtual etc.
- f) **feedback** – „Feedback is the response or reaction of the receiver after perceiving or understanding the message. It enables the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the message. It is inevitably essential in case of two-way communication. Without feedback, a two way communication is either ineffective or incomplete" (BUSINESS COMMUNICATION, 2015).
- g) **the disturbing factor** which may be the noise, due to environmental conditions or unauthorized interferences of other parties:

“There’s also semantic and physiological noise. Semantic noise happens when the sender splits words or is ambiguous in meaning. Physiological noise is perhaps the most detrimental roadblock to message receipt; this occurs when receivers are distracted by their body’s reaction to the message such as blurry vision due to tears, a headache, emotional stress, etc” (CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY TEXAS, n.d.).

Efficient communication represents the ability to:

- Give and collect information;
- Influence the attitudes and behavior of others;
- Form contacts and maintain relationships;
- Make sense of the world and our experiences in it;
- Express personal needs and understand the needs of others;
- Give and receive emotional support;
- Make decisions and solve problems;
- Anticipate and predict behavior;
- Regulate power;
- broadcast various information;
- influence other peoples’ attitudes and behaviours;
- establish and preserve relationships with other people;
- broadcast our experience to the world;
- express our needs and to understand the needs of other people;
- give and receive emotional support;
- take decisions and solve problems;
- anticipate the behaviour of others;
- regulate the power rations among people and communities (SKILLS YOU NEED, n.d.).

In order to obtain communication efficiency we have to make sure that “all components of a communication interworking perfectly for “shared meaning” (HEATHFIELD, 2017).

Language represents the most important means of communication and the oldest method of influencing other people (KUNERT & DIMITROVA, n.d.). This influence can be achieved in a *direct and imperative* manner (usually in the structured based on the power relationships), but also during some conferences or activities led by a president or an organization group which establishes who talks, when and

how much or in the education system where the teacher determines what, when and how to communicate with the teaching subjects or in an *indirect manner*, when one of the parties that participates in the communication persuades the other to accept the point of view of the other (diplomatic negotiation “conducts the passages from protest to menace, dialogue to negotiation, ultimatum to reprisal, and war to peace and reconciliation with other states. Diplomacy builds and tends the coalitions that deter or make war. It disrupts the alliances of enemies and sustains the passivity of potentially hostile powers.” (MARKS, & FREEMAN, n.d.), in elections, when political leaders persuade the people taking part in the meeting to vote them, in situations in which manipulation methods are being used, in publicity, etc.

Usually, verbal communication is completed by non-verbal communication. When meaning contradictions appear between the two, the goal of communication may be compromised.

3. WHY DO WE NEED COMMUNICATION EFFICIENCY

Every individual has to be efficient in communication in order to send and receive messages, so that they are clear and easy to understand “both for his superiors and for his colleagues (...) and to ensure a successful career” (DOYLE, 2018). In other words, regardless of the broadcasting manner, the sender has to have a message that contains sufficient information so that the reliever perceives it correctly (HEATHFIELD, 2017). Therefore, communication has to be in accordance with the interlocutor and the situation in which it takes place because “it’s not just what we say that matters but also the tone we use and how we say it. Additionally, by considering our understanding of the other person, we figure out how to best our intentions and ideas to that particular individual.” (HAN, n.d.). On the other hand, “having a well-balanced repertoire of interpersonal skills will allow you to handle any situation more gracefully. You need listening skills to balance assertiveness, non-verbal communication to balance questioning etc” (GEMMA, 2014).

4. THE PATH TO CHOOSE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN COMMUNICATION EFFICIENCY

Efficient communication represents the ability that the human beings possess in order to make themselves understood and to obtain that they aim for.

Communication efficiency is obtained through a laborious process which proposes **adequate personal qualities**, known as “soft skills” (Will Gemma: “the ability to stay calm, focused, polite, interested and to match the mood or emotion of the situation.”), eloquence, developed observation spirit, high adaptation capacity to new situations, creativity, patience and **specialized training**, which has to be accompanied by **accumulation of experience** (GEMMA, 2014).

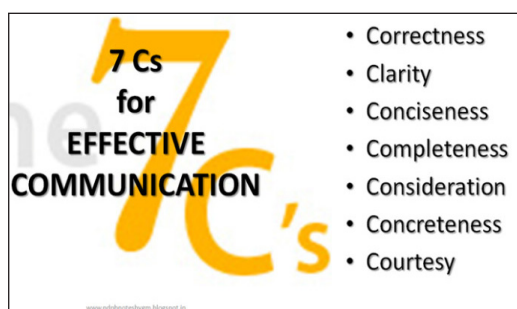


Fig. 3. Seven C's of Effective communication (MENON, 2015)

The specialized training profile represents a preparation stage in which communication experts and leaders have to learn:

- to listen, especially to practice **active listening**. “Active listening involves paying close attention to what the other person is saying, asking clarifying questions, and rephrasing what the person says to ensure understanding (“So, what you’re saying is...”). Through active listening, you can better understand what the other person is trying to say, and can respond appropriately.” (DOYLE, 2018);
- to formulate clear and concise what he wants to transmit (DOYLE, 2018);
- to adapt the content of the message according to the interlocutor and the communication goal set;
- to coordinate non-verbal language with what it is spoken, especially gestures, to preserve permanent eye contact with the interlocutor (audience) and to use a friendly tone as people communicate non-verbally all the time. “Everything you do or don’t do says something about you and how you are feeling. Your facial expressions (especially eye contact), your posture, your voice, your gestures with your extremities and even the way you position yourself physically in a room or amongst colleagues is constantly revealing your true attitude, for better or for worse” (GEMMA, 2014).
- to gain the trust of the interlocutor (audience) using professional competency (“They won’t respect or listen to, let alone be influenced by, individuals who do not know what they are talking about” (HEATHFIELD, 2017), honesty (“Focus on creating a win-win deal with honest and open communication rather than tricks that can possibly provide an upper hand through intimidation” (LEIGH, n.d.) and a positive attitude;
- to make use of his smile and sense of humour in order to generate a friendly atmosphere and to eliminate abstention and possible psychological barriers from the attitude of the interlocutor (audience);
- to be patient, understanding and respectful towards opinions of the interlocutor (audience) even those he disagrees with them;
- not to be arrogant or aggressive in tone and attitude;
- not to respond immediately to critics and not to display anger towards those who formulate them, but to thank them for being interested in continuing the good work of the organization and to encourage them to continue to identify situations where there are problems or in which improvements can be made (DEXTER-WILSON, 2015);
- to choose the most suitable communication path, according to the situation: the most important aspects have to be solved through direct communication (face to face);
- to choose the best time and lengths for communication (“One of the most important communication skills business people can

- learn is knowing the best time to communicate sensitive information" (MORLEY, n.d.);
- to know their interlocutors (audience): age, training, political and religious convictions, the goal of the meeting, taboos and customs, passions etc.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Communication does not possess a unanimously accepted definition and that is why there are at least 40 definitions for the relationship process between people and communities.

Efficient communication is taught and the success of gaining it is facilitated by the native qualities of the person who wishes to become a communicator or a leader respected by his interlocutors. The most significant native qualities and the skills required by an efficient communicator are the following: active listening, verbal eloquence, friendly and positive attitude, patience, tact, politeness, professionalism and self-control. All these aspects coordinate both oral and non-verbal communication.

Communication efficiency is obtained through a quite laborious training process, followed by improvement due to the participation in a number of relationship activities with people or groups of people on various topics and in different surroundings.

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