

# How to Overcome Barriers in Communication

## Communication:

Communication is the art of transmitting knowledge, ideas, information and thoughts from one person to another. The transfer should be such that the receiver understands the meaning and the intent of the message and give proper feedback.

## Barriers in Communication:

Communication is complete and perfect when the receiver understands the message in the same sense and spirit as the communicator intends to convey, here, idea and information reached to and responded by receiver remain unaltered and undistorted. But practically it has been noticed that such perfect and complete communication does not take place because of certain obstacles or other factors known as communication barriers.

There are a lot of causes of misunderstanding and misinterpretations of message communicated. As the process of communication involves sender (encoding of message), medium/channels and receiver (decoding of message), the problem of communication usually lies with either one or more of them.

Main types of communication barriers are;

- **Physical barriers:**

Physical barrier is the environmental and natural conditions that act as a barrier in communication in sending message from sender to receiver. For example, distance, noise, defect in medium.

- **Physiological barriers:**

Physiological barriers of communication occur due to the physical condition of sender or receiver which might even be physical disabilities. It includes sensory dysfunction and other physical dysfunctions.

- **Psychological / Emotional barriers:**

The psychological barrier of communication is the influence of psychological state of the communicators (sender and receiver) which creates an obstacle for effective communication.

- **Semantic / Language barriers:**

A language barrier is a figurative phrase used primarily to refer to linguistic barriers to communication, **i.e.** the difficulties in communication experienced by people or groups speaking different languages, or even dialects in some cases.

- **Organizational barriers:**

The **Organizational Barriers** refers to the hindrances in the flow of information among the employees and employers that might result in a commercial failure of an organization.

- **Perceptual barriers:**

Seeing things through the lens of our own unique life experiences or "conditioning" may lead to assumptions, stereotyping and misunderstandings of others whose experiences differ from our own.

- **Social / Cultural barriers:**

A **cultural barrier** is a rule or expectation in any **culture** that prevents or impedes someone, from outside of that **culture**, from being included or participating equally.

## **Strategies to Overcome Barriers in Communication:**

For effective communication and in order to remove hindrances in the way of communication the following steps are worth consideration:

- **Eliminating differences in perception:**

The organization should ensure that it is recruiting right individuals on the job. It's the responsibility of the interviewer to ensure that the interviewee has command over the written and spoken language. There should be proper Induction program so that the policies of the company are clear to all the employees. There should be proper trainings conducted for required employees (for eg: Voice and Accent training).

- **Use of Simple Language:**

Use of simple and clear words should be emphasized. Use of ambiguous words and jargons should be avoided.

- **Reduction and elimination of noise levels:**

Noise is the main communication barrier which must be overcome on priority basis. It is essential to identify the source of noise and then eliminate that source.

- **Active Listening:**

Listen attentively and carefully. There is a difference between "listening" and "hearing". Active listening means hearing with proper understanding of the message that is heard. By asking questions the speaker can ensure whether his/her message is understood or not by the receiver in the same terms as intended by the speaker.

- **Emotional State:**

During communication one should make effective use of body language. He/she should not show their emotions while communication as the receiver might misinterpret the

message being delivered. For example, if the conveyer of the message is in a bad mood then the receiver might think that the information being delivered is not good.

- **Simple Organizational Structure:**

The organizational structure should not be complex. The number of hierarchical levels should be optimum. There should be a ideal span of control within the organization. Simpler the organizational structure, more effective will be the communication.

- **Avoid Information Overload:**

The managers should know how to prioritize their work. They should not overload themselves with the work. They should spend quality time with their subordinates and should listen to their problems and feedbacks actively.

- **Give Constructive Feedback:**

Avoid giving negative feedback. The contents of the feedback might be negative, but it should be delivered constructively. Constructive feedback will lead to effective communication between the superior and subordinate.

- **Proper Media Selection:**

The managers should properly select the medium of communication. Simple messages should be conveyed orally, like: face to face interaction or meetings. Use of written means of communication should be encouraged for delivering complex messages. For significant messages reminders can be given by using written means of communication such as : Memos, Notices etc.

- **Flexibility in meeting the targets:**

For effective communication in an organization the managers should ensure that the individuals are meeting their targets timely without skipping the formal channels of communication. There should not be much pressure on employees to meet their targets.

- **Have Clarity In Your Thoughts:**

You should be very clear about your objective and what you want to convey. Arrange your thoughts in a proper order and then communicate accordingly. Systematic communication and clarity in thought get adequately received and appreciated. Aimless talks can be misleading so you should always try to show that there is an aim or motive behind your talk.

- **Understand the needs of your audience:**

You should be emotional and sensitive towards the needs of your receiver. Understand his behavior, nature, culture, and religion, however, it does not mean you cannot express your feelings or thought, but it simply means that you are showing respect to his religious beliefs or thoughts and then stating your point of view. Most importantly the message should also be structured as per his level or ability. If you are conveying the message to a layman then avoid using technical words and if you are addressing corporate elite, the language should have professional sophistication and maturity.

- **Seek the Advice of others before Communicating:**

If you are going for a high prolific meeting, seek the advice from your seniors and colleagues on the level and kind of talk that should be given. The main advantage of this practice is simple, you can get many ideas which can build your motivation and knowledge and you can then use the same to meet your purpose.

- **Take adequate care of your Tone, Language and way you are speaking:**

Messages should be framed in a simple and polite tone which attracts the listeners. Care should be taken to keep the sentences short and simple. Technical words should be used only where they are required the most. The most important of all the interest of the receiver should be kept in mind and the things that conveyed should attract the users else you might find your audience or listening yawning while you are speaking.

- **Have a Feedback from the receiver:**

Avoid asking listener, "Have you understood," ask them instead their views about what you have said and the aspects they had grasped from your message. This is a most polite and best way to have your listener involve in a conversation. This would help you to have a better understanding of their aptitude and the interest he or she is showing towards the subject.

- **Retain Consistency about the Message:**

The message conveyed should conjure with the organizational goals and policies. Whenever you are replacing any old message instead of the new one, you should clearly mention about it and clear all the doubts.

- **Keep a Routine check on the communication system:**

You should analyze the weaknesses in the communication system. All the efforts should be made to know whether you should focus on the formal or informal way to communicate. The situation needs to be analyzed to decide on the appropriate way of communication and whether audience loves to talk informally or in a formal way.

- **Make use of the body language:**

During the process of communication make sure you make the most appropriate use of your body language, Avoid showing too much of emotions as the receiver might misapprehend the message. Try to always keep a smiling face while talking and make eye to eye contact with the listener but make sure not to keep your eyes gazed at the person for more than five seconds and avoid too much of fluttering of eyes which indicate you are not confident. Sit in an upright position and feel relaxed.

- **Reduce the level of noise as far as possible:** Always make sure to speak and interact with someone where there is no noise and least disturbance. Find the source of noise, remove it and then start conversing.

- **Communication chain should be short:**

You should avoid using the mediocre or send the message through the third person unless it is very urgent. Try to directly communicate with the person concerned. The risk of distortion of the facts gets more if message is passed through the third party and just imagine if there are more people in between the sender and receiver the chances of filtering of the messages is doubled.

- **Keep your Anger in Control:**

Do not be aggressive or show your anger if you do not agree with any point of view or anything that is going against your ideology. State your thoughts politely with facts if you have and reflect positivity in your talk and nature.

- **Teamwork Hierarchy:**

Businesses have different levels of management—an entry level employee functions differently than a C-level executive. When you assemble a team, it is inevitable that there will be a process for communication between employees on different levels. Creating a process for approval and communication will aid in developing a collaborative and productive workplace and reduce the barrier of hierarchy.

- **Network problems:**

Missed connections and delayed service make it difficult to collaborate in real time. Team members need to connect through voice, video, messaging, and project sharing. Downtime and connection difficulties waste an estimated 40% of work time. Have a reliable business telecom network so you can make collaboration easier.

- **Fear of Change:**

Familiar ways of working are comfortable. Working with different team members, trying new ideas, putting together unique projects, all require moving out of your comfort zone. When we allow change, we open ourselves to the opportunity to new ideas and stronger

business decisions. New technology requires adapting your business processes because improvements happen when you allow changes. If your business fears change, you may want to ask yourselves whether you're overdue to upgrade your telecom technology.

- **Support on ideas and projects:**

When someone puts together a new idea or project, support from others on your team help those ideas to grow. When you collaborate, it is important to let others know when they have a good idea and to offer opinions on the success of projects. Creating clear communication helps to come to consensus. Work moves more quickly when team members support each other.

- **Fragmented communication:**

Many businesses use various technology including mobile devices. Different types of devices and software create barriers to communication. For example, an employee with a non-compatible mobile device who does not check messaging presents a communication challenge that can decrease productivity. Compatible technology like cloud voip and mobile integration is essential for seamless business communication.

- **Seven C's of communication:**

There are generally seven C's of communication given by Cutlip in 1952 in his "Effective Public Relations", much-quoted words in an explanation on the communication process.

1. Clarity
2. Credibility
3. Content
4. Context
5. Continuity
6. Capability
7. Channels

The application of these seven C's can ensure communication is going on a right track and will give valuable results.