

## Barriers to Communication

Communication is a process beginning with a sender who encodes the message and passes it through some channel to the receiver who decodes the message. Communication is fruitful if and only if the messages sent by the sender is interpreted with same meaning by the receiver. If any kind of disturbance blocks any step of communication, the message will be destroyed. Due to such disturbances, one can face severe problems. Thus, one must locate such barriers and take steps to get rid of them.

There are several barriers that affects the flow of communication in an organization. These barriers interrupt the flow of communication from the sender to the receiver, thus making communication ineffective. It is essential to overcome these barriers. The main barriers to communication are summarized below.

**Following are the main barriers to communication:**

**Perceptual and Language Differences:** Perception is generally how each individual interprets the world around him. All generally want to receive messages which are significant to them. But any message which is against their values is not accepted. A same event may be taken differently by different individuals. For example: A person is on leave for a month due to personal reasons (family member being critical). The HR Manager might be in confusion whether to retain that employee or not, the immediate manager might think of replacement because his team's productivity is being hampered, the family members might take him as an emotional support.

Sometimes, the linguistic differences also lead to communication breakdown. Same word may mean different to different individuals. For example: consider a word “value”.

What is the value of this Laptop?

I value our relation?

What is the value of learning technical skills?

“Value” means different in different sentences. Communication breakdown occurs if it is perceived wrongly by the receiver.

**Information Overload:** Managers are surrounded with a pool of information. It is essential to control this information flow else the information is likely to be misinterpreted or forgotten or overlooked. As a result, communication is less effective.

**Inattention:** At times we just not listen, but only hear. For example a traveller may pay attention to one “NO PARKING” sign, but if such sign is put all over the city, he no longer listens to it. Thus, repetitive messages should be ignored for effective communication. Similarly ,if a superior is engrossed in his paper work and his subordinate explains him his problem, the superior may not get what he is saying and it leads to disappointment of subordinate.

**Time Pressures:** Often in organization the targets have to be achieved within a specified time period, the failure of which has adverse consequences. In a haste to meet deadlines, the formal channels of communication are shortened, or messages are partially

given, i.e., not completely transferred. Thus, sufficient time should be given for effective communication.

**Distraction/Noise:** Communication is also affected a lot by noise to distractions. Physical distractions are also there such as, poor lighting, uncomfortable sitting, unhygienic room also affects communication in a meeting. Similarly use of loud speakers interferes with communication.

**Emotions:** Emotional state at a particular point of time also affects communication. If the receiver feels that communicator is angry, he interprets that the information being sent is very bad. While he takes it differently if the communicator is happy and jovial (in that case the message is interpreted to be good and interesting).

**Complexity in Organizational Structure:** Greater the hierarchy in an organization (i.e. more the number of managerial levels), more is the chances of communication getting destroyed. Only the people at the top level can see the overall picture while the people at low level just have knowledge about their own area and a little knowledge about other areas.

**Poor retention:** Human memory cannot function beyond a limit. One cant always retain what is being told specially if he is not interested or not attentive. This leads to communication breakdown.