

Communication: Sender and Receiver

How do leaders with innovative ideas and great intentions set themselves up for failure? Often it's for a very simple reason - they are unable to communicate what matters to them in a way that matters to anybody else.

What is communication?

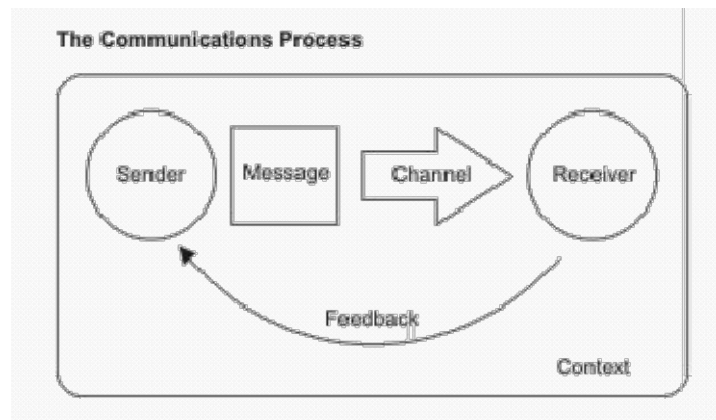
Effective communication requires the ability to both speak clearly and listen actively. Learn how to convey your message effectively in different situations and how to be an active listener.

Why Communications Skills Are So Important:

The purpose of communication is to get your message across to others. This is a process that involves both the sender of the message and the receiver. This process leaves room for error, with messages often misinterpreted by one or more of the parties involved. This has the possibility of causing confusion and negative interaction.

Communications Skills — The Importance of Removing Barriers:

Communication barriers can pop-up at every stage of the communication process (which consists of sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback and context — see the diagram below) and have the potential to create misunderstanding and confusion.



To be an effective communicator and to get your point across without misunderstanding and confusion, your goal should be to lessen the frequency of these barriers at each stage of this process with clear, concise, accurate, well-planned communications.

Follow the process through below:

Sender...

To establish yourself as an effective communicator, you must first establish credibility. In your professional and/or personal arena, this involves displaying knowledge of the subject, the audience (individuals or groups to which you are delivering your message, i.e., members in an organization) and the context in which the message is delivered.

You must also know your audience. If you fail to understand your audience you are communicating messages that will likely result in delivering messages that are misunderstood.

Message...

Next, consider the message itself. Written, oral and nonverbal communications are effected by the sender's tone, method of organization, validity of the argument, what is communicated and what is left out, as well as your individual style of communicating. Messages also have intellectual and emotional components, with intellect allowing us the ability to reason and emotion allowing us to present motivational appeals, ultimately changing minds and actions.

Channel...

Messages are conveyed through channels, with non-verbal and verbal social interactions

Receiver...

These messages are delivered to another party. No doubt, you have in mind a desired action or reaction you hope your message prompts from the opposite party. Keep in mind, the other party also enters into the communication process with ideas and feelings that will undoubtedly influence their understanding of your message and their response. To be a successful communicator, you should consider these before delivering your message, then acting appropriately.

Feedback...

The other party will provide you with feedback, verbal and nonverbal reactions, to your communicated message. Pay close attention to this feedback as it is crucial to ensuring the audience understood your message.

Context...

The situation in which your message is delivered is the context. This may include the surrounding environment or broader culture (i.e. college culture, family culture, organization culture, etc.).

Removing Barriers At All These Stages

To deliver your messages effectively, you must commit to breaking down the barriers that exist in each of these stages of the communication process.

Let's begin with the message itself. If your message is too lengthy, disorganized, or contains errors, you can expect the message to be misunderstood and misinterpreted. The use of poor verbal and body language can also confuse the message.

Barriers in context tend to stem from senders offering too much information too fast. When in doubt here, less is oftentimes more. It is best to be mindful of the demands on other people's time, especially in today's ultra-busy society.