

# Exploring Communication in Ways That Allow Individuals to Understand One Another

<sup>[1]</sup> Emma Cheryl, <sup>[2]</sup> Dr Jennifer G Joseph

<sup>[1]</sup> Research Scholar, Vinayaka Missions Research Foundation, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India.

<sup>[2]</sup> Professor & Head, Department of Humanities and Science, Aarupadai Veedu Institute of Technology, VMRF, Tamil Nadu, India.

Corresponding Author Email: <sup>[1]</sup> cheryl@vinayakamissions.com, <sup>[2]</sup> jenifer@avit.ac.in

---

*Abstract— Employers increasingly recognize strong communication skills as the most critical competence among employees and job applicants. Recent research from the Pew Research Centre indicates that since 1980, there has been an 83 percent increase in employment in jobs requiring more vital social skills, which the report describes as "interpersonal, communications or management skills." Indeed, the general public perceives communication skills as critical to succeeding in the job marketplace, with 85 percent of Pew surveyed saying that writing and communications training is crucial in today's economy. Workers were asked about the skills they rely on most in their jobs, and good written and spoken communications skills ranked at the top. This paper aims to help one tailor communication strategies in an approachable fashion by delivering them professionally and effectively.*

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

Communication skills are essential in our respective careers because we use them daily. Think about how we communicate via email, with our colleagues, or while doing presentations. We don't have to work in communications to be effective communicators. But learning those skills now will help us in the future. No matter what industry we enter or our role, assisting people in understanding each other will be a part of our jobs. And so, we have to be effective communicators to help [15]clients communicate with each other effectively. Improving our communication skills is the only way to express thoughts to somebody else. Humans are social animals; we only reach our potential by communicating and sharing our insights, acquired knowledge, and opinions. And speaking, we also test our beliefs and hopefully change them from time to time. We become better together, and strengthening communication skills is essential because we are fundamentally social creatures. And the better we understand stories or narratives, the better we can communicate with one another.

Effective communication will help in every aspect of our lives by improving our relationships. It will also help us in our profession, no matter what job we're working in. If you're a doctor, a lawyer, or a coach, being a better communicator and listener will help you lead better. And ultimately, communicating is [13]something computers won't be able to do. It's one of those skills that won't be automated and won't replace us as a human in the workforce. Sharpening our communication skills is something that's going to take us a long way in our professional careers.

## II. ANALYZING AUDIENCE

Every choice you make when communicating directly depends on who you are speaking with or writing to. Communication takes place in the mind of the listener, not the speaker. That's a quote by [16] Peter Drucker. The Economist says he's the most prolific management thinker of the past century. Peter Drucker's quote alleviates some of the pressure you might be feeling as a communicator. It's not about you at all. It's about your audience and getting a message across to them as clearly as possible. That means that every choice you make when communicating directly depends on who you're speaking with or [14]writing to. Focusing on your audience, not yourself, is the most straightforward way to transform and strengthen your communication strategy.

Let's take an example to illustrate this. Say you've been hired by a company in the corporate communications department. It's your first day on the job, [17] and your boss asked you to write a paragraph about a new line of products coming into stores next month. You want to impress her, but you're getting anxious about the assignment.

- What words will you choose?
- What tone do you take?
- What kind of information are you going to include?

To answer these questions, you must first ask [23] some of your own. It would help if you found out who you're writing to. You also need to ask why you're writing and over what platform. Are you writing to pre-existing customers? If so, you probably don't need to explain some of the more technical language used [12]to describe products. The company has some particular jargon that they use for their products. Since this audience already has the product knowledge, you could compare this new line of products with

an older line or tell them the best way to use the product.

When you have a diverse audience or one with competing interests, catering your message to these key influencers is particularly relevant.

- What is their level of understanding?
- What type of words can you use to convey the information?
- What information does the audience know, and what do you need to explain?
- Are they familiar with the industry?

You need to assess your understanding level when selecting content [18]and language. Addressing a hostile audience will be very different than speaking to people who have already bought into your ideas.

### **III. DISCOVERING PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION**

In the business world, we communicate with people because we want something. We are eliciting some form of action. Thinking about what that action is - why you are communicating - from the outset of the communication is imperative. Business writing and speaking are not acts of altruism. You're [10] not writing a group of customers telling them about an upcoming sale because you want to help them. You're not pitching your business idea to an investor because you care about her finances. You're communicating to elicit action or movement from your audience. This will directly benefit the business. What do I want my audience to do to equal the purpose? But what's the actual meaning of this communication? It's not an act of charity. Sometimes, we communicate because we have to.

In the business world, we communicate with people because we want something. We are eliciting some form of action. Thinking about what [20]that action or purpose is from the outset of your communication is imperative.

### **IV. CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION**

Channel means the platform or medium you use to communicate the message. In other words, the channels you choose are where and how you will deliver your message. Some of the more common channels we see in the business world are emails, calls, instant messages, text messages, tweets, blogs, PowerPoint presentations, and pitches. So, looking at this list, how do we decide which to choose? Therefore 'channel [8]selection' depends on the other two aspects: the purpose we are trying to achieve and our audience. In comparison, when we communicate with different people, for example, with a group of pre-existing customers, the purpose is to get them to buy our products and spend their money. So, keeping this in mind, what type of channel should we use to achieve our purpose here? And by just reviewing that list mentioned above, one could think an

email would be an excellent choice. That's because we probably already have their email information and are probably already communicating with these people by email because they have bought things from us.

Now, if you look at [11]the younger generation, they are very active on their smartphones and always have their devices open, inboxes up and ready, so it would be a perfect way to reach them quickly. Another source like a blog post would have access to people of a particular lifestyle, culture, yoga, etc. The last thing we need to consider is these different channels' benefits and drawbacks. It's not just about audience preference; sometimes, we need to be aware of a benefit or a drawback. So, writing lets us get across information that's a lot more detailed and complex. This is because people have the luxury of stopping and reading through a paragraph and rereading it if they don't understand or flip back and forth in a document. So, there is a detailed message; sometimes, writing is the best [9]call. It also creates a permanent record as it's essential to have this one; other times, it's imperative not to have a permanent one, so it's just something to think about here. It's also a lot more precise. With a piece of writing, we can go back and edit it and make it exactly how we want it, where we don't have that when we're speaking because once a word is said, it's said.

On the contrary, presenting gives us immediate feedback. We know immediately by looking at our audience's nonverbal cues whether they're buying into our message or are entirely bored and put off by it. So, if that's something you need, then speaking to a group is probably your better call. It also gives us information at the same time. Think about a big company announcement. If you email it out to all staff at the company, you can't control [19] when they open up their inboxes, but if you hold a town hall, you can give them all the information simultaneously. That creates a greater sense of community as well. If community building or interaction is a part of what you're trying to achieve, then usually presenting or speaking to a group is the suitable method for you.

The last thing is there's no permanent record. So, if it's necessary not to have a paper trail or a trace of having made this communication, then speaking is probably the way to go. This is changing, though, with the advent of smartphones and how easy it is to record things, so that's not altogether true that there's no permanent record created when you present, but it is less of a chance. So sometimes, it's a better call to pick up the phone and communicate an empathetic piece of information than it would be to create an email communicating that same thing. The exciting thing here is that in the last few years, social media has completely changed this writing/presenting dichotomy. A tweet on its face seems like it falls into the writing camp. You have 140 to 280 characters to get [7]out your message, so you have that ability to edit and to think through what it is you're going to say. But as anyone who has ever controlled a corporate

Twitter account knows, if you send out your tweet and the public doesn't like it or has an extreme reaction to it, you will get that immediate feedback piece. It also can go viral in a negative way. Then we have something like a YouTube video. It seems to [6]fall more into the presenting camp. But because you can go back and edit it, you can be a little more precise, so it kind of falls between these two, writing and presenting. You can also use multiple channels to deliver the same message.

In conclusion, there isn't a right and a wrong. It comes back to you using our analytical skills to think through your audience and your purpose to select the right channel for your message.

## **V. PLANNING AS AN INTEGRAL ASPECT OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS.**

Planning is an essential part of the communication process. A lot of planning involves thinking about your audience, analyzing your purpose, and selecting your channel. A solid organizational structure for your communication will mean it's easier for [4]the audience to follow and interpret. There are fundamental principles to understand before deciding what goes where—starting with organizing oral remarks. It would help if you thought about what is logical for your audience. Remember, they don't have the luxury of flipping backward and forward through a document, so what do you need to explain first for them to understand the rest of your speech. It's also essential to be a bit selfish here. Rely on your intuition. What makes sense for you?

You are the person who needs to remember what part of the speech comes next, so think about what's natural. Outlining the plan of your remarks is helpful to your audience. Previewing the message and the delivery order will help them follow along. Transitions are also critical. Think about how the different parts of your speech relate and connect. Signal to your [2]audience when you are moving to a separate section. That's called signposting. Moving on to the fundamentals of organizing your writing. Your audience here is busy. They will not read the entirety of your document from front to back like it's 'Pride and Prejudice.' It would be best if you remembered this, which should inform all your organizational decisions. We're writing for people who will skim and scan the document, so you need to make it easy for them to do this. How do you do that? You start by grouping related information[1] together in the same section. Use a table of contents so people can look up the chunk of information they're interested in. Label sections with descriptive headings and subheadings. This way, when someone's scanning a document looking for something specific, they'll know where to look for it.

Other visual elements can help, too. An index, bullet points, graphics. These [22] all increase the readability of your writing. The last thing to keep in mind is to put the

objective of why you're writing near the top. This isn't Ulysses, and we don't want our readers left wondering why you're taking up their time. Tell them [21]upfront. The readings do an excellent job of going over some of the more common types of organizational structures for speaking and writing, but some are not mentioned. An inverted pyramid is a structure specific to press releases. The theory here is that you lead with the most critical information first, and if that's all someone reads, they'd still understand what was going on. The rest of the document could be chopped away. This is also called 'Most important to least[5] important.' but when it's not used with a press release. A lot of business emails are written in this way. The author starts with the most relevant information first. You might have heard of the 'Five W's and one H' in high school. A lot of journalism is organized in this style. It covers the who, what, when, where, why, and the how in no particular order.

The last and maybe the most important one I want to talk about is 'Institutional Structure.' Most organizations have their templates and internal style guides for organizing documents. When you start working somewhere new, you need to ask around. If you're writing for a superior, find out how they specifically like information organized. Not every document you create or speech you're going to give is going to follow one of these patterns strictly. Some won't conform, and others might employ two or three. A report can be both chronological and topical. [3]Now that we've gone over these basic organizational principles, I'd like you to start analyzing the content you consume and deciphering how it's organized. Awareness of the communicator's choice of structure will help you become more proficient at making your own organizational decisions.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

This paper dealt with skills that one would like to go out and practice. What kinds of divides do you see yourself bridging in your workplace, community, school, or family? What kind of change would you like to see? Maybe it's practicing dialogue instead of debate, speaking up and speaking out, or small acts of kindness. What will you commit to doing? And also practice conversation with people, so we learn what our new community has to offer, the wonderful place, and the people there. We need to take a proactive approach to allyship and help one tailor communication strategies in an approachable fashion by delivering them professionally and effectively.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] PEW Research Center. Changes in the American workplace. (2016, October 06). Retrieved October 29, 2017, from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/10/06/1-changes-in-the-american-workplace>.

- [2] Ida, A. & Garcia-Navarro, L. (2017, June 4). Alan Alda's Experiment: Helping Scientists Learn to Talk to The Rest of Us. NPR Shots Podcast.
- [3] Snook, S. (2014, May 27). Find Your Purpose and Put It to Work [Video File]. Harvard Business Review.
- [4] Craig, N. & Snook, S. (2014, May). From Purpose to Impact. Harvard Business Review.
- [5] Kurland, Rachel. "Interfaith Families Make High Holidays a Priority." Jewish Exponent, vol. 238, no. 128, Jewish Exponent, 14 Sept. 2017, p. 9.
- [6] Labossiere, C. (2013, Sep 19). Business writing tips to get results. The Globe and Mail.
- [7] Allocca, K. (2011, Nov). Why videos go viral.
- [8] What do you want your audience to know? - Campfire Method. <https://www.campfire-method.com/blog/what-do-you-want-your-audience-to-know>.
- [9] (2017, June 21). Travis Kalanick resigns as CEO of Uber. CBC News.
- [10] Hadjistoyanova, I. (2016, June 30). Choosing the Right Communication Channel. CEB Blogs.
- [11] "Preparing Lawn for Cooler Weather." Florida Times Union, Florida Times Union, 19 Sept. 2020, p. D-1.
- [12] Hadjistoyanova, I. (2016, June 30). Choosing the Right Communication Channel. CEB Blogs.
- [13] (2012, July 10). Video Tutorial on Audience [video file]. Pros Write.
- [14] Swimming Pool Chemicals Used for Pool | Aloha Desert Pools. <https://alohadesertpools.com/swimming-pool-chemicals-used-for-pool-maintenance/>
- [15] McCroskey, J. C. (1970). Measures of communication-bound anxiety. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 269-277.
- [16] Bumiller, E. (2010, April 26). Enemy Lurks in Briefings on Afghan War: PowerPoint. The New York Times.
- [17] Coleman, J. (2014, August 29). 5 Tips for Off-the-Cuff Speaking. Harvard Business Review.
- [18] O'Hara, C. (2014, November 20). How to Improve Your Business Writing. Harvard Business Review
- [19] An, S. K., & Cheng, I. H. (2010). Crisis Communication Research in Public Relations Journals: Tracking, in the handbook of crisis communication, Wiley-Blackwell, UK.
- [20] Center for Evidence Based Management (2014), Critical Appraisal Checklist for a Meta-Analysis or Systematic Review. Retrieved 21 June 2017 from <https://www.cebma.org>
- [21] (2012) Rudy Giuliani gives four tips for crisis management, Journal of Emergency Medical Services, May 2.
- [22] Welch, M., & Jackson, P. R. (2007). Rethinking internal communication: a stakeholder approach. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 12(2), 177-198.
- [23] van Riel, C. B. (1997). Research in Corporate Communication: Overview of an Emerging Field. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 11(2), 288-309.