

Why You Need to Get Your Message Across

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Why communication 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 of that message. This process leaves room for error, with messages often misinterpreted by one or more of the parties involved. This causes unnecessary confusion and counter productivity.

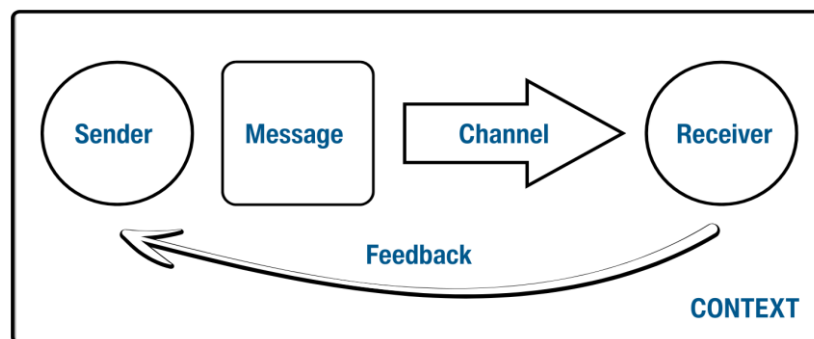
In fact, a message is successful only when both the sender and the receiver perceive it in the same way.

By successfully getting your message across, you convey your thoughts and ideas effectively. When not successful, the thoughts and ideas that you convey do not necessarily reflect your own, causing a communications breakdown and creating roadblocks that stand in the way of your goals – both personally and professionally.

Communication 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.

The Communication Process



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. We follow the process through below.

Sender...

To establish yourself as an effective communicator, you must first establish credibility. You must also know your audience (individuals or groups to which you are delivering your message). Failure to understand who you are communicating to will result in delivering misunderstood messages.



Message...

Next, consider the message itself. Written, oral and nonverbal communications are affected by the sender's tone, method of organization, and 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 verbal channels including face-to-face meetings, telephone and videoconferencing; written channels include letter, emails and texts.

Receiver...

These messages are delivered to an audience. You have in your mind the actions or reactions you hope your message prompts from this audience. Keep in mind, your audience 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, acting appropriately.

Feedback...

Your audience 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. corporate culture, international 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. 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 often times more. It is best to be mindful of the demands on other people's time, especially in today's ultra-busy society. Once you understand this, you need to work to understand our audience's culture, making sure you can converse and deliver your message to people of different backgrounds and cultures within your own organization, in this country and even abroad.

Insight Suggestions from Insight Maximizers

Here are some questions to think through before communicating

- Concise: Is my message short enough to grasp, and long enough to be thorough?
- Organized: Is my message organized in such a way that it can be understood?
- Accurate: Is the content accurate, with no errors to my knowledge?
- Tone: Whether written or spoken, how can I align my tone with the content and intent of my message?
- Body Language: Is my body language aligned with my tone and intent of my message?
- Clarity and consistency: How clear and consistent is my message?
- THINK: Is my message true, helpful, inspiring, necessary and kind?