



# Communicate! 16e Chapter 1

Foundations of  
Communication.

**“Human beings are the most meaning-seeking, emotional, social, and story-wired creatures on the planet.”**

*-Retired LTC Scott Mann*

# Trust

- Understanding
- Motive
- Ability
- Character
- Track Record



**By the end  
of this  
chapter,  
you  
should be  
able to:**

1. Describe the nature of communication.

2. Define critical components in the communication process.

3. Explain the characteristics of communication.

4. Assess messages using the principles of ethical communication.

5. Develop a plan to improve communication competence when interacting with others in person and online.



# Communication Competence

Communication competence is the degree to which our communication behavior is perceived as appropriate and effective.

Studies affirm employers seek effective written, oral, interpersonal, and teamwork communication skills when hiring and promoting employees.

# The Nature of Communication

*Communication is the process through which we:*

**express**

**interpret**

**and coordinate**

messages with others



A photograph of a brick wall at night. A neon sign is mounted on the wall, glowing with a warm orange-red light. The sign consists of four lines of text in a stylized, slightly irregular font: "THIS IS", "THE SIGN", "YOU'VE BEEN", and "LOOKING FOR". Below the sign, there are some colorful, patterned items, possibly cushions or bags, and a white object with a graphic design, possibly a skateboard deck.

THIS IS  
THE SIGN  
YOU'VE BEEN  
LOOKING FOR

# Messages

- Encoding
- Decoding
- Feedback

# Canned Plans:

a “mental library” of scripts  
each of us draws from to create  
messages based on what  
worked in the past





... the ... delivered Daniel from the lion's den and the ...  
... could also deliver His followers from the ...  
... of bondage:

I'm goin' home!  
I'm goin' home!  
I will overcome some day!  
I'm goin' home!  
I'm goin' home!  
I will overcome some day!

I do believe!  
I do believe!  
I will overcome some day!  
I believe!  
I believe!

# Scripts:

an actual text of what to say and do in a specific situation

# Communication context

Physical situation

Social presence

Social situation

Historical  
situation

Psychological  
situation

Cultural identity

Cultural situation

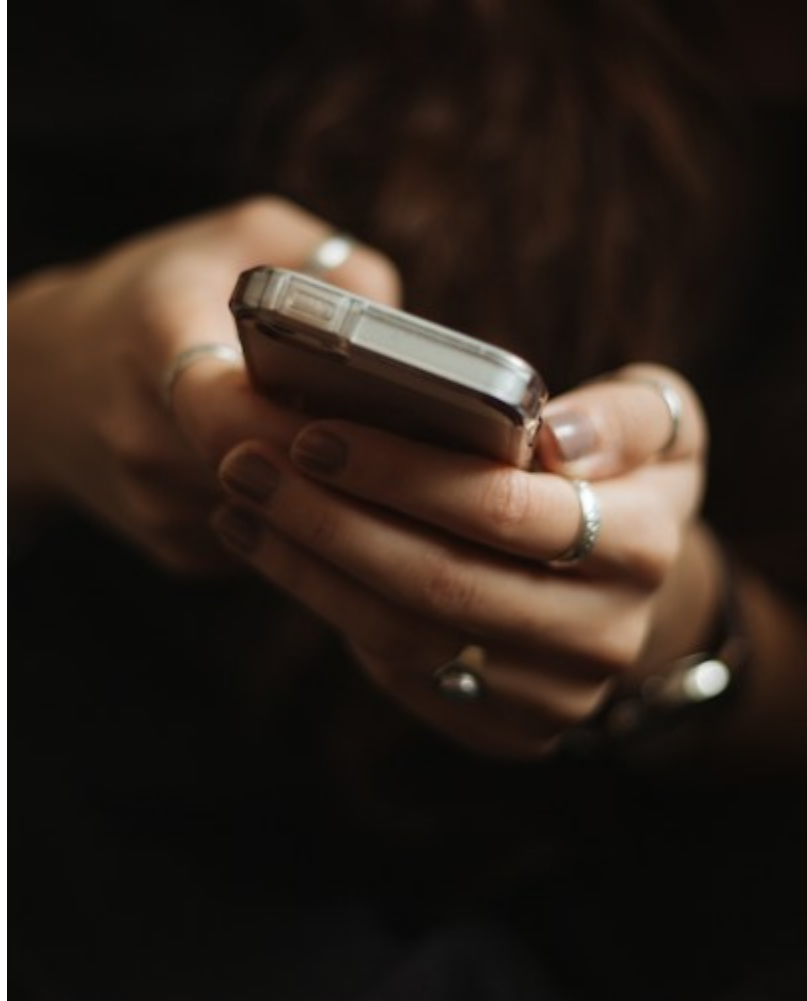
# Physical Situation

includes the location, the environmental conditions (temperature, lighting, noise), and the physical proximity of participants to each other.



# Social Presence

a sense of “being there” with another person virtually is social presence.



A warm, golden-hour photograph of three people laughing together. The person in the foreground is a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a dark and light patterned sweater. Behind her, another woman with glasses is laughing, and further back, a woman wearing a black hat is also laughing. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor social gathering.

# Social Situation

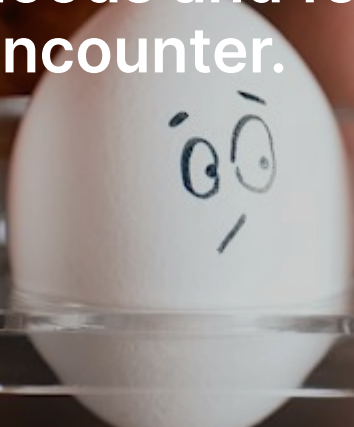
is the nature of the relationship that already exists between the participants.

# Historical Situation

is the background provided by previous communication between the participants.

# Psychological Situation

includes the moods and feelings each person brings to the encounter.



A close-up photograph of two hands, palms facing each other, covered in thick, vibrant paint. The colors are primarily yellow, blue, and red, with some white and purple tones. The paint is applied in a textured, layered manner, suggesting a creative or artistic activity. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the hands and the paint.

# What is Culture?

what you allow or disallow, in other words, honor or shame in a particular group.



# Cultural Situation

A large, diverse crowd of people is gathered at a Pride event. A massive rainbow flag is being held up by the crowd, stretching across the top of the frame. The people are of various ages and ethnicities, many with their arms raised in celebration. The atmosphere is vibrant and joyful.

includes the beliefs, values, orientations, underlying assumptions, and rituals that belong to a specific cultural or co-cultural group.

A top-down photograph of five hands of different skin tones resting on a dark wooden table. From left to right: a dark-skinned hand with a black watch, a medium-dark-skinned hand, a light-skinned hand, a medium-light-skinned hand, and a very light-skinned hand. The hands are spread out across the table, with the text overlaid in the center.

# Cultural Identity

what group or groups you identify with.

# Communication settings

Intrapersonal communication

Interpersonal communication

Small group communication

Public communication

Mass communication

# Intrapersonal





**Interpersonal**



# Small Group

A man with glasses and a black shirt is speaking into a microphone. He is gesturing with his left hand. The background is dark and out of focus, showing the silhouettes of an audience. The text "Public Communication" is overlaid in large white font.

# Public Communication

# Mass Communication





# Communication process:

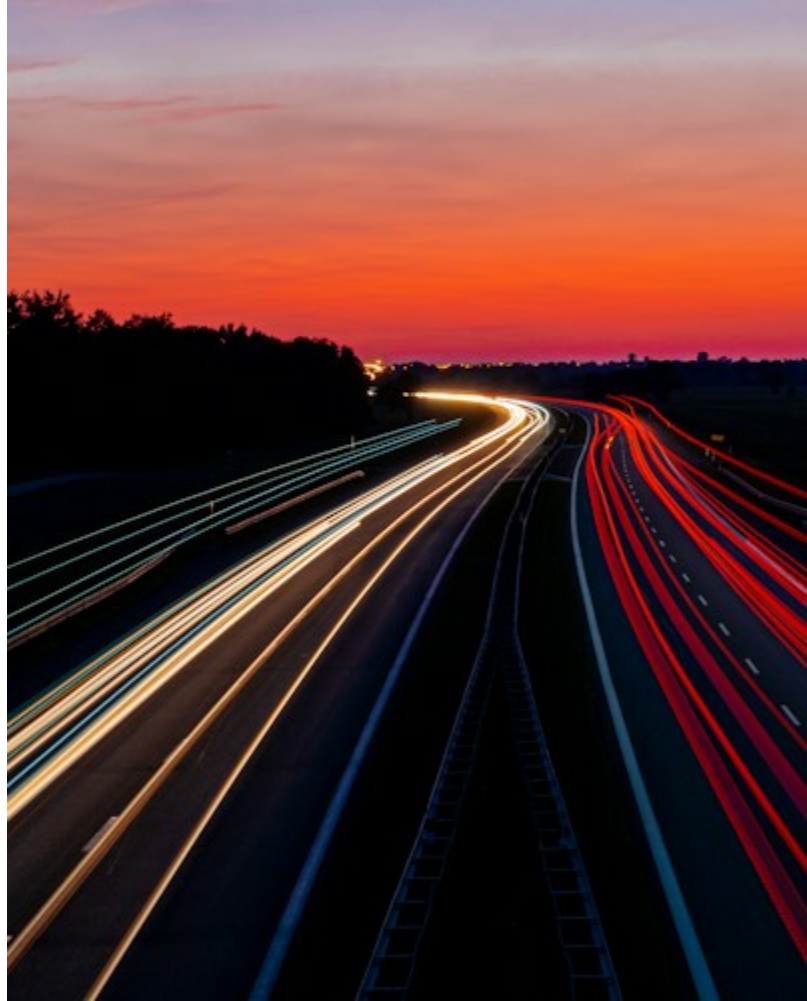
A complex set of different and interrelated activities intended to result in shared meaning.

- Message production
- Message interpretation
- Interaction coordination

# Channels

*Both the route traveled by the message and the means of transportation*

- Acronyms
- Media richness
- Synchronicity



# Acronyms

plus movements, touch, gestures,  
emoticons, and emojis

A collection of social media icons including Instagram, Twitter, Discord, YouTube, Spotify, and TikTok, arranged around the central text. The icons are rendered in a 3D style with soft shadows and highlights, set against a dark, textured background.

# Media Richness

how much and what information can be transmitted via a particular channel.

A person stands on a beach at sunset, their silhouette reflected in the calm water. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds in shades of orange, red, and blue. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow.

# Synchronicity

synchronous is immediate feedback (face-to-face);

asynchronous provides time to craft responses (bulk mail).

# Interference and Noise

Any stimulus that interferes with achieving shared meaning.

- Physical noise
- Psychological noise

# Physical Noise



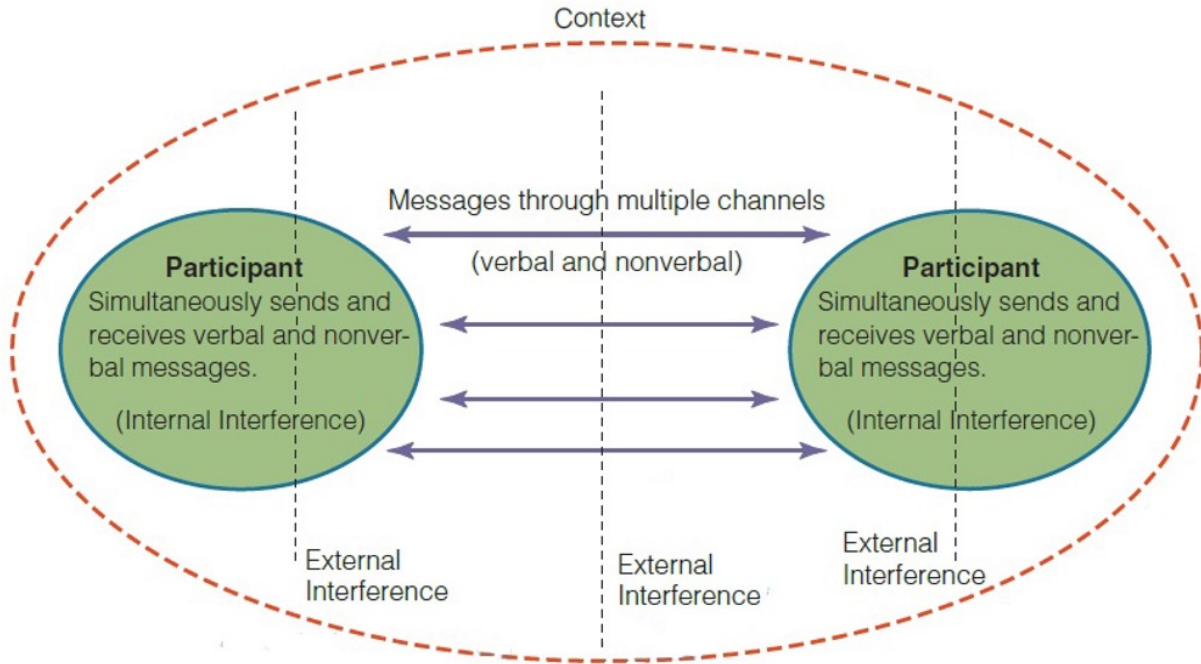
sight, sound, or smell that distracts us from the message.

# Psychological Noise



Thoughts and feelings that compete with the message.





**Communication Process Visual**

**Communication  
has a purpose.**

To develop and maintain a sense of self.

To meet social needs

To develop and maintain relationships.

To exchange information

To influence others



# Communication is continuous

always sending and receiving...

# Communication is irreversible

we cannot reverse time



# Communication is situated

how we communicate and interpret messages is influenced by the specific situation or context in which communication occurs.

# Communication is indexical

**our words and messages don't permanently have fixed meanings by themselves. Instead, their meaning can change based on the context and how they are delivered. Think of it like a pointing finger (index finger) - it doesn't mean much on its own, but when you see it pointing at something, you understand its meaning. In communication, things like tone of voice, body language, and the situation in which a message is delivered can all affect how we interpret what is being said.**

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# Control

**the extent one believes they are "in charge".**

Complementary feedback = agreement on control

Symmetrical feedback = disagreement on control



# Intimacy

how emotionally close  
is the relationship?



# Communication messages vary in conscious thought.

- Spontaneous expressions - are myopic
- Constructed messages - are thought out and scripted



**Cultural norms guide  
communication.**



# Culture

includes shared beliefs, values, symbols, and behaviors.

# Positionality

is the distinct worldview a person brings to an occasion.





# Rhetorical sensitivity

is communication expressing empathy and compassion for diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and worldviews.

# Communication Ethics



Ethics are moral principles a society, group, or individual holds that differentiate right from wrong.

# Ethical communicators:

- Are honest.
- Act with integrity.
- Behave fairly.
- Demonstrate respect.
- Are responsible.



# Bright side messages

ethical and appropriate



A silhouette of a woman's head and shoulders is shown in profile, facing left. Her hair is pulled back into a bun. The background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset sky with warm orange and yellow tones near the horizon, transitioning to a cooler blue at the top. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat somber.

# Dark side messages

- “Hard dark side” = inappropriate
- “Easy dark side” = unethical
- “Evil dark side” = inappropriate and unethical

# Communication Competence

is the impression that communicative behavior is appropriate and effective in each situation.

- Credibility = knowledge, trust, and warmth
- Social ease = calm
- Communication apprehension = fear and anxiety