

Miscommunication and Barriers to Communication

Communication is the process of sending information and understanding from sender to the receiver. When the information in the mind of the sender is not passed on and not understood exactly by the receiver, it is called miscommunication. It may take place at the level of the communicator or at the level of the receiver or at the medium. The hurdles or the problems which do not allow the message to reach the target audience properly are called barriers to communication.



PERSONAL BARRIERS

The barriers or hurdles at the personal level which prevent effective communication are as follows:

1. **Emotions:** Emotions like extreme happiness, extreme pain and extreme anger do not allow effective communication.
2. **Closed mind:** Prejudices and firm beliefs lead to closed mind which prevent the free flow of communication.
3. **Status block:** Status consciousness of both superiors and subordinates do not allow free and effective communication.
4. **State of health:** Unhealthy mental and physical state leads to improper communication.
5. **Poor communication skills:** Poor communication skills in speaking, listening, writing and reading result in miscommunication.

SOCIAL BARRIERS

The social activities or the problems which do not allow effective communication are known as social barriers to communication. Some of the social barriers are:

1. **Cultural differences:** In international communication, the cultural barriers become barrier to communication. The same symbols, words, body movements convey different meanings to people from different cultures.
2. **Group identification:** The sense of belonging to a particular society, culture, religion, caste, religion, etc., regulates the feelings of an individual. Therefore, the ideas communicated may be accepted intellectually or rejected emotionally.
3. **Interpretation of words:** Some words have multiple meanings in different societies. The context in which a word is used by a particular society may not be understood equally in every society. This may lead to miscommunication.
4. **Wrong choice of medium:** The media available to the sender for transmission of a message is not suitable in every society. Wrong selection of media by the communicator results in miscommunication.
5. **Improper time:** Different societies have different conceptions of time. Communication made at a time unacceptable for a society turns out to be a failure.

BUSINESS BARRIERS

Hurdles that prevent effective communication in a business organization are called Business Barriers to communication. Some of the business barriers are:

1. **Organizational rules and regulations:** Rigid rules and regulations of an organization restrict the flow of information among the various levels of employees and become hindrance in the process of communication. This delays transmission of messages and discourages the employees to put forward their innovative ideas.
2. **Non conduction of staff meetings:** In business houses where staff meetings and conferences are not held regularly, free communication does not take place. Here non conduction of meetings become a barrier to communication.
3. **Hierarchical relationship:** In most business houses, hierarchical and formal superior-subordinate relationships in the organizational structure

- do not enable free communication between subordinates and superiors.
4. **Distance:** Distance between different business houses becomes a barrier to communication when it is greater and in the absence of proper channel and media.
 5. **Inadequate or overloaded information:** Inadequate information and overloaded information within and outside business houses prevents effective communication.

Effective Communication

Barriers to communication can be overcome with planning and great efforts. The strategies which can be taken for overcoming the barriers to communication in order to make communication more effective are:

1. **Overcome perceptual barriers:** We can overcome perceptual barriers by becoming more alert and aware and through spiritual exercises.
2. **Effective listening:** Proper and effective listening to the communicator ensures free and open communication.
3. **Create healthy and friendly environment:** Communication becomes effective when the environment is healthy and friendly.
4. **Convey emotional contents of the message:** The message should be conveyed along with the emotional content in order to make effective communication.
5. **Use appropriate language:** Using appropriate language and words understandable for the receiver helps in making the communication effective.
6. **Use proper channel:** Using appropriate channels of communication after proper audience analysis helps in effective communication. The communicator may choose a meeting, mail or telephone conversation, depending on the message to be conveyed.
7. **Encourage open communication:** Organisations should encourage open communication from subordinates to superiors for removing the communication gap among the employees.

8. **Ensure two way communication:** Sound feedback from the receiver ensures two way communication and is a requisite for effective communication.
9. **Make best use of body language:** Positive body language blended with proper voice modulation aids the effective transmission of a message.