

Types of Communication

Communication, very broadly, is classified into the following two categories:

(a) Formal communication

(b) Informal communication

Formal communication is that, which takes place in an enterprise, in a formal manner via the scalar chain or the line of command.

This type of communication has the following variations:

(1) Downward communication

(2) Upward communication

(3) Sideward (or horizontal) communication

(1) Downward Communication:

Downward communication moves downwards in an organisation, from the top management to middle and lower level managements travelling via various links in the scalar chain. Such communication is imperative for organisational purposes.

Mostly it consists of communicating plans and policies of the enterprise to lower level managers; and in particular, issuing orders and instructions to subordinates, for initiating action according to these for execution of assigned jobs.

(2) Upward Communication:

This type of formal communication is really a feedback to downward communication. Upward communication proceeds upwards in an organisation from the lower level management to middle and upper levels of management, travelling via various links, in the scalar chain.

Upward communication, usually, takes the following forms:

(i) Reports by subordinates to superiors on work-performance

(ii) Grievances, problems or difficulties of subordinates forwarded to superiors, at appropriate levels.

(iii) Suggestions and ideas of subordinates to upper management, for kind consideration and appropriate implementation.

(iv) Clarifications sought by subordinates from superiors as to the orders and instructions issued by the latter (i.e. superiors).

(3) Sideward (Or Horizontal) Communication:

This type of formal communication takes place among managers, placed at the same rank, in the organisation. It is necessary for achieving co-ordination of actions of individuals, doing the similar type of work, under managers of equal ranks.

For example, a communication between two assistant production managers is an instance of horizontal communication. Sideward communication, might take place through the 'gang-plank', as suggested by Fayol; or through the scalar chain, in a hierarchical manner.

(b) Informal communication:

Informal communication, also called grapevine communication, takes place through informal groups, existing inside or outside the formal organizational structure. This communication has no formal manner of routing. It might spread from any person to any person, in any manner and in any direction, like the structuring of a grapevine.

Major Elements of Communication Process

Seven major elements of communication process are:

(1) sender

(2) ideas

(3) encoding

(4) communication channel

(5) receiver

(6) decoding and

(7) feedback.

(1) Sender:

The person who intends to convey the message with the intention of passing information and ideas to others is known as sender or communicator.

(2) Ideas:

This is the subject matter of the communication. This may be an opinion, attitude, feelings, views, orders, or suggestions.

(3) Encoding:

Since the subject matter of communication is theoretical and intangible, its further passing requires use of certain symbols such as words, actions or pictures etc. Conversion of subject matter into these symbols is the process of encoding.

(4) Communication Channel:

The person who is interested in communicating has to choose the channel for sending the required information, ideas etc. This information is transmitted to the receiver through certain channels which may be either formal or informal.

5) Receiver:

Receiver is the person who receives the message or for whom the message is meant for. It is the receiver who tries to understand the message in the best possible manner in achieving the desired objectives.

(6) Decoding:

The person who receives the message or symbol from the communicator tries to convert the same in such a way so that he may extract its meaning to his complete understanding.