CLASSIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION

Difference between formal and informal Business communication

Difference[between formal and informal communication](http://businesscommunicationnew.blogspot.com/search/label/Types%20of%20Business%20communication) are as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Subject | Formal Communication | Informal Communication |
| 1.Definiation | When communication takes place through the formal official channels then it is known as formal communication. | Any communication by passing the formal channels can be termed as informal communication. |
| 2.Flexibility | Formal [communication](http://businesscommunicationnew.blogspot.com/search/label/Types%20of%20Business%20communication)is not flexible. | It is flexible. |
| 3.Degree of control | Formal communication is totally controlled by the management. | It cannot be controlled like formal communication. |
| 4.Evidence | It has documentary evidence. | It has no documentary evidence. |
| 5.Discipline | Official discipline is strictly maintained in formal communication. | Official decorum and discipline are not followed. |
| 6.Flow of information | In formal communication information can flow only upward and downward. | But in informal communication information flows freely to all direction. |
| 7.Speed | Here speed of communication is slow. | Informal channels are very fast; here information can be transmitted instantly. |
| 8.secrecy | In case of formal communication secrecy can be maintained. | Here maintaining secrecy is very difficult. |
| 9.Rumor | There is no scope for creation of rumor in formal communication. | Due to its flexible nature rumor can be created. |
| 10.Distortion | Generally information is not distorted. | As official decorum is not followed information can be distorted. |
| 11.Time | It is time consuming. | Less time is taken for transmitting information. |
| 12.Misunderstanding | In case of formal communication caution, there is almost no chance of misunderstanding. | Due to lack of control misunderstanding can takes place? |
| 13.Cost | It is expensive. | It is less expensive than formal communication. |
| 14.Mistakes | As official discipline is maintained chance of mistakes is very low. | On the other hand, as strict rules are not followed possibility of mistakes is very high |

Types of Communication Based on Style and Purpose  
Based on the style of communication, there can be two broad categories of communication, which are formal and informal communication that have their own set of characteristic features.  
\* Formal Communication  
Formal communication includes all the instances where communication has to occur in a set formal format. Typically this can include all sorts of business communication or corporate communication. The style of communication in this form is very formal and official. Official conferences, meetings and written memos and corporate letters are used for communication. Formal communication can also occur between two strangers when they meet for the first time. Hence formal communication is straightforward, official and always precise and has a stringent and rigid tone to it.  
\* Informal Communication  
Informal communication includes instances of free unrestrained communication between people who share a casual rapport with each other. Informal communication requires two people to have a similar wavelength and hence occurs between friends and family. Informal communication does not have any rigid rules and guidelines. Informal conversations need not necessarily have boundaries of time, place or even subjects for that matter since we all know that friendly chats with our loved ones can simply go on and on.  
  
**Formal and Informal Types of Communication**

Formal communication is that which devices support from the organisation structure. It is associated with the particular positions of the communicator and the recipient in the structure.

Formal communications are mostly of the written type such as company manuals, handbooks magazines, bulletins annual reports and are designed to meet the specific need s of the organisation.

Informal communication is based on the informal relationships that grow up in an organisation and is commonly referred to as "the grapevine". It may be conveyed by a nod, a glance, a gesture, a smile, and even silence.

Whereas formal communication is generally more articulate, direct and has got official backing, informal communication is more indirect, less explicit and somewhat spontaneous and flexible. It serves the social needs of the individuals in the organisation and a manager can utilize the grapevine as a positive aid.

However it may also contain distorted information and may even degenerate into gossip and rumour and other negative outlests of expressions by people in the organsiation.

The speed at which information flows through a grapevine is often astounding. The grapevine cannot be destroyed and hence should receive conscious attention of management.

3.1 Verbal communication

Verbal communication (vocal included) contributes to 45% of our communication. It

involves the use of language and meaning (either oral or written). Normally the words

used in communication are concrete or abstract. Concrete words represent an object (eg.

Chair) and hence convey ideas easily. Abstract words, on the other hand, has a built-inambiguity because the ideas conveyed by such words are subjective and so effectiveness

of communication is in question (eg. beauty, intelligence etc.). Thus, while concrete

words can be compared to a sharp tool, abstract words are often compared to a blunt

instrument.

Role of jargons is also crucial in determining the effectiveness of communication. While

jargons help to communicate easily in a homogeneous group, excessive use of there can

hinder communication. Use of jargons has to be minimized while communicating to

someone who is not familiar with the terms.

Verbal communication becomes effective through the choice of right words & emphasis

of the same. There should be an optimum use of pauses, non-words and phrases because

excessive use of these leads to distraction of the receiver.

3.2 Non-verbal Communication

Non verbal communication is the conscious and unconscious body movements in

communication that couple with physical and environmental surroundings. Non verbal

communications are those which are not expressed orally or in writing and includes

human elements associated with communication. These form an important and inevitable 3

aspect of the total communication process because it compliments and substitutes verbal communication.

A good communicator should have the right posture, facial expression and body language

that are in tune with the words spoken. Lack of co-ordination between verbal and nonverbal contents of communication would only confuse the receiver. So while

communicating, care should be taken to ensure a proper blend between words and

actions.

One way communication is when information is shared to others without a response. This would include posting a memo for staff members to read. Two way communication involves information being shared back and forth. Such as a staff meeting where info is given and staff members are permitted to ask questions and give there input.

1.2     MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

In this section, you will learn about three models of communication:

[Linear model](http://lms.oum.edu.my/e-content/OUMH1303KDP/content/24094922OUMH1303_OralCommunication_v1/OUMH1303_Topic1/OUMH1303_1_2.html#1)  

[Interactive model](http://lms.oum.edu.my/e-content/OUMH1303KDP/content/24094922OUMH1303_OralCommunication_v1/OUMH1303_Topic1/OUMH1303_1_2.html#2)  

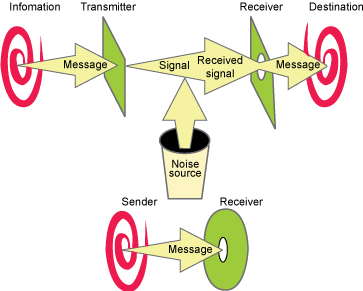
[Transactional model](http://lms.oum.edu.my/e-content/OUMH1303KDP/content/24094922OUMH1303_OralCommunication_v1/OUMH1303_Topic1/OUMH1303_1_2.html#3)   

1.2.1   Linear Model

The linear model views communication as a one-way or linear process in which the speaker speaks and the listener listens. Laswell’s (1948) model was based on the five questions below, which effectively describe how communication works:

http://lms.oum.edu.my/e-content/OUMH1303KDP/content/24094922OUMH1303_OralCommunication_v1/OUMH1303_Topic1/OUMH1303_Topic1_Grafik/OUMH1303_1.2.1.jpg

Shannon and Weaver’s (1949) model includes noise or interference that distorts understanding between the speaker and the listener. Figure 1.3 shows a linear model of communication:



**Figure 1.3**: A linear model of communication  
**Source**: Wood, J. T. (2009). Communication in our lives (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth

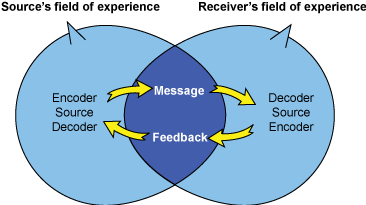
[Top](http://lms.oum.edu.my/e-content/OUMH1303KDP/content/24094922OUMH1303_OralCommunication_v1/OUMH1303_Topic1/OUMH1303_1_2.html#top1)

1.2.2     Interactive Model

The main flaw in the linear model is that it depicts communication as a one-way process where speakers only speak and never listen. It also implies that listeners listen and never speak or send messages.

Schramm (1955) in Wood (2009) came out with a more interactive model that saw the receiver or listener providing feedback to the sender or speaker. The speaker or sender of the message also listens to the feedback given by the receiver or listener. Both the speaker and the listener take turns to speak and listen to each other. Feedback is given either verbally or non-verbally, or in both ways.

This model also indicates that the speaker and listener communicate better if they have common fields of experience, or fields which overlap (please refer to Figure 1.4):



**Figure 1.4**: An interactive model of communication  
**Source**: Wood, J. T. (2009). Communication in our lives (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth

[Top](http://lms.oum.edu.my/e-content/OUMH1303KDP/content/24094922OUMH1303_OralCommunication_v1/OUMH1303_Topic1/OUMH1303_1_2.html#top2)

1.2.3     Transactional Model

The main drawback in the interactive model is that it does not indicate that communicators can both send and receive messages simultaneously. This model also fails to show that communication is a dynamic process which changes over time.

The transactional model shows that the elements in communication are interdependent. Each person in  the communication act is both a speaker and a listener, and can be simultaneously sending and receiving messages.

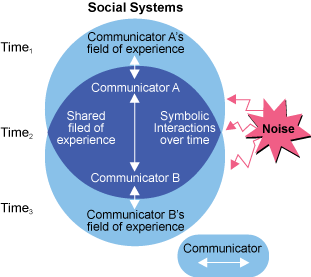
There are three implications in the transactional model:

“**Transactional**” means that communication is an ongoing and continuously changing process. You are changing, the people with whom you arecommunicatingare changing, and your environment is also continually changing as well.

In any transactional process, each element exists in relation to all the other elements. There is this interdependence where there can be no source without a receiver and no message without a source.

Each person in the communication process reacts depending on factors such as their background, prior experiences, attitudes, cultural beliefs and self-esteem.

Figure 1.5 shows a transactional model of communication that takes into account “noise” or interference in communication as well as the time factor. The outer lines of the model indicate that communication happens within systems that both communicators share (e.g., a common campus, hometown, and culture) or personal systems (e.g., family, religion, friends, etc). It also takes into account changes that happen in the communicators’ fields of personal and common experiences. The model also labels each communicator as both sender as well as receiver simultaneously.



**Figure 1.5**: A transactional model of communication