

Session 1

The communication process

Mehrabian's model

There are many different forms of communication – whether it be via letter, faxes, email, telephone, SMS, flags, symbols, sign language, morse code, smoke signals or body language – to name a few.

Abraham Mehrabian conducted a lot of research into the different forms of spoken communication and developed the “Communication Model”. He identified that we communicate using either words, tone or body language and assessed the effectiveness of each aspect -

- 7% of meaning is in the words that are spoken
- 38% of meaning is paralinguistic (the way that the words are said)
- 55% of meaning is in facial expression

Mehrabian's model above has become one of the most widely referenced statistics in communications. Understanding the difference between words and meaning is a vital capability for effective communications and relationships.

The model is particularly useful in illustrating the importance of factors other than words alone when trying to convey meaning (as the speaker) or interpret meaning (as the listener), but care needs to be taken in considering the context of the communication: style, expression, tone, facial expression and body language. Mehrabian's experiments showed that 93% of the meaning was inferred by the people in the study.

Effective communication is in the understanding of how to convey (when speaking) and interpret (when listening). Using the Mehrabian percentages is not a reliable model to overlay onto all communications scenarios. For example, Mehrabian's research involved spoken communications. Transferring the model indiscriminately to written or telephone communications is not reliable, except to say that without the opportunity for visual signs there is likely to be even more potential for confused understanding.

When applying Mehrabian's findings to modern written memo, letter, email etc and telephone communications one can simply say that greater care needs to be taken in the use of language and expression, because the visual channel does not exist. It is not correct to assume that by removing a particular channel, the effectiveness of the communication reduces in line with the classically represented Mehrabian percentages.

When speaking on the telephone one can convey words and the way that the words are said, but no facial expressions. Mehrabian's model provides clues as to why telephone communications are less successful and reliable for sensitive or emotional issues. However, the model cannot be extended to say, for instance, that without the visual channel the meaning can only be a maximum of 45% complete. Nor does Mehrabian's model say that telephone communications are no good for, say, phoning home to ask for the address of the local poodle parlour. For this type of communication, and for this intended exchange of information and meaning, the telephone is perfectly adequate, and actually a whole lot more cost-effective and efficient than driving all the way home just to ask the question and receive the answer face-to-face.

Mehrabian's statistics certainly suggest that video-conferencing communications are better than just using the telephone however we are a few years away from us all having that facility at work and at home.

Background reading

So do we need to learn to talk again?

This is a great article explaining how we are all so engrossed in the art of SMS and emailing that we have forgotten to pick up the phone and have a chat. You may wish to make notes from this article.

www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1084344/Were-addicted-text-email-losing-art-conversation-So-need-learn-talk-again.html

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Emailed something to the wrong person? You're not alone

This is an interesting article on the repercussions of sending an email to the wrong person. You may wish to make notes from this article.

www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-340310/Emailed-wrong-person-Youre-alone.html

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Class activity – how do we communicate?

How do we communicate in the 21st Century?

Advancements in technology have been tremendous over the last 10 years.

How has technology helped **you** communicate with others?

And are there any hindrances?

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Hindrances?

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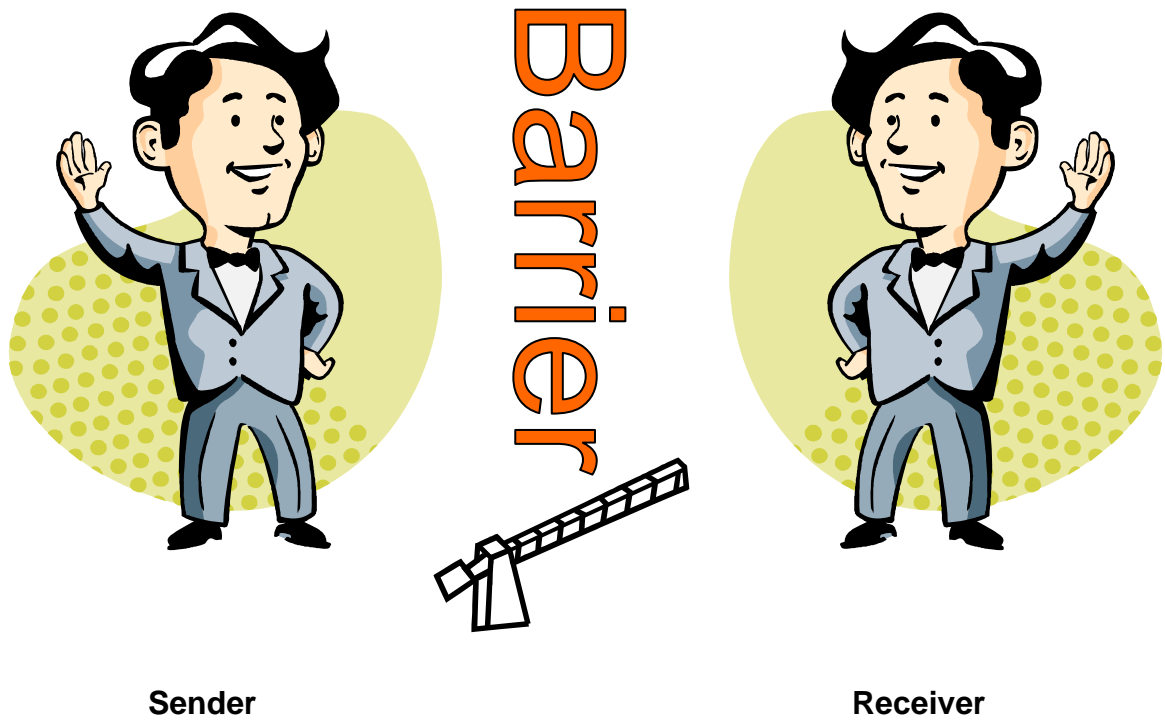
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Class activity – barriers to communication



What barriers and distractions do you encounter when communicating?

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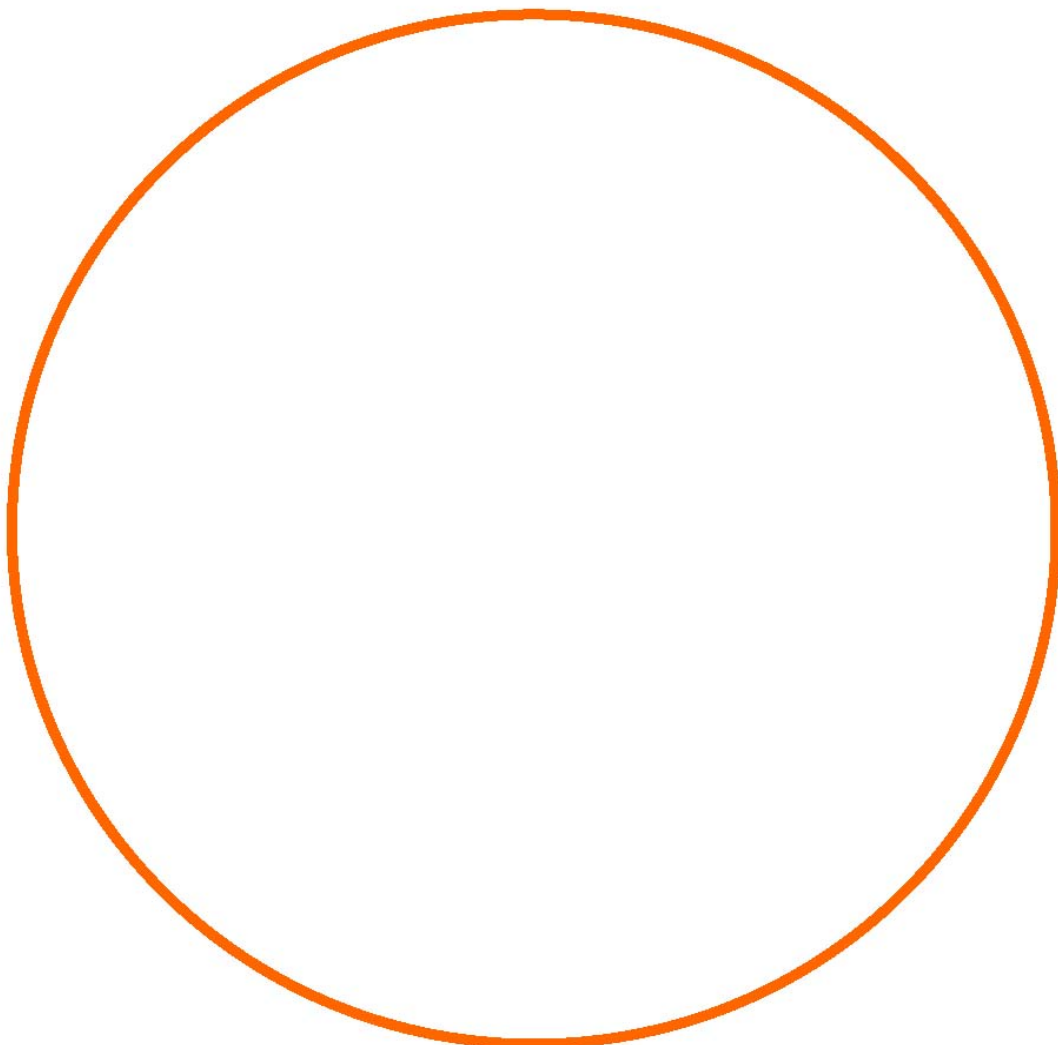
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Individual activity – the communication circle

Divide the circle below into 3 parts. Each part will represent some aspect of how you communicate with others.

Think about when you communicate every day. How much are you communicating with others through your body language? How much is through your actual words and how much is through the tone you use? Allocate a segment to –

- Body language
- Words
- Tone



Session 1 lecture slides

Learning outcomes for this session

At the end of this session you will be able to:

- Explain the structure and function of the communication process
- Explain the importance of good communication in the travel, tourism and hospitality supply chain



The Communication Process

Business Communication and Customer Care - Session 1



Learning Objectives

At the end of this session students will be able to:

- Explain the structure and function of the communication process
- The importance of good communication in the TTH Supply Chain
- Explain the advantages and disadvantages of different verbal and non-verbal communication
- The effectiveness of body language
- Possible barriers to effective communication
- Solutions to overcome barriers



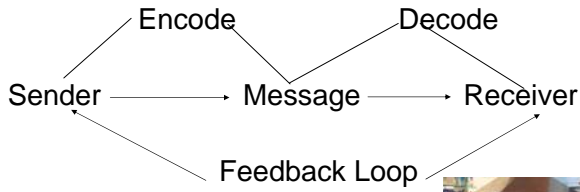
The Communication Process

Definition –

- Effective communication is to give or exchange information
- Communication may be one or two ways
- Effective communication means that the sender and receiver have a clear understanding of the message



Communication Model



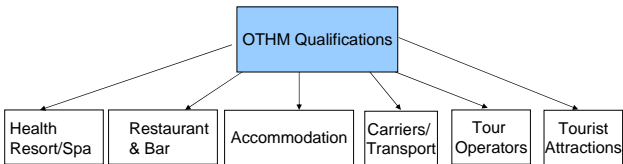
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Effective Communication

- Example of effective communication in the supply chain



Case example: British Airways (Carriers)
 Tour operators, Travel Agents, Hotels (F&B)
 Spa/Leisure Facilities

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Why Communicate?

- To receive information
- To convey information
- To persuade
- To sell
- To learn
- To form relationships
- To train others

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Forms of Communication

Different forms of communication:-

- Written
- Verbal
- Visual
- Audio
- Face to face
- Use of ITC (Information, Technology and Computers)



Positives and Negatives

Advantages & usefulness:-

- Effective daily communication within team
- Regular contact with stakeholders
- Professional communication with customers
- Ability to solve problems quickly
- Marketing communications

Disadvantages:-

- Poor training of employees leading to misunderstanding
- Incorrect information provided
- Problems with late communication
- Ethical issues on misleading information eg photograph of hotel that has not been completed – customers arrive building works in process



Barriers to Communication

- Body language
- Attitude and culture
- Language and translation
- Organisational culture
- Poor interpersonal skills (lack of training)
- Incorrect medium of communication
- Emotional tension during communication
