



**Chapter 7**  
**Communication**

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I've always had what my dear mother likes to call "*the gift of gab*," and I learned at the young age of 16 that I was good at sales when I worked for a clothing store and received numerous national sales awards and recognition. In conjunction with that, I grew up in a "*Coca-Cola*" home, one that was brand loyal to Coca-Cola products, so I always loved the brand. I became even more interested in the company while studying about it in my business courses during college.



I graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign with a B.S. in business administration with a concentration in marketing. Amazingly enough, the opportunity to work for Coca-Cola came when I wasn't even looking. The woman that would eventually become my manager had been watching me sell to customers at the job I was working at in college and approached me about an open sales position that she had on her team. It was an incredibly valuable lesson to learn early in life...you never know who's watching you, so always be at your best.

Reflecting back on my career choice, I just love how the restaurant and foodservice industry touches everyone. No matter what walk of life you come from, no matter where you are at in the world, we all have our own unique stories about what and how we eat and drink. And let's face it, the foodservice industry is fun. It's an exciting field with endless possibilities. No matter what your talents are, you can find a place to call home in this industry...if you have entrepreneurial spirit, if you're technically savvy, or if you're a creative and brilliant innovator. All can be found in the restaurant and foodservice industry.

Cooking is one of my biggest passions, and I find it incredibly therapeutic. But it wasn't always that way. I couldn't make scrambled eggs 5 years ago. I believe truly good cooking comes from deep down in the soul, and once I made that connection, my true love affair with food and cooking began. While having the knowledge and skills to cook is very important, the greatest food comes from those who put their heart and soul into their cooking.

Be passionate about everything you do...from the most mundane tasks to the largest projects. Exuding passion is contagious, and ultimately, it's what will help you get through the good times and the bad times throughout your career.

Remember: **“Food is our common ground, a universal experience.”**

—James Beard, American chef and food writer

...and, another quote that is dear to my heart...

**“A billion hours ago, human life appeared on earth. A billion minutes ago, Christianity emerged. A billion Coca-Colas ago was yesterday morning.”**

—1996 Coca-Cola annual report



### About Communication

Communication is one of the most important of all skills. But you're only an effective communicator if you are able to engage your audience. So it's critical to (1) be aware of your surroundings and (2) be sensitive to who your audience is. Then you can adjust your communication style accordingly.

#### 7.1 The Communication Process

- The process of communication
- Barriers to communication

#### 7.2 Communication Skills

- Personal characteristics that affect communication skills
- Effective listening
- Effective speaking
- Effective telephone skills
- Effective writing

#### 7.3 Types of Communication

- Organizational communication
- Interpersonal communication

## SECTION 7.1 THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication is an important part of everyday life. It allows us to interact with each other and to share our knowledge, ideas, and experiences. Most people think communication is just speaking and listening, but it is so much more. We communicate through body language, gestures, writing, speaking, listening, and in many other ways. Of course, this means that just as many ways exist to miscommunicate. It is important to use positive communication by focusing and listening.

### Study Questions

After studying Section 7.1, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the communication process?
- What are the barriers to effective communication?

### *The Process of Communication*

Communication is the process of sending and receiving information by talk, gestures, or writing for some type of response or action. Communication is a learned skill. Most people are born with the ability to express themselves, but need to learn how to effectively communicate. Communication includes both verbal (speaking and writing) and nonverbal communication (body language and gestures).

[fast fact]

**Did You Know...?**

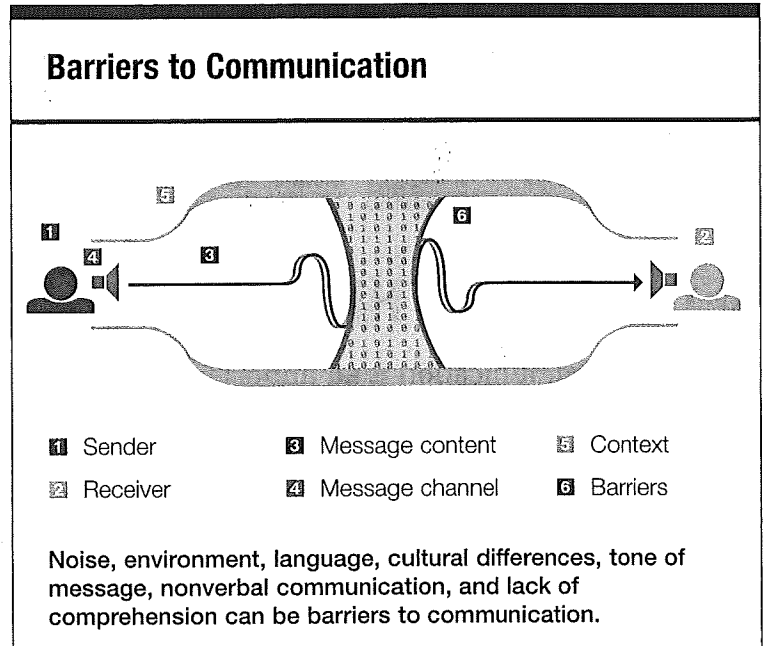
It is estimated that 75 percent of a person's day is spent communicating.

Understanding how the communication process works is important for building strong relationships with employees and customers. It isn't only what people say that is important. How they say it has a major impact on a message's success with the audience, too.

The communication process has five parts: sender, receiver, message content, message channel, and context. Figure 7.1 illustrates the communication process.

The following is an example of the communication process in the restaurant and foodservice industry:

- **Sender:** Chef
- **Receiver:** Line cook
- **Message content:** Fire three shrimp on table 10.
- **Message channel:** Downward
- **Context:** The line cook is “in the weeds,” and the chef really needs that table out quickly.



**Figure 7.1:** Understanding the process of communication will help employees to communicate effectively with one another.

The person sending the message begins the communication process. Often, the sender wants something done as a result of the communication. Following are some of the things that the sender needs to think about before sending a message:

- Who will receive it?
- What message do I want to send?
- How should I send the message?
- What other factors do I need to consider as I deliver the message?

In most cases, the person who receives the message is not just a passive receptor of the information. Some things this person does are the following:

- Communicate understanding of the information
- Interpret the message
- Act on it
- Makes decisions along the way to complete the actions

The main connection between the people sending and receiving a message is the message content. The two kinds of messages are following:

1. **Historical information:** This is information that has already happened. Examples include company history and orientation information, status updates, and management decisions. Receivers don't usually need to do anything with these messages. They simply build receivers' knowledge for future situations.
2. **Action-required information:** People who send these types of messages expect something to happen because of the message. Some action must happen immediately or in the future. The person receiving the message is usually who must act on the information. One example is an order from a supervisor. It can be as simple as "Clean that table."

The sender must decide the best way for the message to be delivered. Which medium will help the message be as clear as possible for its intended audience? Messages can take many forms including the following:

- **Words:** This can mean verbal or written words.
- **Sounds:** For example, a siren is one way to send a message.
- **Graphic illustrations:** Some examples of this are pictures, diagrams, job aids.
- **Signs and symbols:** Gestures and nonverbal forms are two kinds of signs and symbols.

## ***Barriers to Communication***

Barriers to communication include anything that interferes or affects communication. Barriers to communication include lack of time and other pressing needs. Lack of time forces people to rush and doesn't allow them to think things out. It may also produce noncommunication. Some situations, particularly in a restaurant or foodservice operation, do not allow much time for complete communication. Follow up is required to make sure everyone is understood.

Another common barrier to communication is fear of confrontation. Younger people are often afraid to speak up when they notice something because they don't have as much experience. They are afraid of negative results such as punishment or retribution.

To prevent barriers in communication, make a plan:

1. Before sending a message, observe the audience. Hear what's happening. Look to see what's happening.
2. Decide the best way to get the message out with a chance of success.
3. Make sure the message was successfully received. In some cases, the barrier is not obvious until the message is already out there. Go back to the beginning of the process if the message wasn't a success and change the approach as needed.

Figure 7.2 shows a manager who may be having trouble overcoming a few barriers. What do you think they might be?



**Figure 7.2:** When communicating, it is important to be aware of potential barriers that might interfere with the communication.

### Nonverbal Communication Around the World

Nonverbal communication is an important part of communication. It includes touch, eye contact, gestures, posture, and facial expressions. Nonverbal communication is important because it repeats and complements a verbal message. However, in different cultures, nonverbal communication means different things:

**United States:** Greet each other with a firm, brief handshake. Make eye contact. Keep distance when communicating.

**Japan:** Eye contact and pointing the index finger are considered rude and aggressive.

**India:** Shake hands when meeting but seldom do men and women shake hands because of religious beliefs. Do not stand close; keep at least an arm's length between you and the person you are communicating with. The left hand is considered unclean, so use the right hand to touch or pass something.

**China:** Avoid body contact and pointing with the index finger. Winking is considered rude.

Be aware of the following obstacles to good communication before communicating any message. Table 7.1 describes the obstacles to good communication.

**Table 7.1: Obstacles to Good Communication**

Communication Obstacle	Description	Examples
<b>Language differences</b>	<p>We all speak with accents and dialects that reflect where we live now and where we've lived in the past. A dialect is the variation of a language spoken by a particular group of people, such as Easterners, Southerners, or Bostonians. Even if everyone is speaking the same language, members of different groups must often work hard to understand what is being said.</p> <p>For many people, including those working in the restaurant and foodservice industry, English is a second language. It takes a lot of concentration and energy to master something new when someone is not completely familiar with the language. Be patient with people who are still learning. Don't let the way a person speaks affect you negatively.</p>	<p>This may be as easy as soda versus pop, or hoagie versus hero versus submarine versus grinder.</p> <p>It may also be something as easy as understanding the dialect. For example, in Boston: "Pahk the cah in Hahvuhd yahd" means "Park the car in Harvard yard."</p>

*continued*



<b>Table 7.1: Obstacles to Good Communication <i>continued</i></b>		
<b>Communication Obstacle</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Semantics (what words mean)</b>	Not everyone understands words in the same way. Can the audience understand the message as you intended? Does the audience understand the actual words of the message as well as the speaker does? Do words or phrases mean one thing to the communicator and another thing to the audience? Consider replacing "common" phrases (or adages) or words that have multiple meanings with simpler terms. Make sure the intended meaning is clear.	The word "ill" means "to be sick" but also can mean "cool." The word mouse means "rodent" or "computer device." Cup of soup, cup of coffee, cup of flour all mean something different.
<b>Jargon</b>	Buzzwords, technical language, and slang usually shouldn't be used, unless the communicator is absolutely sure that the audience understands these words. It's better to avoid jargon altogether.	Use of "loop in" to mean "keep informed," or "heads-up" to mean "be aware" or "watch out."
<b>Tone of message</b>	Speakers can say something in a tone that differs from the meaning of what they're saying. People often judge the sincerity of a speaker by his or her tone.  Is the tone one of open sharing and inclusion? Or does the speaker sound negative, snobby, or disapproving? Avoiding negativity and sarcasm is critical to sounding sincere.	"Turn in your time card by the end of the day." "Time cards should be turned in at the end of the day."
<b>Clarity</b>	Bad writing, such as not being direct or using too many tangents, can cause confusion and/or leave room for interpretation. Check the structure of the message to make sure that the message is as clear as possible. Follow good business writing guidelines.	"I can't recommend this dish too highly."
<b>Assumptions</b>	Do you assume someone knows how to solve a problem when it happens? Have you provided enough instruction to get the problem fixed? Or are you providing too much basic information? Make sure you understand what your audience knows before you deliver a message.	"We have too many people waiting to be seated."

*continued*



**Table 7.1: Obstacles to Good Communication *continued***

<b>Communication Obstacle</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Cultural differences</b>	Consider any cultural differences.	If someone orders scones in most of the United States, he or she expects a biscuit-like quick bread item, perhaps with fruit in it. If they order scones in the Intermountain West of the United States (Idaho, Utah, Arizona), they expect a yeast-leavened deep-fried bread served with powdered sugar, butter and jam, or honey butter.
<b>Prejudices and biases</b>	<p>A prejudice or bias is a preconceived idea about something that could affect a message, usually negatively. They come from many factors, including experiences, upbringing, and cultural beliefs. People can be biased against a group, a particular person, or even a situation.</p> <p>Do you carry certain biases based on experiences you have had? Do you think certain groups of people have a tendency to do something or not do something? Do you have attitudes that influence the way you send your message? Are you afraid to talk to certain people? Answer these questions honestly for yourself. Then reexamine your communications to make sure your messages don't include any bias.</p>	<p>"Teenagers are lazy."  "Older people are computer illiterate."</p>
<b>Noise</b>	Noise is any sound that interferes with clear reception. Will machinery, loud-talking people, or blaring radios interfere with the clear reception of the message? Is the noise associated with a specific time or location? Try to find a place to either get rid of or reduce this noise.	Should you try to talk to an employee in the entryway of your restaurant or foodservice establishment, or move to a quieter location?

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<b>Table 7.1: Obstacles to Good Communication <i>continued</i></b>		
<b>Communication Obstacle</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Nonverbal boundaries</b>	Face-to-face meetings can be difficult for people who need a lot of personal space. The amount needed can vary based on people's upbringing and experiences. Give the other person space before beginning communication.	North Americans usually feel comfortable with greater personal space, whereas Europeans prefer to be closer to their companions. While this may seem unimportant, the opinions associated with them can become a problem. Moving too close to a North American could appear insolent or even threatening. Moving too far from a European could appear disdainful or aloof.
<b>Gestures</b>	Does your body movement interfere with listening? Do your gestures help send the right message? You should avoid using gestures that might appear to be in conflict with the message.	An example might be smiling while shaking a fist.
<b>Other distractions</b>	Many other things can affect how successful communication is. For example, personal life and mood might have an impact. Sometimes, what is acting as a barrier to communication is not obvious until the communicator tries to deliver a message.	Be more careful with how you communicate with other people if you wake up "on the wrong side of the bed."

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## Essential Skills

### *Planning Your Message*

Before delivering an important message, it's important to spend some time planning not only what you want to communicate but how you will communicate. It's also important to consider your audience and how your message might be received, as well as follow up after you deliver the message. Here are some steps in the process:

- Observe your audience over time and consider how people interact with you and with others, how they listen, what gets their attention.
- Be aware of any potential obstacles to communication; i.e., ways in which your words could be misunderstood or ways in which you could be misinterpreting other people's actions.
- Decide which medium is most appropriate for delivering your message; for example, a memo posted by the time clock, a quick group meeting, a one-on-one talk.
- Taking all these into account, create and communicate your message.
- Be aware of feedback, both spoken and active, such as changed behaviors, positive or negative comments.
- Review your actions and consider whether or not you achieved your goal, how you could have performed better, what to do next time.

Of course, every communication, large or small, sends a message about your values and priorities. Take the time to consider what you want to communicate. Make sure that you are consistent; the message may differ, but the underlying values and priorities should remain the same. Otherwise, you run the risk of confusing and alienating your coworkers, who may think you are untrustworthy.

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## Summary

In this section, you learned the following:

- Communication is the process of sending and receiving information by talk, gestures, or writing for some type of response or action.
- Barriers to effective communication include language differences, semantics, jargon, tone of message, clarity, assumptions, cultural differences, prejudices and biases, noise, nonverbal communication, gestures, and other distractions such as lack of time and other pressing issues.

## Section 7.1 Review Questions

- ① What is communication?
- ② Explain semantics.
- ③ What are the two types of messages that can be sent?
- ④ Why is it important to understand the process of communication?
- ⑤ Mary Fox says that it's critical to be sensitive to who your audience is. Assume you have a problem with a friend and a situation with a teacher. Would you approach these people in the same way? If not, what would differ?
- ⑥ One of Linda's hostesses, Sung, appears to be a little formal and reserved with guests. Linda explains that patrons have to feel welcome as soon as they enter Uptown Grille. Sung grew up in Japan, but she has lived in this country for more than 20 years. What do you think the problem might be? How should Linda handle this situation?
- ⑦ How can failed messages create problems in the workplace?
- ⑧ How can cultural bias detract from a positive work environment?



## Section 7.1 Activities

### 1. Study Skills/Group Activity: Miscommunication

Work with two other students and discuss a problem that you have experienced that was caused by miscommunication. Role play some of these situations to consider some other possible outcomes.

### 2. Activity: How to Handle Miscommunication

Read your local newspaper to identify a problem that, in your judgment, resulted from miscommunication. How would you have handled the situation? Create a one-page report on how you would have handled the situation differently.

### 3. Critical Thinking: Learning From Communication Obstacles

Think about a time when a specific communication obstacle created a problem for you. What could have resolved the problem? What did you learn from the episode?

