

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 7.3 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication involves the exchange of information through many different ways. The types of communication include organizational and interpersonal communication, focusing on sharing information and verbal messages.

Study Questions

After studying Section 7.3, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is organizational communication, and how might it be used in the restaurant and foodservice industry?
 - What is interpersonal communication?
 - How can relationships be built through interpersonal communication?
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Organizational Communication

Managers must have strong communication skills to build credibility and a strong reputation. Similarly, a business must be able to communicate to build its identity and reputation with the public and even its own employees. **Organizational communication** is the numerous messages and information that convey operational procedures, policies, and announcements to a wide variety of audiences.

Organizational communication can be sent to people inside the organization or outside the organization. An example of a message sent inside an organization is an e-mail stating a change in the dress code. An example of a message sent outside an organization is a table tent for guests to read that outlines the new sustainable practices taking place in the operation.

Two important types of organizational communication are the **mission statements** and **vision statements** of an operation. A mission statement primarily serves an internal function. It describes the company's purpose and key

objectives to its team and owners. A **vision statement** is directed both internally and externally. It defines the company's purpose and values to employees (so they know how they are expected to behave) and customers (so they understand why they should work with or patronize the company). These statements should be shared at orientation, discussed during employee meetings, and sometimes even posted or distributed in print.

Other high priorities for organizational communication include industrial, environmental, and community-related issues. Industrial and environmental issues impact every restaurant and foodservice organization. For example, parking lot construction or renovations to the building need to be communicated in a timely manner so the guest is not inconvenienced. Regulatory changes, such as pollution reduction (no-smoking ordinances) caused by consumer demands for better air quality, affect restaurant and foodservice establishments. Organizational communication is key to alerting the public about these changes and the restaurant's support of them.

[on the job]

Food Writer, Food Editor, and Food Critic

All these terms describe a writer who focuses on food in some way. Writers may concentrate on ingredients, restaurants, or anything else involving food and cooking. Some food writers research and write stories. Others will proofread, edit, and fact-check those stories, testing recipes as well. Still others assess food-related manuscripts for publication as periodical articles or books. And some food writers don't write for publication. Instead, they develop content for television, movies, and the radio.

Career opportunities are available in newspapers, television, radio, magazines, movies, and the Internet. Food writers who are further along in their careers may even contribute to books or write their own. However, food writers often begin as freelancers, pitching ideas or finished articles to editors for potential publication. Others start out on the Internet, as the number of food-related blogs and Web sites continues to increase.

There are no specific educational requirements for food writers, and they come from all walks of life. However, many do have a background in writing or communications, and more than a few have worked in restaurants and other foodservice establishments. It's essential to have strong writing skills and to work well independently. You must also be aware of industry and consumer trends, be knowledgeable about ingredients and cooking techniques, and, most importantly, have a real passion for food.

Interpersonal Communication

Part of a manager's role is to create a positive and respectful work environment.

Interpersonal communication

is one key to succeeding in these tasks. Interpersonal communication occurs in all types of relationships. However, it can vary depending on the relationship type. For example, the short interaction restaurant and food-service employees have with guests is different than the relationship they have with friends and family.

Interpersonal communication is any two-way communication that has immediate feedback. Basically, it is a conversation,

although three people can sometimes be involved. The people in the conversation are trying to relate to each other at some level. The goals of interpersonal communication are to achieve a specific outcome, such as provide performance feedback, and to improve the relationships of the people involved. Figure 7.9 shows coworkers engaged in interpersonal communication.

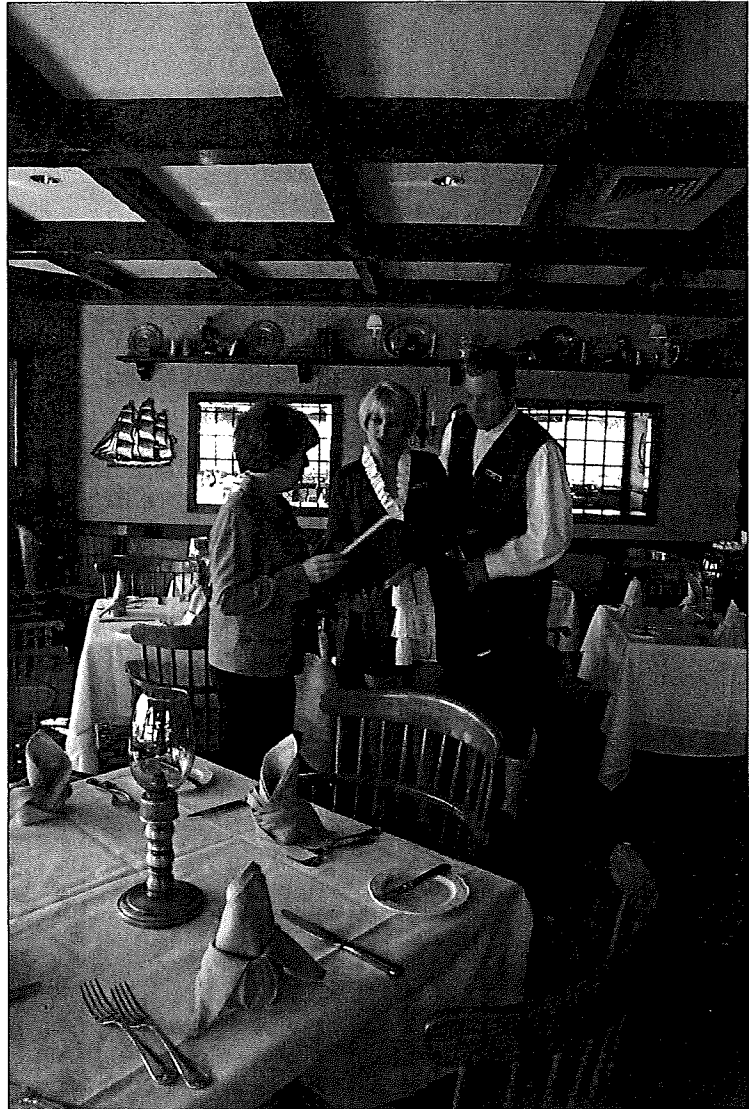


Figure 7.9: Interpersonal communication allows for immediate feedback.

Essential Skills

Listening

Learning to listen to another person's point of view is a developed skill in most people. It is very easy to hear what other people are saying, all the while mentally preparing the next funny, clever, and witty reply. If only the speaker would hurry up!

That is not the best way. Truly listening to what another person says will encourage that person to continue talking and sharing. The more shared, the better acquainted two people become.

There are more parts to listening. The first is responding. It's important to quickly mention or repeat back something about the conversation, demonstrating an interest. The next part is confidence. If a person says something, keep it quiet unless it is necessary to share the information for someone's safety.

The listener should indicate that he or she is engaged. Listening with glazed and distracted eyes is not convincing. Look at the person's face and eyes. Periodically repeat back a bit of what the other has said to make sure the meaning is understood.

Employee: "I have an idea about scheduling that might save us money."

Manager: "Great! Would you please share it with me?"

Employee: "If we . . . , then . . ."

Manager: "So, you are saying that if we . . . , then . . . will happen for us?"

Employee: "Yes! I'm sure it would help."

Manager: "I appreciate your ideas. I will think about how we can try them."

People are the most important part of the restaurant, for without the staff there is no food on the tables. Learn to listen and work well with other people (see Figure 7.10).

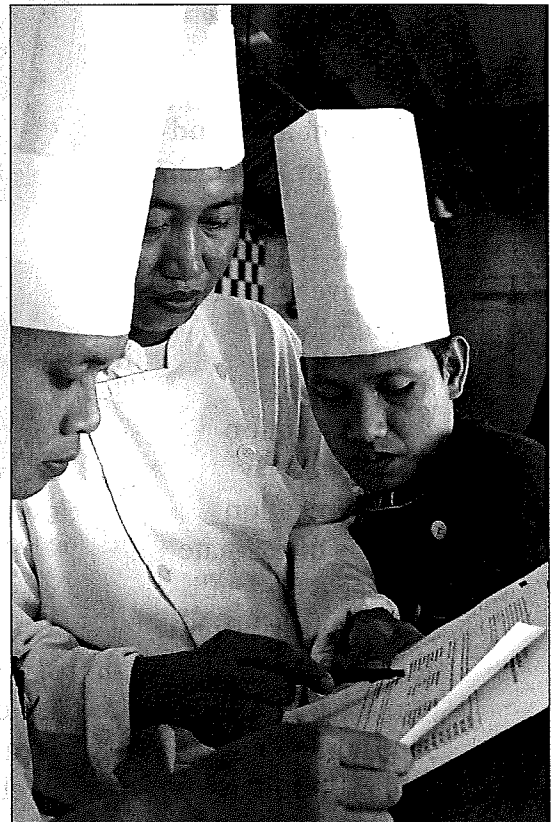


Figure 7.10: To be successful, employees must learn to listen and work well with co-workers.

Sharing Information

In interpersonal communication, one person shares information that helps the other person relate back. Typically, a person shares information that the other person normally wouldn't know. By sharing, the two become closer and strengthen their relationship. For example, having a conversation about where one was raised and went to school, professional goals and aspirations, or what type of music each person likes can help two colleagues develop closer bonds that will in turn increase their trust in one another.

But this trust can't be based only on conversations. "Actions speak louder than words." The actions managers and employees take in the workplace show people a lot about who they are and what they value. Do they appreciate cultural differences? Are they humble? Do they praise others? Do they remain professional at all times? Often, fellow employees will make judgments about someone's personal integrity and effectiveness in a job based on how well they model positive attitudes and behavior in the organization. Employees who observe positive behavior are also more likely to set equally high standards for their own behavior.

Managers' actions also allow employees to better predict how they will react. For example, making the work environment a fun place by telling a funny story or having fun, friendly activities can lead employees to view the manager as more approachable. Additionally, showing humility has a huge impact on employee-manager relationships. No employee likes to work with a manager who feels solely responsible for why the organization is performing well and achieving its goals. Effective managers remain humble and give credit where credit is due. They look for every opportunity to build trust and respect among the staff.

[on the job]

Interpersonal Communication at Work: Leading Groups of Diverse Coworkers

Leading groups of diverse employees can be a challenge for even the most experienced supervisor. The restaurant and foodservice industry can be stressful, and bringing together workers of different ages, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, and cultures can increase the stress. But that doesn't have to be the case. Successful leaders know that capitalizing on the strengths each employee brings to the workplace can build a healthier, more effective environment. Here are some ways to accomplish this mission:

- Be a task-oriented leader. Focus on responsibilities, deadlines, and hierarchies, not emotions.
- Listen more than talk. Employees are more likely to offer suggestions when they haven't heard the manager's opinion. The manager might learn a new technique or piece of information.

- Research the cultures of coworkers. This can help uncover some important obstacles to communication, such as listening postures and facial expressions.
- Ask coworkers directly and respectfully about their cultures. This indicates that the manager sincerely wants to learn.
- Treat all colleagues with respect, and make sure everyone else does, too.

Is it easy to lead a diverse group? Not always. Is it rewarding? Yes. In fact, this opportunity may be one of the most rewarding.

Verbal Messages

Verbal messages also have a significant impact on interpersonal communication and therefore on the relationships a manager has with employees. Whatever the intention of their message, managers must remember that how a person receives the message also affects the outcome of the interpersonal communication. For example, showing **empathy** to employees who are having personal challenges creates a stronger bond with them. Empathy is the act of identifying with the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person. Empathetic individuals may put others at ease with nonjudgmental acceptance. Often it is referred to as “standing in someone else’s shoes.” By using empathic statements in communications with staff, the manager conveys genuine concern about them and understanding of their situation.

The following is an example of how empathy can help diffuse a difficult situation:

Employee to manager: “Chris called in sick again today. He’s been out a lot lately, and it’s been hard on all of us.”

Manager to employee: “I know that this has been a difficult situation, and I appreciate the fact that all of you have been pitching in to keep everything running smoothly. We are working to resolve this so that the situation won’t continue to be a problem.”

If a manager spoke this way of an employee, the rest of the employees would understand that they are being recognized for their extra effort and that management knows there’s a problem. How would this make you feel about your manager?

Positive perspective, even of negative events, brings positive results.

Along with being empathic, respecting employees’ views and opinions is another way of building stronger interpersonal communications with them. Displaying this type of acceptance conveys the message that the manager values their ideas and believes in collaboration. Additionally, employees

perceive managers' feedback as interest in their development and performance. Similarly, by receiving their feedback, the manager conveys to employees the message that they are open to improving themselves. In both situations, the message creates a long-lasting impression on the receiver, which improves the relationship.

Successful managers use all the available and appropriate ways to communicate with staff and coworkers. Interpersonal communication, in particular, allows managers to model an organization's values to employees. Here are examples of ways that managers use verbal messages to communicate positive values to employees:

- Chatting or having casual conversations with the staff can set the best tone. Managers want to build a friendly environment, which can increase their employees' trust. The nonverbal cues that accompany these types of chats, such as a pat on the back, a smile of thanks, or a "thumbs up," can also create an appreciation of positive values, resulting in a stronger bond between managers and coworkers. Figure 7.11 shows a manager using nonverbal cues to show his chef that he is pleased.
- Finding opportunities to coach, counsel, and provide feedback to an employee supports both the employee and the organization. The easiest and most immediate way to convey positive values and support by the organization is through feedback. Feedback is communication that helps a person understand how well he or she has done something and how to improve (think of it like a report card with comments from a teacher). Most manager feedback—whether positive or constructive—is related to an employee's performance. Employees prefer continuous feedback (letting people know how they're doing as they go) about how they are doing on the job, rather than once a year at a performance review. The manager provides employees with this information (see Figure 7.12). Likewise, the more feedback employees get, the more they will feel comfortable with it and look forward to the experience. Some initial ways to approach feedback with employees include the following:
 - Offer to provide clarification or help with tasks.
 - Invite them for coffee to put them more at ease.
 - Point out positive things they are doing along with constructive feedback.
 - Thank them for their efforts even when there is room for improvement.
 - Understanding the appropriate behavior in conducting one of these conversations is also essential for ensuring that an employee views the feedback as constructive and is willing to listen to it and then act upon it.

- Coaching helps reinforce and improve performance on the job. Coaching can be used when an employee needs more direction during on-the-job training, or when an employee needs support and encouragement to stick with a task. Coaches (who might include more experienced coworkers) provide additional guidance, clear directions, and more training. They also understand the delicate balance between coaching and doing.

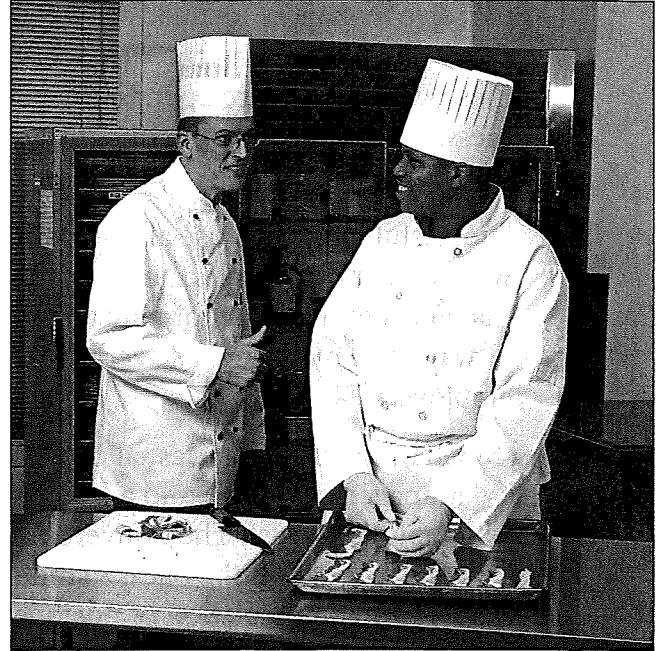


Figure 7.11: Nonverbal communication is communication without words and includes facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact.

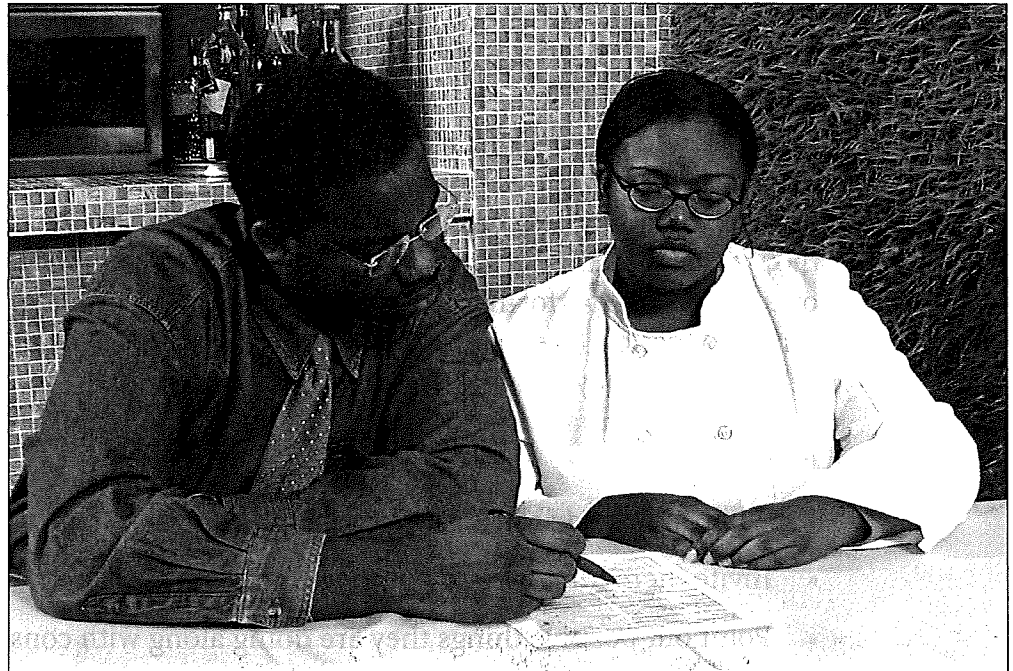


Figure 7.12: Most employees favor instant feedback.

Food Blogs

Just 10 years ago, no one knew what a “blog” was. Fast-forward to today, and worldwide there are more than 5,000 blogs about food. Writers across the world are turning to the Web to write accounts of their experiences with food. Subjects may include cookbooks, restaurants, ingredients, chefs, regional cuisines, the restaurant and foodservice industry, or farmers' markets. There is at least one blog for virtually anything and everything food-related.

Every blog is different. They vary widely as far as frequency of updates, quality of writing, and visual appearance. The common thread is a love of food. Blogs commonly contain recipes, photographs, and some personal information, such as a tale of culinary

success or, more likely, failure on an epic scale. The best blogs combine good writing with a catchy “hook,” high-quality photos, and a passion for food. There are even annual awards for the best food blogs, with categories such as best food blog for humor, for a particular city, and for writing. Figure 7.13 is an example of a food blog.

Like other blogs, food blogs often start slowly, but if they catch media attention, a single defining moment can cause radical growth in page views as well as financial attention. Some blogs have been criticized for poor writing or for unprofessional behavior, such as spreading baseless rumors about restaurants or chefs. As a result, a food blog code of ethics has been developed to help like-minded bloggers agree to certain standards of practice.

Note: To learn more about this code of ethics, look online at <http://foodethics.wordpress.com>.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'JimmyCooks' food blog. At the top right, there are navigation links for 'HOME', 'ABOUT ME', and 'CONTACT'. The main header features the blog's name 'JimmyCooks' and the tagline 'Learn to cook from the chef'. To the right of the header is a 'Featured Recipes' section with two items: 'Gazpacho' described as 'Delightful and elegant, this refreshing tomato soup... read on' and 'German Plum Cake' described as 'Perfect for fall, my grandmother's plum cake... read on'. Below this is a 'Recent Articles' section listing several titles like 'Salted vs. Unsalted Butter - The Ultimate Bake-off' and 'How Much Salt is Too Much?'. There are also 'Categories' and 'Useful Links' sections. The main content area has two articles: 'Boredom, the Mother of Invention' which includes a photo of a dish and text about a restaurant's Monday night service, and 'Breaking News! Butter Tastes Good!' which includes a photo of a butter pat and text about a new purveyor of work that knocked out all of their collective socks. At the bottom, there is a footer with 'Site sections', 'In the Spotlight', 'Email Newsletter' sign-up, and 'Our feeds'.

Figure 7.13: Food blogs are a great way to share ideas and thoughts with others.

Summary

In this section, you learned the following:

- Organizational communication is the numerous messages and information that convey operational procedures, policies, and announcements to a wide variety of audiences. Send organizational communication to people inside the organization or outside the organization. Use organizational communication in the restaurant and foodservice industry with mission and vision statements.
- Interpersonal communication is any two-way communication that has immediate feedback. It is a conversation. The people in the conversation are trying to relate to each other at some level. The goals of interpersonal communication are to achieve a specific outcome, such as provide performance feedback, and to improve the relationships of the people involved.
- Relationships can be built through interpersonal communication by being empathetic, respectful, and open to sharing information with others.