COMMUNICATION

Communication is defined as the exchange of information, ideas, opinions and feelings. Communication is said to be effective when it is received and understood in the manner intended by the sender. This means that communication can take a number of forms including written, verbal, non–verbal, graphical, pictorial and electronic forms of communication using information technology.

Communication in an organization can be external as well as internal. Examples of external: suppliers, bankers, customers, government. Examples of internal: meetings, memos, distribution of policies between employees, departments also telephonic conferences.

PURPOSE AND ADVANTAGES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
A.   INTERNAL

1.   Goal setting and its communication to the staff.
2.   Staff motivation.
3.   Leading, directing and controlling becomes easier.
4.   The number and quality of ideas generated improves.
5.   Increased speed of decision – making.
6.   Increased speed of reaction changing conditions.
7.   Effective co-ordinator between departments.
8.   Strategy and policy implementation becomes easier.
9.   Better development of plans.
10.   Reduced level of conflicts.

B.   EXTERNAL

1.   To improve the reputation and image of the business.
2.   Reduced delays in supplies and deliveries.
3.   To correct any misunderstanding in the market.
4.   To improve the impact of demands in front of the government.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS / MODEL
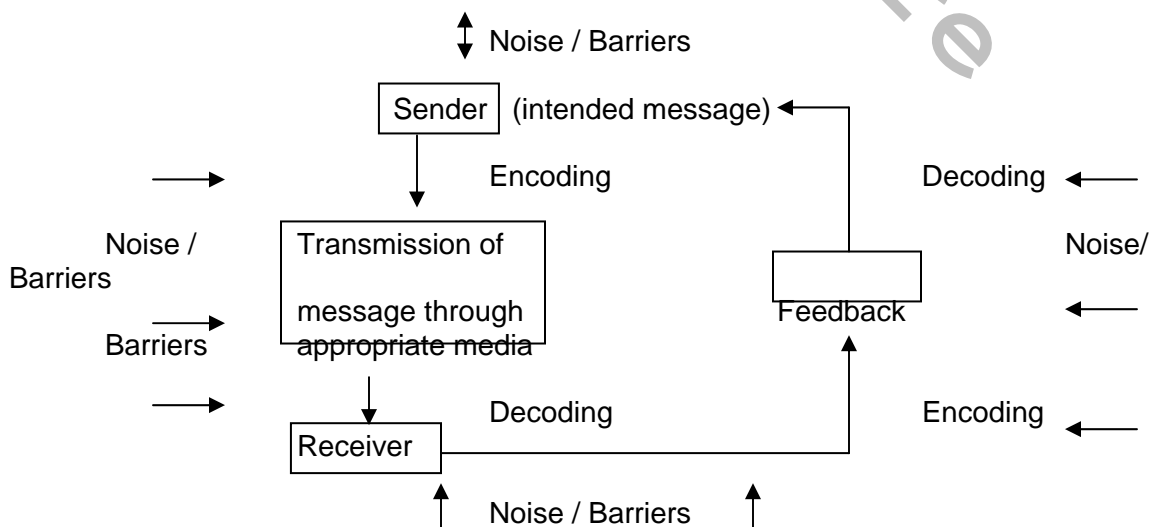
CLASSIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is classified according to the following three factors or aspects of communication.
1.   Media (oral or verbal, written, visual, electronic and non–verbal) body language.
2.   Direction (vertical, horizontal one–way or two–way)
3.   Degree of formality (formal or informal)

COMMUNICATION NETWORK

1.   Wheel network
2.   Chain network
3.   The 'y' network
4.   The Circle network
5.   The integrated or connected network (all channels network)

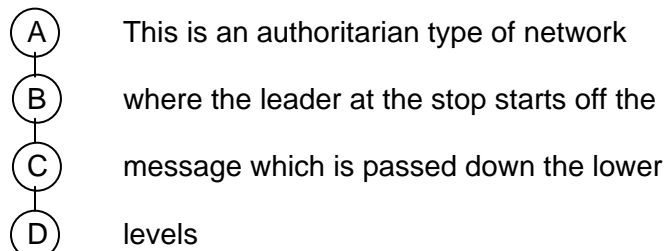## COMMUNICATION
NETWORK OF COMMUNICATION

A.   WHEEL NETWORK:
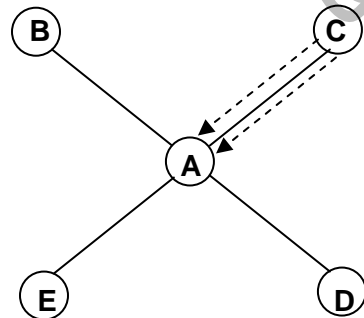
It is the entrepreneurial type of network with the leader at the center. All other employees are directly connected to the leader.
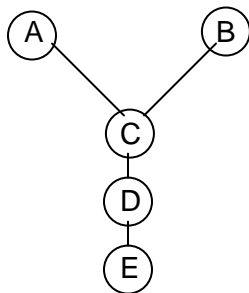
⇒   Two–way communication can occur
⇒   Horizontal communication is poor i.e. low interaction
⇒   Fast performance speed
⇒   Low creativity
⇒   Dominated by the leader
⇒   Formal contact between employees is limited
⇒   E.g. a head off ice communicating with sales people operating in region

B.   CHAIN NETWORK

This is an authoritarian type of network where the leader at the stop starts off the message which is passed down the lower levels

$\Rightarrow$ Characteristic of hierarchical structure
$\Rightarrow$ Usually tends to long chains of command
$\Rightarrow$ Mostly one–way communication though there may be weak two–way communication too.
$\Rightarrow$ Moderate performance speed
$\Rightarrow$ Low motivation leading to low creativity and interactivity
$\Rightarrow$ Centralised decision–making with leader in full control
$\Rightarrow$ Isolation at the lowest levels of structure
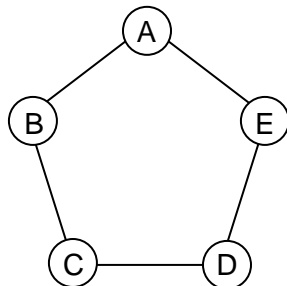$\Rightarrow$ E.g. police, army and civil service.

C.   THE 'Y' NETWORK

It combines the wheel and chain networks. The person 'C' controls all the others through ideas may be generated by both 'A' and 'B'.

$\Rightarrow$ Moderate performance speed
$\Rightarrow$ Fairly centralized
$\Rightarrow$ Allows a degree of two–way communication
$\Rightarrow$ Originality of ideas is low
$\Rightarrow$ Isolation at the lowest levels of network

D.   CIRCLE NETWORK

In this network each person or department can communicate with only two others. In this the members communicate freely.

$\Rightarrow$ No necessary leader
$\Rightarrow$ Slow decision–making due to lack of co-ordination
$\Rightarrow$ Slower performance
$\Rightarrow$ Higher interactivity
$\Rightarrow$ Greater motivation and higher morale
$\Rightarrow$ Decentralised network
$\Rightarrow$ Two–way communication

⇒   Greater difficulty on agreeing at new strategies

⇒   E.g. communication between middle managers at the same level of air organisation

INTEGRATED NETWORK
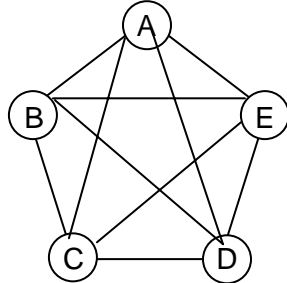
Also known as a connected network or an all–channel network. It is used in small working groups. Information flows all around network.

⇒   Allows full two–way communication
⇒   Typical of brain–storming sessions
⇒   Participative style of decision–making
⇒   Decentralized and democratic
⇒   No necessary leader
⇒   Slow performance
⇒   Provides best solutions to complex problems
⇒   Disintegrates under time pressure to get results when operated in a group
⇒   Very high motivation, satisfaction and morale
⇒   E.g. An ICT network or brainstorming for innovative ideas at a departmental meeting.

COMMUNICATION

Q.1.   Discuss the barriers to effective communication and explain the ways to reduce them.

(12 – 14)

Ans.   Effective communications will only happen if information is sent, received and them understood. It occurs when the clear message is sent by the sender through an appropriate medium who then gives feedback which shows that the message has been understood. Several factors called barriers can lead to communication bring ineffective.

Firstly, failure could occur in any of the stages of the communication. It may be that the message is sent through an inappropriate media. E.g. explaining technical diagrams and graphs and technical language over telephone is most likely going to lead the receiver to make mistakes in understanding it. Also using jargon which is words or phrase with specialized meaning may be misunderstood. They are usually understood by a certain group of people but not by others (e.g. technical computing language). This is definitely going to lead to confusion over the meaning of the message by the general employees. E.g. technical information about a product not understood by the marketing department may lead to misleading advertisement and poor sales. Also sending long messages orally may result in the message being forgotten or jumbled up by the receiver. So the form of the message may be barrier if it is nuclear or

unexpected for the receiver or it lacks the information which was intended to be conveyed. E.g. asking for goods to be sent is an incomplete message. It may be that goods were required immediately but the receiver not understanding the urgency sends goods the next day resulting in poor satisfaction of customer. Also if there is too much information perhaps more than is actually required by the receiver to respond in the right way then this may result in information overload or noise. This is unnecessary data that actually prevents the receiver from grasping the important elements of the message. If information has to pass through a long chain of command due to too many levels of hierarchy, then it may get distorted. Also the delivery of messages may be so slow that by the time they reach the receiver, the time of action has already passed or messages may change their meaning over the way.

The other barriers are due to poor attitudes of either the sender or the receiver. Employees are more likely to have confidence in people they trust, because of past experience of their reliability. On the other hand, if an employee has learned to distrust someone, then what she says will be either ignored or treated with caution. The demotivated, employees who feel isolated are poor receivers. Workers that don't derive job. Satisfaction and don't wish to work hard feel no responsibility towards making communication effective. They may not listen to orders, follow direction and may not give their feedback. Also employees in an autocratic system may become suspicious if they are suddenly more involved in decision making. Some people could have belies about others that may result in a stereotype which may affect how they interpret a message. E.g. if a male manager has a certain stereotype of women being less rational and able then men, his first reaction might be to ignore a female manager's communication because he believes she does not understand the information.

Finally physical reasons may also create barriers to effective communication. If factories are too noisy or office places are too noisy then effective communication is not possible as oral orders being shouted out do not reach the desired receiver. The noise of fans in an office can also cause voices to be jumbled up. Their geographical distances can inhitat effective communication especially interpersonal communication. E.g. meeting can be delayed. There may be breakdown of channel due to technical problems. E.g. breakdown of management information system on the computerized network may lead to problems in dealing with enquiries.

There are several steps that could be taken to reduce these barriers. Firstly, it should be ensured that the message is clear and precise and contains only required details. Language used is simple which could be understood by the receiver. The communication channel used is as short as possible so that chances of message getting distorted are reduced and they are quickly delivered. Also the communication channels being used are understood by all so that the right receiver gets the correct message. Also feedback should be an essential part of the process to ensure that problems with receipt or understanding of message can be checked quickly. This would increase motivation levels as well as decision–making becomes more participative. Then trust should be established between senders and receivers. This is easily achieved in a business where culture is to accept all staff as being important and as having useful contributions to make. Finally ensure that physical conditions are appropriate for messages to be heard or received in other ways.

Q.2.   Evaluate the significance of an informal communication in a business organization   (8)

Ans.   Informal communication channels are part of the organizational structure because people cannot be prevented from interacting with each other. They do not involve the formal networks and are not under official management control.

Informal communication is very significant as it allow people from all departments and even different hierarchal levels to socialize with each other. This may help them to four options on work related issues and problems which can then be passed onto the management through formal communication networks. Usually workers are better aware of the problems as they have hands on experience which may help improve overall efficiency of the business. Also informal channels can be used to encourage discussion of a new idea as employees feel freer to discuss this way then if asked directly. Their reaction could then be used to see if the new idea would be any good and if it could be implemented. Informal communication also satisfies the social need of Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory thus increasing motivation and job satisfaction. This may lead to higher productivity and greater loyalty amongst workers for firm and also reduce their frustration levels.

However informal communication may lead to spread of grapevine which are rumors and exaggerations that could prove counter–productive. If formal messages are unclear then grapevine may cause unreliable information to spread whose original source is untraceable. These messages may ruin the reputation of business because of being inefficient or false gossips. It may also cause a breach of privacy and insecurity by the leaking of information between departments. Also strategies or policies may be misunderstood if they hadn't been made clear by the management in first place and may lead to improper achievement of objectives.

To discuss whether or not informal communication should be a part of the organizational structure is fertile. It cannot be prevented and is very beneficial for the business. Its drawback can be minimized by keeping employees very busy so that they do not get too much time for in constructive talk. Also keeping then formally engaged in business decision – making may serve the same advantages as informal communication but at the same time reducing the effect of its drawbacks.