

The process of communication involves the following steps:

1. **Sender:** The person who conveys his thoughts, message or ideas to the receiver is known as the sender. He is at the starting point of the communication system and represents the source of communication.
2. **Message:** The subject matter of communication is termed as messages. It includes ideas, feelings, suggestions, order, etc., which a sender wants to convey to the receiver.
3. **Encoding:** The process of converting messages into communication symbols, which may be understood by the receiver. It includes words, pictures, gestures, symbols, etc. Encoding translates the internal thought of the sender into a language which can be understandable.
4. **Media:** The path, channel or medium through which encoded message is transmitted to the receiver is known as media. It is the carrier of the message. It can be in written form, face to face, through telephone, letter, internet, etc.
5. **Decoding:** The process of translating the encoded message into an effective language, which can be understood by the receiver is known as decoding. In this, the encoded symbols of the sender are converted.
6. **Receiver:** The person who receives the message of the sender is known as the receiver.
7. **Feedback:** In order to complete the process of communication, feedback is essential. The process of reversal of communication in which the receiver expresses his reaction to the sender of the message is known as feedback. Feedback ensures that the receiver has received and understood the message.
8. **Noise:** Any construction or hindrance which hampers the communication process is known as noise. The hindrance may be caused to the sender, message or receiver. It acts as a barrier to effective communication and because of this message is interpreted differently by the receiver. Disturbance in the telephone line, inattentive receiver, faulty decoding, poor internet connection, improper gestures and postures, etc., are some examples of noise.

Here are 7 elements that are essential to successful communication.

1. Sender

- **The sender** is the person who is trying to communicate a message.
- The sender wants the other person to receive and understand his/her message. The intent of the message is usually to get the other person(s) to do or understand something.

Unfortunately, in the transference of information, the other person(s) may not understand the message the way the sender intended. In fact, it is not

uncommon for the other person(s) to respond in some affirmative manner communicating the message was received. This does not mean the message was understood the way the sender intended.

2. Receiver

- The receiver is the recipient of the message and must translate the words into thoughts, process the thoughts, and determine how to respond to the sender.
- The challenge is that since the receiver's education and experience may be very different from the sender, words often have different meanings.

3. Message

While you may carefully choose the words to speak, words alone represent a small percentage of what is received by the other person. In fact, according to the literature, words carry the least value in the message.

- Hence, what is said is not nearly as communicative as body language and voice inflection. Even when no words are spoken, communication is taking place. If a person frowns, does not make eye contact, or looks at his/her watch a message is being sent...and it may not be the intended message.
- Consequently, it makes sense to pay attention to body language and voice inflection. This takes more than casual watching and listening. It takes our full attention to be most effective.
- An effective message is one where there is congruency, or agreement, between the words, meaning, and emotion. Body language and voice inflection are essential in achieving congruency.

4. Channel

- Channel is the medium used by the sender to send the message to the receiver. This may be in-person, via telephone, e-mail, text message, written correspondence or a third-party.
- An important point to remember is that when communication is only verbal the most important element of communication...body language...is left out. If the communication is written, then both body language and voice inflection are left out.
- Therefore, depending on the nature of the message to be sent, a sender will want to consider which medium to use. More critical messages may require face-to-face meetings, while less critical messages may be appropriately sent via a verbal or written message.

5. Noise

- Noise refers to interference that takes place during the communication process. Both the sender and receiver may be distracted by noise. Noise may come from internal (thoughts, emotions, etc.) or external sources (radios, other conversations, etc.).
- When encountering a noise, take steps to reduce the distraction. If the noise is internal, take some time to refocus. Taking several deep breathes can help. Excusing yourself to go get a drink of water may be the mental break needed to clear the mind.
- If the noise is external, then try to find a quieter location for the meeting. If necessary, consider rescheduling the meeting for a time when there are fewer distractions.

6. Feedback

Feedback is the process of determining if the message has been properly received. This can be initiated by the sender or receiver. The sender, for example, may ask the receiver to repeat the message to confirm that the message was received as intended. On the other hand, a good listener will provide feedback to confirm that he/she correctly received the message.

Feedback may occur in four ways.

1. First, and probably most common, is paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is reciting back what the other person said in your own words.
2. The second is summarizing. This involves making a brief statement of the key points and feelings expressed by the other person.
3. The third is to reflect the feelings. The focus is not so much on the message as the emotions behind the message. This is often an effective way to reflect empathy.
4. The fourth way is to reflect meaning. The focus of this type of feedback is to identify the meaning being expressed by the other person. On occasion, a person says one thing, but it carries a different meaning.

Feedback Examples

Message

I came to work today intending to do I/M undercover runs and there are no vehicles available. I will have to go to another lab to obtain a suitable vehicle.

Paraphrasing

I heard you say that because there are no vehicles here you will have to pick up a vehicle at another lab before you can start work on your runs.

Summarizing

I heard you say you will have to get a vehicle at another lab before you start work. You sound frustrated.

Reflecting Feelings You sound upset.

Reflecting Meaning Are we having problems getting undercover vehicles again?

Each of these different forms of feedback has a place in the communication process. Two things occur when feedback is provided. First, it helps ensure the message was clearly received. Second, it is a way of valuing the sender. When the receiver takes the time to make sure the message was correctly heard and understood it communicates that the sender is important...valuable.

7. Context

Context is another way of taking into consideration the setting. Examples of context include:

- What is going through the other person's mind when you show up? Did they just have a blow-up with an employee or customer?
- What is the environment like? Is it noisy? Are there customers standing around?
- What was the nature of the last contact and how did that go?
- What cultural factors should be considered?
- Are there notes or helpful information from the person who took the initial call?