



# Is it Talking or Is it Listening?

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN A DIGITAL AGE

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# Communication – An Agenda



Let's define it?



Identify bias in communication



Hitting Effective Communication Techniques



Breaking down the Barriers to communication



Most famous question...are you listening or just hearing?



Communication methods based on personality



# Communication Defined

Communication is the exchange of information or ideas between individuals, groups, or organizations through various means such as language, writing, gestures, or technology. It involves the process of transmitting, receiving, and interpreting messages in order to establish understanding, create meaning, and achieve mutual goals.



# Cool definition...why is it important?

A study conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute found that productivity in the workplace could increase by up to 25% through better communication and collaboration among employees.

According to a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, 84% of respondents identified communication as the most important soft skill for employees.

The Project Management Institute found that ineffective communication was a factor in 56% of project failures.

A study published in the Journal of Patient Safety found that communication errors were a contributing factor in 70% of medical errors.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers found that strong communication skills were the most sought-after attribute among job candidates, with 80% of employers identifying it as a critical factor in hiring decisions.



# Primary Goals of Communication



1. **Sharing Information**
2. **Building Relationships**
3. **Persuading or Influencing Others**
4. **Expressing Emotions**
5. **Solving Problems**



# Communication – All shapes and Sizes

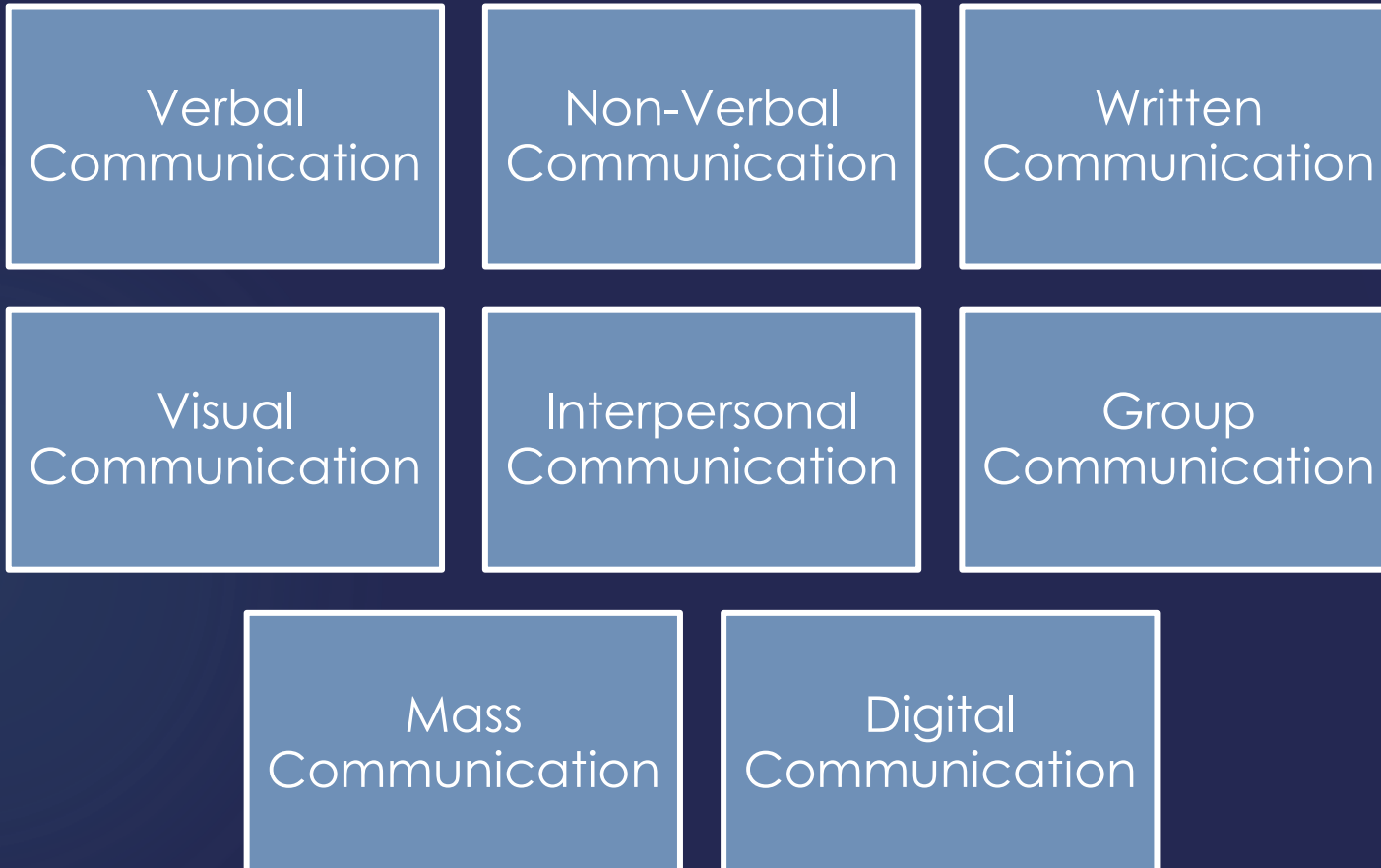




Image source: "Image of the word 'BIAS' using toy letter blocks." Created by OpenAI's DALL-E, [12-19-2023]





# Some various types of bias that exist in our communication pathways

**Stereotyping bias:** Stereotyping bias occurs when someone makes assumptions or generalizations about a person or group based on their race, gender, age, or other characteristics. This can lead to unfair treatment and discrimination.

**Confirmation bias:** Confirmation bias is the tendency to seek out or interpret information in a way that supports preexisting beliefs or opinions. This can lead to ignoring or discounting information that contradicts these beliefs.

**Halo effect bias:** The halo effect bias occurs when someone's positive attributes or achievements are overemphasized, leading to an overall positive impression of the person. This can lead to ignoring negative attributes or flaws.

**Anchoring bias:** Anchoring bias occurs when someone relies too heavily on the first piece of information they receive when making a decision or judgment. This can lead to ignoring or undervaluing other information that may be relevant.

**Availability bias:** Availability bias occurs when someone relies on information that is readily available or easily remembered when making a decision or judgment. This can lead to ignoring information that is less salient but may be more relevant.

**Attribution bias:** Attribution bias occurs when someone attributes the behavior of others to internal factors (such as personality traits) rather than external factors (such as situational factors). This can lead to misunderstandings and misjudgments about others.

**Cultural bias:** Cultural bias occurs when communication is influenced by cultural norms and values, which can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds.



# Key Takeaway from Bias discussion

- ▶ Be aware of your personal bias
- ▶ Be aware of your “audience” bias
- ▶ Acknowledge the filters that bias flows through



So now I know what it is and possible pitfalls...

What are the attributes to successfully communicating?

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**Clarity:** The message should be clear and easy to understand. This means using simple language and avoiding jargon or technical terms that the audience may not be familiar with.

**Conciseness:** The message should be concise and to the point. This means avoiding unnecessary details or tangents that can distract from the main message.

**Relevance:** The message should be relevant to the audience's needs and interests. This means understanding the audience and tailoring the message to their specific situation or perspective.



# A few more...

**Timing:** The message should be delivered at the right time, when the audience is most receptive and attentive. This means considering the context and scheduling the communication appropriately.

**Empathy:** Effective communication also involves empathy, where the sender is able to understand and relate to the receiver's perspective. This means considering the receiver's emotions and perspective when delivering the message.

**Active listening:** Effective communication also involves active listening, where the sender and receiver are engaged in a two-way conversation. This means paying attention to the other person's response and adjusting the message accordingly.

**Nonverbal cues:** Nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice can also play a crucial role in effective communication. This means being aware of your own nonverbal cues and interpreting those of others.



How do you breakdown barriers?



Simple answer, merge our learning:

$$A - B = C$$

- ▶ A = Applying **A**ppropriate effective communication techniques
- ▶ B = Recognizing our **B**ias/filters that we instill before beginning our communications
- ▶ C = Barriers will fall allowing us to **C**ommunicate effectively



Now the tricky part...it's not just the talking



Have you ever been challenged by someone with the following question?



*Are you even listening to me?!?!?!?*





# Wait, Is there a difference?

## Hearing

- ▶ It is a passive process. Doesn't require attention or conscious effort.
- ▶ It is limited in interpretation. Doesn't interpret the meaning of sounds. Simple recognition of sound waves
- ▶ Can trigger automatic physiological responses. For example...being startled at loud noise. No conscious control.
- ▶ Involuntary process. We cannot turn off or control...regardless if we are actively paying attention or not.



# Listen up!

## Listening

- ▶ It is an active process. Actively engaging with sounds we hear and thus interpreting their meaning.
- ▶ Interpretive process requires acknowledgment of context, tone and underlying message.
- ▶ Voluntary process that we control. We can choose to pay attention.
- ▶ Empathetic listening requires understanding and relating to person speaking
- ▶ Interactive elements focus on responding and providing feedback.



# Tools and Resources

- ▶ Communication courses – There are a host of courses available at local universities, community colleges and online. These can help people develop new skills or hone existing ones.
- ▶ Books and articles – Reading to gain knowledge will never go out of style.
- ▶ Communication coaches – A growing trend that is becoming more evident are business coaches. These folks can help by highlighting strengths and weaknesses in communication skills and then outlining strategies for growth.
- ▶ Practice! – Put yourself out there...Look for opportunities to put yourself into more communicating roles such as presentations, participating in group discussions or asking friends and colleagues for feedback.



Another avenue for communication improvement

Consider personality tests



# Some of the usuals



**Enneagram**: The Enneagram categorizes individuals into one of nine personality types based on their core motivations and fears. The Enneagram can be useful for understanding how different personality types communicate and relate to others.



**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**: The MBTI is a widely used personality test that categorizes individuals into one of 16 personality types based on their preferences for how they perceive and interact with the world. The MBTI can be useful for understanding how different personality types communicate and process information.



**DISC assessment**: The DISC assessment categorizes individuals into one of four personality types based on their behavioral tendencies. The DISC can be useful for understanding how different personality types communicate and interact with others.



# What is possible outcome of personality test?

## Communication Styles

**Passive communication:** This style of communication involves avoiding conflict, expressing one's needs and wants indirectly or not at all, and often putting the needs of others before one's own. Passive communicators may come across as timid, submissive, or indifferent.

**Aggressive communication:** This style of communication involves expressing one's needs and wants in a forceful or threatening manner, often at the expense of others' needs or feelings. Aggressive communicators may come across as intimidating, hostile, or domineering.



# What is possible outcome of personality test?

## Communication Styles

### **Passive-aggressive communication:**

This style of communication involves expressing negative or critical thoughts indirectly, such as through sarcasm, sulking, or backhanded compliments. Passive-aggressive communicators may come across as manipulative, resentful, or disingenuous.

**Assertive communication:** This style of communication involves expressing one's needs and wants in a clear and direct manner, while also respecting the needs and feelings of others. Assertive communicators are confident, honest, and respectful.



# Secret Ingredients – Self Awareness and Empathy

## **Self Awareness**

- Allows a clear understanding of our own thoughts and emotions and how they impact others
- Allows for us to regulate these emotions and behaviors as to how they impact others.
- Allows us to adapt our communication style to others to assist in effectiveness.
- Allows us to recognize our own biases and assumptions.

## **Empathy**

- Allows us to share and understand in the feelings and emotions of others.
- Allows us to build trust and facilitate a better element of collaboration.
- Allows us to develop stronger relationships and resolve conflict more effectively.





# A final word – Listening Is Learning as We Learn to Listen





# Thank you!

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