

Effective Communication and Barriers 2

Failures of human communication can become amplified in professional settings. In business transactions, especially those involving large amounts of money, a small miscommunication can have devastating effects. Or, if a company fails to lay out a clear, comprehensible set of objectives, the employees tasked with meeting them will probably also fail. If a business makes inaccurate or misleading claims about its products, that can have damaging consequences, as well—possibly causing it to lose customers or, worse, find itself in a lawsuit. For these reasons and many more, it's important for businesses to communicate clearly, consistently, and honestly. It's also important to be informed about the things that get in the way of communication and seek to overcome them. The following is a list of common barriers to communication:

- **The use of jargon:** The use of unfamiliar, overcomplicated, or technical terms can generate confusion and obscure meaning of the sender's message. The solution is to use clear and concise messages that are easy to understand.
- **Withholding information:** Within an organization, some information is kept confidential due to company policies. Make sure the information that is needed is readily available and easily accessible.
- **Chain of command:** The maintenance of an organization's hierarchy is essential, but its very presence can reduce the flow of communication. To counteract that tendency, it's important to reduce unnecessary hierarchical levels and increase departmental interaction and communication.
- **Lack of trust:** In companies with a competition-driven culture, there may be a lack of trust among employees, which can hamper communication. Companies should strive to involve their employees in decisions, emphasize the importance of sharing information, and communicate openly and honestly.
- **Physical barriers or disabilities:** Hearing, vision, or speech problems can make communication challenging. Organizations need to be aware of accessibility issues for both internal and external communication.
- **Bias:** Preconceptions or prejudice can lead to stereotyping or false assumptions. Using care to choose unambiguous, neutral language and explain things clearly can help reduce bias.
- **Filtering:** People may hear what they expect to hear or want to hear, rather than what is said. Because filters are present in every system of communication, the

message that the receiver receives is rarely the same as the one the sender sends. Some distortion of the message is almost inevitable.

- **Language and cultural differences:** Language use and social norms vary enormously from culture to culture. Companies need to educate themselves about cultural sensitivities and gear their messages to their audiences. In the next section, we'll look more closely at the patterns and uses of business communication—who sends the messages, who receives them, and the different types of messages businesses typically use.

LICENSES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

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