

Business Communication and Etiquette in Chinese

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Chapters

1. Understanding Business Communication
2. Contemporary Issues in Business Communication
3. Interpersonal Communication Skills
4. The Writing Process
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6. Persuasive Messages
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8. Making Oral Presentations
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Chapter 1

Understanding Business Communication

Understanding business communication

- Communicating in organizations
- The components of communication
- Verbal communication
- Directions of communication
- Barriers to communication

Communicating in Organizations

- An organization is a group of people working together to achieve common goals. Communication is vital to that process. Understanding how communication works in business and how to communicate competently within an organization can help you participate more effectively in every aspect of business. Competent writing and speaking skills will help you get hired, perform well, and earn promotions.

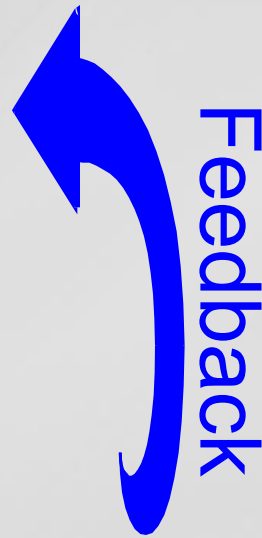
The Importance of Good Communication Skills

- 1. Writing ability is used to evaluate prospective employees for hiring.
- 2. Writing ability is used to evaluate employees for promotions. In fact, writing skill becomes more important as a person advances in the field.
- 3. Careers can be blocked because of poor writing skills.
- 4. Verbal and listening skills are essential in dealing effectively with people.

- 5. Good communication skills help coordinate activities within an organization.
- 6. Good communications help increase job satisfaction and productivity.
- 7. Effective written communications provide official, permanent records for a business and reflect the pride that employees take in themselves and their firm.
- 8. Good communications help project a positive company image.

The components of communication

- Stimulus
- Filter
- Message
- Medium
- Destination



- **The Stimulus (刺激)**
- The stimulus--internal or external--is an event that creates within an individual the need to communicate. You respond to the stimulus by formulating a message: a verbal message (written or spoken words), or a nonverbal message (nonwritten and nonspoken signals), or some combination of the two.

- **The Filter (过滤)**
- The filter consists of a person's unique impression of reality based on that person's experiences, culture, emotions at the moment, personality, knowledge, socioeconomic status, and other variables. The brain receives the stimulus that is the source of the communication, interprets the stimulus, and derives meaning from it in determining what response--if any--is necessary.

- **The Message (信息)**
- The message is the information you want to transmit. The extent to which your communication achieves its goal depends directly on how you construct your message to suit your audience.

- **The Medium (媒介)**
- The medium is the means of transmitting the message. The medium can be oral (for example, a phone call), written (a letter), or nonverbal (a smile).

- **The Destination (目的地)**
- The destination is the point at which the transmitted message enters the sensory environment of the receiver. At this point, control passes from the sender to the receiver, and the transmitted message becomes the source, or stimulus, for the next communication. A response or reaction to a message provides feedback.

Exercise: Communication Components

- Communication Components Working with a partner, identify the five components of communication in the following situation:
- Alice Liston has had dream of going to State College. She has worked hard to maintain a 3.95 GPA and has a very high ACT score. Because her family is not in a position to pay her tuition. Alice applied for an academic scholarship to State College. Two weeks later Alice receives a letter from the scholarship committee. She nervously reads the letter and then runs to her bedroom to email her best friend letting her know that she had received a full-ride scholarship to State College. Her friend reads the email message two hours later.

<i>Incident</i>
<i>Stimulus</i>
<i>Filter</i>
<i>Message</i>
<i>Medium</i>
<i>Destination</i>

<i>Incident</i>	Alice dreams of going to State College.
<i>Stimulus</i>	External source—letter from the scholarship committee.
<i>Filter</i>	Interpreting the letter to mean that her dream of going to State College will be realized.
<i>Message</i>	Alice has been awarded a full-ride scholarship to State College.
<i>Medium</i>	E-mail message.
<i>Destination</i>	Best friend receives the e-mail message.



Communication noise

Examples of noise or interference that can enter into the communication process:

- Misreading body language or tone
- Noisy transmission
- Power struggles
- Managers and subordinates hesitating to be candid
- Physical distractions

Think of an example of each type of noise.



Providing feedback

- Providing feedback is accomplished by restating the speaker's feelings or ideas in your own words. Your words should be saying, "This is what I understand your idea to be. Am I correct?"
- Providing feedback includes both verbal and nonverbal responses. Cocking your head or dipping your eyebrows shows you don't quite understand the meaning of the last phrase.
- One direct way of getting feedback is to ask the listener, "Would you repeat what I just said in your own words?"

Verbal communication

Oral

One-on-one conversations

Meetings

Phone calls

Presentations

Videoconferences

Written

Memorandums

Letters

E-Mail

Reports

Miscellaneous

Oral Communication

- 1. Oral communication is one of the most common functions in business.
- 2. Oral communication is different from written communication in that you have more ways to get a message across to others.
- 3. For oral communication to be effective, a second communication skill-listening-is also required. Nearly 60 percent of all communication problems in business are caused by poor listening.



Forms of oral communication in an organization

- Staff meetings
- Personal discussions
- Informal conversation
- Face-to-face meetings
- Telephone calls, teleconferences, videoconferences
- Speeches, presentations

Written Communication

- 1. Writing is often more difficult than speaking because you have to get your message right the first time; you do not have the advantage of immediate feedback and nonverbal clues.
- 2. Writing is critically important to the modern organization because it serves as the major source of documentation.
- 3. Efficient reading skill is necessary when a written communication channel is used.



forms of written communication in an organization

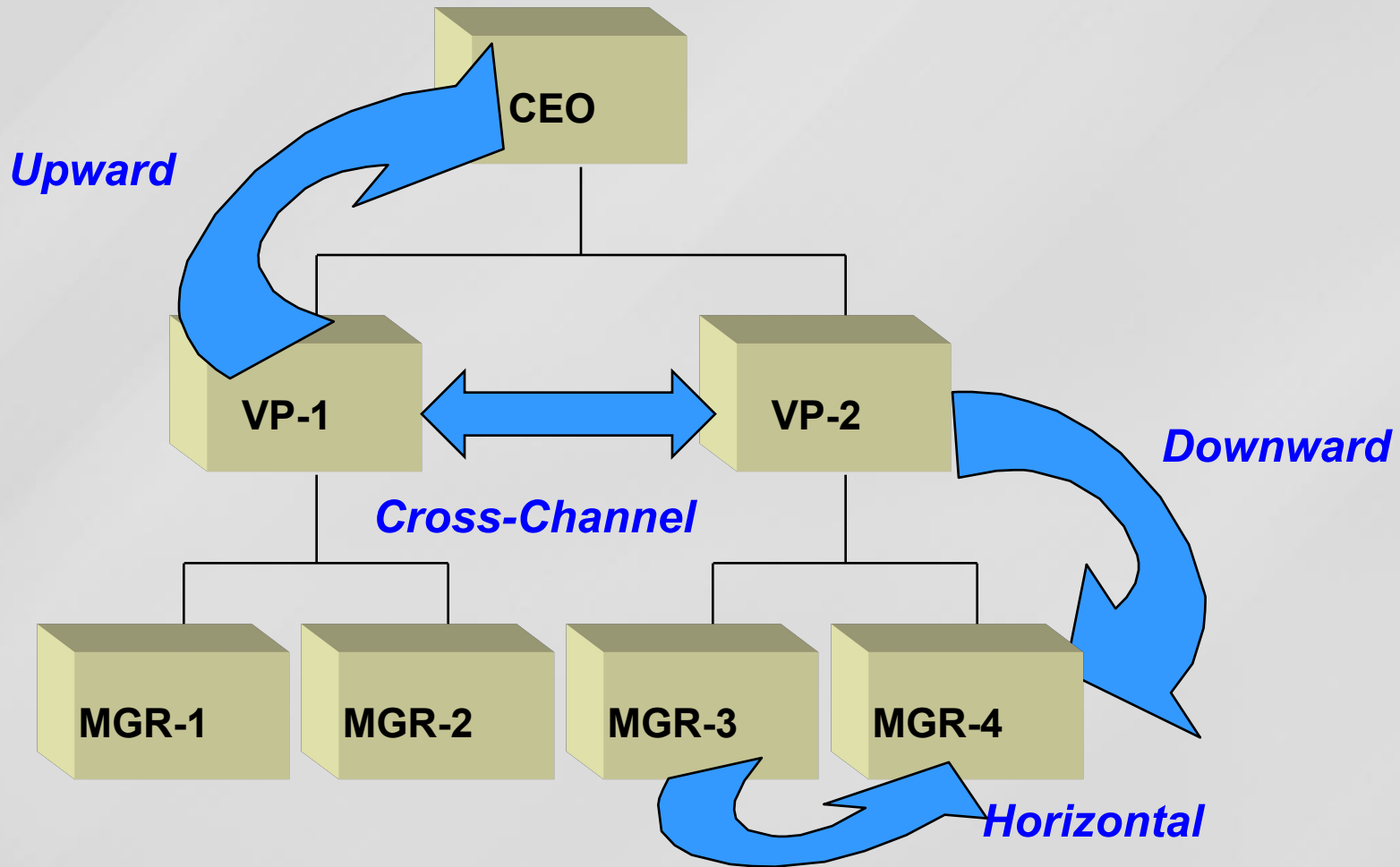
- **e-mail** (a message transmitted electronically over a computer network most often connected by cable, telephone lines, or satellites)
- **website** (a source of information accessed via the Internet)
- **memorandum** (a message sent to someone within the same organization)
- **letter** (a message sent to someone outside the organization)
- **report** (an orderly and objective presentation of information that assists in decision making or problem solving)



Other forms of written communication in an organization

- Employee handbook
- In-house magazines and journals
- Bulletin boards, posters
- Museums and exhibitions
- Notice boards
- Suggestion system

Formal communication network



Downward communication

- In most organizations the largest number of vertical communications move downward, from someone of higher authority to someone of lower authority. Information regarding job performance, policies and procedures, day-to-day operations, and other organizational concerns is communicated.

Upward communication

- Upward communication provides higher management with the information needed for decision making and with feedback indicating whether downward messages have been received and understood. It cultivates employee loyalty by giving employees a chance to be heard, to air their grievances, and to offer suggestions.

Horizontal communication

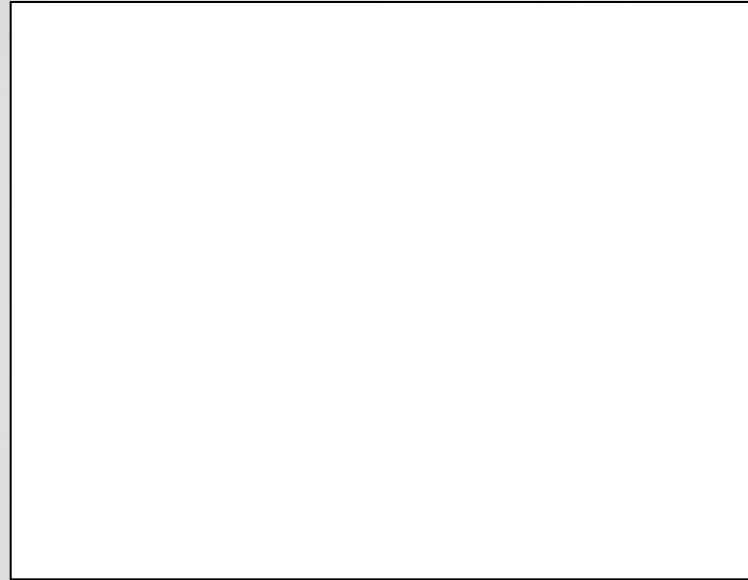
- Horizontal communication is the flow of information among peers within the same work unit. It helps individuals coordinate work assignments, share information on plans and activities, negotiate differences, and develop interpersonal support, thereby creating a more cohesive work unit.

Cross-channel communication

- Cross-channel communication is the exchange of information among employees in different work units who are neither subordinate nor superior to one another.



The communication network at Finagle A Bagel



Heather Robertson describes how the "open door" policy at Finagle A Bagel, which allows one-on-one interaction with top management, helps to retain employees. How would you describe the formal communication network at this company?

The Informal Communication Network

- The grapevine is the informal communication network, the nonofficial channels within the organization through which information is transmitted. Employees often say the grapevine is their most frequent source of information on company plans and performance.

The grapevine is. . .

- Business-related
- Accurate
- Pervasive
- Rapid
- Most active during change
- Normal



Verbal barriers

- Inadequate knowledge or vocabulary
- Differences in interpretation
- Language differences
- Inappropriate use of expressions: Slang, Jargon, Euphemisms
- Over-abstraction and ambiguity
- Polarization

Nonverbal barriers

- Inappropriate or conflicting signals
- Differences in perception
- Inappropriate emotions
- Distractions





Apparent nonverbal barriers

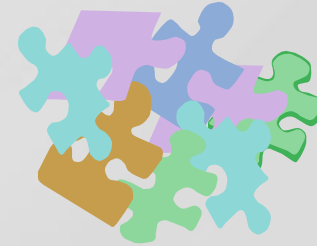
- Flashing or rolling eyes
- Quick or slow movements
- Arms crossed, legs crossed
- Gestures made with exasperation
- Slouching, hunching over
- Poor personal care
- Doodling
- Staring at people or avoiding eye contact
- Excessive fidgeting with materials

Source: Rod Windle and Suzanne Warren, "Communication Skills,"

<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/section4.cfm#Verbal%20Communication%20Barriers> , accessed 10/1/07.

The 3Ps model

- **Problem :**
defines the situation and discusses the need for a particular communication task.
- **Process**
is a series of questions that provides step-by-step guidance for accomplishing the specific communication task.
- **Product**
is the key——the finished document..



Example

- Problem
- You are an vice president of sales for Intuit. At the end of the workday, you receive a call from a large software dealer in New York who complains about being repeatedly disconnected during calls to Intuit's customer service centers, which are located in Bangalore, India. Over and over, this dealer screams about the rude treatment she says she has received when trying to talk with Intuit's customer service representatives. You doubt any employees would be rude on purpose, yet it is your job to ensure smooth relations with dealers.

•Process

A. What is the problem facing you in this situation?

I must decide how to respond to an irate dealer's complaints of rude treatment by Intuit employees in India.

b. What verbal and nonverbal barriers to communication seem to be operating here?

- Verbal barrier: Language differences may be preventing the dealer from understanding what the Indian employees are saying.
- Nonverbal barrier: The dealer seems to be displaying inappropriate emotions, specifically overly intense anger.
- Nonverbal barrier: The dealer seems to have a different perception of the situation, believing that being disconnected was a deliberate act of rudeness.

c. What options do you see for resolving this problem?

- Defend the company by saying that no employee would deliberately act that way.
- Talk back to the dealer, saying that you do not appreciate his tone or accusation.
- Offer a brief but sincere apology and then ask what you can do to help the dealer.

d. What criteria can you use to determine the best option in this situation?

- Will this option help defuse a tense situation?
- Will this option benefit or harm the dealer?
- Will this option benefit or harm the company?
- Would I want to be treated like this?

e. Using these criteria, evaluate your options and identify the best.

Defend the company.

- This option is unlikely to defuse the situation. It will neither benefit nor harm the dealer. However, it might harm the company if the dealer reacts even more negatively and tells others how he was treated or reconsiders his affiliation with Intuit. This option also puts me in the position of contradicting the dealer, which is not the way I would like to be treated.

Talk back to the dealer.

- This option is likely to escalate the tension, benefiting neither the dealer nor the company. I would not like to be treated this way, either.

Offer a brief apology.

- This will probably defuse the situation while benefiting both the dealer and the company. I certainly would like to be treated this way.

- Product

On behalf of Intuit, I want to apologize for this problem and for the inconvenience you have experienced. Please let me help you right now. What questions can I answer for you?

Key terms

- abstract word 抽象词
- audience 受众
- communication 沟通
- concrete word 具体词
- connotation 内涵
- denotation 外延
- e-mail 电子邮件
- euphemism 委婉语
- feedback 反馈
- filter 过滤
- formal communication network 正式沟通网络
- informal communication network 非正式沟通网络

Key terms (*cont'd*)

- jargon 行话
- letter 信件
- medium 媒介
- memorandum 备忘录
- message 信息
- noise 噪音
- verbal 语言
- direction 方向
- barrier 障碍
- nonverbal message 非语言信息
- report 报告
- slang 俚语
- stimulus 刺激
- verbal message 语言信息
- Website 网站

Excercise

- Which component is *not* required for communication to take place?
- a) feedback
- b) medium
- c) stimulus
- d) message
- e) filter

Excercise

- Which of the following creates the need for someone to initiate communication?
- a) medium
- b) filter
- c) message
- d) stimulus
- e) denotation

Excercise

- Your unique perception of reality acts as a _____ when you are interpreting a stimulus.
- a) nonverbal message
- b) medium
- c) filter
- d) feedback mechanism
- e) communication process

Excercise

- Which of the following is *not* an example of a filter?
- a) personality
- b) culture
- c) socioeconomic status
- d) communication medium
- e) an individual's emotional state

Excercise

- A(n) _____ is an example of an oral medium.
- a) news conference
- b) hand gesture
- c) e-mail
- d) facial expression
- e) newsgroup

Excercise

- When a message you transmit reaches its destination, it becomes
 - a) feedback for the receiver.
 - b) a stimulus for the receiver.
 - c) a medium for the receiver.
 - d) a filter for the receiver.
 - e) a communication channel for the receiver.

Excercise

- If you put on a puzzled look as a coworker tries to explain the company's new sick-leave policy, you are
 - a) using a nonverbal medium to filter the message.
 - b) adding noise to the communication environment.
 - c) providing an internal stimulus for your audience.
 - d) simultaneously sending and receiving a message.
 - e) eliminating the feedback portion of the process.

Excercise

- Which of the following statements is *not* true of verbal communication?
- a) The ability to communicate by using words separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom.
- b) Our verbal ability allows us to learn from the past.
- c) Verbal communication consists of spoken words only.
- d) Oral communication allows more ways to get a message across.
- e) Listening is required for oral communication to be effective.

Excercise

- To avoid annoying your audience, do *not* _____ when using oral communication.
- a) whine, nag, or complain
- b) add nonverbal clues to enhance the meaning of your message
- c) use your tone of voice to emphasize particular ideas
- d) request feedback
- e) answer questions you are asked

Excercise

- The purpose of a report is to
- a) clarify any questions the receiver may have.
- b) present information for decision making and problem solving.
- c) avoid nonverbal clues that contribute to noise.
- d) offer additional information immediately if needed by the audience.
- e) share information in an informal medium.

Excercise

- A professor who sends an e-mail to her students to explain the requirements for a class project is engaging in _____ communication.
- a) upward
- b) downward
- c) horizontal
- d) cross-channel
- e) nonverbal

Excercise

- _____ communication occurs when peers within a department share ideas, coordinate activities, and negotiate differences.
- a) Upward
- b) Downward
- c) Horizontal
- d) Vertical
- e) Cross-channel

Excercise

- Which of the following is an example of cross-channel communication?
- a) Your supervisor sends you an e-mail that lists your strengths and weaknesses.
- b) Three state senators discuss the pros and cons of passing new laws against hate crimes.
- c) The vice president of marketing prepares a report to share with the regional sales representatives.
- d) You respond to an internal survey conducted by a colleague from another department.
- e) You prepare a year-end sales report for your supervisor's approval.

Excercise

- You are using the grapevine when you
- a) ask top management, during a company meeting, about the company's recent merger.
- b) write a memo to your boss suggesting how to publicize the company's recent merger.
- c) post a news release on your company's website announcing its recent merger.
- d) write an article for your company's newsletter, quoting the CEO's comments about the recent merger.
- e) discuss the company's recent merger while you carpool with a coworker.

Excercise

- Which of the following is another term for the grapevine?
- a) upward communication network
- b) cross-channel communication network
- c) horizontal communication network
- d) downward communication network
- e) informal communication network

Excercise

- Which statement about the grapevine is correct?
- a) It moves information rapidly through the organization.
- b) It is less active during times of uncertainty, such as layoffs, mergers, and branch closings.
- c) Most of the information communicated through the grapevine pertains to personal matters.
- d) Information spread through the grapevine is usually incomplete.
- e) It is not an important communication network in large organizations.

Excercise

- Which of the following is *not* a verbal barrier to communication?
- a) inadequate knowledge
- b) differences in interpretation
- c) language differences
- d) inappropriate use of expressions
- e) specific, concrete words

Excercise

- Which of the following best describes jargon?
- a) a fad expression that is short-lived
- b) a polite expression that is used to soften the impact of an unpleasant situation
- c) a cultural tradition
- d) efficient terminology when communicating within specialized groups
- e) a denotative phrase that characterizes vertical communication

Excercise

- Which of the following is an abstract word?
- a) letter
- b) memorandum
- c) e-mail
- d) report
- e) communication

Excercise

- Which statement contains abstract or ambiguous language?
- a) Tony's e-mail contains five misspelled words.
- b) More than 76 percent of the employees belong to a union.
- c) At least eight associates submitted their expense reports after the deadline.
- d) The office manager purchased 15 cartons of paper for delivery on Tuesday.
- e) The customer service department received some complaints today.

Excercise

- Describe the importance of communication in today's business world.

Excercise

- Describe at least three advantages that oral communication has over written communication. Provide an example of a situation in which oral communication would be more effective than written communication.

Excercise

- Briefly describe a personal example of upward, downward, and horizontal communication in your life.

Excercise

- What is the informal communication network? How effective is it? How does an effective manager deal with it?

Excercise

- Define the terms *slang*, *jargon*, and *euphemism*. When is each type of expression appropriate? When do problems arise?

Excercise

- Give an original example of a nonverbal message that reinforces a verbal message and of a nonverbal message that contradicts a verbal message.