

Non-Verbal Communication

Definition

The **Non-Verbal Communication** is the process of conveying meaning without the use of words either written or spoken. In other words, any communication made between two or more persons through the use of facial expressions, hand movements, body language, postures, and gestures are called as non-verbal communication.

The Non-Verbal Communication, unlike the verbal communication, helps in establishing and maintaining the interpersonal relationships while the verbal's only help in communicating the external events. People use non-verbals to express emotions and interpersonal attitudes, conduct rituals such as greetings and bring forward one's personality.

The non-verbal communication in the form of signals, expressions add meaning over the verbal's and help people to communicate more efficiently. It supplements whatever is said in words, such as people nod to acknowledge and move their hands to give directions.

Functions of Nonverbal Communication

1. Contradicts verbal message

A nonverbal cue may contradict the verbal message and cause what is said to be at odds with what is done. For example, a student about to make an oral presentation to the class, despite his trembling hands and perspiring forehead, who says "I'm not nervous", has his verbal message contradicted by his nonverbal behavior.

The ripple effect of contradictory verbal message is that it leads to a double-message—the verbal message says one thing, the nonverbal cue, another.

2. Reinforces or emphasizes verbal message

A nonverbal message reinforces or accentuates the verbal message when it adds to its meaning. In the same way that underlining or *italicising* written words emphasizes them, saying "Come here *now*" conveys a more urgent message than "Come here now".

Pounding your hand on the table while saying, "Listen to me", conveys a more effective message than the words alone. While your gesture opens in new window may be redundant, it adds emphasis to your statement and captures the listener's attention.

3. Regulate flow of verbal communication

A nonverbal behavior functions to regulate the flow of verbal interaction. Your eye contact Opens in new window, *tone of voice*, *nodding of the head*, *slight hand movements*, and other nonverbal behaviors tell your partner when to talk, to repeat a statement, to hurry up, or to finish the conversation.

The same applies to group communication. The chairperson at a meeting, for example, uses *eye contact* or *hand gestures* instead of words to indicate whose turn it is to speak.

4. Complements verbal message

A nonverbal message complements the verbal message when it conveys the same meaning. For example, when you receive a visitor with the welcome message, “I’m pleased to meet you”, and accompany the verbal message with *a warm smile, an exciting tone of voice and facial expression*, you are complementing the verbal message with your nonverbal cues.

5. Substitute for spoken words

Gestures opens in new window, facial expressions open in new window, and other nonverbal cues can substitute for or take the place of spoken words. When we fail at our attempts to utter words to express our sorrow at the death of a friend or a relative, an embrace often suffices.

Similarly, when you wave your hand to someone instead of saying “hello”, or give someone a hug instead of saying “thanks for helping me”—your message is clear. Often when actions substitute for words, the nonverbal cues function as symbols of the verbal messages because they are widely understood.

✚ Types of Nonverbal Communication

Eye contact

Eye contact, an important channel of interpersonal communication, helps regulate the flow of communication. And it signals interest in others. Furthermore, Eye contact with audiences increases the speaker’s credibility. Teachers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.

Facial expressions

The face is an important communicator. It is commonly said that the face is the index of the mind. It expresses the type of emotions or feelings such as joy, love, interest, sorrow, anger, annoyance, confusion, enthusiasm, fear, hatred surprise, and uncertainty.

Facial expressions are indicated through the mouth (open, wide or closed), eyelids (raised or lowered), nose (wrinkled or relaxed), cheeks (drawn up or back) and the forehead (lowered or raised).

Within the facial area, eyes are especially effective for indicating attention and interest. However, interpretations of facial expressions differ from culture to culture.

Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits:

- Happiness.
- Friendliness.
- Warmth.
- Liking.
- Affiliation.

Thus, if you smile frequently, you will be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and students will react favorably and learn more.

Gestures

If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring, stiff and un-animated. A lively and animated teaching style captures students’ attention, makes the material more interesting, facilitates learning and provides a bit of entertainment.

Head nods, a form of gestures, communicate positive reinforcement to students and indicate that you are listening.

Gestures are movements of the arms, legs, hands, and head.⁷ Some authors opine that gesture is the deliberate body movement because they express specific and intentional meaning.

For example;

a wave of the hand has a specific meaning-“hello” or “good-bye”; a forefinger and a thumb touching to form a circle have the meaning -“ok”.

Alike facial expressions, interpretations of some gestures also differ across cultures.

For example, in Europe, raising thumb is used to convey that someone has done something excellent while in Bangladesh the same gesture means something idiotic.

Posture and body orientation

You communicate numerous messages by the way you walk, talk, stand and sit.

Standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning slightly forward communicates to students that you are approachable, receptive and friendly.

Furthermore, Interpersonal closeness results when you and your students face each other. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided; it communicates disinterest to your class.

Body Language

Body language is another widely recognized form of non-verbal communication. Body movements can convey meanings and messages. Body language may take two forms of unconscious movements and consciously controlled movements.

For example;

When a person is bored, he may gaze around the room rather than look at the speaker or he may shift positions frequently.

When a person is nervous, he may bite his nails or mash hair. These are usually made unconsciously. On the other hand, leaning forward toward the speaker to express interest is the case of conscious body movements.

Space and Distance

Space and distance are significant non-verbal tools in the case of organizational communication. A spacious and well-decorated room indicates a person’s position in the organization hierarchy and external people get a message about his importance and authority only by visiting his room. Distance is another communication tool, which expresses the degree of intimacy and individual acceptance.

Proximity

Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with students.

You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading students’ space. Some of these are:

- Rocking
- Leg swinging
- Tapping
- Gaze aversion

Typically, in large college classes space invasion is not a problem. There is usually too much distance.

To counteract this, move around the classroom to increase interaction with your students. Increasing proximity enables you to make better eye contact and increases the opportunities for students to speak.

Para-linguistic

This facet of nonverbal communication includes such vocal elements as:

- Tone
- Pitch
- Rhythm
- Timbre
- Loudness
- Inflection

For maximum teaching effectiveness, learn to vary these six elements of your voice.

One of the major criticisms is of instructors who speak in a monotone. Listeners perceive these instructors as boring and dull. Students report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to teachers who have not learned to modulate their voices.

Humor

Humor is often overlooked as a teaching tool, and it is too often not encouraged in college classrooms. Laughter releases stress and tension for both instructor and student.

You should develop the ability to laugh at yourself and encourage students to do the same. It fosters a friendly environment that facilitates learning. Adequate knowledge of the subject matter is crucial to your success; however, it's not the only crucial element. Creating a climate that facilitates learning and retention demands good nonverbal and verbal skills.

Touch

Touch is a widely used form of non-verbal communication tool. By touching, one can express a wide range of emotions. However, the accepted modes of touch vary depending on the gender, age, relative status, intimacy and cultural background of the persons.

For example, in the context of our culture, when one touches you from the back of the examination hall, your understanding is that he wants to know something.

Silence

Silence is a powerful tool for communication. It may have a positive or negative meaning. In a classroom, silence indicates that students are listening carefully and attentively. In the same way, through silence one can communicate his lack of interest or a failure to understand.

For example, silence often indicates that a person receiving instruction does not understand the action required or sometimes silence indicates consent.

Personal Appearance

Appearance is also an important non-verbal communication tool. Appearance includes dress, hair, jewelry, makeup, belt buckles and so on. Appearance indicates the degree of importance or interest a person conveys to an occasion. Through uniform, we can identify a student, a doctor, a lawyer, a police officer, etc.

In an organization, one's dress is keenly observed to see whether it conforms to accepted standards of appearance. **As an example**, workers may wear different clothes when they are on strike than they do when they are working.

Symbol

A symbol is something that represents an idea, a physical entity or a process but is distinct from it. The purpose of a symbol is to communicate meaning.

For example, a red octagon may be a symbol for "stop".

On a map, a picture of a tent might represent a campsite. Numerals are symbols for numbers. Personal names are symbols representing individuals. A red rose symbolizes love and compassion.

Visual Communication

When communication occurs using any visual aids, it is known as visual communication.

Thus, communication that occurs through facial expression, personal appearance, gesture, posture, printed picture, sign, signal, symbol, map, poster, slide, chart, diagram, graph, etc. is called visual communication.

For example, to indicate 'danger', we use red sign; to mean 'dangerous', we use a skull placed between two pieces of bone put in crosswise fashion; to indicate 'no smoking', we use an image showing a lighted cigarette with a cross mark on it.

Internal communications (IC)

Internal communications (IC) is the function responsible for effective communications among participants within an organization. The scope of the function varies by organization and practitioner, from producing and delivering messages and campaigns on behalf of management, to facilitating two-way dialogue and developing the communication skills of the organization's participants.

Internal communication is meant by a group of processes that are responsible for effective information circulation and collaboration between the participants in an organization.

Modern understanding of internal communications is a field of its own and draws on the theory and practice of related professions, not least journalism, knowledge management, public relations (e.g., media relations), marketing and human resources, as well as wider organizational studies, communication theory, social psychology, sociology and political science.

According to Lesiker & J.D. Pettit, "Internal communication consists of the structured communication within the organization that directly relates to achieving the organization's work goal."

Media of Internal Communication

A number of forms are available to internally communicate information, views, news or message with the members of the organization, some commonly used forms are as follows:

1. Memos

The most commonly used means of business communication especially among departments are memos.

A memo provides a format for a concise message. Through this form, information flows across and up and down in the firm. It reflects information, makes request and provides responses and presents informal reports.

2. Interview

Sometimes management and concerned people of the organization resort to an interview or conversation to exchange their views on different issues.

3. Telephone

The use of telephone is increasing for internal communication. The size, scope and nature of organization affect the use of telephone for internal communication.

4. Report

A report is another well-known medium of internal communication. A report contains information based on investigation is sent to the authority concerned. It is an excellent means of internal communication.

5. Notice Board

Such a board is used by many organizations to send a message to the employees. It must be kept up-to-date and attractive and should be placed where employees make assembly.

6. Face to Face Discussion

Executive officers and employees many times call for a discussion and interchange views regarding the current problems. This discussion may be regular or irregular and formal or informal depending on the situation.

7. Participating in Praying

In a Muslim country there is a participation in the prayer by the officers and employers where they get the change to come close and create a relation.

8. Questionnaire and Survey

Information about employee attitude, morale and relationship between management and subordinates etc. may be collected through the use of questionnaire and surveys.

9. Fax

When departments, branches or units of an organization are scattered in different places then fax is used for communication.

10. Intranet

Due to wide use of computers now a days, on line system has given a new image in the area of communication. Such a system interconnects all the computers of an organization to create effective and fast communication.

11. Complaint and Suggestion Boxes

At some convenient places in the office or the factory, complaint and suggestion boxes are kept so that employees can drop their complaints and suggestions, if any, into the box.

12. Posters

Eye catching posters are used to communicate various norms, rules principles and ideas of an organization to make its employees aware and up-to-date.

Above discussed methods are used to communicate each branch to another branch of an organization in terms of internal communication.

Small Groups Communication

It refers to interactions among three or more people who are connected through a common purpose, mutual influence, and a shared identity. When more than two persons exchange information face to face, such flow of communication is called small group communication. It is one type of **internal communication**. A small group is generally defined as a group that consists of at least three members and at the maximum around twelve to fifteen members. A group that has just two members or more than fifteen members would not come in the category of a small group.

This small group is generally formed to reach a common goal which could be to solve a particular problem, make decisions, determine policies and submit reports. Groups involved in regular meeting such as personnel committee, audit committee, report committee, grievance committee are the example of small groups.

Since it may be an informal network of people communicating, the group may or may not have any centralized structure. Every member can influence and can be influenced for performing their task. This generally takes place in a context that mixes interpersonal interactions with social clustering.

Functions of Small Groups

- Know skills to encourage meaningful interactions and member contribution, maximize individual participation, enhance motivation and assure commitment to the decisions reached.
- Understand whether to hold a meeting, when to schedule it, how to arrange the meeting rooms and how to develop discussion content (agendas) that keeps meetings on track and get results.
- Handle problem behaviors and problems effectively.
- Manage the complex dynamics of small groups such as communication, hidden agendas, consensus decision making, coordination difficulties, change and conflict.

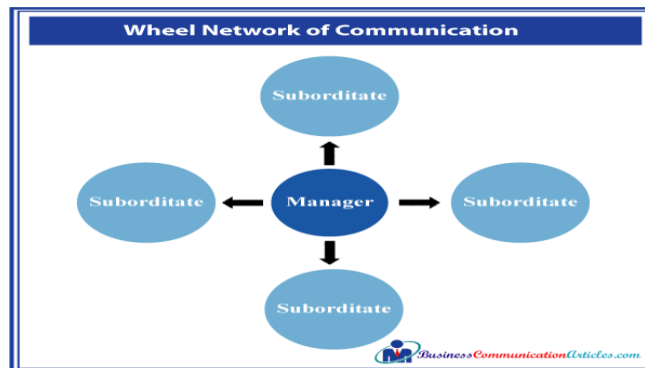
- Every competent team has team members with specific skills and knowledge that must be utilized and imparted to other members in the course of the work.
- Any questions or issues about the project must be broached and shared in order to resolve them. This gives a powerful advantage as a group.
- Any decisions taken must be imparted by influential mentors to all the members.
- Communication skills are essential to good teamwork and every successful business needs them. Yet, they're not easy to learn and often difficult to teach. That is why we publish this blog, to help people learn and apply small group communication skills.

The Network of Small Group Communication

There are many ways of communication small group of communication is one the most effective way of communication so, here we discuss the network of small group communication.

Wheel Network:

In such a network manager plays a vital role to spread information. Here the primary communication occurs between the members and the group manager and then the group manager shares the information with all. It is the feature of a typical workgroup.



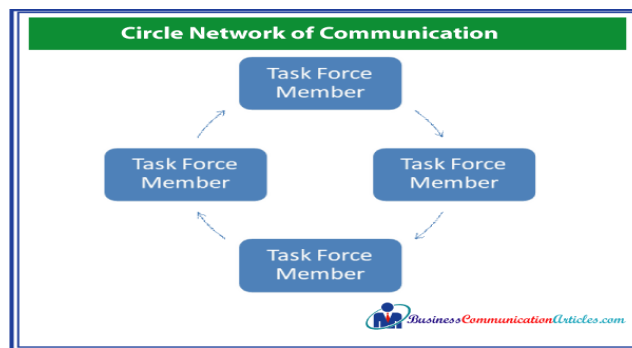
Chain Network:

Here each member communicates with the person above and below. It reflects upward & downward communication and exists in a vertical hierarchy. Learn the difference between upward and downward communication in this link.



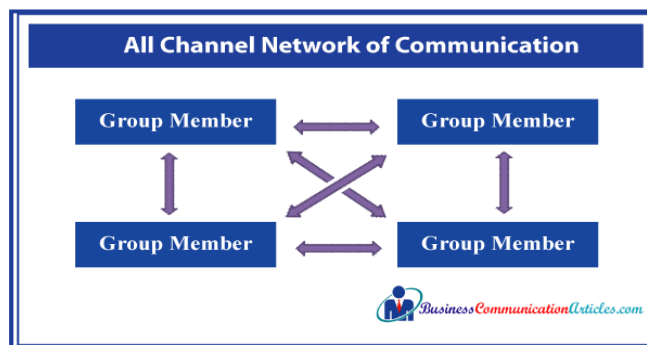
Circle Network:

Here each member communicates with the people on both sides. It is generally found in the case of a committee or task force.



All Channel Network:

Here all members of the group communicate with all other members. Such a network is available in the case of informal groups I Group members that have no formal structure, leader, or task to perform.



Tools of Modern Communication

Conventional process of communication is not sufficient to meet the multidimensional needs of the business enterprises. So, the need for modern communication technology emerges to meet the desired need of modern business enterprises. Worldwide communication has been facilitated by the electronic transmission of data which connects individuals, regardless of geographic location,

almost instantly. Modern communication technology depends upon computer which is a device made up of electronic and electromechanical components. There are a number of communication channels representing both the wide range of possible uses of data communication and the various new technologies in the communication industry. Examples of such technologies are-telephone lines, switched lines, coaxial cables, optical fiber transmission, microwave transmission, infrared transmission, laser transmission, radio transmission, te transmission etc. Oral or voice media in electronic forms include-voice' mail, audio tape and video tele-conferencing and video conferencing, close circuit television, instant message etc.

Written median electronic forms include-e-mail, fax, computer conferencing (with groupware), web sites etc. Some modern devices of communication are discussed as follows:

1. Telephone:

The most popular device to communicate orally is telephone. It connects irrespective of distance. It brings the tone and helps us to communicate at any movement and from an any location. It was invented by Graham Bell during 1876.Telephone in those era and telephone in mod age is far different. The modern telephone has taken the shape of cell phone which is easy and can be used at anywhere in the globe where network is supported by mobile operator

2. Mobile Technology:

It has made a revolution in the arena of means to communicate anywhere supported by network. Such technology has brought the following communication and providing useful value-added services: a Voice-Mail; b Voice SMS; c. Text SMS d Web Browsing: e. Welcome Tune; f. Music Gift g. Push-Pull service;

3. Multimedia:

It is an excellent way which combines sound, text animation, we get the taste of modern communication. of catchy effect. When such effect is displayed on Multimedia is widely used in advertising field to highlight any product or service. The effect multimedia can also be observed through our cell phone. We are using EDGE or GPRS in days where multimedia is the key feature.

4. Electronic Mail (E-mail):

Electronic mail is popularly known as e-mail where textual messages are sent to the receiver through tele-communication links. Here computer terminals are connected together in network to transfer message from one to one or one to many. Sender first ty message on a computer screen and then send pes the s to the receiver. The respective message is dropped in the receiver's mail box and receiver can read the message and answer if required. Both sending and receiving of e-mail are processed and directed by mail server computers which are connected through network.

5. Video Conferencing:

Video conferencing is a new device of communication of recent times. This method of communication is generally used for holding meetings and discussions. This device of communication is mostly used when it is difficult to arrange a much expensive meeting or when long distance travel is involved. Conferencing is virtual meeting where persons can see, hear, talking to and actually work with people in different locations around the world without the expense of travel. Conferencing may take many forms, such as, video-conferencing, audio-conferencing, multimedia conferencing, screen sharing etc. Conferencing programs such as the

popular CU-See-Mee allow work groups to use the Intranet to see each other's' faces in small windows on the computer screen and to hear voices through computer speakers.

6.Tele-conference:

This technology allows people to hold meeting or conversation over telephone Here distant participants exchange their oral message and can only listen (vsme, TrJ) the voice. In multinational culture, group meeting takes place through tele conferencing.

7.Tele-text:

This is an electronic message broadcasted through television. Such text is widely used to communicate a large group of people once at a time. Breaking news, business report, stock market update, weather report etc. are presented as a tele-text through television.

8.Internet:

Internet is the latest development in the communication world and has changed the way of life in respect of communication. It has increased the pace of communication. Internet can be defined as the network of networks that are connected through telephone lines, satellite or radio links. It connects thousands of computer users through networking and helps to explore for information and data and share global knowledge. Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce) is based on the architecture of internet and helping business firms to do business with respective stake-holders. It can be used for sending e-mail, tele-conferencing, video-conferencing, VoIP (Voice over internet protocol) calls, chatting and messaging etc.

9. Smartphones

Cellular phones were revolutionized into smartphones, which can be considered as a small computer that also functions as a telephone. Apart from allowing people to make calls and send messages, several apps, or applications can be installed on a smartphone, which permits people to send emails or surf the internet. There are also several devices that can be used with this modern phone such as Bluetooth earphones or speakers. The experts behind [American Inventor Spot](#) even scrutinized some of the coolest gadgets that you can use in conjunction with your smartphones such as a wireless and USB charger, a screen cleaner, as well as a Wi-Fi booster. The features of smartphones may vary from one manufacturer to another, with the camera and audio functionality often proving to be the distinction.

10. Tablets

Tablets are already considered as communication devices because with a reliable internet connection, or with a certain data capacity, people can reach out to each other using their tablets. While the first types of tablets already appeared in the 80s, it wasn't until the first iPad was launched in 2010 wherein tablets were appreciated by the general public. iPad held a fair share of the market until [Android tablets](#) came into the picture. Tablets generally have similar features to a smartphone, and perhaps the most notable difference between the two is the size of the device. With a tablet, people are able to initiate audio and video calls, as well as send messages through different apps and channels.

11. Laptops

Laptops are portable computers that may come in different weights and sizes. When laptops were first introduced in the market, they were often deemed as glorified calculators. Currently, modern laptops boast of the features of desktop computers with the added advantage of portability. There are [several types of laptops](#) that are intended to fit a specific purpose, such as for business needs, for gaming and entertainment purposes, for recording and music, as well as for personal use. Nevertheless, with a stable and reliable internet connection, people have the ability to get in touch with each other through different messaging software installed in their laptop computers. Apart from messaging services, people can also utilize email services and video conferencing through their laptops.

12. Personal Digital Assistant

Personal digital assistants, or PDAs have similar functions as that of laptop computers. Its features often include phone service, fax service, email and Internet connections. These are usually utilized by employers to equip their employees in instances wherein the use of laptop computers are not possible.

13. Virtual Assistants

The recent addition to the modern devices utilized for communication would be virtual assistants. More and more people are now using virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa to send text messages, emails, as well as phone calls through their smartphones, especially when they have no means to do so or when it is inconvenient for them such as when they are driving on the road. In parallel to this, the recent years brought about the development of smart home assistants such as Amazon Echo or Google home, which can relatively do the same communication functions if programmed to do so.

Thanks to various technological innovations that brought about modern communication devices, allowing people to be connected no matter how geographically far they are from each other. Modern communication devices allowed families to stay in touch even if there is a need for some members to live overseas. In the same manner, these technologically advanced devices also allow businesses to continuously operate their processes, allowing them to reach their customers regardless of geographical distance and time zone differences.
