

**Topic – CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION**

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## **CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION**

It is basically a network operation much like the computer that we use. Much of the communication in an organisation is what we call formal communication. It flows in formally established channels and is concerned with work-related matters. All orders, instructions and directions are communicated to the subordinates through this channel. Several channels are available to organisations and their employees.

**1. Formal Channels Of Communication** – It provides both vertical and horizontal flows of communication.

**(i) Vertical Channel** – A manager issues instructions and orders down the levels in management hierarchy- this is vertical channel of communication. This channel can be classified into two categories depending upon their origin and destination. These two categories of vertical channel are (a) Downward Communication, and (b) Upward Communication.

**(a) Downward Communication** – Communication which flow from superiors to the subordinates are known as downward communication. The organisational chart reflects the flow of authority and the channels through which downward communication must flow. These communication are the medium through which superior (boss): (1) directs the effect of his subordinates; (2) defines the targets or goals of the organisation and the sub-group or sub-unit; (3) tells the subordinates what is expected from them, what resources are available, how well they are doing, etc.; and (4) authorities reward and punishment. In fact, downward communication channels help to direct the behaviour of the employees.

**(b) Upward Communication** – Communication which flow from the subordinates to superiors are called upward communication. Upward communication is the other aspect of vertical communication channel. Manager must encourage upward communication – where subordinates feel free to transmit their opinions, attitude and actions to their seniors. In fact, it provides an opportunity for the employees to convey his suggestions and feelings to the management. This communication generally act as a feedback. It can help in redesigning and making midcourse corrections in plans and activities.

**(ii) Horizontal Channel** – Horizontal channel of communication occurs among the same levels in different departments or offices of the organisation, enabling exchange of information and coordination of activities without referring all matters to support managers. This is known as the 'gang- plank. In fact, horizontal channel of communication is the communication between members of different work groups at the same organisational level. This type of communication is also known as lateral or cross - wise communication. The objects of horizontal channel of communication are (a) to bring coordination among peers, (b) to solve common problems, and (c) to share each other's experience.

**(B) Informal Channels of Communication** – The grapevine carries the type of personal information not generally communicated through formal channels. For example, a manager cannot announce his bad mood officially to his subordinates. The best way to do this would be to put this information on the grapevine so that it reaches the subordinates informally. The grapevine consists of a complex network of informal, person to person personal contacts taking place all day long on the job. These are characterised by half - truths, rumours and facts. Grapevine is not the result of deliberate management design. It offers some attractions and distractions:

**(i) Attractions** – Some of the attractions of grapevine are as follows :

**(a)** It fulfils the desire of the people to communicate with one another for the latest information .

**(b)** Information usually travels more rapidly through the grapevine than through official communication channels or the normal channels.

**(c)** It offers the manager an insight into what the subordinates think.

**(d)** It disseminates some information that can otherwise not be officially transmitted. E.g., the reasons of an officer's sudden transfer or resignation.

**(e)** It gives members an outlet to freely express their fears, attitudes and thoughts during turbulent times.

**(ii) Distractions –** Some of the distractions of grapevine are as follows :

**(a)** In grapevine, the informal communication can be used to spread false rumours and destructive information.

**(b)** Its path and behaviour is unpredictable like a tornado it has no stable associates or definite pattern.

**(c)** It is based on oral or verbal communication and the communicator holds no responsibility, accountability and is at liberty to express imagination according to one's Whims and fancies.

Such informal network of communication cannot be wished away by the managers. It is uncalled for to stamp out the grapevine as this is next to impossible. Instead, an effective manager would make better use of it. A person should:

**(a)** Know people in the organisation, their attitude and behavioural patterns.

- (b)** Learn to read the grapevine message, discover the active participants and make the information more meaningful and effective through them.
- (c)** Counter half – truths and rumours with forceful presentation of facts and improve the formal channels.
- (d)** Use the grapevine to channel such information that, in the interest of the organisation and the individuals, cannot be transmitted officially.