

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

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**OBJECTIVES** To successfully complete this assignment, you must study the text and master the following objectives:

- Identify the parts of Shannon’s communications model.
  - State the barriers to effective communication.
  - Define active listening.
  - Describe how using proper orders and standard terminology may enhance safety and mission success.
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**DEFINITION** Communication is the process of exchanging information. Information is conveyed as words, tone of voice, and body language. Studies have shown that words account for 7 percent of the information communicated. Vocal tone accounts for 55 percent and body language accounts for 38 percent. To be effective communicators, team members must be aware of these forms, how to use them effectively, and barriers to the communications process.

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**Effective Ways To Communicate** The following actions have been observed in teams with effective communications skills.

- Acknowledge (“Roger”) communications.
  - Provide information in accordance with SOP’s.
  - Provide information when asked.
  - Repeat, as necessary, to ensure communication is accurately received.
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**Effective Ways  
To  
Communicate  
(Cont.)**

- Use standard terminology when communicating information.
- Request and provide clarification when needed.
- Ensure statements are direct and unambiguous.
- Inform the appropriate individuals when the mission or plans change.
- Communicate all information needed by those individuals or teams external to the team.
- Use nonverbal communication appropriately.
- Use proper order when communicating information.

**PROCESS**

To understand the complexity of the process and how it can be influenced, Figure 7-1 presents a communication model.

## SHANNON'S COMMUNICATIONS MODEL

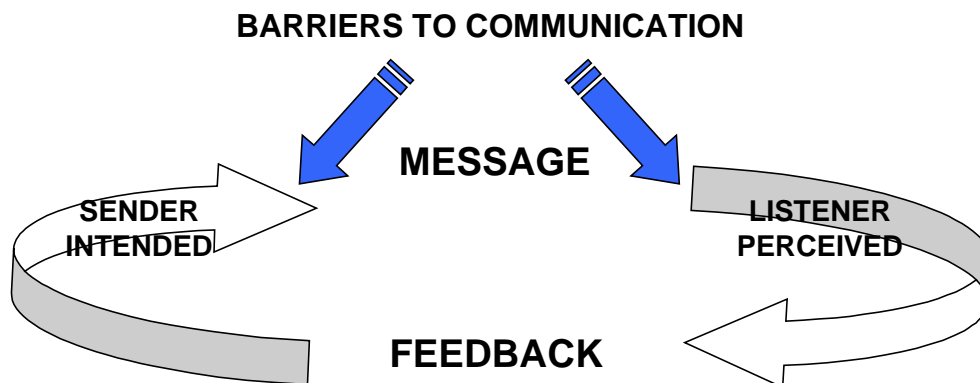


Figure 7-1

**BARRIERS**

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Barriers are influencing factors which impede or breakdown the continuous communications loop. They block, distort, or alter the information. By identifying the barriers and applying countermeasures, team members can effectively communicate. Barriers include:

- Non-assertive behavior
- Task-preoccupation
- Anger or frustration
- Personal bias
- Team diversity
- Lack of confidence
- Inappropriate priorities
- Organizational structure
- Distractions
- Tunnel vision
- Interruptions
- Rank differences.

**SENDER**

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Communications is a two-way process that starts with the sender. The sender should be conveying information necessary for mission accomplishment. The sender must be proactive in making the receiver understand the message. Too often, what is said is not always what is heard. To prevent this from happening, do the following:

- State one idea at a time.
- State ideas simply.
- Explain when appropriate.
- Repeat if appropriate.
- Encourage feedback.
- Read between the lines. Did your choice of words, tone of the sentence, and body language (intentional gestures or subconscious movements) convey the same meaning?

**MESSAGE**

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The message is simply the information the sender wants to communicate to the receiver. The message is usually verbal, but it can also be non-verbal. To reduce potential problems, the sender should:

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- Use correct terminology (standard commands).
  - Speak clearly.
  - Time the message to be sent when the receiver is able to listen.
  - Use appropriate vocal tone and volume. Commands must be heard and perceived as an imperative, not a question or comment. *When breaking error chains, or returning others to situational awareness, express a tone of urgency and importance.*
  - Be relevant to the receiver, not a distraction. *The message needs to be inclusive and informative. Inclusive means that it contains everything necessary for the receiver to understand the sender's point. Informational means it is something that the receiver needs to know.*
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## RECEIVER

The receiver needs information to accomplish his/her task. *The effectiveness of the team often rests on its members' ability to listen.* Unfortunately, most people find listening difficult.

**The receiver must exert control over the communication process. For receivers to have control, it is important that they ensure that the senders understand what the receivers want and why they want it.**

**Example:** Without the conning officer exerting positive control over the flow of information from the navigation evaluator and shipping officer, important information could be buried in the large amount of information that is periodically relayed during a transit in a congested waterway.

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**Active  
Listening**

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Active Listening is a process used by the receiver to facilitate communication and enhance performance. It requires the receiver to be active in the communications process. To actively listen, the receiver needs to:

- Focus attention on the message, giving it momentary priority. If possible, look at the sender.
- Listen and look for the indirect message content (nonverbal) as well as hearing the words. Observing non-verbal cues provides information regarding what the sender wants to convey. Your perception of the message and the sender's intent for the message may be different. Word choice, tone of voice, body position, gestures and eye movements reflect the feelings behind the spoken word.
- Keep an open mind and suspend judgment.
- Verify what was heard. Don't assume that your perception of the message agrees with the sender's intent. Provide the sender feedback.

**MESSAGE  
FEEDBACK**

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Effective receivers verify their understanding of the message with the sender. They consider words, tone, and body language when they give feedback. Forms of feedback include:

- Acknowledgment.
- Parroting.
- Paraphrasing.

**Acknowledging**

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“Rogering” a message is common courtesy. It demonstrates that the receiver has heard the message. However, for critical information or complicated ideas, acknowledgment normally is insufficient to ensure understanding.

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**Parroting**

Parroting is repeating back verbatim the words of the speaker. It confirms to the speaker that the words transmitted were the words received. It is preferred in verifying receipt of standard commands. Like acknowledgement, it does not ensure the receiver understood the message.

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**Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing is rephrasing, in your own words, the content of the sender's message to the sender's satisfaction. It clarifies the message for both you and the sender. Paraphrasing allows you to check your understanding of the message and shows the sender, that you listened accurately (i.e., the content and intent was correctly understood). If you listened inaccurately, the sender has an opportunity to correct the communication error.

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**SELF-QUIZ #6**

1. How is information conveyed?

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2. Which method of conveying information accounts for only 7% of the information actually conveyed? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the parts of Shannon's Communications Model?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name three barriers to effective communication.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is Active Listening?

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6. What is parroting?

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7. What is paraphrasing?

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**ANSWERS TO SELF-QUIZ #6**

Question	Answer	Reference
1.	Information is conveyed as words, tone of voice, and body language.	7-1
2.	Words.	7-1
3.	a. Sender. b. Message. c. Receiver or listener. d. Feedback. e. Barriers	7-2
4	Identify three of the 12 barriers including: a. Non-assertive behavior. b. Task preoccupation. c. Anger or frustration.	7-3
5.	Active listening is the process used by the receiver to facilitate communication and enhance performance.	7-5
6.	Parroting is repeating back verbatim the words of the speaker.	7-6
7.	Paraphrasing is rephrasing, in your own words, the content of the sender's message to the sender's satisfaction.	7-6



**Student Notes**

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