Chapter 3

Robbins & Judge

Organizational Behavior

14th Edition

Communication

Kelli J. Schutte
William Jewell College

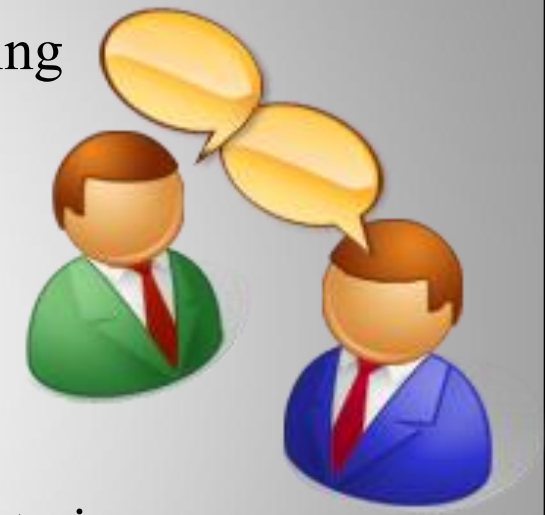
Chapter Learning Objectives

- **After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**
  - Identify the main functions of communication.
  - Describe the communication process and distinguish between formal and informal communication.
  - Contrast downward, upward, and lateral communication with examples.
  - Contrast oral, written, and nonverbal communication.
  - Contrast formal communication networks and the grapevine.
  - Analyze the advantages and challenges of electronic communication.
  - Identify common barriers to effective communication.
  - Show how to overcome the potential problems in cross-cultural communication.

Functions of Communication

Communication

- The transference and understanding of meaning
- Two way process

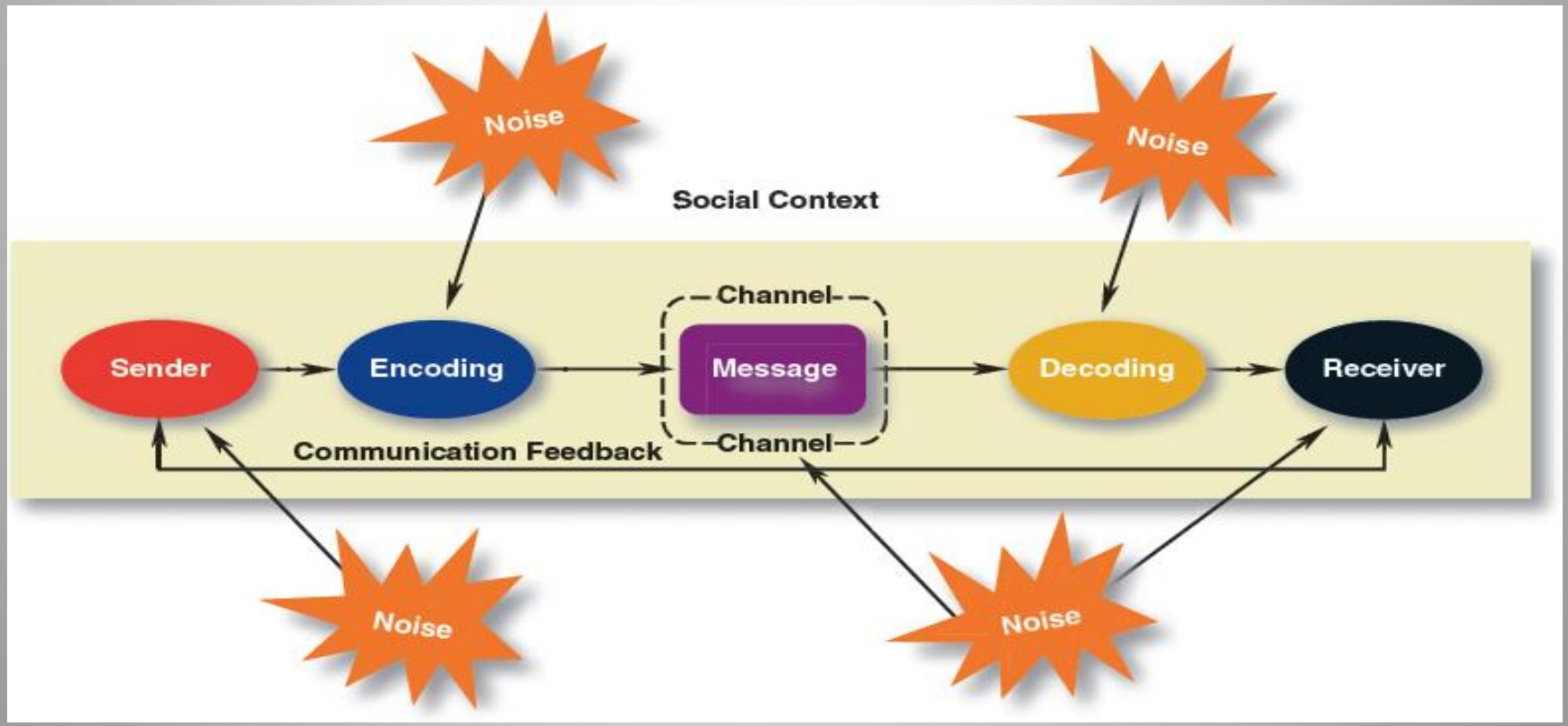


Communication Functions

- Clarifying what employees must do and how to improve their performance.
- Facilitate decision making by providing information needed to make decisions
- Provide a release for emotional expression

The Communication Process

- **Communication Process**
  - The steps between a source and a receiver that result in the transference and understanding of meaning



Key Parts of Communication Process

- **The Sender** – *initiates message*
- **Encoding** – *translating thought to message*
- **The Message** – *what is communicated*
- **The Channel** – *the medium the message travels through*
- **Decoding** – *the receiver's action in making sense of the message*
- **The Receiver** – *person who gets the message*
- **Noise** – *things that interfere with the message*
- **Feedback** – *a return message regarding the initial communication*

The Communication Process

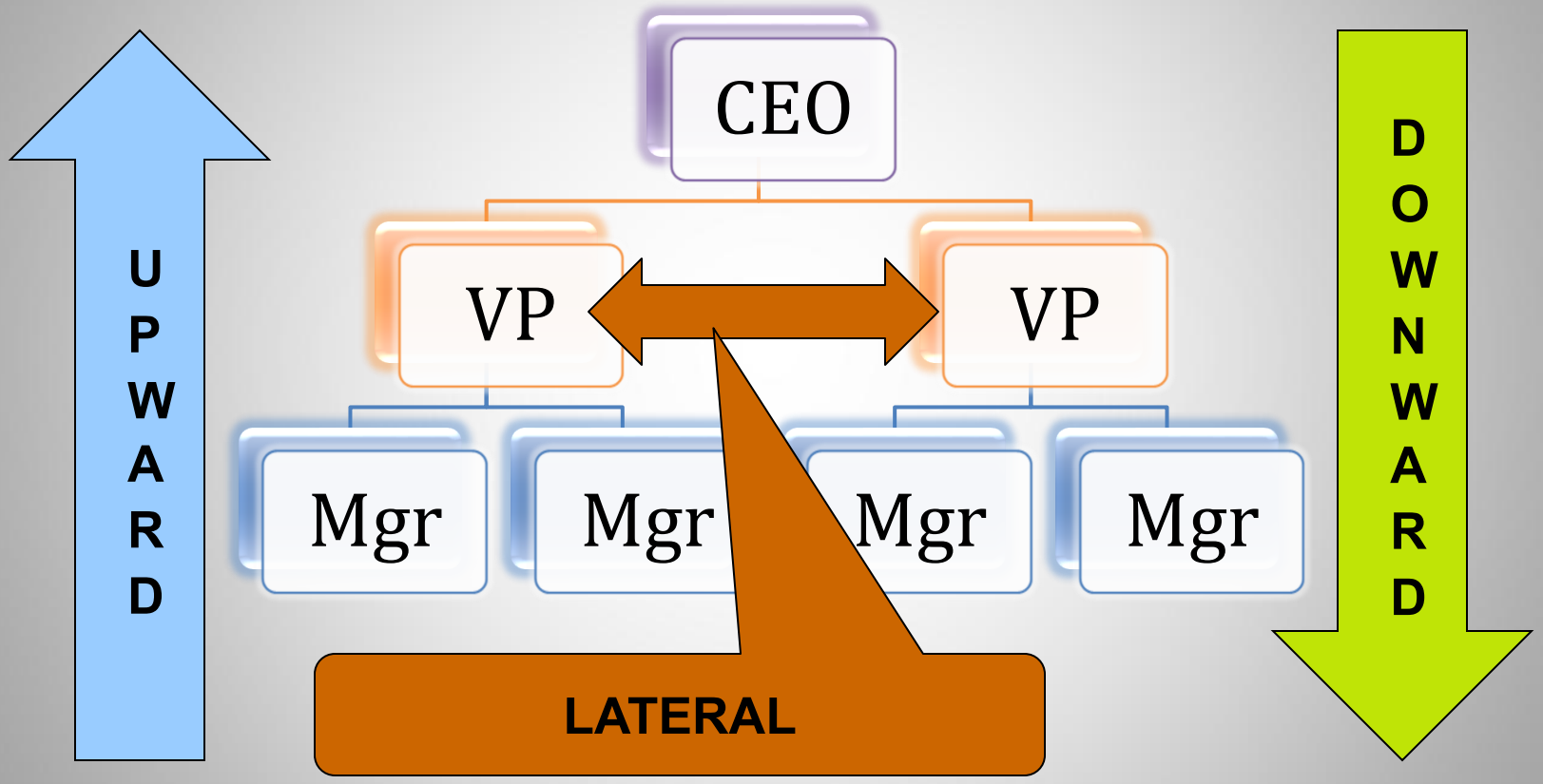
- The sender takes the message to be sent and encodes it either through verbal or written methods.
- They pass the message through the determined channel
- Then it is handed off to the receiver who receives the message and decodes it.
- The process is hindered by noise or communication barriers such as the perceived message.
- Feedback is the check on how successful we were in passing the correct message to the receiver.

Communication Channels

- **Channel**
  - The medium selected by the sender through which the message travels to the receiver

- **Types of Channels**
  - Formal Channels
    - Are established by the organization and transmit messages that are related to the professional activities of members
  - Informal Channels
    - Used to transmit personal or social messages in the organization. These informal channels are spontaneous and emerge as a response to individual choices

Direction of Communication



Ways of Communication

- **Oral Communication**
  - Spoken word
  - Advantages: Speed and feedback
  - Disadvantage: Distortion of the message when involve greater number of people.
- **Written Communication**
  - Emails, text message, letters
  - Advantages: Tangible and verifiable
  - Disadvantages: Time consuming and lacks feedback
- **Nonverbal Communication**
  - A nod, a look, body movement, facial expression
  - Advantages: Provides observable expression of emotions and feelings
  - Disadvantage: Misunderstanding of body language or gestures

Body Language Issues

All of these common U.S. hand signs are offensive somewhere in the world.

In certain Commonwealth countries, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand outward-facing V sign is an obscene gesture.

The 'OK' sign is offensive in Brazil, equivalent to the middle finger.

Body Language Issues

Pointing with an index-finger point is considered rude in most Asian countries.

In many European and South American countries, including Italy, Spain, Greece, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia, the horn gesture has a more obscene meaning.

In the Middle East, including Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the thumbs up gesture has the same meaning as the middle finger is in the US.

Barriers to Effective Communication

- **Information Overload**
  - A condition in which information inflow exceeds an individual's processing capacity

- **Filtering**
  - A sender's manipulation of information so that it will be seen more favorably by the receiver
  - Fear of conveying bad news and desire to please the boss lead employees to tell their superiors what they think they want to hear rather than the actual truth.

Barriers to Effective Communication

- **Language**
  - Words have different meanings to different people

- **Gender Differences**
  - Men complaint that women talk on and on about their problems and women complaint that men don't listen
  - Men and women communicate differently

Electronic Communications: E-mail

- **E-mail**
  - Advantages: quickly written, sent, and stored; low cost for distribution
  - Disadvantages:
    - Messages are easily and commonly misinterpreted
    - Not appropriate for sending negative messages
    - Difficult to "get" emotional state understood
    - Non-private: e-mail is often monitored and may be forwarded to anyone

Electronic Communications: Social Media

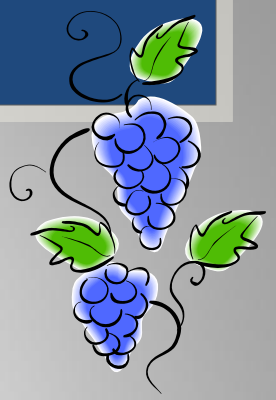
- **Includes:**
  - Social networks like Instagram® and Facebook®
- **Key Points:**
  - These are public spaces – anyone can see what you post
  - Can be used for job application screening

Electronic Communications: Blogs and Videoconferencing

- **Blogs: Web sites about a single person (or entity) that are typically updated daily**
  - A popular, but potentially dangerous activity:
    - Employees may post harmful information
    - Such comments may be cause for dismissal
    - Can be against company policy to post in a blog during company time and on company equipment/connections

- **Videoconferencing: uses live audio and video Internet streaming to create virtual meetings**
  - Now uses inexpensive webcams and laptops in place of formal videoconferencing rooms

The Grapevine



- **Organization informal communication network.**
- **Three Main Grapevine Characteristics**
  1. Informal, not controlled by management
  2. Largely used to serve the self-interests of those who use it
  3. Perceived by most employees as being more believable and reliable than formal communications
- **Results from:**
  - Desire for information about important situations
  - Conditions that cause anxiety
- **Serves employee's social needs**

Summary and Managerial Implications

- **The less employees are uncertain, the greater their satisfaction; good communication reduces uncertainty!**
- **Communication is improved by:**
  - Choosing the correct channel
  - Being a good listener
  - Using feedback
- **Potential for misunderstanding in electronic communication is higher than for traditional modes**
- **There are many barriers to international communication that must be overcome**

Chapter Questions

1. **Draw the basic diagram of the communication process.**

2. **Based on the diagram you draw in Question 1, explain how the communication process takes place.**

3. **Using your real life experience as example, elaborate a scenario where miscommunication takes place between you and other people in that situation.**