

# Organizational Communication and Reports

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Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 13:5 May 2013

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## Flow of Communication in Organizations

Communication is a professional way of exchanging ideas, thoughts, or one's own mind in any organization. It is conducted at different levels within an organization. Features of Communication adopted at various levels of any organization depend on the content, style requirements as well as the hierarchy of the personnel involved. We may look at the flow of communication in the following manner.

1. Horizontal
2. Vertical
3. Upward
4. Downward
5. Crosswise
6. Spiral

### Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication is generated among the people of the same rank in any organization. This is used more often for coordination between various departments. This also helps effective decision-making purposes and wider participation of responsible individuals and groups. In order to achieve the production target for a particular month the discussion held between the production managers will certainly be a perfect example for horizontal communication.

### Downward Communication

However when the production manager imparts certain instruction to the workers and supervisors under him or her for production and all issues relating to it, it will be called downward communication. Here the information moves from the higher authority to the subordinates.

### Upward Communication

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Similarly if the supervisor reports to the manager regarding the present position of the work it is known as upward communication.

### **Spiral Communication**

If the management circulates the copy of the recently decided upon new bonus and incentive scheme among the employees, it'll be known as spiral communication.

### **Diagonal Communication**

Sometimes the communication flows between persons of different levels of hierarchy and who have no direct reporting relationship. This is used most probably to quicken the process of information flow, to improve understanding and to coordinate efforts for the achievement of organizational objectives. Such a movement of information is called as diagonal communication.

### **Need to Employ All the Modes of Communication**

Organizations that do not engage all their staff/employees including higher level “officers” in all these kinds of communication patterns will not make much progress and will not be able to get the work done. Government departments often employ one-way communication from top to bottom and this results in delays and failures to achieve the goals. Some private organizations, unfortunately, in due course fall in the pattern of one-way communication and thus ensure their demise in due course.

### **Informal Communication and Grapevine**

All organizations must encourage informal communication among their workers at various levels. This brings in a sense of participation and enrichment of the personal and professional lives of employees. However, for any better working atmosphere, we need to ensure that informal communication is kept distinct from rumours. “Grapevine” is unavoidable:

“Grapevine is an informal channel of business communication. It is called so because it stretches throughout the organization in all directions irrespective of the authority levels. Man as we know is a social animal. Despite existence of formal channels in an organization, the informal channels tend to develop when he interacts with other people in organization. It exists more at lower levels of organization”

[http://www.managementstudyguide.com/grapevine\\_communication.htm](http://www.managementstudyguide.com/grapevine_communication.htm)

Note that grapevine communication flows in all directions without much effort! This may create both positive and negative impact on the environment within the organization.

### **Reporting**

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Reporting is an important form of business communication in any organization. Generating and analyzing reports is a routine task in every organization. It is nothing but the data related to the organization. Reports are written to analyze the situation, to offer an alternative method of operation, to study the growth of a company, or to observe the trend in the company.

Report is an account of something that happened in the past. It means carrying back, because re means back, port means to carry. It is the description of some event that happened already. There are 4 types but these are inter-related:

1. Oral report
2. Written report
3. Informal report
4. Formal report

### **Oral Report**

It is purely spoken.

It is presented face to face.

It is easy for the speakers.

It is ephemeral in nature.

In this immediate clarification is possible.

It has less accuracy and reliability.

It is purely informal.

### **Written Report**

It is in written form.

There is no face to face contact here.

It is easy for the readers.

It is a permanent record.

In this immediate clarification is not possible.

It is more accurate and reliable

It is very formal.

## **Informal Report**

It has got an informal style, but the contents may be same as that of the formal reports. Informality is seen in choice of words, tone, and summarizing tendency. Not all details and facts may be presented, some conclusions are highlighted. The report meets the urgent requirements to keep the staff as well as supervisors informed of the current situation. So it is written in a shorter form than the formal report. For example, if the managing director wishes to know the current status of production, or people involved in production, or a particular department, the information can be presented in an informal way. Letter reports are normally written in the format of any letter that is official.

## **Formal Report**

These must display the seriousness of purpose and content presenting elaborate data which cannot be informally presented.

There are different types.

1. Routine periodic reports
2. Informational reports
3. Interpretive reports

## **Routine Periodic Report**

They are also known as periodic reports which are submitted annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly, or at any particular interval with prescribed materials in the routine life of business activities. In these, some columns are given in a Performa where some check-offs are to be made, or if anything is to be written it is very brief; they present the collected data and facts in their original form, for e.g., the confidential report on employees may include a brief recommendation for more funds or an extension of the duration of any project.

## **Informational Report**

This is mainly for conveying information which entails all the details related to the subject under discussion and it is helping to understand the aim, objective, organization, policies, regulations, procedures, problems and future outlook of a company. This serves as a purpose of discussion, determining the course of action, co-ordinating the operation of the organization.

## **Interpretive Report**

It is helpful for the readers to analyze, interpret, evaluate and gather facts and ideas. This differs from informational report because it interprets the data obtained from and arrives at some

conclusions and recommendations, hence leading the readers to some course of action. The major emphasis is on the analysis of the results of an investigation.

### **The Present Situation in Preparing Reports**

Many corporations have begun to employ people with technical writing skills specifically to help write reports. This is a welcome development, because documents can be written with readability. General Meeting of the shareholders as well as even the periodic regular Board meetings do require clear and straightforward presentation of information.

### **Deficient Training in Colleges**

Our syllabus needs to change drastically to focus more on *doing* than on acquiring mere information, especially in the area of language learning.

1. One can blame easily the state of our high school education for all the ills of deficient traits that we notice in our college students. But this does not take us anywhere and it is a sheer waste of our time.
2. Let us focus on practical matters of writing letters, reports, resumes, and many other function-oriented writing. For this, our teachers must be re-oriented in their thinking and skills. Then alone they will be able to communicate and transfer skills to their students.
3. Let our textbooks be oriented toward form and content of business communication strategies and offer realistic models with flexibility and grading of the models of reports presented.
4. Let there be team work in preparing reports in the class. In fact, I would encourage that reports are written only through team work and that too within class hours.
5. Let students present the reports in the class and let others have an opportunity to critically evaluate such reports so that students will learn the structures and strategies easily through interaction.
6. There are many other innovative strategies and processes we can adopt. But for all this to happen we need positive attitude.

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### **Reference**

[http://www.managementstudyguide.com/grapevine\\_communication.htm](http://www.managementstudyguide.com/grapevine_communication.htm)

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