

## What are Barriers of Communication – Semantic Barriers, Psychological Barriers, Organisational Barriers, Personal Barriers and Mechanical Barriers

1. Semantic barriers,
2. Psychological barriers,
3. Organisational barriers
4. Personal barriers, and
5. Mechanical barriers.

### **1. Semantic Barriers:**

This denotes barriers of language and symbols and their interpretation. Every language consists of symbols used to transmit meaning from one person to another. Even the Morse code and mathematical symbols are used in a language for communication purpose. The barriers are from the linguistic capability of the individual involved in the communication.

#### **i. Poor Quality of Message:**

When a message is prepared, it must be consistent in all respects like – clarity, precision and usage of appropriate words to express the ‘idea’ to be transmitted. It should be in simple words, easily understood by the receiver. Otherwise it becomes non-specific and the receiver will have a difficulty in following it properly.

#### **ii. Faulty Transmission:**

When message is received from the superior to the subordinate, the individual receiving it must be able to translate it to different categories of subordinates having the constraints of level of understanding and their IQ. It does require proper interpretation of the message received to help disseminate the information to the subordinates.

#### **iii. Lack of Clarity:**

In all the messages, there are certain ideas, which need to be understood correctly. In other words, the meaning between the lines of the message must be well-perceived by the receiver. If it is not, there is every likelihood of the message being misunderstood leading to confusion.

#### **iv. Technical Language:**

It is often seen that technical language is used by specialist persons in their communication. This may not be known by a common man. As far as possible, when communicating to common people, it must be in a simple language,

common to all. For example, take the case of a doctor, who prescribes medicine to a patient and writes 'TDS' (an abbreviation of three times a day). An ordinary patient may not be able to understand this unless it is written in a simple language, or the abbreviation is explained to him.

## ***2. Psychological Barriers:***

In interpersonal communication, the psychological state of mind of the sender, as well as that of the receiver makes lot of difference. When an individual is under emotion, his tone overpowers the script of the message. This creates an obstacle in normal communication leading to emotional barriers.

### **i. Premature Evaluation:**

This premature evaluation is the possible outcome of message before it is transmitted to the receiver. Such an evaluation may prematurely conclude the message may not bring the desired result, thereby he withholds the message. This is an important psychological factor of communication barrier.

### **ii. Inadequate Attention:**

Normally, in a communication this happens at the receiver's end due to carelessness and not listening properly what the person at the other end is telling. This takes place in fact to face communication or in attending telephones.

### **iii. Transmission Losses and Poor Retention:**

When communication passes through various hands and levels in an organisation, the transmission of the message by various persons tends to become inaccurate or corrupt. This happens in written as well as vocal communication. In the latter, the receiver may not retain the message as it was transmitted to him due to poor retention capability, thus leading to confusion at a later stage.

### **iv. Undue Stress on Written Message**

In an organisation every executive believes that written message, instructions and orders would be better, since the chances of any miscarriage of the message are almost nil. When face to face communication of a message takes place between a superior and subordinate, it not only makes better understanding but is also effective. It does instil confidence in the subordinate in so far as execution of the orders instructions is concerned. No doubt, it is a better medium of communication than the written one.

### **v. Lack of Trust in the Sender by the Receiver:**

When a communicator (sender) frequently alters the original communication, the receiver at the other end will normally delay the action warranted by the message. This happens due to uncertain decisions often taken by the sender. Thus, the communication becomes ineffective, for various alterations and additions. This is an example of lack of confidence on the part of the sender.

**vi. Failure to Communicate:**

At times, the superior/manager fails to communicate the desired information/order, etc. This may be the cause of flippant attitude of the sender or his apathy. For instance, the sender's over confidence that the message has already been conveyed to the people is likely to create confusion and embarrassment.

**3. Organisational Barriers:**

This depends upon the general organisational policy governing the communication network of the organisation. Such policy might be a written text explaining various aspects of communication, especially the upward, downward and lateral since it is desirable to bring an effective communication flow in the organisation.

**The barrier on this aspect is discussed below:**

**i. Restrictions Imposed by Rules of Organisation:**

Normally, the information is to be passed to higher ups through proper channel. This gets delayed while passing through the hierarchical ladder. Instructions in general for passing messages must be given. Also, specific instructions for handling important messages need to be explained to all in order to avoid delays.

**ii. Status/Hierarchical Positions Restrict the Flow of Communication:**

Status and/or position of an individual make a lot of difference in personal dealings. Superior/subordinate capacity in formal organisation also prevents free flow of communication. This happens especially in case of upward communication. A person from the lower rung in the hierarchy may find it difficult to approach directly the top executive of the organisation.

**iii. Complex Situation of the Organisation:**

Large organisations, where there are a number of levels in managerial posts for communication may get distorted. This takes place due to censoring of the message when transmitted in the upward direction; since people are usually hesitant to inform the superiors about the adverse aspects.

#### *4. Personal Barriers:*

**These barriers are those, which occur in communication, according to personal constraints at various levels of organisation such as:**

##### **i. Attitude of Superiors:**

Attitude of the superiors play as vital role in the communication process; whether it is upward or downward or in any other direction. Therefore, the attitude of superior, either favourable or unfavourable affects the flow of communication, i.e., from superior to subordinate and vice versa.

##### **ii. Insistence on Following Proper Channel:**

Superiors instruct their subordinates to follow the proper channel, while communicating. They do not want that a subordinate bypasses them and goes direct to the next higher authority. They always want to be in touch with the communication process, so as to help them to know what is happening in their jurisdiction.

During emergency situation, there may be a need to bypass the superior; however, the superior may not like it. He may prevent it and instruct the subordinates to keep him in the picture with whatever information / message being passed to higher up, as and when occasion arises.

##### **iii. Lack of Confidence in Subordinate:**

It is a general perception that subordinates are not competent enough to advise superiors, since they do not possess the capacity to do so. This apprehension makes the superior to have lack of confidence in subordinates. However, this idea may not be correct, as there are more able subordinates than their superiors in many respects.

##### **iv. Preoccupation of Superior:**

A superior feels that there is no necessity to communicate him each and every matter, as he is always preoccupied with his own work. Supervisor's involvement with their subordinate is a major requirement for efficiency, which many superiors ignore due to lack of time as an excuse.

##### **v. Lack of Awareness:**

Inadequate knowledge about the importance of communication and its usefulness in various ways, at times, the superiors may not give desired attention to it. This may lead to restricted or poor transmission of communication affecting the organisation. This can lead to inefficiency and mismanagement.

##### **vi. Hesitation to Communicate:**

This happens to be a cause with subordinates not to communicate with their superiors. Subordinates show unwillingness to convey the superior certain information; since such part of information may have an adverse effect on them. Thus, the hesitation to communicate takes place.

### **5. Mechanical Barriers:**

Mechanical barriers are another group of factors putting barriers in the smooth flow of communication.

#### **They are:**

- i. Inadequate arrangements for transmission of message
- ii. Poor office layout
- iii. Detective procedure and practices
- iv. Use of wrong medium.

#### **i. Inadequate Arrangement for Transmission of Message:**

The arrangements include proper coding and decoding facilities. This is normally carried out through coding machines and trained staff to operate such machines. When important information is sent under different classification, top secret, secret, confidential, etc., adequate care has to be taken in its transmission. It should not be leaked out to unauthorised persons. Safety and security of classified information need to be handled by responsible staff.

#### **ii. Poor Office Layout:**

A proper information centre is an inescapable necessity to transmit the messages with in the organisation and outside. Therefore, various types of information transmitting through like wireless sets, radio communication system, electronic machines- FAX, e-mail, etc., are required. The infrastructural facilities to accommodate these systems are very essential for effective communication. In their absence there can be various obstacles in the transmission of information.

#### **iii. Defective Procedures and Practices:**

There must be defined procedures for docketing of incoming and outgoing messages properly maintained in an information centre. Also, proper arrangements to allot priority messages like immediate, most immediate, etc., and their subsequent transmissions, if all these are not looked into, the very purpose of communicating will be defeated.

#### **iv. Use of Wrong Medium:**

This is another barrier in mechanical communication. It is the responsibility of the sender of the message to select the right medium. For example, let us take despatch of letters from one organisation to another at a distant place.

