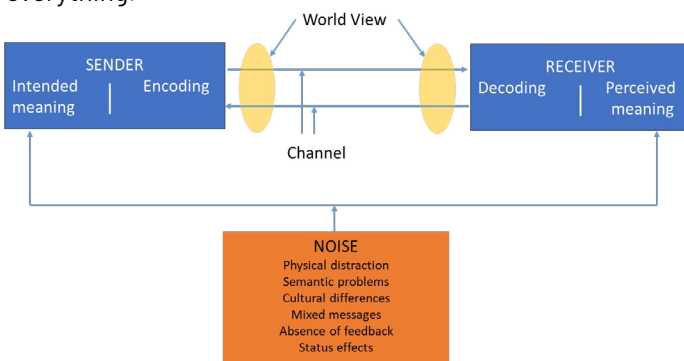


Effective Communication

WHAT ARE THE 'PRESSURE POINTS' WHEN IT COMES TO COMMUNICATION?

When we explore the concept of communication, it helps to tease apart the individual components – this helps us to understand the 'pressure points' or in other words, where communication can break down.

When we communicate with someone, we are sending a message and choose a method or mode of communication to distribute that message. But for our message to get through to the other person, it is going through the lens of our world view. Our world view is basically as it sounds – the way we see the world, which is made up of every experience we have had to date, the way we were raised, our values and beliefs, our family and friends, the jobs we have had; everything.



Adapted from Wood et al., 2010

Before it reaches the other person, it also is subject to the impact of any noise. This could be physical noise, or more often it is anything that may distract the other person from receiving our message accurately and effectively. Some examples might be semantic problems, cultural differences, mixed messaging or the absence of feedback.

At that point, it goes through the other person's world view, which once again is a collection of that person's values, beliefs, experiences, and so on.

Now imagine the complexity of choosing a different medium or method (email instead of face to face, for example), imagine that people's emotions are running high (creating distraction and additional 'noise'); imagine all the places that communication can break down.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT CAN DISRUPT OUR COMMUNICATION?

We also need to recognise the impact of our unconscious biases and the impact this can have on our communication. Common biases include stereotyping, but there is actually a long list of biases that we may not even be aware of. Some of examples are:

Confirmation bias – our tendency to search for, interpret, favour, and remember information in a way that supports our beliefs or values.

Halo/horn effect – making an assumption (positive = halo, negative = horn) about an individual based on minimal information.

Affinity bias – gravitating to people who are similar to us in their appearance, beliefs or background.

Actor observer bias – explaining our own actions based on external or situational factors (e.g. I cut someone off on the drive to work because I have had a difficult morning and I'm late) while explaining other people's behaviours based on internal or personality-related factors (e.g. that person cut me off because they're selfish and bad driver).

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

These questions are designed to prompt team discussion and interaction following the podcast:

- What sort of communication 'break downs' have we experienced recently? Why did this happen?
- What are some of the biases that we have?
- How can our biases impact our communication with our customers and each other?