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COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

Part I: Background Information

I work with an information technology (IT) department in Brunswick, Maine. We maintain a network that serves several sites within the city. The maintenance includes running network cables, repairing computers, installing software, and removing viruses. The scope, location, and variety of our work require that we be organized and that we communicate effectively.

I have noticed several attempts to communicate at work which have resulted in misunderstandings that impacted either the effectiveness of the IT department or the opinions of others about the IT department. Although most of the problems involved only members of the IT department, there were instances which involved communications between the personnel in the IT department and other departments.

Part II: Communication Inhibitors

- *Audience expectations* – result when the message that is sent differs from the message that is expected by the audience, possibly causing confusion or resentment.
- *Competition barriers* – occur whenever the audience members attempt to focus on two or more activities simultaneously, distracting their attention away from the message.
- *Emotional barriers* – are caused by the audience's emotions--such as anger, resentment, or excitement—which interfere with its ability to understand objectively the message being delivered.
- *Physical barriers* – cause a breakdown in communications due to physical limitations, such as a lack of time, noise, environmental discomfort, or remoteness, and produces confusion or misunderstandings.

Part III: Incidents

Communication	Inhibitor	Analysis
When I arrived at work, my supervisor told me that he had some items for me to accomplish, then he immediately listed the items for me. I realized	Audience expectations	I expected my supervisor to assign the usual two or three tasks which would not require a list; I was unprepared.

<p>that I needed to make a list, so I obtained a pen and paper. I had to ask my supervisor to repeat the jobs to ensure that I had a list of all the jobs.</p>	<p>Competition barrier</p>	<p>“Some” normally meant two or three. I assumed that it meant the same thing this time. I was wrong.</p> <p>Looking for pen and paper while trying to listen to my supervisor distracted my attention, causing me to miss some of the jobs.</p>
<p>My supervisor directed me to obtain the address of a voice-over-IP phone. He told me how to obtain it since I was unfamiliar with the process. When I attempted the procedure and failed, I called my supervisor. He tried to tell the procedure to me over the phone, but the procedure still did not work. Upon his arrival, we attempted variations of the procedure without success.</p>	<p>Physical barriers</p>	<p>When my supervisor initially described how to retrieve the address, we did not have a voice-over-IP phone with us, preventing a hands-on demonstration. When I failed to retrieve the information and called my supervisor, he could not see the labels on the keys; therefore, when he told me the names of the keys, they did not match the keys on the phone that I was working on.</p>
<p>I called my supervisor to inform him of a situation, but he could not hear me because of a problem with his cell phone’s reception.</p>	<p>Physical barrier</p>	<p>The lack of adequate reception prevented the communication from occurring.</p>
<p>IT decided to remove the administrative access for users of computers and to limit Internet activity to reduce viruses and to provide automated backups of computer data. While accomplishing the changes, I explained what I was changing and why I was changing it. One or two</p>	<p>Emotional barrier</p>	<p>Some people did not want to give up administrative access to their computers, and they liked being able to surf the Internet. They viewed IT’s actions as a power struggle instead of an attempt to improve the reliability of the network and the computers.</p>

individuals just rolled their eyes and said, "Whatever."		
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Part IV: Evaluation

On a scale of 100, I give a grade of 85 to the communication effectiveness in my work place.

My associates and I generally communicate well, but the lack of reception for the cell phones (physical barrier) often prevents attempts to pass information or to coordinate the efforts of personnel. We need better cell phones. Furthermore, IT needs to promote a better understanding among all members of the organization about what IT does, the problems that IT faces, and how the actions taken by IT benefit everyone, not just IT.

As for the organization as a whole, when people call IT concerning problems, the individuals say what they think they need instead of describing the failure's indications or the requirements that must be met. IT must then ask the appropriate questions to determine the information that is needed to provide the required support. This interface between customer and our IT service reps also needs to be streamlined and made less frustrating for both parties.