

What is Organizational Communication?

Worksheet

Organizational communication is how an organization exchanges information internally and externally. It includes downward (manager to staff), upward (staff to manager), horizontal (peer to peer), and diagonal (across levels and departments) flows.

Questions

1. Which of the following is downward communication?

- A) An employee suggests an idea to the CEO
- B) A manager announces a new deadline to the team
- C) Two colleagues discuss a project
- D) An employee files a complaint with HR

2. What is a communication barrier?

- A) A channel like email
- B) Anything that blocks or distorts a message
- C) The feedback process
- D) A manager's role

3. Why might a company create a suggestion box?

- A) To replace all other communication
- B) To encourage upward communication from staff
- C) To eliminate the need for managers
- D) To record all company decisions

4. If a message is sent but not understood, which step failed?

- A) Encoding
- B) Decoding
- C) Feedback
- D) Channel choice

5. A manager sends an email explaining a new company policy. Employees ask questions in a reply-all. Is this effective organizational communication?

6. Two departments rarely talk; decisions from Finance never reach Marketing. What communication barrier exists?

7. An employee feels unheard when complaints go to their manager but nothing changes. Why might this fail?

8. Define: What is organizational communication?

9. Define: What are the four directions of communication in an organization?

10. Define: What is an example of a communication channel?

Answer Key

1. B) A manager announces a new deadline to the team - Downward = manager to staff. Option B is the manager (sender) communicating to the team (receivers).
2. B) Anything that blocks or distorts a message - Barriers = noise, silos, misunderstandings, jargon, or lack of trust that prevent clear communication.
3. B) To encourage upward communication from staff - A suggestion box is a channel for upward communication - allowing employees to share ideas and concerns with management.
4. B) Decoding - Decoding is when the receiver interprets the message. If it's misunderstood, decoding failed - or the message was unclear.
5. Yes. The manager encoded the policy in writing, chose email as the channel, employees received and decoded it, and provided feedback (questions). Two-way communication loop completed.
6. Horizontal communication barrier (silos). Departments aren't connected laterally. Fix: create cross-department meetings, shared channels, or liaison roles.
7. Upward communication may be blocked (manager doesn't listen or relay to above) or feedback loop is incomplete. The employee needs to know their message was received and acted upon.
8. The flow of information between people, departments, and levels in an organization.
9. Downward (manager to staff), upward (staff to manager), horizontal (peer to peer), and diagonal (across levels).
10. Email, meetings, phone calls, memos, instant messaging, or face-to-face conversation.

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