

CPLD CUSTOMER SERVICE LECTURE 4

COMMUNICATION APPROACHES IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

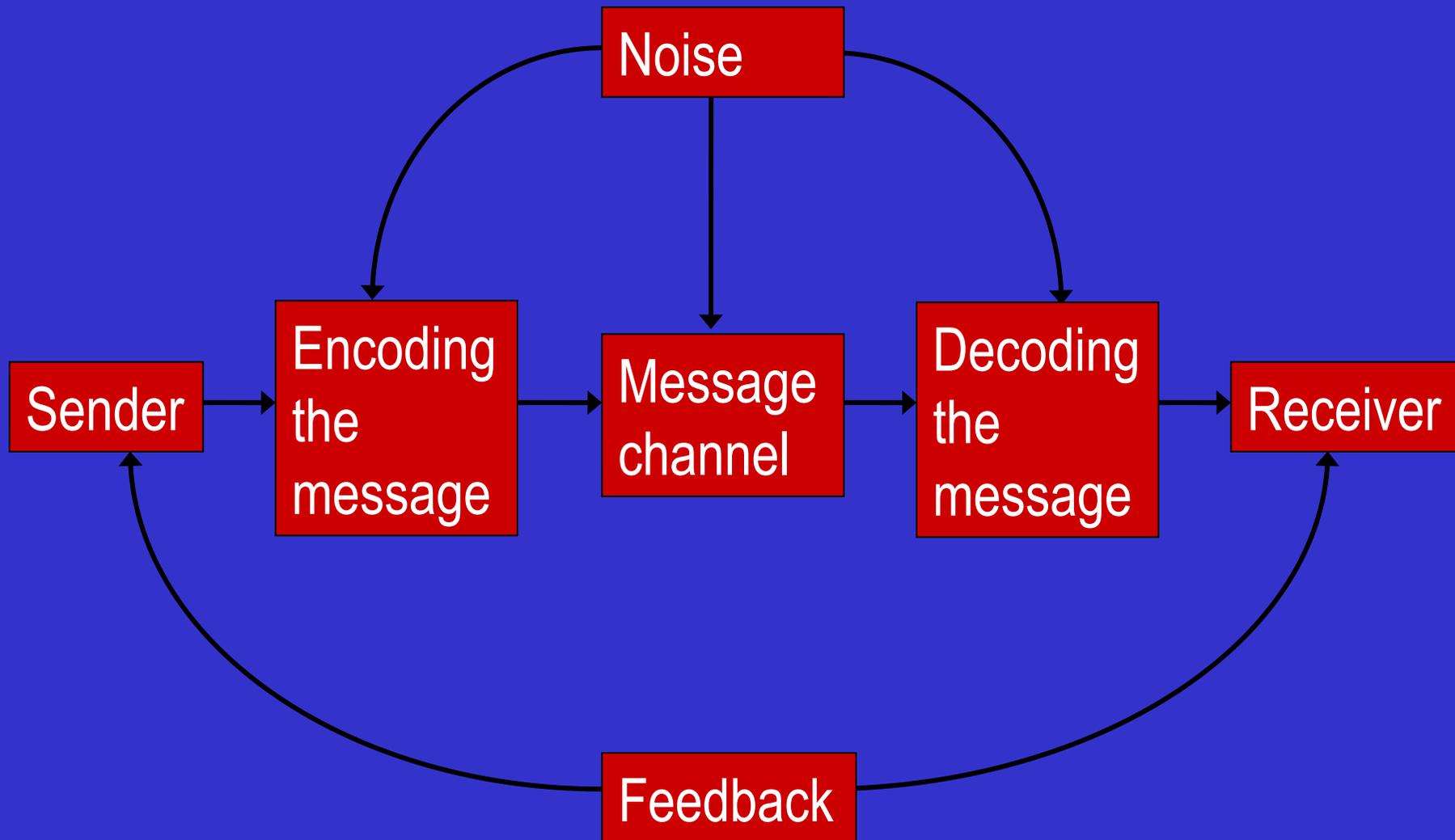
LECTURE 4 OUTCOMES

- **Communication and the communication Process**
- **Different Methods of Communication**

A. WHAT IS COMMUNICATION

- Customer service requires the ability to communicate effectively.
- Communication is the process in which information, ideas, and understanding are shared between two or among more people.
- The element of understanding must take place.

A. THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS



B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

- Listening is the ability to hear and understand what the speaker is saying.
- Writing is communicating by using the written word in a manner that others can understand the intended message.
- Talking is speaking by using words and terminology that others can comprehend.
- Reading is the ability to read and comprehend the written word.
- Non-verbal communication includes tone and inflection of one's voice, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact. Non-verbal communication may contradict verbal communication.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Being a good listener

- It is not easy to be a good listener.
- Listening is a skill that must be continuously developed.

Barriers to listening:

1. Distractions
 2. Closed mind to the speaker and message
 3. The listener won't stop talking
 4. Uncommitted to listening
- Listeners need to pay attention and focus on what is being said.
 - Avoid becoming visually distracted.
 - A good listener considers what is being said and avoids jumping to conclusions.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

2. A good listener always:

- Conveys sincerity
- Doesn't interject his or her own thoughts
- Nods head
- Doesn't finish the sentence for the speaker
- Paraphrases what was said
- Leans toward the speaker
- Shares positive comments
- Shows good eye contact

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

3. To improve your listening skills:

- Focus on the speaker and what he or she is saying.
- Look at the speaker and make eye contact; make mental notes as you listen.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Rephrase what was said to clarify your understanding.
- Control your body language; don't show impatience or disapproval.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

4. Using your voice - Voice inflection is a customer service tool.

- Voice inflection is a variation in the pitch, timing, or loudness of the voice.
- Pitch is made up of the highs and lows of your voice.
- Many people are unaware that they possess unpleasant vocal characteristics.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

6. Using your voice effectively

- To experiment with voice inflection read the following sentence in your normal voice: “John solved the billing situation in Johannesburg.”
- Now repeat it as a question.
- Now repeat it as a secret.
- Now repeat it with surprise.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

6. Questioning Skills

- To get information from a customer, we need to ask questions. There are two main types of questions: **Open ended and Close ended**
- **Close ended questions** requires the respondent to choose an answer from a limited number of options
eg. Yes or No or Do you require the new electricity meter to be installed today, tomorrow or next week.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

6. Questioning Skills

Open ended questions allow the respondent to give a detailed answer – how do you feel about the level of customer service you received at our Braamfontein offices yesterday. *Remember open ended questions are helpful in identifying needs and wants of customers and assist in giving the organisation a competitive advantage by improving customer satisfaction*

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

6. Questioning Skills

- The following types of questions can also be identified under open ended and close ended questions –
- ***Probing Questions*** – *tend to be used to find out more*
- ***Echo Questions*** - *using a customer's words and turning them into a question eg. You did not receive our invoice? You can then apologise, show empathy and get more information from the customer*

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

6. Questioning Skills

- The following types of questions can also be identified under open ended and close ended questions –
- ***Leading Questions*** – *try and nudge the customer into giving a specific answer eg. What would your choice be then...would you go for the first option?*
- ***Hypothetical Questions*** – *eg If you received the extra equipment, would you extend the lease for another year?*

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

7. Telephones and customer service:

Any time you are on the telephone, you are selling yourself.

Customer service providers and all management and employees must have excellent telephone skills.

Seven steps to answering a call:

1. Smile!
2. Answer with an enthusiastic and professional greeting.
 - a. Greet the caller.
 - b. Identify your organization or department.
 - c. Introduce yourself.
 - d. Offer your assistance.
3. Ask questions; ask for additional information.
4. Give answers and assistance as quickly as possible.
5. Thank the caller.
6. Conclude the call in a positive manner.
7. Follow-up the call!

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Words to use

- Please
- Yes
- May I
- Consider this
- Do
- Let's negotiate
- Will
- Thank you
- You
- Us
- Appreciate
- Can
- Use the customer's name
- Would you like
- Opportunity
- Challenge
- Regret

Words to Avoid

- Can't
- Never
- Don't
- You have to
- Don't tell me no
- Won't
- Not our policy
- Not my job
- Profanity
- Vulgarity
- Love slang (honey, etc.)
- We'll try
- Haven't had time
- I do
- I know
- Hang on for a second

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

8. Using Power Phrases

- Due to your specialized knowledge....
- What a unique suggestion!
- I'd like your considered opinion...
- Please can I hear more....
- You are absolutely right!
- If I could borrow just a moment of your time.
- May I?
- As you, of course, know.
- I'd like your advice.
- I would appreciate it if.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

9. Voicemail

- Customer service providers must be comfortable speaking with customers' voice mail systems and must understand their own system.
- When leaving a voice mail message:
 - a). Speak clearly and slowly, identify yourself, your company, the day, and date, and time.
 - b). State the reason for your call.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

9. Voicemail

- c. Suggest to the customer what the next step should be. Does he or she need to call you back or wait for more information?
- d. Leave your name and the phone number where you can be reached. You have already given the customer your name, but in case he or she didn't write it down, give it again with your phone number.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

10. Written communication

Your technical staff member is a wizard at troubleshooting and solving your customers' problems, but has no idea when it comes to writing

ie via e-mail, drafting a manual or responding to a letter of complaint – It's called ***Lost in Translation***

Here are some tips to help:

1. **Put the bottom line upfront** – Create a framework for understanding at the beginning – do not dive into the detail! If it is a customer complaint remember to apologise upfront.

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

12. Written communication

2. Write Message headings - Headings make writing easy to scan and absorb and enable readers to read the amount they want, in the order they want.

3. Easy to follow instructions or advice – cut out the technical jargon and unfamiliar terminology – call a spade a spade not a spade, shovel, digger or earth mover – it gets confusing!

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

12. Written communication

4. Write concisely – Be specific, don't waffle, use tables, diagrams and graphs depending on whether the recipient is tech-savvy or not

5. Use correct spelling and punctuation

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

12. Written communication

- 6. Plan your writing** – Ask yourself the following
 - What do I want the recipient to think or know?
 - What actions should he take?
 - What are the key points that I need to make?
 - What information does the recipient need?
 - Why does he need this information?
 - What does the recipient already know?
 - What else does he need to know?
 - How does he or she feel about the topic?

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

13. Positive and Negative Nonverbal Communications

Positive

- Brief eye contact (3 to 5 seconds)
- Eyes wide open
- Smiling
- Facing the customer
- Nodding affirmatively
- Expressive hand gestures
- Open body stance
- Listening actively
- Remaining silent as customer speaks
- Gesturing with open hand
- Maintaining professional appearance
- Clean organised work area

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

13. Positive and Negative Nonverbal Communications

Negative

- Yawning
- Frowning or Sneering
- Attending to matters other than the customer
- Manipulating items impatiently
- Leaning away from customer as he or she speaks
- Subdued or minimal hand gestures
- Crossed arms
- Staring blankly or coolly at customer
- Interrupting
- Pointing finger or object at customer
- Casual unkempt appearance
- Disorganized, cluttered work space

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

14. Unproductive Nonverbal Behaviours

People develop unproductive nonverbal behaviours which can be nervous habits or mannerisms in excess pulling an ear, playing with hair, scratching etc...Beware

- **Unprofessional handshake** - The wet fish
- **Fidgeting or crossing arms**
- **Pointing a finger or pen/ruler**
- **holding hands near mouth**
- **Peering over glasses**

B. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

14. Unproductive Nonverbal Behaviours

Exercise: See if you can have a productive discussion with a colleague on a technical subject for 5-10 minutes without using unproductive nonverbal behaviours – let your colleague be aware of what you are saying and doing and give you a reportback.