

COMMUNICATION THEORY AND PRACTICE



Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication

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THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION THEORIES

The appreciation and study of human communication arises from research, observation, practice, and theories that explain the phenomena, realities, and facts of communication; the various components, characteristics, and qualities of human expression and exchange; and the innumerable circumstances, conditions, events, and experiences it creates, in our occurring world, throughout life.

Communication theories, as systematic, scientific explanations, offer principles and practices, models and metaphors, patterns and paradigms that unify and clarify facts, that define and describe the essence of expression and exchange, that create comprehension and understanding for interactivity and its influence and effect on being and becoming, on existence and reality, through countless circumstances, conditions, contexts, and events experienced in life. Although no theory offers an absolute explanation or representation of reality, we advance our comprehension and understanding of communication – we advance our skills, practice, and proficiency – using the facts, components, and qualities of human expression and exchange in theory.

OBSERVATION, RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND THEORY

Working nearly fifty years in the business of business communications as a communications specialist, strategist, creative director, writer, and designer, to mention a few areas of my experience and expertise, I have always been fascinated in the nature of human expression and exchange especially in learning and knowing what works and what doesn't work to produce intended outcomes. Accordingly, I have a deep interest in the exploration, observation, study, and research of communication and the practical, productive application of models and theories, assumptions and ideals, opinions and principles. My background in business communications includes promotional and motivational communications; advertising; public and professional relations; internal and external corporate communications; technical, educational, clinical, and scientific writing; public speaking and broadcast media; professional education, instruction, and training programs; and leadership training and personal coaching. Besides the research of professionals and theorists, I have also conducted various forms of research over the years for my clients including surveys, one-on-one studies, image and message testing, focus groups, market analyses, and more.

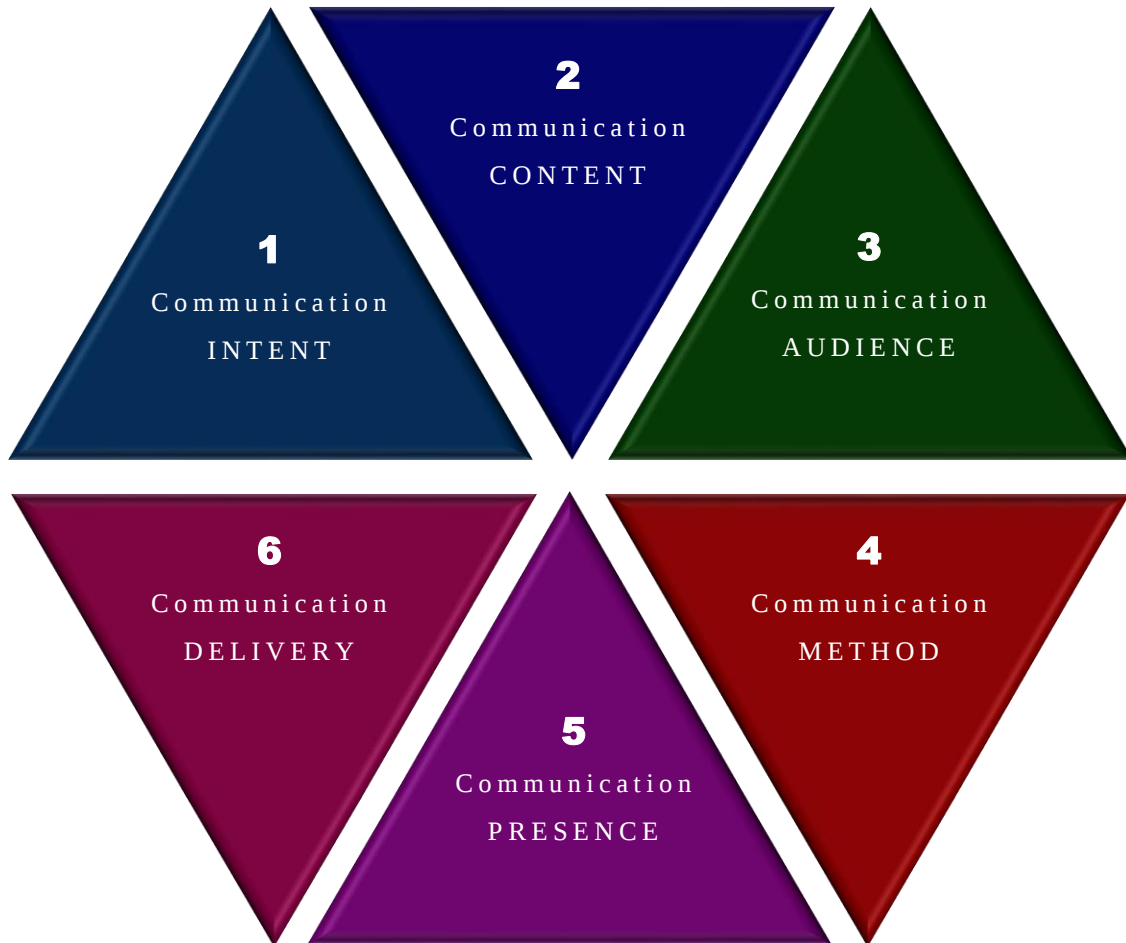
In my expertise and experience, I have come to recognize certain facts, realities, and phenomena of human communication; accordingly, I have established a series of theories, based on universal truths, which advance our knowledge and understanding of expression and exchange, which advance our skills, practice, and proficiency for achieving full self-expression, for reaching desired outcomes, for satisfying our needs, wants, and desires in life. The Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication is eighth in a series.

THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION

We humans are born with an innate capacity for word and language giving us access to thinking and being, speaking and communicating, doing and achieving things in life. In our thinking and being, we sense and perceive, interpret and understand our needs, wants, or desires; in our speaking and communicating, we express our desire to satisfy our needs, wants, or desires; and in taking action, we achieve them. Our capacity for thinking and speaking, for taking action and achieving our needs, wants, or desires is nothing more than existing and surviving. Rarely, however, do we think or speak about it this way and yet our entire life is about existing and surviving by satisfying our needs, wants, or desires. What's more, we seldom contemplate how we can effectively, efficiently communicate to get what we want or need; rather, we simply and routinely speak.

Working in parallel to create effective, efficient expression and exchange, three theories and their constituent parts form the mechanism of communication. Working together, these interdependent, mutually reinforcing theories and practices advance the performance and productivity of communication creating value and optimal outcomes. While the Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication involve communication intent, content, audience, method, presence, and delivery, the Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication involve intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and ethical qualities as well as relational and physical attributes; and, the Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication involve communication clarity, dynamics, distinction, and integrity. Seldom, if ever, do we think of communication as having a mechanism of action nor do we think of communication as having these ingredients, as having components, characteristics, and conditions of expression and exchange. And yet, in acknowledging them, in understanding their features, functions, benefits, and overall delivered value, and in putting them into practice, we appreciate the mechanism of communication and its constituent parts for achieving quality communication.

The Theory and Practice of
THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION



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COMMUNICATION INTENT

Stated or unstated, the intention of communication is to fulfill on and satisfy our needs, wants, and desires no matter their significance or insignificance in life; the intention of communication is why we express our self visually, verbally, or otherwise. All communication begins with a reason, purpose, or cause we create or exists. For example, we have a reason to satisfy a want or need; or we have a purpose to fulfill or a goal to achieve; or, in reply to an event, occurrence, circumstance, or condition that causes or triggers us to communicate, we react or respond. Besides expression and exchange, the intention of communication works to create some purpose and meaning. It works to achieve goals and objectives in our life; it works to create and generate thoughts and things, concepts and ideas, inventions and innovations. What's more, Communication Intent also works to establish communication goals so that we can achieve our other life goals; the Theory and Practice of the Goals of Communication distinguish both types of goals and how they contribute to effective communication.

COMMUNICATION CONTENT

Communication Content is about messages and their meanings; it is about information and data, knowledge and intelligence conveyed in the content as well as the context of the communication. Whereas the content is the theme and topic, the message's subject, the context is the circumstance and condition, the message's setting. The content of communication is what we express visually, verbally, or otherwise. As such, the information contained in a communication is typically created using words and language, signs and symbols, images and numbers, gestures and depictions; it may, however, also be created with touching, fragrances, or flavors. Communication Content and communication context convey messages and meanings in clusters of visual and verbal message units (as well as other types of message units); a message unit is a distinct, single entity of information in and of itself. Each message unit in a cluster contributes to a larger message and greater meaning.

Generally speaking, Communication Content frequently involves information about our self, our thoughts and feelings, opinions and judgements, viewpoints and beliefs; we voice perspectives, perceptions, and preferences in life. Also, it frequently involves our concepts and ideas, recollections and memories as well. Or, if our communication is not about our self, it is usually about our occurring world; that is to say, it is about other people and places, thoughts and things. Generally speaking, again, Communication Content also frequently involves meanings, meanings we make in expressing information and meanings we make in interpreting information. Those meanings include all sorts of thoughts and feelings, opinions and judgements, perceptions and beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong, true or false, positive or negative, better or worse, safe or unsafe; about what we think is important or not, meaningful or not, relevant or not, valuable or not; about what we like or dislike, agree or disagree, trust or distrust, believe or disbelieve, and so forth.

One important source for content is distinguished in the Theory and Practice of Designations of Communication. To begin with, we put names to people, places, thoughts, and things; naming and identity create content. We also create content by defining and describing and by comparing and contrasting thoughts and things. What's more, we make connections and associations with information and we create relationships as well in content. Often in creating Communication Content, we make designations of distinction and difference as well as likeness and similarity; accordingly, we group and individualize, we sort and arrange information; we classify, categorize, and compartmentalize messages and meanings. In addition, we create content that describes regularity and change, consistency and uniformity or variation and transformation; we distinguish more or less, better or worse, different or similar, and so forth. Communication Content is closely associated with form, style, and method of expression and exchange to be addressed after Communication Audience.

COMMUNICATION AUDIENCE

Communication Audience is about understanding, relating, and connecting with your audiences, your listeners, your viewers. Communication Audience is all about knowing who they are; what their interests and concerns are, and what they think is meaningful, relevant, and valued in their life. There are all sorts and sizes of audiences; there are personal audiences including family, friends, and loved ones; there are social audiences including acquaintances, associates, connections, and others in community and social settings; and there are business audiences including customers and competition, business constituents and communities, and more. In communicating with many different audiences, there is a need at times to segment and prioritize them; there is a need to create a hierarchy of eyes and ears. In segmenting and prioritizing, understanding and connecting

with audiences, we learn who they are and their interests and concerns by listening to and observing them, by researching and profiling them using data from demographics, psychographics, and other statistics.

COMMUNICATION METHOD

Communication Method is all about communication approaches, styles, and practices; it is about how the communication communicates. Communication Method or approaches involve eight distinct types of expression and exchange defined and described in the Theory and Practice of the Palette of Conversations. On the whole, they are conversations of attention and relation, information and education, promotion and motivation, and negotiation and transaction. Communication styles involve six types of qualities or attributes of expression and exchange defined and described in the Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication; they are intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and ethical qualities as well as relational and physical attributes. Communication styles also involve four elements of expression and exchange defined and described in the Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication; they are communication clarity, dynamics, distinction, and integrity.

Additionally, communication styles often include ways or practices of communication; for example, passive, passive assertive, assertive, and aggressive expression and exchange; they often include other practices or ways of approaching the audience; for example, expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative expression. What's more, we also recognize two major practices of communication one, communication that represents and reports, and two, communication that generates and creates. While style is the voice and manner of the communicator, it is also media and delivery to be addressed after Communication Presence.

COMMUNICATION PRESENCE

Communication Presence is about timing and timeliness in expression and exchange; its concerns are when to communicate, how long to communicate, how often to communicate, and when to respond. Communication Presence is also about the occurrence and permanence of messages and the resonance of meaning and effect. Beginning with timing, communication duration affects comprehension and understanding; Communication Content affects length and duration as do intent, types of audience, method, and delivery of communication. As such, brief or lengthy communications are affected by the other components of communication. The duration or length of a communication involves time to encode and transmit the message, time to receive, decode, and interpret the message, and time to respond. The duration of a communication not only affects the meaning, relevance, and value of the message, duration also creates meaning for interpretation. Regarding timeliness, it is a matter of appropriateness, correctness, or suitability in delivering content for optimal receptivity; that messages and their meanings are important, relevant, and valued by an audience in the moment or moments of receiving them. Timeliness, as such, often involves judgement and planning, scheduling and staging; timeliness also involves consistency, constancy, and repetition in delivering multiple messages over time.

Understanding the nature of communication and time, Communication Presence requires our awareness and appreciation for the occurrence of communication. We can only communicate in the present moment. We live in the present and we communicate in the present. We say something and it instantly vanishes; it evaporates. We depict something or we make a gesture and in the next moment it is gone. We can only communicate in the present moment and once we have spoken or gestured or depicted something, it slips into the past; we

communicate in the present moment and it consistently and constantly slips into the past. What you have just read, what I have just communicated to you in these words, is now in the past.

In view of that, we cannot communicate in the past. We can, however, communicate in the present moment about what we communicated in the past. We can recall and recollect memories and we can speak about them or write about them, but that communication about the past also slips into the past once spoken, once written. In addition to our inability to communicate in the past, we cannot communicate in the future. We can, however, communicate in the present moment about what we want to communicate to others in the future; for example, we can prepare a speech, write a book, make a video, design a presentation, draw a graph, and more. And although we will deliver those communications sometime in the future, at a particular moment that has not yet arrived, we can only deliver or arrange to deliver those communications in the present. What's more, those communications can only be experienced by audiences in the present and, like all communication, those messages then slip into the past. Because we live in the present, we can only communicate in the present.

Indeed, if all communication evaporates and slips into the past, how then are we able to accurately recall or remember that which was spoken, gestured, or depicted? As mentioned, we have the ability to create communications in the present so that we can experience them in the future. We also have the ability to archive communications in the present so that we can experience them in the future as well. Creating and archiving communications are activities we perform in the present moment using technology, tools, and media to write, draw, record, and capture present moments for future moments. This is important since we are always left with the remnants and resonance of message and meaning, an impression and effect of what was communicated. Thus, when we refer to Communication Presence, it not only refers to timing, timeliness, and duration, it also refers to its existence and effect. And although its effect can last, communication exists only in the present when we think about it, when we use it, and when we experience it. Communication is all about the precious present, the gift of existence and survival here and now.

COMMUNICATION DELIVERY

Communication Delivery involves the activity of expression and exchange; it is how we communicate and the objects, devices, or things we use to communicate. Communications are encoded and transmitted to be received and decoded; these four activities of encoding and decoding, of transmitting and receiving, determine the effectiveness and efficiency of communication delivery. As such, Communication Delivery is concerned with the Theory and Practice of Languages of Conveyance involved in encoding and transmitting messages and meanings as well as the Theory and Practice of Languages of Receptivity involved in receiving and decoding them. In addition to the languages, Communication Delivery is also concerned with the method of expression and exchange, the staging of communications, and media for communicating.

In our activity of encoding, we determine participation in expression and exchange; for example, we determine if our expression and exchange is limited to one-on-one, personal communication; one-on-some, interpersonal communication, or one-on-many, impersonal communication. We distinguish personal communication as expression and exchange between two people; we distinguish interpersonal communication as expression and exchange among a small group of people, three or more in which people can actively participate in conversation. And, we distinguish impersonal communication as expression in a large crowd; typically we call this mass

communication which is usually listening and observing without active exchange or, if there is exchange, it occurs in the form of questions and answers.

Besides determining participation in expression and exchange, we also determine staging: the conditions, circumstances, environment, and events we want to create for effective, efficient communication. As such, we create the right conditions with a context and background of the communication and with being related to and in the listening of our audience; we create the right circumstances with timing, timeliness, and duration of the communication and with judgement and appropriateness of the message for our audience; and we create the right environment with a physical space that advances optimal listening and hearing, observation and seeing, rather than detracting from it; in other words, we create an environment for enhancing receptivity, decoding, and interpretation. Lastly, we create an event or events of communication, the actual moment or moments we need to effectively and efficiently transmit messages and meanings. The Theory and Practice of Languages of Receptivity distinguishes the importance of sensation and perception, comprehension and understanding for the delivery of communication.

In our activity of encoding, we also determine media if we want or need to enhance our communications with technologies and tools that emphasize or expand the effectiveness and efficiency of our expression; for example, video, audio, and digital recordings; pictures, graphics, maps and charts; amplification; and so forth. Technologies and tools are available in various media; we classify media into four groups: one, print media: visual messages which are written or printed on paper or other substrate like books, newspapers, magazines, brochures, billboards, and signs and more; two, electronic media: visual messages which are projected on a screen along with audio messages which are played through a speaker involving internet communications on computers and cell phones, programs on televisions and radios, games and movies, and more; three, alternate media: visual, audio, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory messages which are in a physical form not ordinarily considered as media or communications but they communicate nonetheless such as food, scents, natural and manmade objects including clothing, accessories, imagebuilders, and premiums as well as sticks, stones, frying pans, and weapons, and more; and four, personal media: the use of others as spokespeople, representatives, advocates, models, and more who create audio and visual messages like promotions and testimonials as well as visual demonstrations and depictions. The Theory and Practice of Languages of Conveyance distinguishes the various forms of conveyance and the use of objects as media to communicate touch, feel, and contact.

BENEFITS AND VALUE

The Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication contribute, about one-third, to the mechanism of communication, a system of interdependent, mutually reinforcing components, characteristics, and conditions that work together for expression and exchange. The components of communication include intent and content, communication audience and method, and communication presence and delivery. The second-third of the mechanism of communication, the Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication, involve intellectual and emotional characteristics, spiritual and ethical characteristics, and relational and physical characteristics. The third-third of the mechanism of communication, the Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication, incorporate clarity, dynamics, distinction, and integrity into messages and meanings. All three sets of theories, and their components, characteristics, and conditions, work to establish effective, efficient communication for creating meaning, relevance, and value as well as quality optimal outcomes.

In summary, Communication Intent involves the reasons, purposes, and causes for our expression and exchange. We communicate in the long run to fulfill on and satisfy our needs, wants, and desires. As such, Communication Intent creates a foundation for establishing and achieving our communication goals and objectives so that we can establish and achieve our life goals and objectives. Communication Content is about messages and meanings. While content is the subject of the message, context is the setting. Communication Content is comprised of knowledge and intelligence presented in clusters of message units; a message unit is the least amount of visual, verbal, or other conveyed information. Single words are simple message units and yet when they are combined into clusters, they create phrases and sentences with meanings. Single graphic elements are simple message units also and yet when type is combined with pictures, with colors, with textures, with patterns, with graphic devices, and with more, they create pages and other visual surfaces with meanings. We create more meaning with more message units and with more clusters of message units and with more collections and surfaces of clusters of information. At some point, based on intent and content, less is more for advancing comprehension and understanding, for advancing effectiveness and efficiency.

Communication Audience is about understanding, relating, and connecting with personal, social, and business audiences based on audience interests and concerns as well as audience perceptions of message meaning, relevance, and value. With multiple audiences, Communication Audience involves creating a hierarchy of eyes and ears for effective, efficient communication. Communication Method is about style, approach, and practice. To that point, the palette of conversations is part of Communication Method with conversations of attention, relation, information, and education as well as conversations of promotion, motivation, negotiation, and transaction. Communication Method also involves communication qualities and attributes (intellectual, emotional, spiritual, ethical, relational, and physical characteristics) and conditions of communication from clarity and integrity to dynamics and distinction.

Communication Presence is about the duration, time, timing, and timeliness of communication and how these topics affect receptivity, comprehension, and understanding. In addition, Communication Presence is also about the nature of communication which can only be experienced in the moment. Once spoken, once seen, all communication slips into the past. Because it occurs in the present moment, we cannot communicate in the past or the future; we can only communicate what we communicated in the past or we can prepare communications for the future. Accordingly, we experience communications created in the past in the present. Communication Delivery is about encoding and transmitting, receiving and decoding messages and meanings. Languages of conveyance and languages of receptivity are involved in delivery as well as staging and media and manners of expression and exchange such as personal, interpersonal, and impersonal expression and exchange. Staging in delivery involves conditions and circumstances, environment and the communication event itself. Print, electronic, alternate, and personal media is critical to delivery as it can emphasize and expand the effectiveness and efficiency of communication.

In the final analysis, effectiveness and efficiency is the overall intention of the Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication, along with the Theory and Practice of the Characteristics of Communication, and the Theory and Practice of the Conditions of Communication; all working to advance the mechanism of communication for achieving quality optimal outcomes.

OVERVIEW MAP

Theory and Practice of the Components of Communication

1. **Communication Intent** *Why We Communicate*
 - A. Fulfill on and Satisfy Needs, Wants, and Desires
 - B. Reason, Purpose, or Cause
 - C. Establish Goals and Objectives

2. **Communication Content** *What We Communicate*
 - A. About Our Self and Our Occurring World
 - B. Content and Context as Messages and Meanings
 - Information and Data
 - Knowledge and Intelligence
 - C. Message Units and Clusters of Message Units
 - Comprehension and Understanding
 - D. Designations in Communication
 - Identifying, Naming, Defining, and Describing
 - Comparing, Contrasting, Connecting, and Associating
 - Distinction, Difference, Similarity, and Likeness
 - Regularity, Consistency, Variation, and Change
 - Perspectives, Perceptions, and Preferences

3. **Communication Audiences** *Who We Communicate*
 - A. Understanding, Relating, Connecting to Our Occurring World
 - Audience Interests and Concerns
 - Audience Meaning, Relevance, and Value
 - B. Personal, Social, and Business Audiences
 - Family, Friends, and Loved Ones
 - Social and Community Acquaintances and Associates
 - Customers, Competition, Communities, Constituency
 - C. Hierarchy of Eyes and Ears
 - Demographics, Psychographics, Geographics, Indigraphics, etc.

4. **Communication Method** *How We Communicate*
 - A. Our Approach, Style, Structure, and Practice
 - B. Palette of Conversations
 - Attention, Relation, Information, and Education
 - Promotion, Motivation, Negotiation, and Transaction
 - C. Characteristics of Communication
 - Intellectual, Emotional, Spiritual, Ethical, Relational, and Physical
 - D. Conditions of Communication
 - Clarity, Dynamics, Distinction, and Integrity

5. Communication Presence *When We Communicate*

- A. Duration, Time, Timing, and Timeliness
 - Appropriateness, Correctness, Suitability for Receptivity
 - Consistency, Constancy, and Repetition
- B. Communication Instance
 - We Can Only Communicate in the Present
 - It Slips into the Past Immediately
 - We Cannot Communicate in the Past
 - We Can Only Speak about the Past in the Present
 - We Cannot Communicate in the Future
 - We Can Only Prepare Communication in the Present to Deliver in the Future
- C. Communication Permanence
 - We Create Communications for the Future in the Present
 - We Experience Created Communication in the Present
 - We Archive Communications for the Future in the Present
 - We Experience Archived Communication in the Present
- D. The Gift of the Precious Present
 - Life and Communication Occur Only in the Present

6. Communication Delivery *Where We Communicate*

- A. Encoding and Transmitting / Receiving and Decoding
 - Languages of Conveyance
 - Languages of Receptivity
- B. Participation in Expression and Exchange
 - One-on-One: Personal Expression and Exchange
 - One-on-Some: Interpersonal Expression and Exchange
 - One-on-Many: Impersonal Expression and No Exchange
- C. Staging Communications
 - Conditions: Context and Background / Being Related and in the Listening
 - Circumstances: Timing and Timeliness / Judgement and Appropriateness
 - Environment: Physical Space Enhancing Receptivity and Interpretation
 - Event: Present Moment(s) of Expression and Exchange
- D. Media
 - Emphasize and Expand Effectiveness and Efficiency of Communication
 - Four Groups of Media
 - Print: Visual Messages Written or Printed
 - Electronic: Visual and Audio Messages Projected and Played
 - Alternate: Visual, Audio, Tactile, Olfactory, Gustatory in Physical Form
 - Personal: People as Spokespeople, Reps, Advocates, Models, etc.