




# Project Communication – Virtual and Global Teams

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# Mike Graupner, PMP/CSM



- Practicing PM& Presenter
- Industries include:
  - Aerospace, Consulting, Mortgage, Healthcare and Petrochemical Industries
- Projects include:
  - Space qualified GPS systems,
  - Advance research project for the US government,
  - IT Governance and Data Warehouse systems
- Strong believer in appropriately applied methodologies
- Developed & deployed effective business processes supporting:
  - Project Management,
  - Quality Management
  - Systems Development Life Cycles

# Learning goals

- *At the completion, you should be able to:*
  - *define and explain how communications impact projects*
  - *demonstrate your understanding of the communication process*
  - *devise and confidently control communication during your project*
  - *identify and analyze problems when communication*
  - *evaluate other people's commitment to communication*
  - *adapt to working in teams and leading the communication process*
  
- *You should also have had some fun in executing the project along the way!*

# Agenda

- Introduction
- Communication Theory
- Virtualization/Globalization Barriers
- Technology Barriers
- Social Media Impacts
- Communication Improvement Strategies

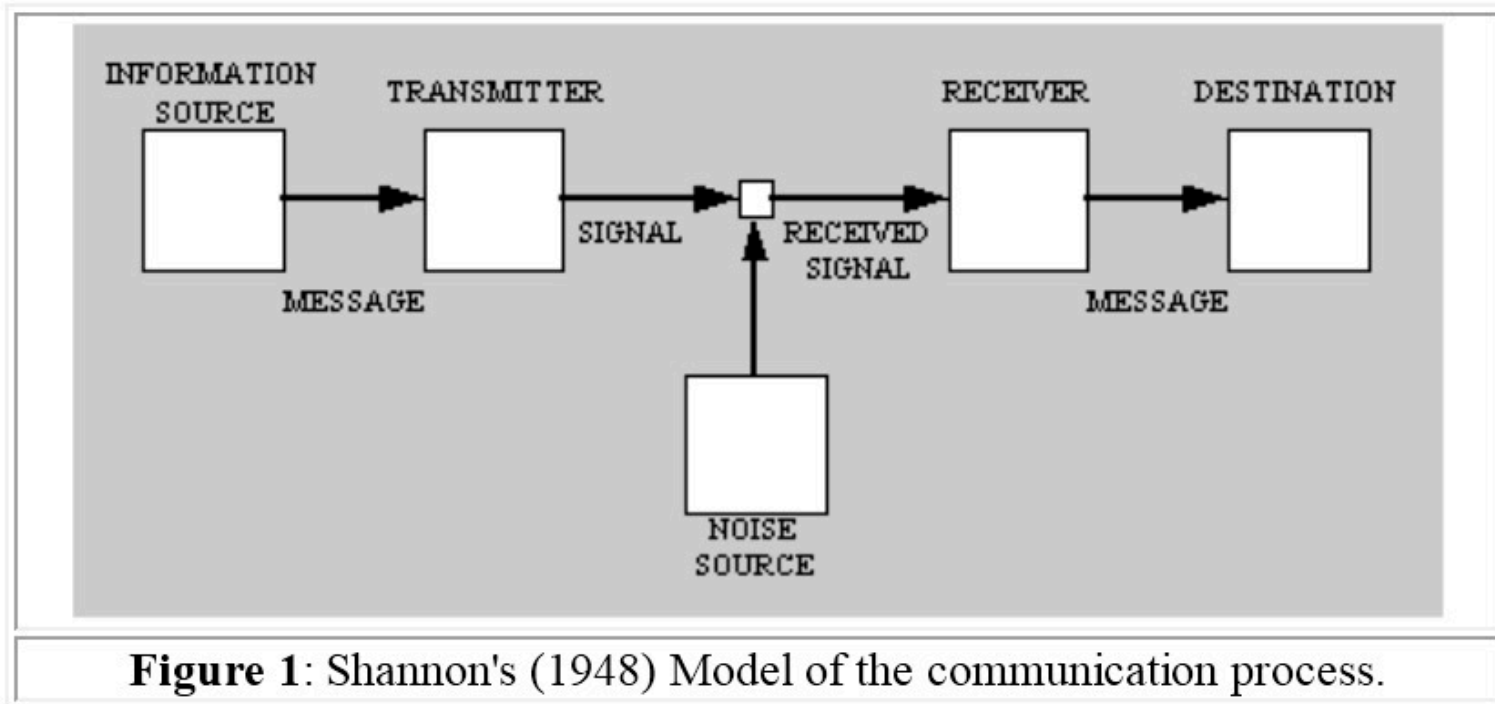
# Communication Introduction

- Communication should be a intentional process
  - not an accident
- Having process will improve project communications.
- Perfect communication is not possible
- Great communication is possible by understanding the pitfalls and addressing the process weakness.

# How do we communicate?

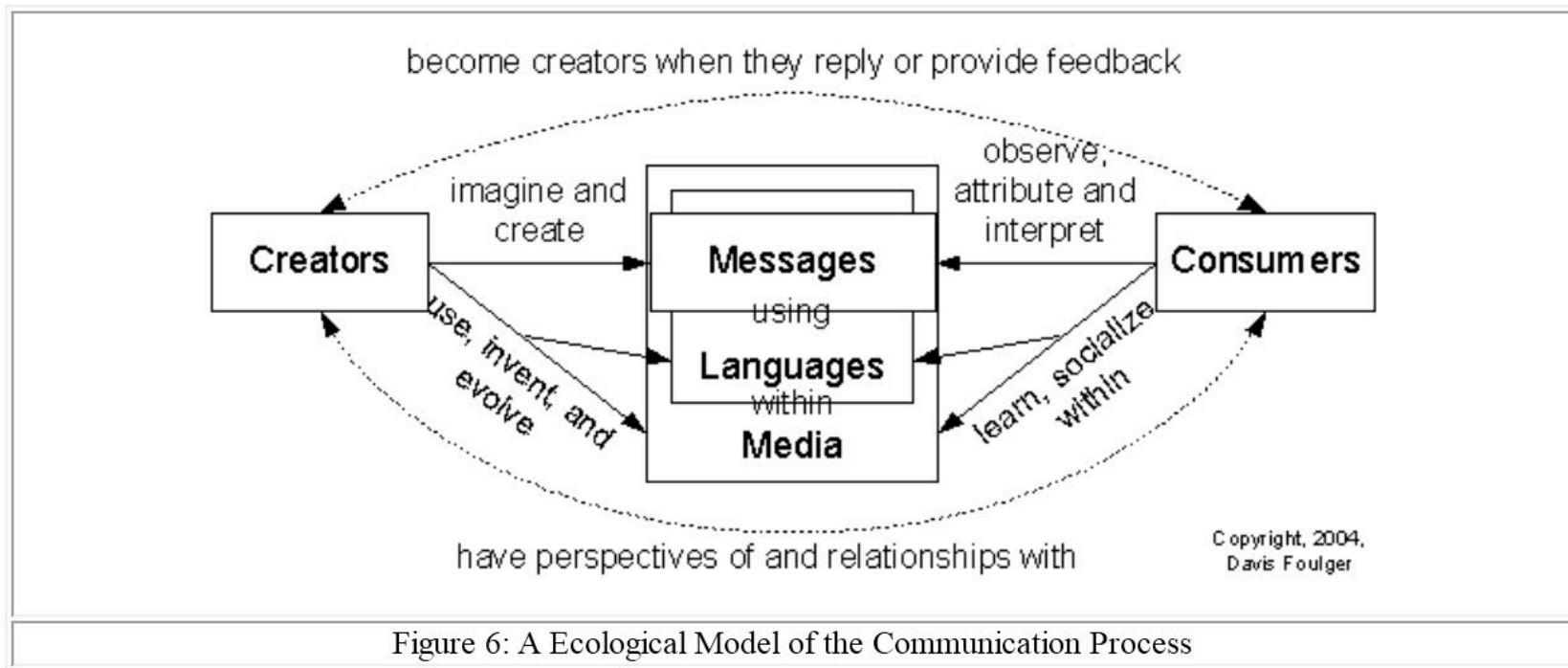
- **Verbal Communication:** 7% of the message comes from the words we use. Vocal quality (volume, rate, and pitch) reflects our sincerity, enthusiasm, and knowledge of the subject being discussed.
- **Non-verbal communication:** as much as 93% of the message comes from the tone and inflection in our voice (38%) and our body language (55%).
- Effective communication requires congruence between what you say and how you say it. Match your words with your feelings. Feelings are shown through nonverbal cues

# Communication Model - 1948



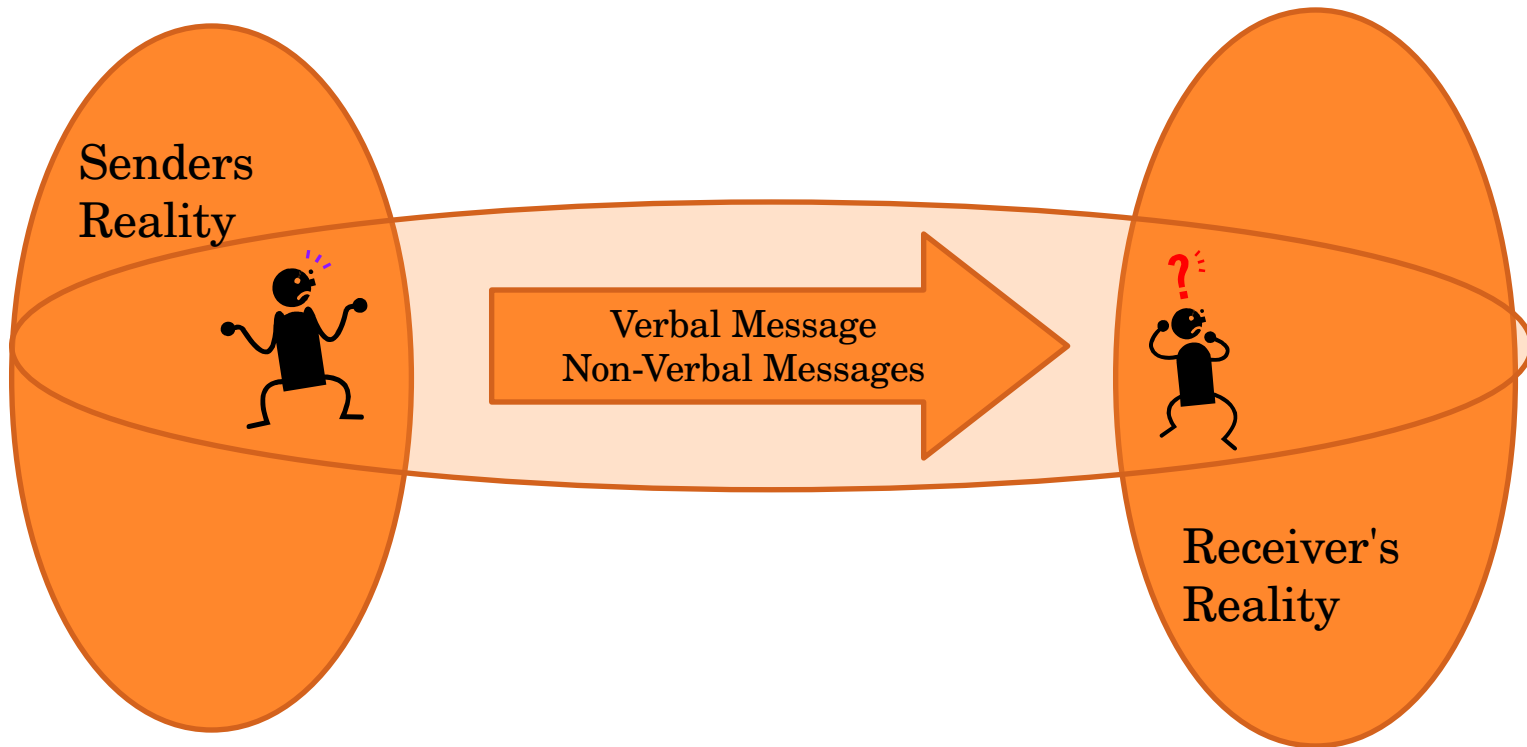
**Figure 1:** Shannon's (1948) Model of the communication process.

# Communication Model - 2004





# Sender/Receiver Model



To have effective communication one needs to take all the factors into consideration. The different realities, the space the communication takes place in, verbal as well as non-verbal messages, the intended meaning versus the perceived meaning.

# Models and Theories

- Both have evolved over time
- Communication is a complex process
- True communication does not happen until the receiver has properly decoded the intended message
- Responsibility for communication:

# Sender's Responsibilities

- It is the sender's responsibility to make the communication as clear as possible
  - Use suitable words
  - Avoid ambiguous words
  - Isolate your most important words into separate statements
  - Review with the receiver
  - Be aware of your non verbal messages

# Receiver's Responsibilities

- It is the receiver's responsibility to show courtesy and to demonstrate understanding of the sender message.
  - Tune in and focus
  - Repeat message back to sender in their own words
  - Acknowledge your understanding further by supporting the senders feelings
  - Take a moment to respond, don't agree or disagree
  - Ask clarifying questions or attempt to summarize the major points you heard.

# Virtualization/Globalization Barriers

## ○ Culture

- Customary beliefs, social norms, values, material traits, and behavior patterns transmitted from generation to generation that distinguish groups of people
- Culture generally contains norm, but as project managers we have to be aware of the exceptions.
- We must factor culture into our communication strategy, but not let it sabotage project communication.
- The project team must all be flexible to adapt as necessary.

# Virtualization/Globalization Barriers

- Language
  - Not as big of a impact as people may think
- Prejudices
  - We all carry preconceived impressions of culture

# Common Cultural Issues

- Reluctance to give bad news
  - In many cultures, giving bad news is not normal. Stressing that accurate information is critical for the team success and offer your assistance to help them develop skills in sharing bad news.
- Vegetarianism
  - More and more team members are choosing not to eat meat. This is a good opportunity to respect teams culture by not ordering just the sausage pizza for the working lunch.

# Tools for Managers to Overcome Communication Barriers

- **Use Simplified Language (The K.I.S.S. Principal).**
- **Use Repetition for a Theme.**
- **Avoid Using Gender-Specific Metaphors.**
- **Employ the Most Effective Technologies Available.**
- **Seek Outside Training.**
- **Be specific about timelines and due dates for deliverables.** (don't forget to include the definition of "done")
- **Establish ground rules for your team to collaborate.**



# Technology Barriers

- Technology has not increased communication, only made poor communication faster
- Email lacks the visual and tonal feedback – you must be more careful in crafting messages
- Text Messaging is even more challenging
- Conference calls provides tonal feedback
- WebEx reintroduces some visual feedback

# Social Media Impacts

- Social Media is still emerging in the day to day business world
  - Some early adopters
- Be aware of the communication and what needs are not fulfilled

# Communication Improvement Strategies

- Think before communication
  - How do I want this received?
  - What action would I like to invoke
  - What miscommunication paths are possible
  - How can I verify that this messages was decoded properly

# Learning goals - Review

## ○ *Did We:*

- *Define and explain how communications impact projects*
- *Achieve understanding of the communication process*
- *Allow you to devise and confidently control communication during your project*
- *Provide tools to*
  - *Identify and analyze communication problems*
  - *Evaluate other people's commitment to communication*
  - *Adapt to working in teams and leading the communication process*

# More from Mike Graupner, PMP

- PM Mind - [www.pm-mind.com](http://www.pm-mind.com)
  - Resource addressing project management philosophy enabling project managers improving their competency by improving their thought processes.
  - MS Project training presentations
  - SOX training presentation
  - Leadership training presentation
- Marlai - [www.marlai.com](http://www.marlai.com)
  - Personal site for Mike Graupner, evolving into a source for methodologies, processes and templates.