A Study of Communication in the Business Organization With Emphasis on Written Managerial Communication.

David Marion Robinson

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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WITH EMPHASIS ON WRITTEN MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
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in

The Department of Management and Marketing

by

David Marion Robinson
B.S., Louisiana State University, 1956
M.B.A., Louisiana State University, 1957
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ABSTRACT

This study presents a detailed analysis of the communication process as it is used as a management tool in the business organization. The purpose of the study is to stimulate a better managerial understanding of the nature of information flow in the firm in order that more effective use of communication might be made in performing the management functions of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating. This purpose is achieved in the study through research of the published findings of general semantics and the behavioral sciences relating to communication. Findings applicable to communication in the firm are extracted to support a concept of purposive business communication which is presented in the study.

As defined in the study, communication is the process which links two or more intellectual entities and provides for the transmission of expression between them. This process is conceived in a given instance to involve four phases:

1. the introspective phase of the sender.
2. the encoding phase of the sender.
3. the transmission phase of the sender.
4. the inference phase of the receiver.

Miscommunication occurs in the firm because each of these phases is influenced by certain factors of human and language frailty. The impreciseness of the English language and the inability of firm participants to subordinate their personal interests to those of the
organization are considered to be two of the most basic factors which account for miscommunication. Functionalization of the firm is also considered to be a basic factor which conditions information flow.

As a result of functionalization, firm components become oriented primarily to the objectives of their functions rather than the overall objectives of the organization. This orientation is reflected in their efforts to send messages as well as in their responses to messages received, the result being that information frequently does not serve the best interests of the decision-making organizational entity.

As established in the study, the primary objective of communication is to provide a means for setting organizational objectives and stimulating conformity of participant effort toward securing those objectives. Management is the force within the firm which uses communication to secure this primary objective as the basic functions of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating are carried on. Through exercise of appropriate standards of communication, such as those provided in this study, management can minimize the emergence of miscommunication patterns in the firm and, accordingly, promote organizational balance and stability. Balance and stability prevail in the firm when objectives have been set, similarity of intent on the part of the firm's participants has been secured, and the needs resulting from interdependence of the firm's participants are being met.

A conclusion is drawn in the study that the ultimate effect of
perfect communication in the firm would be a perfect state of balance
and stability. This perfect state, however, represents an unattainable
goal because language impreciseness and human intellectual frailty
render communication less than perfect in the business organization.
As a user of information input and an originator of information output,
the manager's responsibility, nonetheless, is to use the communication
tool as effectively as possible to promote relative organizational
balance and stability.
CHAPTER I

THE BASIC PROBLEM OF MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION AND METHODS FOR ITS SOLUTION

Communication is a process which is much talked about but little understood in the business organization. Management literature is replete with references to the importance of communication,¹ but rarely does the literature concretely explore the phenomenon itself. The consequence is that people who serve in the field of business management are highly conscious of a need for effective information flow but frequently are at a loss for courses of action to correct faulty communication situations as they arise.

Sociologists, psychologists, semanticists, and other social scientists have long been preoccupied with the problems of communication. The work of these scholars in this area can be of direct benefit to managers of industrial enterprises. However, much of the information presented by such scholars, information which has direct managerial communication applications, appears only in the literature of psychology, sociology, and semantics. The problem is compounded by the fact that

¹Chester I. Barnard stated in 1938, for example, that "The first executive function is to develop and maintain a system of communication." The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 226. According to Charles E. Redfield, "It is safe to say that every recent publication and lecture on human relations in management has a section, a chapter, or a paragraph on communication." Communication in Management (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 3.
much of the information is entrapped in vocabularies necessary to pure research in particular fields, vocabularies which the typical manager has neither the time nor the inclination to learn.

I. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

This study attempts to integrate the findings of certain behavioral and communication scientists into a unified body of knowledge about managerial communication. The findings of these scientists are relied upon because of the close relationship between communication and human behavior and the closely related need for management to influence human behavior by means of information. Generally speaking, therefore, the basic problem of managerial communication is to find ways and means by which information can make maximum contribution to efficiency in the business organization.

This approach is based on a conviction that the individual manager who understands the nature of the communication process is in a position to make proper use of appropriate standards for communicating effectively in the business organization. Specifically, then, the basic

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2Commenting on this problem, Colin Cherry states: "One of the great difficulties of discussing a subject that lies in the borderland of a number of well-established fields of study is the choice of language and definitions. It may be true that concepts can be validly relevant in different fields, yet their expression in forms acceptable to students in these various specialties may not prove easy. In each field there may already be sets of definitions, and students may be loth to change, modify, or extend their customary definitions, framed for their specific purposes, to suit the interest of others." Colin Cherry, On Human Communication (New York: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1957), p.3.
problem of managerial communication, as it is analyzed in this study, is inherent in and defined by three questions which have not been answered satisfactorily in terms understandable in the business environment:

1. What is communication?
2. What are the special implications of communication in the business organization?
3. Given knowledge of the nature of communication in the business organization, what can management do to communicate effectively?

Importance of the Problem

In this age of electronic rapid data processing in the business organization there is a critical need for a rapid flow of reliable information among the individuals who make up the organization. Electronic data processing equipment can provide almost instantaneous solutions to highly complex business problems; but the work of such equipment, in the final analysis, is dependent upon the human factor in the organization to communicate quickly and clearly for purposes of problem isolation and definition. Commenting on the fact that electronic data processing equipment constitutes a "fantastic advancement" of the communication process, Haney states that:

Quantity, speed, and coverage, however, are not the only requirements of communication. It is also imperative that we communicate clearly and precisely. But, in contrast to the technological improvements, progress toward greater understandability has come much more slowly. It is still entirely possible for persons to fail to understand one another, even though they speak the 'same' language; for firms to snarl orders and lose customer confidence; for nations to break off diplomatic relations and even declare wars because of distortions in communication.3

The business organization characterized by poor communication practices is likely to be an organization which is operating at a sub-standard level of efficiency, even though the organization may boast of the latest in electronic data processing equipment. Certainly efficient communication practices are even more essential in the business organization of appreciable size which does not have electronic or other mechanical facilities for rapid processing of data.

In addition to its importance from the standpoint of the individual business firm the basic problem of managerial communication is important from the standpoint of the national economy. Total national economic efficiency logically is influenced by the efficiency of the economic entities that constitute the economy as a whole. In the cold war years prevailing today there appears to be a need for American capitalism to prove its mettle on the international scene. This need is superimposed on the self-evident need for individual firms to achieve levels of efficiency which will contribute to a higher standard of living in the United States. In national interests, therefore, it behooves the firms that make up the total economic picture to strive for efficiency in all areas of production and distribution.

Effective communication within the individual firm is a vital ingredient of efficiency in that communication is a factor which promotes quick flexibility of the firm when problems of production and distribution must be solved. In these days of international tension, this flexibility is particularly desirable in firms which might be subject to conversion to production in the interests of national defense.
Limitations of the Study

Primary emphasis in the study is placed on written managerial communication in the business organization. The oral communication process is analyzed in the study only as such analysis is needed to shed light on the written process. A practical reason for this limitation of the study is that the writer's experience and graduate work in the field has for the most part involved written communication. When the study was undertaken, therefore, the writer concluded that a more definitive work could be produced if research were concentrated in the area of written communication. Further extension of the study in an attempt to analyze the oral process would have taken the writer into the unfamiliar territory of the physiological aspects of oral communication. This type of analysis, because of the limitations of the writer's background, would have been of questionable validity.

Another reason for concentration on written managerial communication is the writer's belief that some of the most perplexing problems of communication are generated by management's need to rely on the written word. Most management communications must be characterized by a high degree of accuracy. A consequence of this need for accuracy is reluctance on the part of many managers to communicate important matters orally if time permits the framing of messages in carefully selected written words. A case in point is the chief executive of a company who "speaks" from a written manuscript at his annual shareholders meeting. Paradoxically enough, the manager sometimes obscures his intended meanings by selecting abstract words that are frequently used in writing
but seldom used in oral communication. Thus in such a case a full circle might be made in which the manager, reluctant to communicate orally because of a fear that he will not be understood, secures perhaps a lower degree of understanding because he has relied upon the written word. In the opinion of the writer, this typical problem and the many other problems of written communication merits the major attention of the study, even to the exclusion of detailed attention to problems of oral communication.

II. THE BACKGROUND AND PRESENT STATUS OF MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION

Positive corporate image building probably was not a conscious undertaking on the part of corporate managements on the American industrial scene at the turn of the twentieth century. The Sherman Act of 1890, the "trust busting" activities of President Theodore Roosevelt, the Clayton Act of 1914—all of these bear testimony that American capitalism was under severe test at that time in the public eye. Of interest to this study is the fact that these years were also marked by exceptionally poor communication practices on the part of certain leading entrepreneurs. It was at about this time, for example, that Commodore Vanderbilt took a public-be-damned point of view. And it was not many years later that Henry Ford pronounced that the public could have any color of car it wanted as long as the color was black.

American industrial history shows that:
... Attempts by the managers of business and industry to communicate with employees and the public in the United States has been marked by many different phases. In historical perspective, however, it is clear that ineptness generally has been the trademark of the overall effort.

The origin of this ineptness of communication effort can be traced perhaps to the early 1900's, the time at which the idea of the corporate annual report to shareholders was catching on in such prominent companies as United States Steel Corporation and General Motors Corporation. At this time some managements were recognizing that shareholders and employees had a right to know how their business was being operated and the degree of success or failure it was achieving. This idea, however, was inconsistent with what appears to have been a prevailing notion that managers should be given free rein to operate their organizations with a minimum of interference from "outside" sources.

K. C. Pratt, an individual who shows great insight into the role and techniques of corporate annual reporting, comments on this historical problem thusly:

Not that managers may not sometimes have preferred to operate in the dark without any outside interference. And many have been the excuses over the years for keeping stockholders in the dark as much as possible. Even today, with the annual report to stockholders a conventionalized and streamlined business procedure, some business managements still seek avenues of escape from disclosure of operating methods and results; still hide behind 'the mystic jargon of accountancy.'

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6Ibid.
It is understandable that corporate managements, many of which have been naturally inclined to be close-mouthed, have historically bungled their efforts to communicate when the fact is considered that very little meaningful and organized attention was given to the communication process during the first forty years of the twentieth century:

During the first four decades of the twentieth century the managers of business and industry tried blatant press-agentry, characterized by a 'tell them only what we want them to know' attitude. Individuals tried occasionally an outspoken 'tell them all' approach, only to be hammered down--sometimes by their own business associates. The New Deal and the 1930's brought primarily sulky silence, a 'tell them nothing' attitude--at least after the first painful outcries about Franklin Roosevelt's administration met with little employee or general public approval.

Actually, problems of communication within the organization have been given scant attention up to the present time. But there are indications today of awakening interest in this area. Up until recent years, however, management authorities, generally speaking, have given only token acknowledgment to the need for effective communication within the confines of the business organization. There have been exceptions, of course--Henri Fayol being notable among the exceptions. For example, Fayol commented on the need for cross-contacts (cross-communications) within the organization:

\[\text{\textsuperscript{7}Dover, loc. cit.}\]
The hierarchic channel is the road which all communications leaving or addressed to the supreme authority follow in passing through all the ranks of the hierarchy. The need for this channel arises both from the need for safe transmission and from unity of command but it is not always the quickest channel, and in very big enterprises, the State in particular, it is sometimes disastrously long. As, however, there are many operations whose success depends on rapid execution, we must find a means of reconciling respect for the hierarchic channel with the need for quick action.®

In pointing up this problem of organizational communication, Fayol was much more specific in his references than are many of today's management authorities.

A glance through some of the standard management principles textbooks of the past 10 years reveals a curious situation about some authoritative views of the communication process. Many of these works apparently view the communication problem as being essentially a problem of personnel administration, relating somehow to the management functions of directing and controlling. Frequently these texts make passing reference to communication as being a vital element in the organization because of the need for employees to be directed and informed by management and for management to be informed by the employees. Some management principles texts, for example, refer to "channels of supervision and communication" as though communication were only a vertical phenomenon within the organization:

The organization plan should provide definite channels of supervision and communication. Supervision and communication are interrelated; supervision indicates direction, and direction requires communication. Since . . . the control of the whole organization is centered in top management, it is essential that the channels of communication should always be kept open for the flow of information, instructions, directions, and orders from above and for the flow of reports, comments, and suggestions from below.9

Terry treated communication in a similar manner in 1953 when he postulated his Principle of Communication:

All members of an enterprise wish to be kept informed; it is the responsibility of the manager to receive and to answer employee questions in an understandable manner and to let his group know what is trying to be accomplished, how, where, and why.10

Perhaps the greatest recent progress toward solution of communication problems in the business organization has occurred in the booming field of human relations. Authorities in this field are today giving greater and greater recognition to the vital need for communication throughout the organization, not just as a means of keeping employees directed and informed.

A healthy attribute of some late work in human relations is pointed recognition of the fact that communication is not necessarily limited to a flow of information from management to employee to management. Keith Davis, for example, recognizes a distinct area of communication which he calls "management communication:"


Sometimes there is a tendency to say, 'Let's improve employee communication; management can take care of itself.' The result is that the company's entire communication effort is directed toward employee communication; yet there are reasons why management communication deserves equal emphasis.11

Still other inroads against communication problems are being made by the communication theorists who appear to be becoming increasingly interested in the business organization. Communication theory of particular interest to the business world today appears to logically fall into two broad schools of thought. On the one hand there is the mathematical theory of such authorities as Warren Weaver and Claude Shannon. On the other hand there is the semantical theory of such authorities as Stuart Chase and S. I. Hayakawa. A most active representative of the latter school, Stuart Chase is taking particular interest in the communication problems of the business organization.12

At this stage of progress in the management field it appears reasonable to predict that management people of the immediate future will lean even more attentive ears toward communications scientists in efforts to discover the "why's" and "how's" of communication. The door of today's business world is open to attorneys, mathematicians, and the


13See, for example, Chase's "Executive Communications: Breaking the Semantic Barrier," Management Review, XLVI (April, 1957), 58.
behavioral scientists for consulting in their specialties. There is no reason to believe that the communication scientists will be denied access to this same door.

What contributions, then, will these communication scientists make to the business organization? Will they broaden the horizons of their work to gain a greater understanding of the "dynamics of communication in work relations?" The answers to these questions are yet to be revealed. Today, as was the case as far back as 1954,

... Much of the increasing study of communication in industry resolves itself into finding means of bringing to bear or utilizing what is already known about communication. Most of the literature on communication in industry reflects this interest; it is 'how to' literature, telling people what to do to communicate more effectively ...  

It is desirable, of course, that managers understand how to use the techniques which are necessary for clear and effective communication in the business organization. But there is reason to believe at the present time that there is a more pressing need for management to secure an understanding of just what the communication process is. With such an understanding, management can regard communication techniques as something more than abstract rules which may or may not get results when they are applied.

16Ibid.
III. RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

It is necessary in this study to explore fields of knowledge not necessarily attuned to the specific needs of the business organization. For the most part, this exploration takes the form of bibliographical research.

Bibliographical research is based on a carefully considered and established point of view on the part of the writer. This point of view is that various related but not unified disciplines are prepared to yield findings of communication research that can be assembled in lay terms to strip some of the mystery from the communication process in the business organization.

In his brilliant work On Human Communication, Colin Cherry attempted to unify findings of various disciplines relating to communication. Cherry pointed out that:

". . . At the time of writing, the various aspects of communication, as they are studied under different disciplines, by no means form a unified study; there is a common ground which shows promise of fertility, nothing more."18

Cherry did succeed in bringing certain unity to the study of communication. But it should be noted that he was not concerned with the application of communication research findings to the business organization as such.

17Cherry is the Henry Mark Pease Reader in Telecommunication, Imperial College, University of London.
18Cherry, op. cit., p. 2.
Bibliographical research for this study (especially for Chapters II and III) takes an approach similar in some respects to that taken by Cherry. However, research methodology for the study is vastly different in other respects. Whereas Cherry was "... seeking to extract from the various sciences ... in such a way as to show the historical development and growth of [The] subject," this study seeks to extract specific findings of communication research which have application to the special needs of the business organization.

It is the writer's belief that one of the most urgent needs of management today is to gain a full understanding of the applied aspects of communication. This full understanding is not achieved when a given manager demonstrates his ability to write clear, forceful prose in business communication media. The manager does reach a full understanding of communication, however, when he understands why certain things should be done certain ways to achieve clear communication which will evoke a desired response on the part of readers.

Throughout the study, therefore, the writer pursues an objective of sifting the findings of communication theorists and behavioral scientists for knowledge that can be applied to an understanding of why communication acts and reacts as it does in the business organization. For example, research of the communication redundancy concept results in a conclusion on the part of the writer that the typical manager would care little about the shades of difference between semantic and syntactic redundancy. At the same time, however, the writer recognizes
that with general knowledge about what syntactic and semantic redundancy are, the typical manager is better prepared to understand the differences between writing characterized by brevity and writing characterized by conciseness. Thus in this given instance of analysis (see Chapter IV for the complete treatment of redundancy) the objective of the study is to establish the why which supports a long-standing, generally known principle of written communication, the Principle of Conciseness. Similar objectives are pursued throughout the study.

IV. PREVIEW OF ORGANIZATION

The next chapter of the thesis, Chapter II, undertakes a comprehensive definition of communication which is drawn carefully from definitions advocated by various authorities. Chapter II reveals that there is great variation in the definitions of communication which have been proposed by authorities from time to time. The definition of communication conceived and presented by this writer in Chapter II is stated in terms which should be meaningful to those in the business organization who are concerned with carrying out communication functions. A major part of Chapter II, following the establishment of a meaningful definition, is dedicated to an analysis of the communication process through its various phases, including encoding, transmission, and decoding. Chapter II also gives coverage in depth to certain factors which condition communication. These factors include perceptive inconsistency, language imprecision, semantic order, and others.

Chapter III explores in considerable detail the most critical
factor which conditions communication in the business organization, the
so-called environmental factor. The environmental factor provides the
most meaningful clues to the specific needs of communication in the
business organization. Thus this factor is given chapter emphasis, with
a significant portion of the chapter dealing with the impact of the
business organization on the individual and his communication efforts
and needs.

In Chapter IV the findings of Chapters II and III are brought
together to support a body of standards for effective written managerial
communication. These standards are related generally to techniques for
organizing and writing messages in anticipation of a desired reaction on
the part of readers in the business organization. The standards pro-
posed in some cases confirm standards of communication that are already
well known. In certain instances the validity of currently accepted
standards can be questioned in the light of findings of the study. In
other instances new standards are proposed and supported by findings of
the study. In essence, therefore, Chapter IV constitutes a body of
communication standards which can guide the manager as he attempts to
deal with communication problems peculiar to the business organization.

Chapter IV also analyzes the communication patterns and incidents
which arise as the basic management functions of planning, organizing,
controlling, and actuating are carried on. Each of these functions is
considered from the standpoint of communication needs and problems. As
such needs and problems are revealed, the communication standards are
cited and applied. The case for Chapter IV rests on the generally
accepted idea that business management can be explained as a functional process of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating the components of the organization. Within the view of this student, it logically follows that management's problems of communicating develop and must be solved as these basic functions are carried on.

Finally, Chapter V sets forth briefly the most significant conclusions of the study and summarizes the most basic of the study's findings. Chapter V is designed primarily to give a quick but comprehensive review of the nature of communication in the business organization and how communication can make maximum contribution to organizational efficiency.
CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

The analysis presented in this chapter is designed to make communication more meaningful to people who must deal with and use the process in the business organization. The first step toward accomplishment of this objective is one of defining communication in terms which are as clear as the somewhat imprecise English language permits. The definition proposed in this chapter takes various established definitions into consideration, but it is not constituted of a verbal conglomeration of the several definitions considered. To the contrary, the definition proposed seeks to shed new light on communication in the business organization rather than refocus old light.

As discussed in this chapter, communication in a given instance of information transfer is a process (consisting as it does of several phases) rather than a unilateral act of signal emission. Therefore, part of the chapter is concerned necessarily with an analysis of the phases of the communication process—phases which range from the introspective phase experienced by the communicator to the inference phase experienced by the communicatee.

Analysis of these phases reveals that each is conditioned by certain factors which affect the communication relationship existing between the communicator and the communicatee. Because the impact of these conditioning factors frequently determines whether or not
communication occurs as anticipated by the communicator, considerable attention is given to the factors in the pages of this chapter.

I. COMMUNICATION DEFINED

Like all abstract words, communication assumes different meanings and shades of meaning in different contexts. Meanings for the word can by pyramided to such an extent that it would be foolhardy for anyone to propose a meaning for universal acceptance in all situations. Thus the definition sought for purposes of the present study is one which will be appropriate for explaining and understanding communication in the business organization.

A Survey of Definitions

The fact that communication is an extremely difficult word to define has not deterred certain people from making conscientious efforts to do so. The various definitions of the word proposed reveal the vagaries and inconsistencies which semanticists such as the late Alfred Korzybski normally expect. These definition shortcomings arise because, as pointed out by Korzybski, a word—in this case the word communication--does not embody the basic assumptions of the individual using the word.¹ Then, too, words are used to define the word communication with

the result that the abstraction fog becomes denser. In spite of these obstacles to definition, there is today at least a range of meanings for the word. Exploration of this range of meanings helps make possible the postulation of a meaning which is appropriate for the business organization.

Communication as idea transmission. The sweeping definition, "Communication is idea transmission from one person to another . . ." is probably the most frequently heard definition of the word in the business environment. One's first reaction might be that this definition should be dismissed quickly with a notation that it assumes the existence of at least two human entities in communication, a situation which does not always exist in a given instance. For example, the infant child who makes his first contact with a hot stove comes to grips with the communication process. He touches a hot stove; he feels pain; he associates pain with a hot stove. Reasoning from a symbol (the stove), he conceives the idea that a hot stove causes pain.

2For example, such abstract expressions as stimuli, perception, and organism are frequently used in definitions of communication. A concise definition which relies upon these expressions has little communicative value in and of itself without a supporting discussion of what the expressions used mean.

3A contrary point of view is expressed in the statement, "One thing, however, is always true of all forms of communication--it may take place only between people. Machines, equipment, and other material things may be means of communicating, but only human beings send, receive, and make use of communication." Raymond W. Peters, Communication Within Industry (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), p. xiii.
He, not the stove, conceived the idea. Nor did the stove transmit pain as such to the child. But the fact remains that an idea was born of a contact or communication between an intellectual entity and a non-intellectual entity. In his future behavior the child, then the man, will see a hot stove as a symbol of pain when it is touched. Ideas are born in a similar manner when an archeologist comes into contact with an artifact, when a highway traveler observes a hole in the road ahead, or when a shop foreman observes oily waste on the shop floor.

In spite of its basic shortcomings, the definition under criticism is not entirely without merit because much human effort is dedicated to idea transmission; and the definition emphasizes the role communication plays in this social behavior of man. Even with this merit, however, the definition suffers the defect of emphasizing a step of communication rather than what the process actually is. Given the more typical instance in which two human entities (as opposed to the examples just noted) are linked in a communication network, certain things happen which are ignored by the definition. For example, the definition fails to allow for idea conception on the part of the human being initiating the message as such an idea relates specifically to the need to communicate. Logically, within the area of the human communication process, idea conception should precede idea transmission. An idea is a product of mental reflection on the part of the communicator, the purpose of such reflection being one of giving the idea some semblance of order to make it understandable to the receiver. This pretransmission phase of communication might be called the intrapersonal.
or introspective phase.⁴

To hold simply that "communication is idea transmission" is to ignore still another vital phase of the process which follows transmission. This phase assumes the existence of a receiver and assumes further that there will be inferences drawn by him from that which is transmitted. The inferences may or may not precipitate a response desired by the sender. And, similarly, the sender must face the contingency that the idea he transmitted will differ vastly from the idea received by the communicates. In the latter case, a miscommunication pattern emerges, a pattern which Haney calls "by-passing:"

By-passing . . . is the name for the miscommunication pattern which occurs when the sender (speaker, writer, etc.) and the receiver (listener, reader, etc.) miss each other with their meanings.⁵

It is noteworthy that by-passing occurs when communicator and communicatee send and receive the same words but interpret them differently.⁶ Thus the fact is inescapable (and supported by common-sense observation) that much communication difficulty can be traced to the fact that a sender can transmit one idea to a receiver only to have another idea received. For this and the other reasons noted, to hold that communication is simply idea transmission between people is to vastly oversimplify the definition of the word.

⁴See discussion of this phase of communication on page 30 of the study.
⁵Haney, op. cit., p. 42.
⁶Ibid., p. 43.
Communication as response stimulation. Many published definitions of communication posed for the needs of the business organization place emphasis not on the sender and idea transmission but on the receiver and his response to the message. For example, in his recent work Merrihue states that

The author's concept of communication as it should be practiced in business usually encompasses the complete cycle which started with the baby's behavior. In this context, communication may perhaps best be defined as 'any initiated behavior on the part of the sender which conveys the desired meaning to the receiver and causes the desired response behavior from the receiver.'

Brennan describes the business communication process as one in which

... Some writer, speaker, signaler, etc. (communicator) wanting to get some task accomplished (purpose), requiring the transmission of information (idea), speaks, writes, signals, etc. (expression), directing this idea over appropriate transmission lines (channeling) to some employee, potential customer, etc. (receiver) who does the work ordered, purchases the goods offered, etc. (response).

Definitions such as these stipulate that response on the part of the receiver must conform to that which is anticipated by the sender for communication to exist. Such definitions appear to minimize the ever-present contingency that the communicatee, in a given instance in which a message is received, will respond with a behavior pattern quite


different from that anticipated by the communicator. These definitions at least imply that when response differs from that anticipated by the sender, no communication has occurred. Such, of course, cannot be the case. Communication has occurred to the extent that a message has been encoded, transmitted, received, and (though erroneously) decoded.

Definitions such as those of Merrihue and Brennan attempt to incorporate the effect of communication into a definition of the word itself. In this connection, one psychologist takes the extreme position that for purposes of definition communication effects should be disregarded and that emphasis should be given to "message emission." He states:

Communication occurs when a message is emitted—regardless of its reception. . . . The importance of our definition is that it keeps the effect of communication separate from the definition of communication. Thus we can speak of communication and 'good' or 'successful' communication.9

This point of view has merit to the extent that communication can be defined as a unilateral act involving only a communicator. In certain instances the process may be considered as a unilateral act,10 but these instances are undoubtedly rare in the business organization.

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10The author under criticism cites such an instance in the case of "buried works of art such that no audience received them during the artist's lifetime." In this case it could not be held logically that the artist did not communicate—at least within the confines of his own intent. The communication was unilateral to the extent that the artist did not have in mind specific, art-appreciating communicatees. Singing in the bathtub might be considered, similarly, unilateral communication.
Business communication is almost without exception purposive in nature; that is, messages are emitted for specific purposes, usually for influencing individual and/or aggregate behavior in the organization. Even the Christmas card sent out by the human-relations conscious office manager has a dual purpose (1) to express the season's greetings, while (2) "humanizing" the relationship of the company to the employee in the interests of improving employee satisfaction and efficiency in the organization.¹¹

A conclusion is drawn for purposes of this study that the definition of communication which will be most meaningful in the business organization should take into consideration its purposive nature in the firm. Since the purpose of business communication is generally response stimulation, the definition should hold it to be a bilateral process (involving a sender and receiver) rather than a unilateral act involving only a communicator. At the same time, however, an acceptable definition must allow for the contingency that receiver response to a given message does not need to conform to the behavior pattern anticipated by the sender if communication is to occur. Though faulty (or unsuccessful), a given instance of communication is consummated when inferences are drawn by the communicatee as or after the message is received and response stimulated accordingly.

*Communication as a two-way process.* The position is taken here

¹¹Throughout the study, emphasis is concentrated on the purposive nature of communication as it occurs in the business organization.
that a specific instance of communication is consummated when receiver inferences have been made and response stimulated to manifest the inferences. At first glance, this position is somewhat inconsistent with the oft-cited expression, "Communication is a two-way process." Management literature frequently admonishes the reader to regard communication as a two-way process, the implication being that the employee should be allowed to speak his mind to his superiors.

Much more than a platitude is involved in the two-way aspect of information flow. Actually communication is of a two-way nature when manager is communicating with manager and when subordinate is communicating with subordinate. However, the expression two-way does not suffice to explain just what precipitates a continuing information flow between intellectual entities. A better expression to explain this phenomenon is feedback.

Feedback may take the form of written or spoken words; it may take the form of a visual signal such as a negative shake of the receiver's head; or it may take the form of total silence on the part of the message receiver. In the latter instance there is feedback to the extent that the initial sender draws inferences about the silence of

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12 The Owens and Terry comments on communication cited on page 10 of the study give great emphasis to the two-way aspect of communication. As a footnote to his definition of communication (cited on page 23 of the study), Merrihue states, "Communication is a two-way process and the sender may be either the manager or a subordinate."

13 Actually feedback is an engineering concept which was developed in the area of cybernetics to explain information flow from such machines as electronic computers.
the receiver (e.g., the receiver does or does not understand the message sent, or has or has not misinterpreted the message).

The feedback phenomenon considered, communication might be visualized as being circular in nature. The initial sender emits a message which is received and stimulates a response on the part of the receiver. This response is or results in a behavior pattern on the part of the receiver which "tells" the initial sender what he must next communicate in order to secure a further desired response. Feedback in this instance, of course, is a part of the behavior pattern. And feedback is that part of the communication encounter which causes the cycle to be set in motion again and again.14

Communication as a linking mechanism. Certainly the most general of all definitions of communication is Cherry's "Communication is that which links any organism together." As visualized by Cherry, an organism can be simply two friends holding a personal conversation or a daily

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14The point of view could perhaps be taken that feedback, regardless of the form it takes, precipitates a new instance of communication each time it occurs. Within this view, communication would not necessarily be a circular process. Feedback would be the phenomenon which would transform an initial communicatee into a communicator in the next information transfer. Feedback, then, would be a phase linking two instances of communication. The merit of this point of view is conceded; however, it appears to cast an unnecessary pall of complexity over an understanding of communication, an understanding which can be more directly reached through a consideration of communication as a circular process.

newspaper and its readers. By the same token, a business organization can be regarded as an organism which is linked (indeed, owes its existence to) communication. Unquestionably a cessation of communication among its components would result in the breaking up of the business organism.

Cherry's definition, of course, is not designed to provide insight into the specifics of information flow in the business organization. This definition does, however, point to the need for a definition in general terms which will emphasize the dependence of the firm on communication. This general definition might be posed in these words: Communication is that which links the components of a business organization into an organism dedicated to pursuing prescribed organizational objectives. Inherent in this general definition is the condition that if communication totally breaks down or does not exist, the organization does not exist. Inherent also is the fact that communication is the process which unifies organizational components in the pursuit of organizational objectives.

A Proposed Definition of Communication

The critical dependence of the business organization on communication makes imperative the need for a definition which will aid

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16Observing that business is communication, Lawrence D. Brennan states, "Underlying every organization of men is a basic communication system which gives that organization existence." Brennan, op. cit., p. 3.

17This observation is explored in further detail in Chapter III of the study.
management in analyzing the factors and forces which constitute and
influence the flow of information. This need is best met by providing
a definition which holds communication to be a process that moves through
phases when intellectual entities\(^{18}\) are linked for purposes of trans-
mitting information. Communication can in fact be regarded as a
divisible process, each phase of which is subject to consideration when
communication problems arise. This process does not necessarily occur in
a rigid order of steps. For analytical purposes, however, a logical
order for the phases can be assumed.

For purposes of this study, communication is defined as the
process which links two or more intellectual entities and provides for
the transmission of expression between them. It is submitted that a
given instance of purposive communication between two or more intel-
lectual beings in a business organization involves four phases:
(1) the introspective\(^{19}\) phase experienced by the communicator; (2) the
phase in which the communicator encodes the purposive message; (3) the
phase in which the communicator transmits the message; and (4) the

\(^{18}\) In the interest of providing a meaningful and useful definition,
no note is taken of communication between non-intellectual and intel-
lectual entities as envisioned by the discussion on pages 20 and 21 of the
thesis.

\(^{19}\) Though it is an awkward word, introspective appears to be the
most descriptive adjective to apply to the initial communication phase
experienced by the communicator when he is stimulated to communicate.
As used here, the word carries its denotative meaning of "inspecting or
looking within" on the part of the communicator.
inference phase experienced by the communicatee.

The communicator's introspective phase. The introspective phase is set in motion by the sender's response to a stimulus which results in his conception of a need to transmit an expression. The introspective phase also involves his derivation of a purpose for an incident of communication. In addition, the phase involves an introspective consideration of the purpose by the sender to the end that the purpose is given the dimensions necessary for a communication pattern to exist between two or more intellectual entities. Thus it is in the introspective phase that the communication process, as it occurs in the business organization, assumes its purposive nature. Logically, there is reason to believe that many instances of miscommunication in the business organization can be traced to human frailties of thinking and observation which are revealed in the introspective phase. Some of these frailties are discussed at a later point in this chapter.

The communicator's encoding of the purposive message. In the encoding phase of the communication process, the sender puts his message into aural or visual symbols which presumably are common in

20For example, an office manager observes an employee talking on the telephone and taking pencil notes on a piece of company letterhead bond paper (the office manager recognizes a need to transmit an expression). He decides that notetaking on company letterhead paper is a wasteful practice and that something should be done about such waste (derivation of a purpose for an incident of communication). He further decides that rather than chastise the one employee he will publish a general memorandum for all office employees on the subject of waste reduction (consideration of the purpose as it relates to a communication pattern to be created).
meaning to the sender and the receiver.

Undoubtedly errors made by the communicator in the encoding phase contribute to just as many if not more patterns of miscommunication as does human frailty in the introspective phase. As later discussion in the study reveals, for example, the encoding phase is the step in a given instance of communication in which the sender faces the danger of selecting word symbols which will not be meaningful to the receiver, the effect being either no behavior change or erroneous behavior change.

The communicator's transmission of the purposive message. The transmission phase involves, first, a selection of the transmission channel or medium and, second, the release of the message to the receiver via aural or visual signals. The sender may in the business organization use any of the conventional transmission media. These media include the telephone, the telegraph, the intracompany mail system, the public address system, or simply face-to-face conversation. As later analysis in the study reveals, the transmission phase is subject to influence from the noise factor regardless of the transmission medium used.

The communicatee's inference of the purposive message. The inference phase is characterized by the receiver's decoding of the purposive message as a basis for behavior change (a consideration of needed response to the message because of inferences drawn). Moreover, the phase involves the communicatee's feedback--translation
of the message into an overt or tacit response.\(^\text{21}\)

II. SOME MAJOR FACTORS CONDITIONING COMMUNICATION

IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

Each of the phases of purposive business communication is subject to influence from certain human and language factors. The analysis of the factors presented here is designed to provide a background for an understanding of the role of communication in the business organization. The analysis, moreover, is intended to provide a foundation for the standards of managerial communication which are presented in Chapter IV of the thesis.

The Introspective Phase

The introspective phase of communication gives rise to numerous problems in the business organization, most of which can be traced to human shortcomings.

\(^{21}\)The office employee who had customarily used letterhead bond for notetaking might stop such practice on receiving the office manager's memorandum about waste reduction. But on the other hand it should be recognized that the employee might continue wasting letterhead bond while sharpening his pencils to shorter lengths and conserving on paper clips. In such a case the employee's response (feedback) would bring to light a flaw in the communication incident. This flaw might be traced to any one of the four phases of communication. For example, the office manager in the introspective phase might have assumed no need to mention specific examples of waste (such as using company letterhead for notetaking). Or perhaps in the encoding phase he enjoined office employees to "take notes on suitable material such as sulphite paper," an expression not properly translated by the employee under consideration because he did not know what sulphite paper was.
Some of these shortcomings are physical or mental in nature and can be quickly considered because of their obvious effect on an individual's ability to function properly in the introspective phase. Under certain circumstances, for example, a blind person could not conceive a need to transmit an expression because he could not respond to a visual stimulus. Similarly, a moron might not have the mental capacity to derive a purpose for an incident of communication. And, finally, a deaf mute might not be able to relate an instance of communication to the communication pattern which would involve the proper medium of transmission and the proper communicatee. In the presence of such human frailties, the inability of certain thinking entities to function in the introspective phase of communication is readily understandable.

Less understandable, however, is the inability of people to function properly in this phase of communication where no such mental or physical infirmities exist. The human frailties of "normal" people undoubtedly account for the vast majority of patterns of miscommunication in the business organization which originate in the introspective phase.

The communicator's inconsistency of perception. It is realistic to hold that the origin of a given instance of purposive communication can be traced to the sender's reaction to a stimulus. This stimulus may come from within or without the communicator:

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22 Such as, for example, an office employee's taking notes on the company's letterhead bond.
Man always acts in response to some stimulation. These happenings may occur outside the person, as, for example, the scene of a boy digging for worms, the roar of a plane overhead, or the aroma of frying bacon. Or they may occur within the individual as, say, a feeling of nausea, or euphoria, a memory, the 'flash' of an insight, etc. 23

Were all members of a business organization given to responding the same way to the same stimuli, patterns of miscommunication would undoubtedly be rare in that organization. The same would be true were specific individuals given to responding a specific way each time they were confronted with a specific stimulus.

The business organization of the real world, however, is not made up of individuals with the robotlike characteristics necessary for them to see with identical eyes and respond with identical behavior. The individuals who make up a firm bring to bear on their organization a variety of backgrounds which condition their responses to observed stimuli. Consider, for example, the case of two employees who observe a third employee stealing tools from the company's tool crib. One of the two employees might immediately conceive a need to communicate his observation to his supervisor because he had been conditioned by his parents or experience to believe that stealing in any form was wrong. The second employee, on the other hand, might have a personal conviction, based on home environment or experience, that stealing from the company was not wrong. The latter employee would perhaps be

23Haney, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
indifferent to the need to communicate his findings, or perhaps he would transmit a "well done" to the thief. The fact is apparent that two individuals observing the same stimulus at the same time can react at opposing poles of response in the introspective phase of communication.

Another factor which accounts for divergence of human response to a given stimulus is the inability of human beings to see the whole of a stimulus at a single instant in time. Commenting on this problem, Cherry states:

> We do not perceive more than a minute fraction of the sights and sounds that fall upon our sense organs; the great majority pass us by. They may make physical impressions on our retinas or in our ears but seem not to have any effect upon our subsequent perceptions, thoughts, or behavior. \(^{24}\)

This basic human frailty sometimes causes the communicator to enter an introspective phase of communication which results in a miscommunication pattern attributable to faulty recognition of a need to communicate. For example, a communicator who smells smoke and at the same time observes a person running in the general direction of a fire extinguisher might react with the message, "Fire! Fire!," only to learn later that the odor he sensed was harmless cigarette smoke and that the running person was simply out for his morning exercise.

The communicator's tendency to reason from a part of the total stimulus can also result in miscommunication because the pattern

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created for the derived purpose of information transmission involves the wrong receiver. Thus the office manager who finds an unopened first-class letter on the office floor and verbally disciplines the mail clerk for carelessness might later be embarrassed to learn that he (the office manager) was the one who carelessly dropped the letter.

Certainly a factor of critical importance which conditions the introspective phase of communication is the perceptive tendency of the sender. Undoubtedly there is truth in the philosophical observation that that which is real to one communicator is fantasy to another.

Or, in Cherry's words:

The schizophrenic has his own world, the dipsomaniac his nightmare; it is conceivable that a butterfly, with organs of smell in its feet, has a world of smells possessing shapes. We each of us have our own models of reality.25

The communicator's power to deduce. The introspective phase of communication, once entered by a specific business communicator, is significantly conditioned by his powers of deduction, or—in a broader sense—his capacity to think. It should be recalled that in the introspective phase the purposive communicator must:

Conceive a need to transmit an expression;
Derive a purpose for the incident of communication;
And establish a pattern for communication to occur.

Any one or all of these steps of the introspective phase are

25 Ibid.
influenced by the quality of the individual communicator's thinking. It is self evident that much of the thinking done by communicators in a business organization takes a deductive approach, viz., a premise is established on the basis of observation and conclusions are drawn therefrom. And of course the strength of the conclusion is a function of the strength of the premise. Logicians hold that the essential validity characteristic of deductive argument, in a given instance, is that a false conclusion cannot be supported by a true premise. An elementary illustration of this point might be the case of a newly hired production manager in a business organization who observes:

All production employees in the company are Local 705 union members (the premise).

And concludes:

All Local 705 Union members in the company are production employees.

In this instance the new production manager could have dealt with a true premise and a false conclusion, thus could be stimulated to communicate by an invalid argument. Motivated by such a conclusion in the introspective phase of communication, the new production manager might blunder any or all of the three steps of the phase. While touring his new company, he might, for example, observe a Local 705 member (the assumption here is that such a member would be identifiable) away from the production line during a time when (he thought) such workers were supposed to be attending the line. On the basis of this stimulus, he might

1. Erroneously conceive a need to transmit an expression
to the company's Local 705 employees;

2. And from the need derive a purpose of calling attention to the fact that all Local 705 employees should remain in proximity to the production line during certain hours;

3. And, finally, establish a pattern of communication via union representatives to consummate with all company employees who were members of Local 705.

Assuming a situation in which the production manager's edict passed through the hands of union representatives with no note being taken by them of its fallacy, he might find himself in the ludicrous position of having told office employee members of Local 705 that they should remain in proximity to the production line during certain hours.

A similar pattern of miscommunication can emerge when a business communicator reasons deductively to a true conclusion from false premises or from false premises to a false conclusion. The point of importance in the analysis here is that a consideration of why miscommunication occurs in a business organization must sometimes delve into the quality of the sender's thinking during the introspective phase.

The communicator's prejudice. Human beings are characterized by a basic inability to divorce prejudice26 from their day-to-day

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26 Defined here as a predisposition to respond to a stimulus according to a pattern of behavior based on subjective convictions rather than on an objective consideration of the discerned facts of the stimulus.
behavior. This prejudice may be overtly acknowledged or it may exist on the unconscious threshold of the individual's psyche. In either case, prejudice experienced by the sender during the introspective phase of communication can, in a specific instance, account for a pattern of miscommunication. Indeed, such prejudice can nullify the effect sought by the sender, a condition which can sometimes be traced directly to the sender's conception of a need to communicate when, in fact, no such need existed. A simple example would be the case in which Worker A told Worker B that the water fountain near the lathe shop was unclean and that he was no longer going to drink from it. In explaining why the fountain was unclean, Worker A might point out that he had seen dust trapped on the fountain rim and used chewing gum clogged in its drain. The facts might indicate, however, that Worker A, unconsciously prejudiced against Negroes, had observed a Negro drinking from the fountain. In this instance the pattern of miscommunication might be carried forward as Worker B complained to his supervisor about the filth of the water fountain. The supervisor, on having the medical department check the bacteria count of the fountain in question, might find that the count was significantly in the "safe" range. In such a case not only would a false need to communicate be conceived, but also an unneeded pattern of communication would be established.

Another point to be considered here is that the impact of communication on the receiver can be affected significantly by prejudice intentionally or unintentionally revealed by the sender. Recognition of such prejudice by the receiver is the stimulus which might prompt
him to respond to the message with behavior contrary to that desired by the sender.

The communicator's bias. Closely related to the concept of prejudice is that of bias in the introspective phase of communication. As it is revealed by the communicator in the introspective phase, bias, like prejudice, is a predisposition to react to stimuli.27

Bias, for example, can be a consequence of the communicator's zeal to protect his self interest in the business organization. Thus the company office manager who is directed to report to the administrative vice president on ways and means by which the office staff could be reduced in number might, because of bias in favor of maintaining his status as manager of a large staff, be unable to relate his need to communicate to the directed purpose for the communication, a requisite for the introspective phase. Under such circumstances miscommunication would occur to the extent that the office manager would perhaps conceive a purpose for his report which involved a defense of the size of his present office staff.

27In certain usage, bias can, in fact, serve as a synonym for prejudice. In this context, however, bias is considered to exist on an intellectual plane which differs from that of prejudice. As seen here, prejudice is a reflex conditioned by the total of man's environment (his home, church, work--the totality of his mores); whereas bias is, more simply, a temperamental, day-to-day inclination to close the mind to issues that are contrary to preconceived notions. Being more fundamental, prejudice in the individual changes gradually, if ever. Bias, on the other hand, can be subject to quick change as interests and objectives change.
Should the same office manager suddenly be promoted to administrative vice president, however, his bias might shift to an extreme position in which he would visualize his former office staff as much too cumbersome in number. Under such circumstances, he might even be biased in favor of recommending the elimination of a large number of "bureaucrats" in the organization--his recommendation being, in fact, precipitated by the favorable attention he would expect to get from the executive vice president.

At this point a conclusion can be drawn that such human characteristics as bias and prejudice play havoc with the communicator's introspective phase of communication. Similarly, the sender's inconsistency of perception and his faulty ability to deduce sometimes render ineffectual his efforts to conceive a need and derive a purpose for communication. These human frailties are considered to be some of the most fundamental causes of miscommunication patterns in the business organization which find their origin in the introspective phase. These frailties have a common thread which is tightly sewn to mental, emotional, and environmental characteristics of the individual communicator.

The communicator's responsibility to communicate. A very significant factor affecting the introspective phase cannot be attributed solely to human frailty. This is the responsibility factor. People in the business organization sometimes enter tentatively the introspective phase of communication but fail to conceive a need to transmit information because they feel that it is not their
responsibility to do so.

For purposes of this study, responsibility is defined as the obligation of an individual in the business organization to perform a task to the best of his ability in accordance with directions given him.28 Where the responsibility of a given job in the organization is clearly defined to include a responsibility to communicate, problems of communication can be obviously minimized.29 Very often, however, responsibility as such to communicate is not delineated for either the executive or the operative employee. Thus where an employee does not identify communication as a part of his obligation to perform a task to the best of his ability, he might not be inclined to conceive a need to communicate.

In a given instance, however, the employee might respond to a stimulus by entering the introspective phase of communication beyond the point of need recognition. For example, the employee who failed to report his equipment out of order might have been tempted to do so but decided not to because it was "not his job to take care of such things." In such a case the employee recognized a need to communicate but stopped before he determined a purpose and established a pattern for the communication incident.

28 In all his definitions of management concepts, the writer is influenced by Professor Ralph C. Davis of the Ohio State University. In the preparatory work for this study, specific attention was given to Professor Davis' The Fundamentals of Top Management (New York: Harper Brothers, 1951).

29 This point is explored in further detail in Chapter IV of the study.
It is submitted that the responsibility factor, like the factors of human frailty, bears significantly on both the extent and degree to which miscommunication occurs in the business organization. Making their impact primarily in the introspective phase of communication, the factors discussed here can have the effect of nullifying the communication process, even though an affected instance of communication still may be carried through the encoding, transmission, and inference phases.

The Encoding Phase

For purposes of analysis in this study, encoding is presented as a distinct phase of communication. However, recognition should be given to the fact that in certain instances of communication, encoding and transmission occur almost simultaneously.\(^{30}\) Examples of such near-simultaneous encoding and transmission would be face-to-face oral communication or communication via telephone or radio which did not rely on a prepared written message or script.

The extraction of the encoding phase from the total process of communication makes possible the analysis of some of the most critical factors which condition encoding and contribute to miscommunication in the business organization. As analyzed here, these factors include the imprecision of language, the lack of semantic order in the business organization, and the tendency of people in the firm to confuse words

\(^{30}\) Encoding and transmission are described as "almost" simultaneous because there is a minute lag, even in face-to-face conversation, between the casting of a message into symbols and the projection of the message to the receiver.
with the things the words represent.

For purposes of this study, analysis of communicative symbols is limited to words of the English language, especially as they are used in written and spoken business communication situations. This limitation is imposed for two major reasons: (1) words are the most common communicative symbols in the business organization; and (2) the ineptness of word symbols to communicate accounts for many instances of miscommunication in the business organization. In these pages, therefore, no consideration is given to such communicative symbols as those of the Morse code and highway warning signs.

The imprecision of language. There is nothing sacred about the fact that a fish is called a fish in the English language. Indeed, the object which English speaking people call a fish might well have been called a table or chair had it not been for the particular turn of human events which resulted in a fish being designated by the spoken, then written, word symbol fish. Human emotions being what they are, however, even the relatively concrete noun fish has been through time embellished with mystic qualities to give it communicative value which bears no direct relationship to one of the "... aquatic, water-breathing, craniate vertebrates" defined in Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary*.

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31 According to Korzybski, "In the rough, a symbol is defined as a sign which stands for something. If it stands for something, it becomes a symbol for this something. If it does not stand for something, then it becomes not a symbol but a meaningless sign. This applies to words just as it does to bank cheques." Korzybski, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79. Within the confines of this definition, a word can be regarded as a symbol whether it be presented in the form of noise (spoken) or presented graphically (written).
Thus Employee A in conversation with Employee B might refer to a
supervisor as a "cold dish," meaning perhaps that the supervisor was an
unfriendly person not given to "warmhearted" emotional displays. The
employee who was denied a request for an extra day's vacation and later
referred to the superintendent as a "fish-eyed old bastard" probably
knew in fact that the superintendent was less than thirty years old and
did not have aquatic, water-breathing, unmarried parents. And the
person who "fished" a coin out of his pocket did not send an aquatic
creature to fetch the coin. These and the many other homely examples
that could be cited illustrate a vital finding about human language:
It is an inexact tool for communication.

There are factors to account for the poor quality of language
as a tool by which communication is carried on. In the encoding phase
of the process these factors exercise a significant influence on the
sender as he attempts to frame a message for transmission. One such
factor is the lack of semantic order which prevails in the business
organization.

A lack of semantic order. English words at most give vague
representation to concepts and things, the primary reason being that
people—the users of words—exercise freedom of choice in assigning
meanings to the words they use. It is true that a certain semantic
order is brought to an English-speaking culture by the syntax of
English and by the availability of Standard English dictionaries.
In a certain sense, rules for grammar and accepted dictionaries
constitute an agreement among English speaking
people to allow certain expressions to represent certain concepts and things.

Because this agreement can be easily broken, however, this semantic order is a delicately balanced mechanism, at least from the standpoint of the English-speaking individual and those with whom he communicates.

Another area of agreement which brings a certain semantic order to a society through language involves noise. As pointed out by Hayakawa,

Now, human beings have agreed in the course of centuries of mutual dependency, to let the various noises that they can produce with their lungs, throats, tongues, teeth, and lips to systematically stand for specified happenings in their nervous systems.\(^{32}\)

Thus semantic order is dependent on the maintenance of agreement among people that noise symbols (spoken words, for example) and graphic symbols (written words, for example) will represent specific concepts and things. If people used these symbols with great prudence and with assiduous attention to agreed-upon meanings, it is likely that semantic order in society could be maintained. But such optimum order is not likely to be achieved because of the vast improbability that people, even in a society closely knit by language and custom, will hew to a line of semantic conformity. It is almost a certainty that people will

continue to impute meanings to symbols which have been derived from their personal contact with reality and unreality. It is just as certain that people will under certain circumstances continue to arrive at symbol meaning along an emotional route of reasoning which never touches agreed-upon meanings.

Imaginatively considered, the business organization might be regarded as an institution which is given the order of a small society by the fact that it brings similar people together who deal with similarities. They deal with similar problems, and they pursue similar objectives which contribute to the organization's objectives. To the extent that the firm maintains semantic balance, problems of communication are minimized. Miscommunication in the typical business organization, however, gives testimony to the fact that semantic balance is seldom, if ever, secured.

The gleeful lathe operator who sends a new and naive apprentice machinist to fetch a left-handed monkey wrench at the tool shack is (probably unknowingly) contributing to semantic disorder in the business organization. The expression "left-handed monkey wrench" is to the apprentice symbolic of a tool to be grasped with the left hand. To the seasoned lathe operator, the expression is symbolic of laughter at the chagrin of a "greenhorn" and the pleasure of telling fellow workers about the incident at the first opportunity. In this instance a single expression is symbolic of both a thing and a concept, dimensions of meaning for the expression being determined by individual experience rather than rational reference to society's agreed-
It can be concluded that the encoding phase of communication, the phase in which the communicator puts his message into aural or visual symbols, contributes to the semantic imbalance of the business organization. This imbalance emerges when the communicator encodes a message into symbols which do not carry meanings common to himself and the communicatee.

Confusion of the 'word' world with the 'real' world. Alfred Korzybski, a principal in the establishment of the discipline of general semantics, compared the function of language to the function of a map:

If we reflect upon our languages, we find that at best they must be considered only as maps. A word is not the object it represents; and languages exhibit also this peculiar self-reflexiveness, that we can analyze language by linguistic means.33

Basic to many patterns of miscommunication in the business organization as elsewhere is the human tendency to confuse the world as it is represented by words (the map) with the real (touchable, seeable, smellable) world—that is, the world as it actually exists. The "word" world exists only in the reflections of the human mind. It is a composite of sensations gleaned by the individual from words alone—from listening to the radio, reading the newspaper, reading business reports, hearing a college professor lecture. The "real" world, in contrast, is one of experience which dates from the individual's

33Korzybski, op. cit., p. 58.
infancy; it is a composite of discerned events, of firsthand observation of places, people, things.  

The maturation process of the individual brings him to grips with a "word" world, the horizons of which broaden with his exposure to communication. This "word" world in a certain sense is a map for the "real" world. An individual will react rationally to the "real" world to the extent that the map reflects a fineness of detail of the "real" world as it actually exists:

If however [The individual] grows up with a false map in his head—that is, with a head crammed with false knowledge and superstition—he will constantly be running into trouble, wasting his efforts, and acting like a fool. He will not be adjusted to the world as it is; he may, if the lack of adjustment is serious, end up in a mental hospital.

It is realistic to hold that patterns of miscommunication in the business organization can sometimes be traced to the false maps followed by communicators in the encoding phase of the process. For example, a new management trainee whose map (contributed to by impressions gained at the cinema) was "false" might on an initial meeting with a senior company executive shake protocol by addressing the executive by his first name or his initials. Whereas the nervous young man might have been trying conscientiously to make a correct first

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34 Hayakawa designates the "world that comes to us through words" as the verbal world. He designates "the world we know or are capable of knowing through our own experience" as the extensional world. *op. cit.*, p. 32.

impression on the executive, the executive might see in him (and perhaps in future communications from him) something symbolical of a "smart-alecky young upstart trying to take over the company." In such an instance both communicator and communicatee would be adding lines to their false maps, the executive because of his preoccupation with the sanctity of protocol and the trainee because the executive was, in his estimation, unnecessarily curt at their first meeting. Unguided by false maps, participants in this initial meeting could have made realistic observations each of the other while information flowed smoothly between them. Guided by false maps, however, participants in the meeting somehow confused their respective "word" worlds with the "real" world.

"Real" word-"word" world confusion confounds the encoding phase of communication from the standpoint of both the sender and the receiver. Interacting with the impreciseness of words, this confusion makes the encoding process fraught with possibilities for miscommunication to occur in the business organization. Since there is no substitute for words in most business communication situations, the business communicator finds himself in the critical position of having to work with faulty tools. There are, fortunately, methods and standards by which he can maximize the utility of these tools. These standards, proposed and discussed in Chapter IV of this study, are inherent in but not

36 In Chapter IV, for example, consideration is given to intensional and extensional meaning and the abstracting process. Consideration is also given to the impact of style of expression and message organization as means of securing clarity of communication and stimulating human response.
designated by the works of such scholars as Cherry:

If words of a language do not name things, actions, events, relationships, and so on, with precision, then language itself must be a source of imprecision in communication? Indeed it is. And the degree of this imprecision depends to a great extent upon the choice of words by the writer or speaker, upon his skill in selecting words, and upon his artistic sense in using them in setting his audience in the right frame of mind.37

The Transmission Phase

The encoding phase of communication is essentially one of symbol selection. Transmission, the next logical step of the process, involves the projection of the symbols to the receiver.

Transmission of a written medium can be said to occur when a letter or memorandum is placed in a company or governmental mail service which links the sender with the receiver. However, for purposes of this study emphasis is placed on voice transmission as it occurs in face-to-face conversation or through mechanical media such as the radio, telephone, or public address system.

In the strictest sense it can be pointed out that encoding (as in the introspective phase of communication) gives rise to semantic problems, while transmission give rise primarily to technical problems of mechanics or engineering. There is, however, an interaction of engineering problems with semantic problems when the communication problem of transmission is considered as a whole. Brief note is taken of this interaction as the basic problem of transmission is considered.

37 Cherry, On Human Communication, p. 69.
The basic problem of transmission. Shannon defines the basic problem of communication as one which exists on three levels:

Level A—How accurately can the symbols of communication be transmitted? (The technical problem.)

Level B—How precisely do the transmitted symbols convey the desired meaning? (The semantic problem.)

Level C—How effectively does the received meaning affect conduct in the desired way? (The effectiveness problem.)

Whereas the work of Shannon, Weaver, and others who have contributed to mathematical theory as it relates to communication are concerned primarily with Level A of the problem, the work presented here is concerned primarily with Levels B and C as the business organization is affected. The ability of signals, as mentioned by Cherry, "to change thoughts and behavior" is of most basic concern to this study as attention is given to the transmission phase of communication. It is

38 See Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver's The Mathematical Theory of Communication. R. L. Ackoff, writing in Management Science, has contributed to the integration of mathematical theory to the problem at Levels B and C. Ackoff uses mathematical symbolism, for example, to develop his concept of "the purposeful state," which, he says, is the only entity which can communicate. He holds that "purposefulness exists only if choice is available to the entity involved and if that entity is capable of choice." Ackoff maintains that his work is still in very early stages of progress, that the preponderance of work in mathematical theory (relating to Levels B and C) remains to be done. Ackoff presents his initial work in "Toward a Behavioral Theory of Communication," Management Science, IV (April, 1958), 218-233.
the view of this student that there is one critical factor related to transmission which helps explain the nature of communication in the business organization and accounts for many patterns of miscommunication. This factor is noise.

The noise factor. Within the sphere of this consideration of communication, noise can be defined as "disturbances which do not represent any part of the messages from a specified source."  The relationship of this concept, say, to radio transmission is immediately apparent: noise is the crackling of static, the hum of the receiver, or any other form of aural disturbance which is cominled with but not a part of the message being communicated. Such noise can obviously exert considerable influence on the degree of effectiveness with which a radio message being transmitted is received:

The received noisy signals do not completely represent the messages from the source but constitute only evidence of those messages. The receiver can, at best, weigh this evidence in the light of all the past (a priori) knowledge he possesses and make a verdict--his verdict or decision being the 'best guess' about the transmitted message.

In the business organization the noise factor can contribute to miscommunication at various places in the communication process. In the introspective phase, for example, it is possible that a sender who has had to make a "best guess" about a message he has previously

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39Cherry, On Human Communication, p. 121.

40Ibid., p. 200.
received will conceive a false need to communicate. In the encoding
phase, likewise, noise—perhaps emanating from a noisy piece of machinery—
can comingle with the message the sender is encoding, the result being
that the receiver will, as did the sender, have to make a "best guess"
about message content when the inference phase is reached.

Even though noise does exert influence on all phases of communica-
tion, the factor is best considered as it influences transmission because
here is where it makes its initial impact. For these purposes, trans-
mission is visualized as the process by which signals constituting an
encoded purposive message are projected from the sender to the receiver.
Therefore, transmission is considered to occur via the human voice, as
when a supervisor in face-to-face conversation instructs an employee
about work requirements. The sounds projected through space to the
employee constitute signals to the employee in the form of aural word
symbols. Similarly, transmission occurs in the business organization
when an employee is summoned to the payroll office by means of the
public address system or telephone.

Regardless of the transmission medium used in the business
organization, patterns of miscommunication emerge which are attrib-
utable to the noise factor. This noise is generally a characteristic
of the environment in which messages are transmitted.\(^{41}\) Thus the

\(^{41}\)Actually the noise factor can be said to exist when any
distortion is comingled with the message. For example, the facial
expression of a communicator might cause meaning distortion. Voice
intonation can also influence word meaning.
office manager who elects to transmit instructions to a stenographer while the two are standing close to an operating teletype machine is attempting to communicate in an environment which is conducive to "best guessing" on the part of the receiver. The busy executive conducting a conference who attempts simultaneously to take care of an important matter via the conference-room telephone extension runs the risk of having background cross talk of the conference participants come mingle with the message he is attempting to transmit. In these instances noise might account for communicatee behavior response which bears no resemblance to the response anticipated by the communicator.

The business organization appears to be especially susceptible to influence from noise as communication is carried on for the self-evident reason that the typical firm is a noisy place in both its administrative offices and its plant. With noise abatement in the business organization, there undoubtedly tends to come less miscommunication attributable to the noise factor. However, even the most enthusiastic noise abatement program is not likely to succeed in totally eliminating noise from the business environment.

The Inference Phase

The focal point of any instance of purposive communication in the business organization is the communicatee. To the extent that the
receiver's behavior changes\textsuperscript{42} to conform to the pattern anticipated by the sender, purposive communication can be said to be successful. A change in the receiver's behavior pattern which does not conform to the response anticipated by the sender marks an instance of unsuccessful purposive communication. In the latter instance it should be noted that there can be no denying the fact that communication, unsuccessful though it may be, has occurred because, under the circumstances, expression has been transmitted between two intellectual entities. Evidence of the occurrence of communication is inherent in the fact that the receiver responded to the expression or stimulus.\textsuperscript{43} Because of the need to take note of why miscommunication occurs in the firm, instances of "unsuccessful" information transfer should not be curtly dismissed as "no" communication.

Up to this point, this chapter's consideration of the nature of business communication has concentrated primarily on the sender's reaction to the factors which condition the process in the introspective,

\textsuperscript{42}As used here, behavior change can be tacit (as, for example, a case in which an employee in response to an expression continues doing a job in the same manner) or overt (as in the case where an employee modifies behavior to perform a job).

\textsuperscript{43}Nothing here should be construed to mean that communication occurs when there is a blockage of one of the phases of the process. The noise factor just discussed, for example, might account for a total blockage of the transmission phase, with the sender having no knowledge that blockage has occurred. Under such circumstances no expression is received by the receiver to constitute a stimulus for behavior change; thus no communication has occurred.
encoding, and transmission phases. This concentration is justified because in the first three phases of the process the sender dominates. It is he who recognizes the need to communicate, selects the symbols to encode the message, and selects the medium for transmitting the message.

In the inference phase now to be discussed, however, the receiver comes to the forefront to dictate the success or failure of a given instance of purposive communication.

Why call the final phase of the communication process the inference phase? Why not call it the observational phase? These questions deserve at least brief consideration.

The inference phase of purposive business communication is characterized by the receiver's exposure to a stimulus in the form of a message just as the sender is exposed to stimuli in the introspective phase. In some instances, this exposure results in direct observation, a condition in which the receiver can respond exclusively on the basis of observed fact. A supervisor, for example, might place a specific wrench in a worker's hand and point to a specific nut while saying, "Take this wrench and loosen this nut." Under such circumstances the worker could observe extensional objects--the specific wrench and the specific nut--and respond accordingly. His response in such a case might be said to be based primarily on observation. But there is reason to believe that most purposive communication in the firm is dependent upon inferential response rather than observational response. Thus in the instance just cited the supervisor would be more prone to say to the worker, "Go get a quarter-inch-open-end
wrench and loosen the set nut on the chuck bracket of the drill press."
In such a case the worker would respond inferentially—that is, to
conform to meanings he placed upon words rather than to observation of
concrete motions and objects.

It is submitted that inference accounts for the vast majority of
responses growing out of purposive communication in the business organi-
ization when intellectual entities are linked. Thus the final phase of
purposive communication is appropriately designated as the inference
phase.

**An overview of the inference phase.** There is a distinct simi-
larity among factors conditioning the introspective and inference
phases of communication in the firm. As pointed out early in this
chapter, bias and prejudice condition the sender's reactions in the
introspective phase. Similarly, bias and prejudice condition the
receiver's response to a purposive message. Thus the receiver has a
predisposition not to "see" or "hear" when that which the sender
expects him to see or hear runs contrary to his predisposition to act.
Similarly, the receiver is prone to confuse his "word" world (see pages
48-50) with the "real" or extensional world when he is exposed to a
purposive message couched in words—just as is the sender when he
attempts to encode a purposive message. These factors and the other
conditioning factors discussed elsewhere in this chapter help account
for the emergence of miscommunication in the inference phase, the
reason being that this phase involves human reaction to stimuli just as
do the introspective and encoding phases.

Thus an overview of the inference phase of communication, the phase in which the receiver decodes the purposive message for purposes of response, reveals the communicatee to be a human entity who is affected by the same human frailties as is the communicator. Nonetheless, there are certain conditioning factors which should be considered here that relate specifically to the inference phase and help explain communication in the firm.

Source consideration by the communicatee. Employee A, a peer of Employee B in a business organization, can encode a message to Employee B to the effect that Employee B should perform his job a certain way, and there is no response to the message on the part of Employee B. Employee B's failure to respond, of course, can be attributed to his consideration of the source of the edict. Thus it is not uncommon in the firm when such instances of miscommunication occur to hear employees say such things as, "Who's he to tell me what to do?"

In a similar communication environment, however, Employee D might respond to an edict from Employee C by performing his job in the manner dictated by his peer, the reason being that rapport exists between the two in which Employee D considers Employee C to be a source of worthwhile information about how the job should be done. In such an instance there is no necessary association of a formal authority relationship with the communicative link of the two employees. Employee C might in fact be the information center for a number of employees performing similar work. The employees' group acceptance of Employee C
as a source of wisdom about how a certain job in the business organization should be done establishes him in fact as an informal source of information about job performance. The consequence of an emergence of such a communication center might be, of course, that all employees in the group are performing their jobs incorrectly. Accordingly, a serious problem of miscommunication might exist.

The truth to be considered here is that the inference phase of communication actually involves more than receiver response to spoken or written symbols which have been transmitted to him. A factor which significantly conditions the inference phase is the receiver's rational or irrational consideration of the source of the message. Even in an instance in which communicative symbols carry clear meaning to the receiver, there is no certainty that his response will conform to that anticipated by the sender.

This conditioning factor undoubtedly helps account for patterns of miscommunication which emerge in the business organization when, for example, a staff assistant encounters difficulty in obtaining information or when a new supervisor, promoted from within (to the jealous dismay of his former co-workers), encounters difficulty in getting his instructions "carried out." Standards of communication presented in Chapter IV of the thesis take such patterns of miscommunication into consideration.

Communicatee response for acceptance. Inferences drawn by the communicatee in the business organization are likely to be influenced significantly by what might be called the "acceptance" factor.
This factor can be defined as a tendency for the communicatee to respond to a message in the manner which assures him of greatest acceptance by those members of the organization whose acceptance he is seeking. As is revealed in Chapter III of this thesis, the individual member of the business organization (whether he be operative employee or manager) must constantly reconcile personal objectives with organizational objectives. His basic drive to be an individual is in conflict with his basic need to be a part of the organization. In the area of communication this conflict is intensified by the fact that members of the organization are a captive audience.

The "captive" communicatee who is unable to subordinate his personal objectives to organizational objectives does not necessarily respond to messages in the full interests of the organization. He might, rather, respond in a manner which furthers his chances of acceptance in the informal group of people in the organization with whom he prefers to be identified. Thus in a given instance in which a foreman comments on a production bottleneck at a certain supervisor's point in the production line, the supervisor might actually slow production further because he wants greater acceptance by his subordinates. In the process, he might point out to his subordinates that the foreman was advocating a "speed up" on the line.

At the other extreme of the acceptance factor is the organizational man, popularly known as the "yes" man, whose behavior in response to communication is always designed to further his acceptance by his superiors. This is the individual who initially exerts great effort to
respond to a message in as close conformity to the message as possible. Seemingly, this type of response would mark a high degree of success for a given instance of communication. And such would be the case were it not for the fact that the "yes" man--like the "no" man just discussed--is frequently also an individual who has not subordinated personal objectives to organizational objectives. Thus in his zeal to gain acceptance by his superiors he is prone to "over-respond" to a purposive message. For example, an ambitious staff man in a company's department of market research on being asked to provide a routine staff report on a certain subject might respond with a formal, analytical report which duplicates previous work done on the subject.

The highly subjective nature of the acceptance factor literally precludes its measurement in the business organization. Though intuitive, consideration of the factor does provide a further understanding of the nature of communication in the firm and prompts recognition of a need for communication standards dealing with the factor.

The communicatee's dedication to constancy. Perhaps one of the most striking factors influencing the inference phase of communication in the business organization is that which can be attributed to human preoccupation with the infallibility of experience. Such things as organizational resistance to change and initial animosity toward new executives can undoubtedly be attributed at least in part to the fact that specific "change" and specific "new executives" cannot be related directly to experience.

Thus in the business organization a given communicatee's
response to a purposive message is likely to be influenced significantly by his psychological "set." As noted by Cherry,

A person's psychological 'set' toward some talk, situation, or communication event depends upon his past experience, upon a host of preceding events which have led up to that moment. Such a 'set' is considered to influence his formation of associations, by bringing to bear certain 'determining tendencies' and hence influencing his way of organizing or executing the task, or affecting the degree to which he recognizes signs, or forms perceptions in a communication event.44

Given the need to respond to a message, the receiver is likely to cast about for experience to relate to his pattern of behavior.

A lack of past experience which can be related to the present need gives rise to misgivings about the response that inference of the message seems to indicate is in order.

Commenting on the persisting "palpable fallacy" of the notion of non-change, Haney cites a relationship between the propensity for non-change and the English language. This relationship, according to Haney, stems from the fact that "the basic form and structure of the English language were laid down in ancient Greece: "Now consider what life must have been like then--comparatively slow, static, and unchanging."45

There is, comments Haney further, an enticement even in today's dynamic environment toward "non-change, rest, and permanence," an enticement which is partially attributable to the spawning ground of the


45Haney, op. cit., p. 149.
English language.\textsuperscript{46}

These observations are of a practical significance to an understanding of individual dedication to the \textit{status quo} in the business organization. This dedication undoubtedly explains why patterns of miscommunication arise in the organization when communication efforts are directed toward changing the organization.

It can be concluded, accordingly, that there is a need for communication standards in the business organization which, when properly used, will aid in minimizing the communicatee's inherent opposition to change. These standards and others are proposed in Chapter IV of the thesis.

The standards proposed in Chapter IV are, in general, derived from the factors conditioning communication which are analyzed in this chapter as they relate to the introspective, encoding, transmission, and inference phases of communication. Before such standards can be meaningfully isolated, however, further consideration should be given to the specific role of and need for communication in the business organization. This role and need are the subject of the next chapter of the thesis, Chapter III.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid.
CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

The concept of purposive business communication developed in Chapter II opens a door to an understanding of just what the role of the process is in the business organization, the subject of Chapter III of the study. To hold that this role can be understood without a concomitant understanding of the nature of the process is to stop short in an appreciation of how communication serves the firm. Thus this chapter is a logical extension of the analysis presented in Chapter II. Whereas Chapter II deals with human and language factors which condition communication, the present chapter considers what might be called the environmental factor *per se* that conditions communication— that is, the business organization itself.

It should be noted at the outset that this student's view of the organization does not hold it to be an abstract progression of lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability. Rather, the view is held that a business organization is a social system in which there is an interaction of human behavior that does not necessarily conform to such preconceived lines. Accordingly, the first part of this chapter establishes a concept of the firm as it influences and is influenced by information flow. Within this concept, the firm is visualized as an objective-seeking entity whose success or failure in large measure is dependent upon information in the form of written and spoken words.
Included in this chapter, therefore, is an analysis of the relationship of communication to the various objectives which are pursued in the organizational entity. This analysis includes a consideration of the personal objectives of the people who make up the organization. In general, the first major division of the chapter takes a positive approach in examining how information flow can serve the organization by bringing it balance and stability as the basic management functions of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating are carried on.

The second major division of the chapter shifts to a negative emphasis in that it examines patterns of miscommunication in the firm. This shift in approach is dictated by the need to recognize that communication's role is not entirely positive, as evidenced by the fact that achievement of organizational objectives can sometimes be thwarted by miscommunication. In this part of the chapter, consideration is given to some of the major causes--attributable primarily to the impact of the organization on the individual--of miscommunication. Consideration is also given to the patterns which faulty information flow might take in the business organization and the consequences originating with these patterns.

The final major division of the chapter analyzes management's basic responsibility for information flow in the firm. This analysis results in a conclusion that there is a critical need in today's industrial society for standards by which management can better meet its responsibility to communicate effectively by minimizing instances of faulty information. This final part of the chapter completes the
background against which such standards, the subject of Chapter IV, are presented.

I. THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

As earlier pointed out in this study,\(^1\) communication is the process which links the components of a business organization in the pursuit of prescribed objectives. A consideration of the concept that the firm is a social system reveals the relationship between this process and the organization's objectives.

The Business Organization as a Social System

In a properly functioning business firm, the people assembled are characterized by a similarity of intent when the firm's major goals are considered. The plant worker, the office worker, the executive and others are all preoccupied with contributing to the creation of values inherent in the organization's products and services in order that the firm might survive. This similarity of intent carries with it an interdependence--attributable to division of labor--on the part of the individuals who make up the organization. It is not unrealistic to compare this interdependence to that which exists in any sphere of society--a church, for example, or a municipality. Just as citizens of a municipality are dependent one upon the other to support a system of public schools, so is Worker A dependent upon Worker B in a specific company for a mutual contribution of time and effort toward the creation

\(^1\)See discussion on page 28.
of the values which are necessary for the company's survival.

Similarity of intent and interdependence, which make possible the
designation of a business firm as a social organization, are reflected in
this behavioral scientist's definition:

A social organization is a continuing system of
differentiated and coordinated human activities
utilizing, transforming, and welding together a
specific set of human, material, capital, ideational,
and natural resources into a unique, problem-solving
whole engaged in satisfying particular human needs in
interaction with other systems of human activities
and resources in its environment.²

Of interest to this study is the fact that the individual constit-
tuting a firm did not originally join the organization in a state of
intent conforming to that of other participating individuals. Nor were
these individuals in a state of dependency on the already existing com-
ponents of the organization.

Conformity of intent and the division of labor which establishes
interdependency are related to communication in the social business
organization. It is this process which brings about conformity of
intent through the establishing and securing acceptance of organizational
objectives. And communication is the process which makes possible the
satisfaction of the dictates of interdependency.

It is submitted here, therefore, that communication is the
process which:

²Mason Haire (ed.), Modern Organization Theory: A Symposium of
the Foundation for Research on Human Behavior (New York: John Wiley &
1. Establishes overall organizational objectives, the successful pursuit of which constitutes survival of the firm;

2. Fuses the individual personality into the formal organization in such a way that he subordinates personal objectives to overall organizational objectives; and

3. Provides the means by which the individual expresses his similarity of intent and exercises his dependence upon other organizational components, thus brings balance and stability to the firm.

Organizational objectives. Management literature reflects little agreement among authorities as to what constitutes the specific objectives of a business organization. It would be beyond the scope of this study to delve into the divergency of opinion on this subject. Thus the approach taken here is one which recognizes that a firm at a given time does not pursue a single objective--profit, for example. Nor does the approach taken here incorporate a notion that there is inflexibility of the objectives of the firm. Thus, as visualized here, a specific organization at any one time might pursue several objectives of at least an intermediate nature, any or all of which might change to

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3The point might well be taken that a firm's economic reason for being--thus its single objective--is profit. It should be noted that this point is not under criticism here. The position taken here is that at a given time a business organization pursues a variety of objectives, all of which ultimately might have the effect of contributing to the long-run profit objective of the firm. Within this view, for example, a business on a given day might be pursuing objectives to improve its manufacturing processes, improve labor relations, avoid a threatened anti-trust action, lower prices or raise prices, etc.
conform to the dictates of an instant of time. For example, in a given fiscal year a business might number among its objectives one of expanding its market geographically. However, as the fiscal year advances, management—reasoning from economic indicators—might conclude that the time is not propitious for market expansion and abandon that objective in favor of an objective of stimulating through advertising the present market.

The multiplicity of an organization's objectives plus the flexibility of the objectives dictates a need for continuing communication in the firm. Continuing communication is the means by which the efforts of the components of the organization are unified in the pursuit of overall objectives. Media through which this type of information flow might be carried on ranges from daily or weekly conferences of top administrators to periodic bulletins to foremen and supervisors. To the extent that each component of the organization is apprised clearly of objectives to be pursued, there can be unity of action in the efforts to secure the objectives.

Ralph C. Davis conceives the objectives of a business organization to be of two broad types: (1) primary service objectives—the creation of economic values to serve its customers, and (2) collateral service objectives—the values the business organization supplies to

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4In the sense used here, a component might be a division, a department, a work group, or an individual in the organization. The expression includes, as appropriate, the equipment and other resources with which a component carries on its functions.
groups that are a part of or associated with it.\(^5\) Within the Davis concept of objectives, there is an interrelationship between the objectives pursued by the organization to serve its customers and the objectives pursued in the organization to serve its components. Davis recognizes, for example, that in a business organization collateral objectives can be elevated to take precedence over primary service objectives, the consequence of which is a fundamental change in the mission of the firm. Thus the survival of the firm is undoubtedly dependent upon the maintenance of the primary service objectives to the subordination of collateral personal objectives.\(^6\)

Communication provides the means by which the components of the firm identify the achievement of primary service objectives with the achievement of collateral service objectives. For example, information flow between labor and management was the means a few years ago by which workers in a large automobile plant agreed to a reduction in wages which helped assure the plant's continued pursuit of primary service objectives. Accepting the assumption that workers are inclined toward higher wages (a collateral objective pursued in the firm), it is submitted that this was an instance in which there was a subordination of


\(^6\)An illustration of violation of this principle of primacy of organizational objectives would be a case in which the board of directors of a corporation declared a dividend which made impossible the acquisition of efficiency which would best assure attainment of primary service objectives.
personal objectives to the primacy of organizational objectives in order that the organization might be sustained.

It can be noted here that proper establishment of organizational objectives is a function of information flow. Communication provides the means by which components of the firm are made continuously aware of the nature of the multiplicity of objectives being pursued by the organizational entity and how component objectives contribute to these overall objectives. Thus the broad role of communication in the firm is to establish objectives and provide for their attainment. At the same time, there is a corollary need for communication to promote identity of primary service objectives with collateral personal objectives. A consideration of this need of communication entails an examination of the impact of the formal business organization on the individual personality who is a part of that organization.

The formal organization and the individual. In Chapter II of the study (see especially pages 32-51) recognition is given primarily to certain semantic factors which help account for the behavior of the individual in the business organization as he reacts to information flow. A further consideration of the individual reveals that his reaction to communication in the firm is also conditioned by the impact of the formal organization on his personality.

The objectives of the formal business organization are embodied in the overall plan by which the organization seeks to perpetuate itself. It can be said that the firm secures its goal of perpetuation to the extent that organizational components conform to this overall plan.
Significant among these components is the human factor, or, as pointed out by Argyris, the "participants:"

The participants, however, are human beings who are themselves living organisms with their own 'grand strategy' as exemplified in their abilities, needs, and goals. As organisms, they will always be striving for self-actualization while behaving as agents of the organization.⁷

The individual brings to the firm a personality which is peculiar to himself. Thus it might be said that a formal organization is made up of as many personalities as there are participants in the organization. These personalities are striving for self-identification and for identification with the organization concurrently. Personality differences undoubtedly help account for the divergence of response which the inference phase of an instance of purposive communication in the firm is likely to produce. In an information flow situation in which organizational objectives are being set, therefore, it might be expected that individual personality factors will help account for the objectives' being secured partially, in whole, or not at all.

Personality characteristics, for example, help explain why some individuals are more responsive to persuasive information than others.⁸ Some personalities (described as "topic bound") tend to accept or reject a point of view merely on the basis of a consideration

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of the topic being discussed. Others (described as "topic free") respond to persuasive communication in a certain way because of their degree of susceptibility to the type of persuasion and social influence. Thus in a given instance in which the organization seeks conformity to organizational objectives among its participants, these reactions to the communication might be among those occurring in the inference phase:

1. Some individuals would perhaps be prone to respond contrary to the intent of the message because they would identify all messages relating to objectives as devices to get them to achieve higher standards of performance. In other words, the "topic bound" individual's personality would be prone to reject consideration of the message to any degree.

2. Some individuals ("topic free") would be prone to respond in a contrary fashion because of their reaction to persuasive techniques used in the message. For example, an individual of high intelligence might reject the message because of the emotional appeal on which it was based.

These illustrations point up the fact that when individuals are confronted with a need to consider the formal organization's objectives, mute acceptance of the objectives is not necessarily secured. There is good reason to believe that the initial reaction of any human being to a communication situation is one which entails immediate concern over the direct effect of the communication on himself. Identified by psychology as egocentrism, this tendency of personality plays an acute role in the area of objective setting in the formal business organization.

There is a basic inability of the individual to divorce a

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9 See discussion of the acceptance factor as it conditions the inference phase of communication, pp. 60-62.
consideration of his objectives from the organization's objectives. At most, there can only be a harmonizing of the two families of objectives in which the individual recognizes that he secures a part of his objectives (food and shelter, for example) by pursuing the objectives of the formal organization. Here, then, is the basis for similarity of intent in the business organization.

Problems generated by the need to harmonize personal and organizational objectives are compounded by the fact that usually the formal organization makes its impact on its supporting personalities by means of generalities (bulletin board notices and general directives, for example). For purposes of this analysis, conventional communication media by which objectives are set can be regarded as statements of generalities in that the media do not specify how the details of a given objective will affect the specific personal objectives of each and every personality in the organization. These conventional communication media can take the form of long-range planning reports which are circulated among top executives in the organization, or they can take the form of personal conversations between a line supervisor and his subordinates. The objective ("to increase output by 12% in the next six months," for example) is a generality from the standpoint of the message receiver in the inference phase of communication. The chore of reconciling the organization's objectives with his own is largely left up to him. In the process of extracting from the generality, the individual is undoubtedly influenced by particular
facets\textsuperscript{10} of his personality. Should these personality facets dictate non-conformance to organizational objectives, the individual's personal objectives\textsuperscript{11} might prevail in violation of the primacy of organizational objectives. The inability of persons within the organization to subordinate personal to organizational objectives results in a breaking down of the original structure and mission of the organization.\textsuperscript{12}

A conclusion is drawn here that the most basic role of communication in the firm is one of setting objectives and stimulating conformity to the objectives. This role is carried out effectively to the extent that communication practices result in unifying efforts of the components of the organization in pursuit of the primary objectives of the formal organization. Thus a communication system which contributes to the fusing of the individual personality into the organization is a system which undoubtedly contributes to organizational balance and stability, the factors next to be discussed.

Organizational balance and stability. It is submitted here that the ultimate effect of perfect communication in the business organization would be organizational balance and stability. For these purposes,

\begin{enumerate}
\item The defense mechanisms cited by Argyris can be considered facets of personality: aggression, guilt, denial, repression, overcompensation, rationalization, etc. \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 41 ff.
\item Or, as described by R. C. Davis, "collateral personal objectives," the values that individuals within the organization seek to distribute among themselves.
\item Examples of such breaking down of the original structure and mission of organizations are seen in the recorded cases in which co-operatives have changed to corporations.
\end{enumerate}
organizational balance can be defined as that condition which prevails in the firm when objectives have been set, similarity of intent on the part of the firm's participants has been secured, and the dictates of interdependence of the firm's participants are being met. Organizational stability can be defined as the tendency of the firm to gravitate toward balance and to remain in balance once such balance is achieved.

These concepts of balance and stability, like the concept of pure competition in economic analysis, provide a means for understanding the cumulative effect of reactions of all forces and factors in the firm as the role of information flow is considered. As pointed out earlier in this chapter of the study, communication plays its basic role in setting objectives in the firm and stimulating conformity to the objectives on the part of the organization's components. Since overall objective determination in the organization can be regarded as inherent in the management function of planning, the need for information flow in the firm might be said to trace its roots to this function.

The management function of organizing is dedicated to specifying conditions necessary to the achievement of objectives in the organization. The control function is designed to provide for the constraint and regulation of activities in the organization to the end that these activities conform to plans for securing objectives. And, finally, the motivating function of management provides for the stimulation of organizational components toward achievement of the
firm's objectives.13

When the totality of the management process--planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating--is considered, there is good reason to believe that communication is the basic tool by which the process is carried on. The relationship of the tool to the process can be noted briefly: (1) Planning. Communication provides the means by which the manager assembles the necessary information to ascertain the objectives of the organization. It is also the process by which objectives are made known to the components of the firm. (Here communication is used to set objectives.) (2) Organizing. The manager's placing of organizational components in proper proximity for objective accomplishment is a function of information flow. (Here communication is used to provide for accomplishment of objectives by anticipating the interdependence of the firm's components.) (3) Controlling. Communication is the medium by which standards are set to promote accomplishment of the firm's objectives. Similarly, information flow facilitates management's checking actual organizational performance against such standards. (Here communication is used to make provision for component conformity to objectives.) (4) Motivating. Communication is the tool by which management contacts organizational components to promote acceptance of and optimum performance toward the firm's objectives. (Here communication is used to stimulate similarity of intent among

13Chapter IV explores in some detail the specific relationships of information flow to the basic management functions.
the firm's components.)

Through information flow, the ultimate aim of the management process is to bring order to the organization. The ultimate plateau of this order, it is submitted, would be both organizational balance and stability to an absolute degree of perfection. Under these conditions, communication would be carried on in an atmosphere of perfection. Planned objectives would be fully and perfectly known to all components in the firm. There would be perfect organizational relationships among the components in the pursuit of the planned objectives. There would be absolute conformity of action among the components in the pursuit of these objectives. There would be perfect similarity of intent among the components. And, finally, there would be no tendency toward departure from this perfect balance.

It logically follows that a perfect state of organizational balance and stability could exist only under conditions of perfect communication. Thus the organization characterized by perfect balance and stability would be one in which no semantic barriers existed. Every communicator, for example, would experience the introspective, encoding, and transmission phases of the process without reacting to such human frailties as bias and prejudice; and the communicator's "word" conception of the extensional world would be an exact representation

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14 See pages 48-50 of the thesis.
of that world as would the communicatee's. Under perfect communication, there would be, moreover, a total absence of the noise factor in the organization, the result being absolute and perfect transmission of messages.

This contemplation of a state of organizational balance and stability as it could be achieved through perfect communication leads to a reluctant conclusion that such a state never exists in a specific firm. Impreciseness of language alone would be a sufficient consideration to vitiate a holding that such a state could ever be secured. However, recognition of these concepts of balance and stability does provide a goal toward which communication practices in the firm can be directed as the management functions of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating are carried on.

In the final analysis, a consideration of the business organization as a social system reveals it to be an aggregation of people who have banded together in a cooperative effort to secure organizational objectives. The personality factor considered, these people do not have a natural inclination to conform to the overall plan by which the firm seeks to achieve its objectives. There is, accordingly, a tendency in the absence of effective communication toward imbalance and instability in the firm as people who make up the formal organization fail to subordinate personal to organizational objectives. In the presence of effective communication, on the other hand, management can exercise its functions of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating to the end that there is a tendency toward at least
relative balance of the organization. Then, once this relative balance is achieved, continuing effective communication as the management process is carried on can contribute to the stability of the firm.

Effective communication is, of course, a consequence of the application of proper standards and techniques for information flow. These standards are presented in Chapter IV of the study and are related specifically to the management process of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating. At this point of the study, therefore, it can be noted that a primary concern of this work is to contribute to managerial understanding of how balance and stability can be promoted in the business organization.

The Business Organization as a Communication Network

In striving toward balance and stability, the firm must rely on less-than-optimum managerial planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating because of the inadequacies of the communication tool. Specific inadequacies of the tool are further revealed when the firm is analyzed as a communication network owing its relatively orderly existence to the fact that its components are linked by information flow. Immediately an observation can be drawn, based on previous analysis presented in the study, that the effectiveness of the linkage of the firm is undoubtedly a function of the quality of communication occurring in the firm.

Consideration of the business organization as a communication network permits the further observation that the firm is in fact an organism which is given life and intelligence by communication. Thus
the organization has the necessary requisites to pursue goals and make decisions as an entity. These goals and decisions are functions of information flow through the formal and informal channels of the network.

Certainly information flow is the basis for most decisions made in the firm. For example, the comptroller who makes budgeting decisions generally makes his decisions on the basis of a consideration of communicative symbols rather than direct observation of extensional objects. To the extent that the network facilitates the flow of accurate and timely information, decisions can be made on an efficient and timely basis (with due allowance for the human frailties of those who send and receive information).

The formal flow of information in a company is traditionally identified with the company's organization chart. The conventional line-staff chart provides for a vertical flow of information. Simply viewed, such a chart portrays a downward flow of information and an upward flow of information. Thus it is sometimes said that the downward flow is related to the exercise of authority and responsibility over subordinates, and the upward flow is prompted by the need of the subordinate to hold himself accountable for actions taken in accordance with his authority and responsibility.

This view of formal information flow which— theoretically at

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15 The analysis here is limited to a consideration of line-staff organization. It would be beyond the scope of this study to analyze in detail the many types of organization a given company could adopt.
least--links the top executive of an organization with each operative worker makes possible a concept of the firm that holds it to be a communication network in which all components are ultimately linked by the chief executive. An overview of such a network reveals the untenable fact that coordinate groups in the organization are not directly linked, thus--in absolute conformity to the network--cannot communicate directly. In a real organization, of course, such cannot be the case, a situation recognized by Fayol in his conception of the need for finding "a means of reconciling respect for the hierarchic channel with the need for quick action."16

R. C. Davis reconciles the need for formal channels of information with the need for coordinate individuals and groups to "bridge" in his provision for cross-functionalization:

Cross-functionalization may be defined as a process of functional adjustment through informal contacts. It is primarily a process of self-coordination, as distinguished from executive coordination.17

These informal contacts, Davis points out, "are in addition to any formal structural and procedural relationships that may have been specified for the particular type of problem."18

Of interest to this study is the impurity that such cross-contacts

16Fayol, loc. cit.
18Ibid.
bring to an image of information flow in the firm as a two-way process or a vertical phenomenon. Actually the need for cross-functionalization in the firm introduces another dimension to information flow which is not accounted for in the firm's organization chart. As pointed out by Davis, this dimension takes the form of direct cross-contacts of coordinate groups and individuals. The consequence of these cross-contacts is an organizational communication network which does not necessarily compare to a formal organization chart. Thus the real network of information flow in the firm provides for a vertical flow between superior and subordinate and a horizontal flow between coordinates, essentially a four-way flow of information.

This concept of the four-way flow of information through the firm's network does not abrogate the need for formal authority-responsibility-accountability relationships. Within this concept, in other words, there is no denying of the need for maintenance of single accountability. The individual in the line-staff organization who makes cross contact remains accountable for the execution of his authority and responsibility to but one superior, the superior to whom the formal organization shows his reporting.19

This consideration of the organization as a communication network results in a conclusion that both formal and informal information

19R. C. Davis defines the principle of single accountability as: "Accountability to a single superior executive for results, based on clearly defined delegations of responsibility and authority to designated positions, is a requisite for the accomplishment of organizational objectives." Ibid., p. 322.
flows along the lines of the network. For these purposes, informal information is considered to be that which is not sanctioned by an authority-responsibility-accountability relationship. Thus information transmitted between a production supervisor and a sales manager, even though the information might directly relate to organizational objectives, would necessarily be categorized as informal. In contrast, information transmitted between a firm's chief executive and a production manager would be formal, even though the transmission violated the chain of command. The difference in these two instances is accounted for by the fact that the former instance would be horizontal (or perhaps diagonal) and the latter vertical transmission of information. For all practical purposes, then, information which flows vertically in the organization along distinct channels of authority and responsibility can be said to be formal. And all information that flows diagonally or horizontally can be said to be informal.

It should be recognized that the designation of a specific bit of information as informal does not necessarily destroy the utility of the information to the organization. Informal transfers of information resulting from cross-contacts greatly facilitate the speed with which an organization can adapt to a changing situation or emergency. Though necessary to the maintenance of central authority in the firm, formal channels of communication (as revealed in an organization chart) tend to be cumbersome and time-consuming.

The most realistic view of the firm as a communication network is one which joins formal flows of information with informal flows.
Accordingly, every component in the organization might be visualized as linked to every other component. Within this view, the chief executive of a firm would, accordingly, be directly linked with every employee in the firm; and every employee would be linked with every other employee. The linkages might, of course, be an academic consideration since in the vast majority of instances they might never result in information flow. Nonetheless, such a view does depart from the traditional consideration of information flow as a function of the organization chart. This departure permits consideration of the whole of the organization as it is integrated by its parts. Within this view, the firm is not considered as an aggregation of functions showing varying degrees of relationships and importance. Rather, the firm is considered to be a goal-seeking entity, an organism vested with the intelligence to make decisions, having gained such stature through the impact of information flow.

II. MISCOMMUNICATION IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

Up to this point in the chapter, communication has been treated primarily from the standpoint of its positive effects on the organization through its use as a tool of managerial planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating. As revealed in this chapter, the primary role of communication as it occurs in the organizational network is one of setting objectives and promoting the organizational balance and stability necessary to the achievement of those objectives. Thus to the extent that balance and stability prevail in the organization, information flow is positively contributing to the achievement of the
Attention is now turned to a negative consideration of communication—that is, to patterns of miscommunication which promote organizational imbalance and instability. It is appropriate that this negative consideration follow immediately the analysis of the communication network concept of the business organization just presented. The network is the vehicle through which formal and informal information should flow freely. However, because this network has no built-in mechanism to check automatically the flow of incorrect or faulty information, patterns of miscommunication occur which have the power to influence significantly efforts made to secure organizational objectives.

Some Causes of Miscommunication Fostered by the Organization

In Chapter II of the study the communication process is analyzed in the light of human and language factors which contribute to miscommunication in the firm. The cumulative effect of the human and language factors makes this most vital tool of management something less than satisfactory. Now, to these human and language factors must be added a most basic conditioning factor, the impact of the business organization itself on the people who must send and receive information in the management process.

Functionalization of the organization. A consideration of the firm reveals it to be characterized by three basic spheres of activity. In a manufacturing concern, these three spheres are production, distribution, and finance. In a distributive concern these spheres are procurement, merchandising, and finance. Davis describes the three basic spheres of activity as the "organic business functions" in that the
survival of a business is dependent upon its performance of each and all the functions. Each of the functions contributes directly to the general service objectives of the firm.\textsuperscript{20}

This functional view of the firm introduces a factor which helps to understand causes of miscommunication that are fostered by the organization itself. As a goal-seeking entity and decision maker, the organization must function as a whole. Thus all spheres of activity in the firm must be integrated through communication to pursue the general service objectives. However, the atmosphere in which communication is carried on is not one in which components are concerned directly with the three broad functions. Components and the individuals within those components are dedicated more directly to specific functions on the major and minor levels of the firm's hierarchy.

Superimposed over the three organic functions of the enterprise is another dimension of functions which causes further organizational complexity and fosters the emergence of faulty information. This dimension is the staff of the organization, the role of which is not to contribute directly to the production of salable values to the customers of the company. Rather, through advice and recommendations, the staff contributes indirectly to the creation of such values.

There is a tendency for people in a business organization to be more oriented to functions themselves than to the relationships of the

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., pp. 205-213.
functions in obtaining the general service objectives of the organizational entity. Wrapped up as they are with the significance of their role and status in the firm, people are disposed to view the functions to which they contribute as "ends" rather than means to ends. Gardner and Moore comment on this human tendency:

... All of the positions and functions in an organization are socially interpreted and classified by employees and thus take on an aura of significance and meaning, which influences the individual who occupies the position, as well as those who must interact with him. 21

It is submitted here that the individual in a firm seeks goals in this order of precedence (from highest to lowest order):

1. Goals of self. The individual is dedicated primarily to pursuing goals to the satisfaction of his own ego. Under conditions in which this satisfaction is threatened, he is likely to give up the pursuit of all other goals of lesser ranking in preference to achieving ego satisfaction. Satisfaction with status is a goal of self in the business organization. 22 Satisfaction with being identified with a particular firm is another goal of self. For example, an employee might leave an organization because of disgust with the physical appearance of the company plant, saying that he was "ashamed to work in such a dirty place."

2. Goals of specific function. The individual identifies himself and is identified by others in the specific function that he performs in


22 Gardner and Moore designate as "status anxiety" the type of anxiety which prevails when an individual "expresses concern over his position relative to others." Ibid., p. 260.
the firm. His job, then, is a goal-seeking function, the goals of which are identified by the immediate values his job creates. The fact that the individual ranks the goals of his specific function in the organization relatively high accounts for his primary orientation to his job and the zeal with which he defends it against criticism.

3. Goals of broad function. The individual in the firm undoubtedly gives certain precedence to a consideration that the values created by his job contribute to the overall values sought in his group, section, department, and division. Broadly considered, therefore, the individual is dedicated to pursuing the goals which justify the existence of the functions which have been grouped under an organic or staff heading.

4. Goals of organization. At the lowest level of precedence is the ranking the individual gives the goals of the organization itself. Individual awareness of these goals is conditioned by his awareness of the goals of self, specific function, and broad function. Thus the finished product of a given firm is perhaps to the engineer symbolic of a marvel of engineering processes. To the finance-oriented individual the finished product is perhaps symbolic of a continuum of financial input and output. To the distribution-oriented individual the finished product is perhaps symbolic of time and place utility.

Functionalization of the business organization is undoubtedly the basic cause for miscommunication around which revolves all other causes brought about by the organization itself. Individual preoccupation with
functions orients his thinking, thus influences both what he feels compelled to communicate and how he communicates it. People in the firm are inclined, therefore, to allow their communication efforts to be influenced by the impact of the process on their status (goals of self) and functions.

In a specific reporting situation, then, the individual in a production department might include in his written report an unnecessary and extensive analysis of the importance of production functions in achieving certain designated organizational objectives. Oriented to production, he might reveal a tendency to magnify the problems of production while minimizing the problems of distribution and finance. Then, too, miscommunication is further stimulated by the production-oriented individual's reliance on terminology peculiar to his function, a terminology which might not readily be understood by individuals who are oriented to distribution and finance.

Information flow within a functional group of the organization is not necessarily beset with such problems because information flowing within the group is characterized by similarities. There is, in effect, a "class" of messages which flows within a given group. Cherry conceives a need, accordingly, to think of real-life organizations as "a number of networks superimposed" rather than single networks:

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23 Individuals within the same functional group are, of course, prone to magnify the importance of their respective specific functions within the group in achieving the group's objectives.
For example, in an army the pattern of relationship is clearly laid down, but this pattern is not a simple network. There is a network for *supplying* the army in the field; there is a patterning of flow of orders and directives relating to the *movement* of troops; another may represent the flow of *intelligence* signals.  

Such a view could be taken of the business organization. In a manufacturing organization, there are in fact flows of messages relating to the needs of production and flows relating to the needs of finance and distribution. Thus the business organization could be visualized as three basic communication networks superimposed one over the other.

It is submitted here, however, that the firm is a single network which is ultimately linked by the highest order of centralized authority (the president, for example). It is submitted that, moreover, the organization is further linked into a single network by informal cross-contacts of its components. Thus recognition must be given to the intermingling of classes of messages within the firm as general service objectives are pursued.

For example, messages dealing with new production techniques generally are related to costs and pricing, thus are of interest to the organic functions of distribution and finance. Another example is a case in which an advertising budget is being proposed. Decisions...  

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25 See discussion of cross-functionalization on pp. 34-85.
relating to the advertising budget are not solely made in the organic area of distribution. These decisions are precipitated on the basis of a flow of information from the organic areas of production and finance as well. Similarly, a specific advertising campaign can necessitate information flow among the three organic functional areas in the firm. In the latter instance, a failure to communicate properly can result in a shortage of necessary finished products to support the campaign.

In summary, this part of the study holds that a primary cause of miscommunication in the business organization is functionalization. The process of functionalization results in a division of the organization and the assignment of components to the division. These components, in turn, contribute their functions to the broad functions of the divisions. Individuals within the components are prone to seek immediate satisfaction of goals relating—in order of precedence—to self, specific function, and broad function before general service objectives of the firm are considered. The individual in the firm is prone to be oriented accordingly in his efforts to communicate, revealing his proneness in the structure of his messages and in the terminology used.

The organization and information reliability. The separation of management from operative performance in a business organization spawns a complexity of relationships among the components that make up the firm. As the firm grows and organizational levels are added, top administrators are further separated from the point at which products or services take their ultimate forms of utility. Information,
in the final analysis, is the agent which makes possible this separation without causing a total breakdown of the firm's efforts to secure its general service objectives. It logically follows that the reliability of performance at all levels is a function of the reliability of information which makes the performance possible and dictates the standards of the performance. Unreliable information filtering through a large organization is likely to generate unreliable performance.

A basic communication problem of management, for example, can be traced to the need for cross contacts at the lower level of the hierarchy. Horizontal contacts among peers of the organization can result in changes in methods and procedures brought about by unreliable information. Affected managers might have no knowledge of these changes until they show up in the form of increased scrap or inferior product quality. Earlier in this study (pages 46-48) a case is cited to illustrate a horizontal flow of unreliable information among peers which results in unsatisfactory job performance. In this instance the opinion and knowledge of the information center (an old and experienced employee) was inadequate, thus the action precipitated by information furnished was unsatisfactory.

Unreliable information flow is not limited to a horizontal basis in the organization. Information originating at the top of the organizational hierarchy and flowing downward is reliable only to the extent that it was originally placed in effective form and its original structure maintained. Thus the office manager who at the close of a meeting of intermediate-level managers is told orally to "spread the
word" among his subordinates about a new personnel policy runs the risk of bringing about employee action on the basis of unreliable information. In the process of encoding and transmitting the information about the policy, the office manager brings to the original message situation his shortcomings as both a sender and receiver of information. A message which might have been originally transmitted to the office manager at the meeting with a certain structure and reliability might be retransmitted with new dimensions of meaning reflected by the inadequacies of the office manager's reaction in the inference phase of the initial communication. The inconsistency might be not revealed until a later formal announcement of policy is transmitted to office workers.

Formal methods for transmitting information in the large business firm are sometimes intolerably slow. Certain information, for example, may be reserved for presentation in such periodic media as the monthly house organ, the weekly department heads' conference, or the annual shareholders' meeting. With due allowance for the many shortcomings of communicative effort discussed in this study, these official media constitute reliable sources of information. However, in the interim period--the period in which participants in the firm are awaiting formal presentations--there is no stoppage of information flow. The insatiable thirst of individuals for "facts" is not necessarily satisfied on a periodic basis.

Information flow, therefore, is a continuing formal and informal process in the organization. And this information reflects varying degrees of reliability since it is influenced by each sender and
receiver through whom it passes. Its reliability is also influenced by its very nature:

A fairly simple company decision to grant every employee with more than six months' service a two-week vacation with pay could probably be communicated down through several levels without major alteration. But an announcement of policy on union matters, or on promotions, is often badly mangled or downright misleading by the time it filters down through the levels of organization.\(^26\)

Participants in a firm do not necessarily discard information which is of questionable reliability. Unreliable information can stimulate receiver response just as quickly as can reliable information if the receiver fails to detect its fallacy.

The organizational grapevine. The organizational grapevine is generally considered to be the carrier of information which is not presented under formal circumstances in the firm. In part at least, the grapevine in a company owes its existence to the slowness of conventional media for formal information flow. Certainly one of the most interesting characteristics of the grapevine is the incredible speed with which it can spread information in a large organization.

Koontz and O'Donnell furnish a concise but very adequate description of the grapevine:

The grapevine, of course, thrives on information that is not openly available to the entire group, either because it is regarded as confidential, because the more formal

lines of communication are inadequate to disperse it, or because the information is of the kind (e.g., scandal) that would not ever be given full, formal disclosure.27

Much of the information transmitted through an organizational grapevine can be—reliability considered—classified as rumor. Within the business organization a rumor usually reflects certain characteristics, the most striking of which is plausibility. The individual in a firm who receives and retransmits a rumor does so because the information inherent in the rumor seems logical when known facts and circumstances are considered. For example, a rumor might prevail that "thirty-three production workers are to be laid off at the end of the month" in a specific firm. To the individual who receives and retransmits this "fact," the information might seem highly plausible because he knows that the firm's sales are now twelve per cent less than during a comparable period the previous year; he has observed an inventory build-up in the firm's warehouse; and his daily newspaper has been filled with articles about an economic recession. Having considered the plausibility of the information he received, the individual retransmits to another receiver. The possible consequences of this rumor might be resignations in the plant and a rash of inquiries in the personnel and other offices about the priorities to be followed in the "lay-offs." Rumor plausibility, then, helps account for the fact that receiver response to this type of information can be stimulated by unreliable information.

Another characteristic of rumor in the business organization is vagueness of original source. A step-by-step retracing of rumor generally is a maze-like trip, the reason being that each new instance of encoding to a new receiver further obscures the source through reliance on such introductory words as "They say . . ." or "I hear . . . ." An observation is submitted here that the typical participant in a firm receives and retransmits rumor without particular pause for source consideration in all instances. The nature of message context—not original source consideration—dictates the zeal with which the participant in a rumor situation links with another participant. Thus information about a change in an important step of a technical procedure would be checked as to source. However, information about the upcoming retirement of a particularly disliked foreman would be so relished because of its nature that it would be retransmitted without attention being given to source checking.

As the medium through which rumor passes, the grapevine must be regarded as fostering miscommunication in the business organization. But the fact should be acknowledged that not all information passing through the grapevine is totally unreliable. Nor should the grapevine necessarily be considered as an evil to be stamped out at all costs. Basically, the grapevine is an important part of the informal organization which is blended in with the formal organization. Management literature generally recognizes the role of and need for maintaining the informal organization. As stated by Barnard, the informal organization provides a "means of maintaining the personality of the
individual against certain effects of formal organizations which tend to disintegrate personality."\(^{28}\)

It is concluded here that management has a need for standards by which information flow in the grapevine and other informal organizational contacts will be characterized by higher degrees of reliability. These standards are among those proposed in Chapter IV of the thesis.

III. MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION

Playing its major role in the firm in setting objectives and stimulating conformity to those objectives, communication is management's means for bringing order to what would otherwise be chaos in the business organization. As noted previously in this chapter, the ultimate order which information flow could bring to the firm would be perfect balance and stability. Although there is reason to believe that perfect balance and stability represents an unattainable benchmark, management should nonetheless strive toward this ultimate of order by maximizing the effectiveness of communication in planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating the components of the firm.

The interaction of information with the basic management functions is the key which provides an understanding of how and why a business firm behaves as it does in totally or partially securing its general service

\(^{28}\)Barnard, op. cit., p. 122.
objectives or not securing them at all. Thus a recognition that the manager has a basic responsibility to plan, organize, control, and motivate should be accompanied by a similar recognition that the manager has a basic responsibility to communicate.

Why does the manager have a basic responsibility to communicate? Perhaps the best answer to this question is inherent in the simple observation that the manager in a firm is the individual to whom people come for information and to whom people give information. The fact that the manager receives and transmits information in the performance of the functions for which he is responsible interweaves communicative responsibility with his other basic responsibilities. In facing up to this responsibility to receive and transmit information, the manager in effect becomes a communication center, the hub through which information flows.

The Manager as a Communication Center

George L. Hinds points out that the executive in a business firm "is concerned with the integration and coordination of production, purchasing, accounting, industrial relations, sales and advertising,

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29 As used here, the word manager is representative of a person who bears responsibility for getting work done through individuals who are subordinate to him and report to him. For purposes of this analysis, the immediate objective of the manager is to coordinate individuals performing the functions for which he is ultimately responsible. The manager achieves this coordination by performing the function of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating (as defined on pages 76-79 of the study). In these pages, therefore, a supervisor is considered to be a manager just as is any executive on any higher level of the hierarchy.
and any other divisions essential to the manufacturing and selling of a product." Thus, continues Hinds, the executive is a "focal point" who must integrate information relating to four groups:

1. The consumer or public;
2. The government;
3. The board of directors;
4. The span of control represented by the divisibility of the organization.30

Although his concept of the executive is more appropriate for consideration of the case of a top administrator in a manufacturing concern, Hinds' does furnish insight into any manager's role as a communicator.

Carrying on his role as a communication center, the manager deals with information inputs and outputs. To the manager, information frequently serves as a substitute for direct observation of extensional objects.31 Generally the decisions he makes as he plans, organizes, controls, and motivates are based on information inputs. The decision itself is an information output, the quality of which is influenced significantly by the reliability of the related input. Since the individual manager must bear responsibility for the

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31 For example, the manager does not necessarily see a piece of down equipment when he is about to make a decision. He is told that the equipment is down, and he makes a decision on the basis of information, not observation.
consequences of his decisions, he must, similarly, bear responsibility for the information structure of the decisions he makes. He cannot abdicate responsibility for a decision merely because a specific information input used was not reliable. By the same token, he cannot deny his responsibility because the individual to whom he communicated the decision did not understand the particular information output.

Because of his need for heavy reliance on information, the manager must assume responsibility as both a communicator and a communicatee. His responsibility to the organization as a receiver of information dictates that he be on guard against the human and language factors which distort response in the inference phase of communication (see pages 55-64). His responsibility as a sender of information poses a similar need for him to experience the introspective, encoding, and transmission phases of the process in such a way as to minimize the impact of human language factors which condition these phases. In the final analysis, therefore, the effectiveness with which the manager carries out his responsibility to the firm is influenced significantly by the degree to which he comprehends the communication process and exercises appropriate communication standards.

The Manager's Need for Communication Standards

Richards and Nianderd provide a summation of typical problems of the business firm which can be attributed to faulty information flow:

Subordinates fail to carry out instructions; managers do not coordinate their plans with each other; the executive expects certain performance but fails to give orders to
that effect; one department hires workers while another department furloughs them. Problems in administration such as these (as well as many others) have been attributed to poor communication.\(^3\)

Such problems as these are characteristic of organizational imbalance and instability resulting from management's failure to secure maximum efficiency from the communication network which links the organization into an organic whole. Such problems can perhaps in fact be attributed to management's failure to recognize that the firm is an organism in which a hierarchy of objectives is pursued. For example, the fact that one department is hiring workers while another is furloughing them indicates a possible failure of affected managers to recognize and use a communicative link between the two departments. The cause for this failure might be traced to the managers' preoccupation with goals of broad function (see page 90) rather than goals of organization, a predisposition to view the function of a department as the end itself rather than the means to an end in the total organization. Problems of information flow such as this can be circumvented or at least minimized if managers exercise proper standards for communication.

There is reason to believe, however, that many managers never pause to fully consider the role and impact of information flow in the business organization. As pointed out by Frank E. Fischer of the American Management Association:

The fact of the matter is that many executives still do not understand what communication is and what it can do. They underestimate its complexity, its power, and importance. Too few appreciate that communication is at the heart of all business operations, that it encompasses all those activities by which we influence others . . . .

Fischer further points out that "many executives have mistaken the form of communication for its substance. They have paid too much attention to media and devices, too little to purpose and content." Justification for this study is reflected in the remarks of Fischer. It is submitted here that management's tendency to think of communication in terms of "media and devices" can be attributed in large part to the fact that standards for communication which have heretofore been made available to managers have been limited primarily to the encoding phase of the process in which media and devices are cardinal factors. In the view of this student there is a critical need for standards applicable to the introspective, transmission, and inference phases of the process as well. In order for these standards to be most meaningful to the manager, there is, furthermore, a need for the standards to be related to the basic management process study--planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating. The climax of this study is a presentation of such standards in the next chapter, Chapter IV.

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33 Ibid., p. 103.
34 Ibid., p. 102.
CHAPTER IV

A PROPOSAL OF STANDARDS FOR MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION
IN THE BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

The findings of Chapters II and III reveal a need for standards by which management can be guided in maximizing the effectiveness of communication in the business organization as the functions of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating are carried on. These standards are the subject of Chapter IV of the study.

A question may be raised about why the focal point of the study is a presentation of standards rather than principles. The answer to this question is based on a consideration of the difference between a standard and a principle. As envisioned here, a principle is a guide to physical and/or mental action which, when given specified conditions under which to operate, will yield basically the same results each time it is applied. The principle, properly tested, is subject to universal application in all types of organizations.

A standard, on the other hand, is a benchmark or rule for procedure against which actual performance can be checked and toward which actual performance can strive. A standard may be established through observation of actual experience; or, where no such direct observation is possible, a standard may be established through an intuitive consideration of what performance or practice seems reasonable under the particular circumstances involved. In contrast to a principle,
therefore, a standard is not necessarily a tested, universal guide to action. Rather, the standard involves merely a statement of an optimum toward and by which mental and physical effort should be directed. As seen here, a standard can be a **quantitative** statement of the level toward which a certain performance should strive (e.g., "Each employee in the typist pool should complete 36 Forms 101A during each eight-hour working day."). Or a standard can be a **qualitative** statement of the level toward which a certain performance should strive (e.g., "At the end of each shift, machine operators should leave their machines as clean as possible, depending on the nature of the work in process."). Or, as more frequently used in this chapter, a standard may be a guiding statement designed to aid an individual in achieving certain desired results (e.g., "The manager preparing a message for operative-level employees should write relatively short sentences.").

Because information flow is a nebulous process in the business organization, this student believes that a proposal of principles relating to managerial communication would be unsupported and unrealistic. This student submits that the communication process is constituted of so many human and language variables that the experimentation or testing necessary for the establishment of an extensive body of principles would be virtually impossible with presently existing methods for analyzing human behavior. It is possible that the day will come when such techniques and tools as the depth interview and the polygraph will be refined to the point that experimentation in human communication can result in principles which will have universal
significance. In the meantime, however, the best approach to satisfy the immediate needs of business management is one which provides standards based on a consideration of that which is reasonably understood about information flow in the firm as the management process is carried on.

The standards for managerial communication proposed in this chapter are generally qualitative in nature for the obvious reason that information flow is influenced more by qualitative factors than it is by quantitative factors. Each standard proposed constitutes a guiding statement which management should follow in its efforts to communicate effectively in the firm. These standards are proposed as they logically develop from analysis of each of the basic management functions.

The analysis presented in Chapter IV is broadly divided into four parts. The objective of each of these parts is to relate communication to a basic managerial function and from the relationships noted to propose standards by which management can deal with the communication process.

Of the four parts presented, Part I, which deals with communication in planning, is the most comprehensive. It should be noted that undue emphasis is not given to the planning function in these pages. Previous analysis presented in the study justifies this comprehensive coverage because of the basic finding that the primary role of communication is one of setting organizational objectives and stimulating conformity to those objectives. It is through performance of the planning function that management sets objectives, thus creates the
prevailing atmosphere for information flow in the firm. Moreover, in
this chapter analysis of the planning function in terms of information
flow results in the stipulation of communication standards which are
equally applicable to the other basic functions. Parts II, III, and IV
of this chapter analyze these other basic functions in this respective
order: organizing, controlling, and motivating.

I. MANAGERIAL PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION¹

Consideration of information flow as it relates to the managerial
planning process provides the most effective point of departure in this
analysis because:

1. The planning process, except for instances of routine
   short-run planning, is carried on in an atmosphere
   highly charged with the need for free information
   flow in the firm.²

¹Research for Part I of this chapter was completed during the
summer of 1959 as a pilot study to establish the feasibility of and
need for this dissertation. The major portion of Part I has been
published as Chapter 10, "The Role of Communication Theory in Planning,"
Planning Theory (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,
1961) by Preston P. LeBreton and Dale A. Henning.

²R. C. Davis distinguishes between administrative and operative
planning in this fashion: "Administrative planning is concerned with
the determination of bases of action over a period of time for the
organization and its various elements . . . . Operative planning is
concerned with the determination of bases of action for accomplishment
of specific projects or undertakings." The Fundamentals of Top
Management, p. 81. The emphasis in this chapter is primarily on the
administrative planning function.
2. From the standpoint of a planner, the planning process, as later analysis in this chapter shows, actually passes through the communication phases of introspection, encoding, transmission, and inference.

3. The ultimate consequence of the planning process is an instrument of communication—the written (or spoken) plan itself.

It is interesting to note also that consideration of information flow to facilitate planning in the firm reveals some general standards by which management can be guided in maximizing effective use of the organizational communication network. These general standards are not necessarily limited in application to planning. They are equally applicable to the functions of organizing, controlling, and motivating.

The Planning Concept Considered

As analyzed here, the managerial planning process entails a determination of organizational objectives plus a consideration of the means by which those objectives can be achieved. A realistic consideration of managerial planning takes into account the fact that the function is not performed by a single individual, even in the modest-sized firm. Rather, the plan is a product of information input and output throughout the organization as many individuals contribute to the planning function.

The growing organization is likely to be one that is adding to the complexity of its communication systems and patterns. Especially is this true when the organization is adding staff groups to its

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See pages 69-72 for a detailed discussion of the relationship of objectives to communication.
structure, because staff specialists (psychologists, sociologists, engineers, lawyers, etc.) are prone to speak a language which is perhaps strange to the members of the old organization. Yet, paradoxically enough, a primary function of the staff is communication. Among other things, a staff group might perform such functions as gathering data, issuing reports, preparing directives, coordinating activities, advising persons. All of these functions involve communication in some manner or another.

The advent of the specialist has had a great impact on the communication problems and needs of the firm; and in no instance is this impact felt more than in the area of planning. In this study a point of view is taken that the preponderance of legwork carried on in the planning function is done by staff workers, although the final approving authority for the plan is conceded to be a line executive. As previously noted, a further point of view is taken in this study that most finished plans in the organization represent the work of not just one man, but many men. A specific individual contributing to the planning process, therefore, might be one who:

2. Furnishes data for a plan.
3. Analyzes data for a plan.

"Tapping New Sources of Knowledge," loc. cit.

4. Conceives ideas for a plan.

5. Prepares the plan for approval.

6. Approves the plan.

Some Significant Relationships Between Planning and Communication

Planning stands out distinctively among the other basic managerial functions of organizing, controlling, and motivating. When the manager carries on the latter functions, he does so in the presence of tangible factors (e.g., men, money, machines, etc.) currently in existence. The planning function, on the other hand, is carried on in an atmosphere of intangibles, an atmosphere characterized by futurity and its inevitable companion, uncertainty. It is no surprise, then, that the planning function has characteristics which are peculiar to the function itself. These characteristics give rise to some unique problems of communication.

Planning is an intellectual process. A plan is almost invariably a product of creative thinking on the part of the planner. The creative thinking process is stimulated by the existence of a problem which must be solved or an objective which must be ascertained and set by the thinker. It should be recalled at this point that the introspective phase of communication is set in motion by the communicator's response to a stimulus which results in his conception of a need to transmit an expression. See discussion on page 30 of the thesis.
the more complex must be the thought carried on to reach a solution to
the problem. In the initial stages of thought, the complexity factor
introduces an introspective problem, a problem in which the thinker is
actually frustrated by his efforts to communicate with himself as he
 carries on creative thinking.

At this stage in the intellectual process of planning, the
thinker is likely to be plagued with imagery which he cannot form into
a cohesive whole to represent even the embryo of his plan. On being
asked about his progress with a plan at this point, the planner might
respond with, "Well, I'm getting some ideas, but I haven't been able
to put them together yet." This situation points to the futility of
expecting an individual to communicate clearly and coherently with
others about his plan at an early stage in the planning process. Not
only is he experiencing the frustration involved in reconciling ideas
he is getting about the plan, but he is experiencing other problems
that characterize the introspective phase of communication, such as
his perceptive inconsistency and his inability to deduce correctly.7
Moreover, the individual among many who is contributing to the
planning function must, as pointed out on page 35 of the thesis,

7See discussion of these conditioning factors on pages 35-36.
"reason from a part of the total stimulus" if he does not have a full awareness of the objectives to be sought in the finished plan. 8

While the intellectual planning process advances, the planner's frustration should tend to diminish as he gains further insight into specific objectives to be sought by the means of the plan. He should be able to start piecing together previously conceived, perhaps seemingly unrelated ideas. The intensity and extensity of thought necessary here, of course, would depend on the intellectual capacity of the planner and his ability to discern relationships of previously conceived ideas to the problem or objective and the plan. It is highly probable that some initial ideas will be discarded as having no relationship to the plan; others will be modified to more properly apply to the plan; and still others will be held in abeyance for possible later application to the plan.

What are the prospects for the planner's communication with others at this stage of the planning process? Could the planner intelligently communicate to a second party (or second parties) a concrete picture of the plan to date? The answer to these questions would be affected by the complexity of the plan he is attempting to conceive. Obviously if the problem involved is simple planning for, say, the future arrangement of office furniture, the planner could

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8 On pages 137-138 of this chapter standards are proposed to aid in circumventing this problem.
communicate in such expressions as:

I'm thinking of putting the supervisor's desk by the north window. But instead I might put the calculator operators by the window and the supervisor over by the side door.

On the other hand, if the plan involved futurity of complex action, say, the introduction of a new product to the market several years hence, the planner might attempt to communicate in such expressions as these:

It looks as though our best course of action will be to reorganize market research to ascertain to some extent how to handle some new problems that this product is going to create. Right now, I'm just thinking off the top of my head, but it looks to me as though it would be a good idea to upgrade market research in general.

In the first instance the planner could communicate fairly adequately, even though his planning had not reached a stage advanced enough for some of the important decisions to be made. In the second instance, in contrast, the efforts of the planner to communicate were weak and ineffectual. The explanation for such differences lies in a consideration of the markedly different abstraction levels involved in the two situations.

The first case, the planning for future arrangement of office furniture, involves a relatively concrete situation. The variables with which the planner must work (desks, chairs, office equipment) are easily visualized by the planner himself and can be just as easily visualized by the individual with whom he seeks to communicate.
A much higher abstraction level is reached in the second case, however. The planner in this case is likely to feel that what he is telling the communicatee makes good sense because from his vantage point he (the planner) can more readily visualize the action involved in the abstractions expressed. Thus this second case illustrates a cardinal communication problem which is likely to arise in the planning process—the problem of communicating through abstractions. This problem bears further examination.

Planning deals with abstractions. Brin defines an abstraction as "a picture word that exists in the mind." He goes on to point out that the abstraction takes some of the vital parts of a thought process and allows them to function simultaneously. He cites the words love and gravitation as being good examples of abstractions:

Can you picture the whole gravitation process working when you fire a gun? The bullet starts to drop as soon as it leaves the barrel, but people hardly ever think of this. If you are in love with a pretty redhead you do not say: I like your eyes, face, your hair, your fingers; your toes, your nose; but instead, 'I love you.' The magic word 'love' elucidates immediately.9

Concreteness is the antithesis to abstraction. Whereas an abstract word is subject to a high degree of connotation, a concrete word is subject to a high degree of denotation. Thus the abstract word suggests meaning inside one's head, and the meaning is prone to vary from individual to individual. The meaning of the concrete word,  

on the other hand, is denoted in that object for which the word stands; the meaning of a concrete word cannot be expressed in words.\textsuperscript{10}

The intellectual planning process must necessarily deal in "concepts" as well as "things". The planner will generally be guided in his function by concepts—probably his experience and the principles of management and planning that have evolved from his experience. His plan, as finally communicated, will outline a course of action for things within the organization which has been determined on the basis of concepts. In other words, in all likelihood the written document representing the plan will justify future action on the basis of concepts used to determine that course of action. It is highly probable, therefore, that the written plan will be heavily characterized by abstractions necessary to justify the action of concrete elements in the organization, such as particular people, particular machines, particular departments, and so on.

It is undoubtedly true that the more complex the plan being created, the more necessary it is for the planner's intellectual process to rely on concepts, thus abstractions. It logically follows that the planner who is dealing with a highly complex situation must rely heavily on abstractions in his efforts to communicate. Turning

\textsuperscript{10} Hayakawa, op. cit., p. 58. Hayakawa discusses denotation and connotation within the framework of extensional and intensional meaning. According to Hayakawa, "The extensional meaning of an utterance is that which it points to or denotes in the extensional world." The intensional meaning, on the other hand, is that suggested to the individual.
once again to the two example cases previously cited, one can observe some significant differences between the abstractions necessary for communication. The planner dealing with a simple rearrangement of office furniture could use concrete objects (desks, supervisor, window, door) as his reference points for communication. The planner dealing with the introduction of a new product, in contrast, had to rely heavily on such abstractions as

- our best course of action
- reorganize
- market research
- good idea
- upgrade
- in general

in an attempt to communicate the current status of his planning.

At this point a conclusion can be ventured that communication is a vital part of the planning function from the very outset. The initial frustration involved in the planner's introspective phase of communication, for example, could serve to dampen his enthusiasm to proceed with his planning. His problem of communicating abstraction, after the process has advanced from the initial frustration stage, could have a significant effect on his success or failure in gathering necessary further information to proceed with his plan. In order to secure this necessary further information, he would need to make his request meaningful to those to whom it was addressed. The best way to make such a request meaningful would be to show clearly to the communicatee the relationship between the information needed and the plan, the objective here being one of furnishing the addressee
maximum insight into the total stimulus. The ease with which this

clear relationship can be shown varies with the degree of abstraction

which must be used in the communication medium, whether the medium be
oral or written. Thus, as encoding is considered, standards for writing

are proposed to minimize the planner's need for relying on abstractions.

The plan must be encoded. The culmination of the planner's work

is the encoding of his plan and its final transmission to those who are
affected. Although for many short-run planning purposes (a few minutes,
an hour, a day, or possibly a few days), plans are undoubtedly put into

aural symbols, of more interest to this study is the fact that plans are
also encoded into written symbols, especially in those cases in which
the plan involves even a small degree of complexity.

The advantages of the written plan over the oral plan are both
obvious and multitudinous. Suffice to say here that the spoken word,
aural symbolism, is furtive, thus is a poor substitute for the written
word if the purpose of the communication is to serve as a guide to
action that extends over an appreciable period of time. It is safe to
assume that both the planning process itself and the resulting plan are
generally so complex within the dynamic business organization that most
encoding designed to facilitate planning must involve written symbolism.
This need for encoding, simply stated, brings with it problems of
writing to plague the planner. These problems can best be overcome
through an awareness of and use of good writing standards.
Communication scientists have long been preoccupied with the problem of determining "what makes writing succeed or fail in its communications objective."\(^{11}\) Flesh, Dale and Chall, and Gunning are among those scientists who have provided formulas for testing writing for its communicative strength.\(^{12}\) These formulas generally provide for testing writing against such variables as sentence length, word syllabication, and personal references (personal pronouns and words of masculine and feminine gender). Application and testing of the formulas reveals that high communicative value can be achieved by writing which is characterized by relatively short sentences and simple words.

Standards originating with the research of these communication scientists are appropriate to satisfy the writing needs\(^{13}\) of the planner in the business organization. These standards should be applicable to the written plan itself as well as the other writing the planner does as he carries on his work. Four basic standards for written managerial


\(^{13}\) The standards proposed here, of course, are just as applicable to writing needs generated by the functions of organizing, controlling, and motivating.
communication are cited here.\textsuperscript{14}

1. \textit{Words used in writing should be checked for specificity of meaning}. Word meaning specificity might be influenced by both denotative and connotative factors.\textsuperscript{15} Thus the manager should be word conscious as he writes; he should select words that will convey—as nearly as possible—an exactness of meaning to his reader. The manager, moreover, should be aware of the human tendency to confuse the "word" world with the "real" world.\textsuperscript{16} Such an awareness should aid the manager in recognizing his own shortcomings as a word user and refine his appreciation of the need for writing words that carry a specificity of meaning within the reader's thinking processes.

2. \textit{Sentences used in writing should be checked for effective length and logical content}. From the standpoint of the reader, the sentence stands out as a thought unit. To the extent that each word, phrase, and clause contributes to a central thought expressed in the sentence, the reader grasps an information bit that can be carried forward to aid in his understanding of the total context.

\textsuperscript{14}An exhaustive analysis of the many possible standards for clear writing would be beyond the scope of this study. The four standards proposed are, however, considered to be the most basic.

\textsuperscript{15}In other words, a reader reveals a tendency to utilize that dictionary meaning of a word which is most closely compatible with the interpretation he "feels" should be placed on a message. See discussion of the communicatee's psychological set on page 63 of the thesis.

\textsuperscript{16}See discussion on pages 48-51.
According to the findings of communication scientists, average sentence length bears on the clearness of a piece of writing. There is reason to believe that purposive business writing should be characterized by an average sentence length that falls within a range of 15 to 22 words. The manager's recognition of this need should prompt him to structure his sentences for logical content. For example, this recognition should prompt him to check word and phrase modifiers for their logical relationships to the central ideas expressed in the sentences he writes. In this connection, Thayer notes that:

There is no causal relationship between sentence length and clearness. However, the long, rambling sentence is a symptom of (1) a rambling uncrystallized sequence of thoughts or (2) no plan for the construction of the sentence. One should treat not the symptom, but the disease.

3. **Message organization should be based on reader consideration.**

The initial contact a message makes with a reader has a vital influence on the reader's attitude toward the total message. Advertising copy writers, for example, have long recognized the need to attract the reader's attention and stimulate his interest with the initial contact that an advertisement makes with him, whether the contact be through words or through pictures.

It is generally recognized by business communication authorities

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17 See, for example, Gunning's Principle One, *The Technique of Clear Writing*, pp. 43-53.

that messages composed by managers should be organized to conform to
the dictates of the specific occasion. Thus in a situation in which a
message is not likely to be favorably received by its reader, the
manager should organize the message in such a way as to provide for
positive initial reader contact. He may do this in the opening of his
message by citing a common point of agreement with the reader or by
identifying the reader's best interests with the message which is to
follow.

Sometimes patterns of message organization should be based
on the writer's estimation of the reader's probable understanding of
the message. The two most basic patterns of message organization
which can be adapted here are the inductive and deductive patterns.
The inductive pattern, sometimes called the logical pattern, is
effective in those instances in which the reader is considered to be
unsophisticated in his understanding of the factors justifying con-
cclusions reached or broad observations drawn in the message. Thus a
message organized according to this pattern presents for reader con-
sideration all the factors justifying the conclusions, then finally
presents the conclusions. This pattern is effective also in those
instances in which the reader must be persuaded logically to accept
the conclusions. In the latter instance, conclusions are withheld from
the reader until he has been exposed to all the justifying reasons.

The deductive pattern of message organization is the reverse of
the inductive. The writer using this pattern presents his conclusions
or broad observations first. He then presents supporting analysis or
reasons to justify his conclusions or observations. Thus in those situations in which the manager anticipates that the reader will react favorably to the message, he might capitalize on this reaction by using the deductive pattern. By so doing, he establishes a positive communication atmosphere.

The particular communication pattern selected by the manager for a message should be based on his consideration of probable reader (or readers') reaction to the message. The pattern selected can aid in overcoming communication obstacles attributable to such things as reader personality characteristics and a failure of the reader to identify his interests with the message.

4. Writing style should contribute to communication by maintaining reader interest. Style is considered to be a distinguishing quality of writing that is not subject to specific definition. Commenting on the importance of style, Brennan states: "Style causes us to like or dislike, trust or mistrust, cooperate or oppose the communicator, and hence, accept or reject what he has to say." Style is the quality of writing which causes the reader, perhaps unknowingly, to concentrate his attention on the message being communicated. Style considered, the business writer's need in substance is a need to select words which will

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19 See discussion of "topic bound" and "topic free" individuals on page 74.

20 Brennan, op. cit., p. 59.
transmit meaning to the reader by holding his attention. This need seemingly precipitates a question in some writers' minds about what words they should select to get their message "over" to the reader. Moreover, the need seemingly precipitates a question about how many words will be required. Under circumstances of encoding, some communicators dip deep into the verbiage pot and encode copiously. Others barely skim the top off the verbiage pot and encode parsimoniously. In neither case is there a necessary relationship between the clarity of meaning of the message encoded and the quantity of words used.

The story presented in the recently popular novel Anatomy of a Murder, a novel charged by some critics as being unnecessarily verbose, undoubtedly could have been told in a slim little volume. By the same token, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address probably could have been presented in a succession of eight-hour meetings extending over several days. In both of these instances communicative values or purposes would have been destroyed or defeated. The simple truth to be drawn from these observations is that the specific length of a written message as measured in the number of printed words or pages does not assure that meaning will or will not be transmitted. Style--an intangible quality of written expression--is one of the most basic factors which accounts for the success or failure of the message in holding the reader's interest to the end that desired meaning is transmitted.

Observation of business writing practices reveals that some writers, perhaps interpreting to an extreme certain principles by which conciseness in writing can be secured, place great faith in
this advice on style: "Decide what you wish to say; say it in as few simple words as possible; then quit." By blindly following such advice in the encoding phase of communication, the writer runs a risk of undercommunicating and having to re-communicate to correct for gross misinterpretation of the original message.

In the English language, the key to correct interpretability of writing is redundancy. A product of rules of syntax, redundancy gives scope and structure to sentences written in the English language. Rules of syntax, like denotative word meanings, help in bringing semantic order to society and the business organization.

As a quality of written English, redundancy is a factor to be utilized in developing effective style rather than avoided in the interests of communicating in the absolute minimum number or words. Such utilization of redundancy does not necessarily destroy the conciseness of the message to the extent that words added to the message are not superfluous. By imposing upon writing the conventional arrangements of ideas into words, sentences, and paragraphs, redundancy minimizes the ever-present danger of reader misinterpretation. In the process, redundancy contributes to the effectiveness of writing style to the extent that the addition of well chosen words

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21 In Cherry's words, "Redundancy means additional signs or rules which guard against misinterpretation—it is an essential property of language." On Human Communication, p. 32.

22 See discussion of semantic order on pages 45-46.
and phrases stimulates the reader's interest in the writing.

Standards such as these four should be of value to the planner at any stage in the planning process when it is necessary for him to communicate through the written word. The need for these standards of clearness in writing is especially critical when the point is reached that the plan must be encoded and transmitted to those who will draw inferences from it.

Inferences must be drawn from the plan. As does the planning function itself, decoding of the plan involves intellectual activity. The decoder must translate the symbols he receives into meaningful ideas which will form the basis for a change in his behavior. Thus the individual receiving the plan must draw inferences from the message constituting the plan.

Earlier discussion in the study\(^2\) establishes the fact that the inference phase of communication manifests the success or failure of the process. To the extent that the receivers of a plan change their behavior to conform to the patterns anticipated in the plan, the plan can be said to constitute an instance of successful communication.

Thus a broad consideration of the managerial function of planning reveals that the function shows some significant relationships to the communication process itself. These relationships become even more apparent as a planning procedure is considered and

\(^2\) See discussion of the inference phase on pages 55-63.
communication standards relating to the procedure are proposed.

The Planning Procedure and Communication

An orderly procedure for planning should contribute much within the firm toward maximizing the use of its communication network. If the planning function is carried on in a disorderly atmosphere, on the other hand, it is highly probable that serious breakdowns in communication will occur. Communication breakdowns in planning can result in costly errors of judgment and duplication of work on the part of the planners. H. Edward Wrapp of the Harvard Business School cites an example of some consequences of a communication breakdown in one company's planning procedure:

... At certain stages (of the planning function below the vice-presidential level) planning committee members may not be fully informed about proposals under consideration by the president and vice president. Although most committee members have welcomed the opportunity to deal with broad company policies and problems, nevertheless, they have experienced real frustration when, after weeks of study, a planning proposal has been rendered obsolete by top management's announcement of a move which the members of the committee did not know was under consideration.24

The company Wrapp analyzes, nonetheless, had given considerable thought to effective organization for long-range planning. This company, which Wrapp calls Company A for purposes of his article, carried within its organization structure a planning committee consisting of a chairman (who was a senior vice president) and six

managers who were immediate subordinates of the company's vice presidents. These six managers came from the departments of product development, purchasing, staff engineering, research, production, and personnel. The members of the committee were to utilize staff personnel in their various respective departments for studies needed.25

The committee had as its objective long-range planning for sales, production, manpower, and finance. Subcommittees were organized among committee members to conduct specific studies relating to overall planning in the company. Of interest to the communication needs generated by this company's organization for planning is this quote from Wrapp's article:

Before each subcommittee began any extensive studies, it was asked to prepare a description of how it proposed to collect the data needed for its final report. This proposed approach was presented to the entire committee for discussion and many time-saving and money-saving suggestions were offered. For instance, the need for one expensive study was eliminated by the consolidation of two completed studies made by separate departments but not previously circulated outside the departments.26

In spite of its careful consideration of the need for communication for planning, particularly cross communication, this company's planning program suffered a serious communication breakdown because of the failure of top management to communicate downward to the planning

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25Ibid., p. 39.
26Ibid., p. 40.
committee. This failure could perhaps be traced in turn to the committee's failure to anticipate communication needs as such in its procedure for planning.

While determining a procedure for planning, it is possible for a company to anticipate communication needs at various points in the procedure. By so doing, the company minimizes the possibility of having to deal with the type of communication breakdown cited by Wrapp in his analysis of Company A. An effective and orderly procedure for planning has been outlined as follows:27

1. Reaching an awareness of a possible need for formulating a plan.
2. Formulating a precise statement of the objective of the plan to be prepared.
3. Preparing a broad outline of the proposal.
4. Obtaining approval of the proposal.
5. Organizing the planning staff and assigning responsibility.
6. Determining the specific outline of the plan.
7. Establishing contact with all co-operating units.
8. Obtaining the necessary data.
9. Evaluating the data.
10. Formulating tentative conclusions and preparing the tentative plan.
11. Testing components of the plan.
12. Preparing the final plan.
13. Testing the plan.
14. Obtaining approval of the plan.

Each step of this procedure (some of which have been combined for purposes of this study) poses particular needs for communication standards.

Origin of the plan: idea communication. Conceivably, conception

27This procedure was developed by Dr. Preston P. LeBreton and presented to his seminar in Business Policy at Louisiana State University during the summer of 1959.
of the need for planning activity could take place at any place within the organization. The board of directors, for example, might conceive a need for planning. The president of the company might set in motion the organizational machinery for planning. Or a specialist, occupying a niche within a staff group, might make known a need for specific planning. Still another origin of the need for planning might be traced to a customer, a supplier, or some other source from without the organization. It would be most difficult to specify that area within or without the organization where plans should originate because the planning function embeds its roots in ideas. And ideas do not necessarily respect horizontal and vertical channels of authority.

Regardless of where the need for planning is conceived, the need for communication makes itself immediately apparent. Until the need for planning is communicated, the need exists only in the recesses of the conceiving's mind. The planner's first communication responsibility, then, is to project his idea for planning. The best medium through which this idea can be projected is a written medium, a letter or memorandum directed to some individual who is vested with authority to approve the planner's proceeding with his work.

Preparing the proposal for the plan. If the organization has a permanent planning group, such as that of Wrapp's Company A, the letter or memorandum setting forth the need for the plan might be

\[28\text{See page 127.}\]
directed to this group. The planning group, after considering the proposal, could then secure authorization from the president or board of directors, if necessary, for the planning to be carried on.

Certain standards for this proposal to plan can be established in the interests of clear, complete, and effective communication, regardless of the level of organization at which the proposal must be approved. It is submitted that the proposal should conform to these standards:

1. In its beginning paragraphs the proposal should set forth clearly the objectives and values to be sought in the plan to be prepared. Any problems to be solved by planning should be carefully defined.

2. The proposal should enumerate tentatively the factors and variables which would have to be investigated and considered by the planners. The purpose here is to give the plan's authorizer a general idea of the scope of data gathering which will be necessary to the plan.

3. The proposal should indicate to the receiver some tentative ideas as to where and how data for the plan could be gathered.

4. A first approximation as to time and cost of the plan should be indicated in the proposal. Substantiation of this first approximation would rest on assumptions; these assumptions should be stated clearly for the receiver.

29 The individual receiving the proposal is stimulated immediately to enter the introspective phase of communication. The standards set forth here are designed to minimize his introspective problems. See discussion on pages 32-41.
5. The proposal should indicate to the receiver elements of the organization that will possibly be affected by the plan.

6. If necessary (and in many cases it would be), the planning proposal should be couched in such terms and organized in such a way as to "sell" the receiver on the need for planning to promote organizational efficiency and economy.\(^{30}\)

To minimize the effects of abstraction on the proposal, techniques for clear writing (such as those discussed on pages 120-126) should be utilized. The proposal, which constitutes the origin of the plan, is a medium of idea communication. Idea projection is among the more difficult types of communication because ideas are abstractions. Ideas can be most clearly communicated if the communicator leans heavily on concrete words, simple sentence structure, and appropriate organization for his writing.

**Preparing approval of the proposal.** It is not enough for the addressed authority merely to stamp the proposal "approved" or "disapproved" and return it to the individual originating the proposal. Possibilities of future communication breakdowns occurring can be minimized considerably if the approval or disapproval of the proposal receives the same care and attention that was given to the proposal itself.

Approval of the proposal should constitute a meeting of minds between the originating planner and the approving authority, who in

\(^{30}\)See discussion of the logical pattern of organization on page 122.
many cases will probably ultimately be responsible for the plan. The approving authority should use the medium of approval as his opportunity to anticipate any future problems that will be generated by the planning activity. He should also use the medium of approval to correct or modify the objectives which should be sought by means of the plan.

And, finally, he should use the medium of approval to give his own ideas and reflections about such things as the variables and time and cost involved in the planning.

These standards might well apply to the letter or memorandum approving the proposal for planning:

1. In its beginning paragraph the letter or memorandum should state that the proposal has been approved.\(^3\)\(^1\)

2. The approving authority should restate in his own words the objectives to be sought by means of the plan. This restatement is necessary if the planner is to know that he has been effective in communicating his view of the objectives to the approving authority. This restatement will minimize the possibility of a future situation arising in which the planning process must be changed because the approving authority became aware of the fact that planners were not directing their efforts toward the objectives he anticipated.

3. The approving authority can, if appropriate, provide copies of his approval to interested and affected elements in the organization. The provision of these copies will obviate the later

\(^3\)\(^1\)If the proposal has been disapproved, a statement to this effect might be withheld pending establishment of reasons for the disapproval. This "reasons-first" approach is an effective communication pattern for gaining reader acceptance of a "no" answer to something the reader has proposed.
necessity of the planner's obtaining authority to cross-communicate in the organization in order to gather data for planning. Preferably, however, the approving authority should write a letter or memorandum to affected individuals in the organization which conforms to the standards set forth on pages 131-132 of this study. This letter might be used as a letter of transmittal for the letter approving the planning proposal.  

Setting the planning function in motion. Communication complexities of setting the planning function in motion can be minimized with effective transmission of the proposal and its approval. At the point in pre-planning activity where the proposal has been approved, utilizing the standards just enumerated, individuals within the organization who are to be affected by the planning function are already aware of the pending planning activity.

Three activity areas are involved in setting the planning function in motion. First, the planning staff must be organized and responsibility assigned. Second, contact of the planning staff must be made with all cooperating organizational units. And, third, a specific outline of the plan itself must be created to guide the planning staff in its work.

Communication needs arising from the organizational phase of the planning function will depend, of course, on the type of organization to be used. On the one hand, a planning committee might be appointed to function for the formulation of a particular plan, then

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32 The critical need here is to anticipate problems originating with cross-functionalization. See discussion on pages 83-86.
be dissolved on completion of its work. On the other hand, a company might have a permanent planning department or committee similar to the one Wrapp cites for Company A. In the event the latter situation prevails in a company, no particular communication problem should arise in the organizational phase. Each member of the staff, equipped with a copy of the memorandum approving a previously submitted planning proposal, would be ready immediately to commence his work. In such a case, the chairman of the planning group or committee would undoubtedly be the communication center for the group and would follow an established procedure in fixing responsibility for new planning to be undertaken by the group.

A different situation prevails, however, in the case where a planning group is temporarily organized to undertake the planning project. In such a case, once again, a written medium should be utilized in organizing and fixing responsibility of members of the committee. A ranking line authority, for example, might make the final decision as to who will be on the committee and as to what responsibility will be carried by whom on the committee. In such a case the line executive would have the option of either writing a general memorandum to all selected members of the committee or memoranda on an individual basis. Regardless of the means selected, the communication to members should delineate clearly the functions to be performed by the committee members as well as the responsibility which will be inherent in each function. Provision to each member of a copy of the approval of the planning proposal should suffice to orient the
committee members to the job ahead. Thus the message to the individual member need merely indicate that he has been placed on the committee to perform certain designated functions.

Once the planning group has been organized, the next logical need is to establish contact with cooperating units in the organization. For purposes of analysis here, these units are envisioned as those that will contribute indirectly to the planning process—basically by furnishing information bearing on the plan. The message framed for providing this contact actually has an informative purpose and a persuasive purpose in that (1) the individual contacted is apprised of contribution he will make to the plan and (2) he should be persuaded to cooperate willingly and furnish information freely.

It is a truism of effective communication practice that when rapport is established between the sender and receiver, communication breakdowns are less likely to occur. It follows, therefore, that the primary objective of the message authorizing a planner to cross channels of communication to secure data for the plan should be the establishment of an harmonious atmosphere. The establishment of this atmosphere, whether the research method be company records search or personal interrogation, can be accomplished by a letter or memorandum, preferably originating at a fairly high level of authority within the organization. This letter constitutes the authority for the planner to cross communication channels.

If the data gathering is to be universal in the organization,
the letter might take the form of a general directive. If the data-
gathering chore is destined to take the planner only to isolated parts
of the organization for records search or personal interrogation, pre-
ferably the letter should be addressed by name to affected individuals.\textsuperscript{33}

However, regardless of whether the letter is of a general or
specific nature, it needs to adhere to some common standards:

1. The letter should make clear the organization
values sought in the plan to which the respondent
will contribute. These values can be communicated
through a statement of the objectives of the plan.
A statement in the letter such as this might suffice:

   \begin{quote}
   In order to lighten the recordskeeping
   burden of department head, the Methods
   and Procedures Section is preparing a
   plan for future centralization of
   company records.
   \end{quote}

2. The letter should point out any individual values
that will accrue to the reader as a result of the plan.\textsuperscript{34}

3. The letter should make clear to the reader just
what he is expected to do in cooperating with the
planner who will be contacting him.

4. The letter should briefly explain the procedure
being followed in the planning function in order
that the reader might have the satisfaction of
measuring the degree of his individual contribu-
tion to the plan.

\textsuperscript{33}It should be recalled here that some of the most basic com-
munication problems in the business organization are generated by the
fact that the "formal organization makes its impact on its supporting
personalities by means of generalities." See discussion on page 74.

\textsuperscript{34}See discussion of egocentrism on page 74.
5. Preferably, the letter should allow the reader some option in the time that he will see the planner.

Following establishment of contact with cooperating units, a need arises for the planning group to determine a specific outline of the plan. The determination of this outline involves a consideration of the specific factors to be studied by the planners. If the planning procedure is being carried on by a committee, the members of which are specialists from various parts of the organization, the outline undoubtedly will be a joint product of all members. Initial communication to determine the outline will probably take an oral form, as in committee meetings. These meetings should be dedicated to a discovery of the specific contribution to the outline that each committee member can make on the basis of his specialized knowledge or experience. If the planning being carried on, for example, involves markets for a period five years hence, it might be that the member of the committee representing market research would contribute that portion of the plan's outline which dealt with aspects of motivational research. The mathematician member of the committee might indicate as his contribution to the outline the planning that would be necessary to data gathering for linear programming and other forms of model building. In the final analysis, then, the outline for the plan would consist of an assembly of ideas of the planners.

Communication problems growing out of the outlining stage would undoubtedly be limited to the confines of the committee itself.
Working in close proximity, members of the planning committee should work out communication problems as they arise. Written communication breakdowns, for example, could be mended by supplementary oral communication. Many communication problems in this stage of planning would undoubtedly be semantic in origin. That is, the market research man on the planning committee would not understand the symbols used by the engineer from research and development. And perhaps the market research man and engineer would both be confused by the psychologist's symbols of communication. It would seem that this problem in semantics among the immediate members of the committee could best be overcome through conscientious effort on the part of committee members to couch their communication in symbols understandable to their fellow committee members.

**Obtaining and analyzing data for the plan.** Certain communication problems relating to the data-gathering process have already been taken up in the previous discussion of the need for establishing contact with co-operating units in the organization (pages 136-138). As is pointed out in the previous discussion, the key to clear and effective communication in the data-gathering process is the establishment of rapport between the data gatherer and the respondent. The best communication medium for establishing this rapport is a letter or memorandum which conforms to the standards set forth on pages 136-138.

Data gathering is a primary function of the planning process
within the large business organization. It seems reasonable to hold
for purposes of this analysis that the data-gathering function creates
certain communication situations which must be coped with by the
planner who must make contacts throughout the organization in order to
do his work. Further, it seems reasonable to hold that the complexity
of the data-gathering function increases in a direct relationship with
the complexity of the plan being created as well as with the complexity
of the organization structure itself.

The point of view is taken here that communication is
especially vital when two methods of data gathering are used: (1) the
company records search, and (2) the intracompany personal interrogation
method. In both these cases it is highly probable that the planner
must leave the confines of his own office or environment and attempt
to communicate with people at various places in the organization if he
is to gather necessary data to contribute his portion of the planning
function. For purposes of this analysis, an assumption is made that
the planner is a representative of a staff group or department; but
recognition should be given to the fact that line personnel within
the organization could also engage in the data-gathering process. It
is reasonable to assume, however, that the preponderance of data
gathering within an organization is carried on by staff groups and

35 The observation method could also be considered here.
But some reflective thinking on the subject indicates that the
communication problems in the method would bear very close resemblance to the communication problems involved in the company records search.
individuals.

In the case of a company records search a special communication problem sometimes presents itself to the planner. It is unreasonable to assume that all planners have a previously established and thorough understanding of the records through which they will search, although the information which they need to find and pull from the records is vital to their plan. Hay and Lesikar, commenting on this problem, point out that:

On all occasions, research through company records should never be attempted without the close co-operation of one thoroughly familiar with the records concerned, except, of course, when the investigator himself is intimately acquainted with the information.36

If the way has been prepared properly for the planner,37 the company record search method of data collection should present no major problems of communication. In the case of interrogation research, on the other hand, some significant problems can arise, especially if the interrogation involves a face-to-face relationship of the planner and the respondent. Interrogation problems can become acute if the respondent and planner do not meet in an atmosphere of rapport. And interrogation sessions can be chaotic if the planner has not prepared adequately for the interrogation. It can be concluded, therefore, that communication during interrogation can be facilitated through:

36Hay and Lesikar, op. cit., p. 23.

37See discussion of establishing contact with cooperating units on pages 136-138.
1. Previous arrangement for the interrogation session, preferably through a letter or memorandum reflecting the standards cited on pages 137-138. This previous arrangement allows the respondent to have needed information readily available. Moreover, it makes the respondent's position in the plan clear. And, finally, the letter constitutes authority for the planner to take the time and energy of the respondent.

2. Careful preparation of the planner before he attempts to conduct the interrogation. This preparation involves a well-thought-out procedure on the part of the planner as to how he will conduct the interrogation. In some cases the planner can be guided in the interrogation by a carefully prepared, tested questionnaire. In other cases, non-directed interrogation might be preferable. This latter case does not rule out the need for prior preparation on the part of the planner; to the contrary, the need is perhaps intensified because the planner will need to keep in his mind what amounts to a mental outline of the variables with which his planning function is concerned.

In addition to data gathering, the planner must be concerned with data analysis, even though such analysis in the larger business organization today is being more and more subjected to the electronic processes of the computer. As of today, however, the business world has not actually entered the era of the "thinking machine," a machine which would not be subjected to the frailties of man's analytical processes. For all practical purposes, the human element in the business organization still has in its control the analytical process. Even the organization which boasts an electronic equipment installation of the proportions of the IBM 705 must eventually relegate the refined analytical process to the human element in the organization.
Data analysis is the frame of reference for the creative thinker in the business organization. According to Mee:

Creative thinking is the process of bringing a problem before one's mind clearly as by imagining, visualizing, supposing, musing, contemplating, or the like, and then originating or inventing an idea, concept, realization, or picture along new or conventional lines. It involves study and reflection rather than action.\(^3\)

In bridging between the process of recognizing a problem and the process of, in Mee's words, "originating or inventing an idea," the creative thinker goes through the analytical process. In the analytical process the thinker takes data which has been made available to him and breaks it down to see its innermost relationships. This high-order intellectual process, reserved only to man, gives birth to what this student calls the introspective phase of communication. The introspective phase weighs heavily on the planner when he first attempts to analyze data for his plan. He is frustrated by his inability to blend ideas derived from data analysis. He is further frustrated by his initial inability to communicate coherently about his plan with his fellow planners at committee meetings.

Once this introspective phase has been passed and the planner progresses to the encoding phase, data analysis has resulted in ideas that can be communicated. From the standpoint of effective communication, it would seem that the less time the planner has to cope with

problems common to the introspective phase, the more quickly and efficiently he can proceed to the encoding phase. A simple aid for the planner here would be for him to have made available for his use data in good form—that is data which has been carefully edited and classified and placed in an understandable format.

Preparing the plan. According to the planning procedure outlined in these pages, before the plan is ready for final preparation, concerted efforts of the planning group have been directed toward the formulation of tentative conclusions and the testing of the components of the plan. If such testing reveals the plausibility of tentative conclusions, the plan is ready for final preparation and formal approval. If such testing reveals imperfections in the plan, these imperfections, of course, should be corrected before the plan is prepared for submission. This testing process itself should eliminate certain difficulties in communicating the final plan because the testing should minimize abstractions through the provision of further concrete data for support of the plan.

The final written plan should conform closely to the business writing standards proposed elsewhere in this chapter. The planning group will do well also to give detailed attention to the organization of the finished plan. A need of primary importance in the plan’s preparation stage is that some member of the group be designated to

39See discussion of writing standards on pages 120-126.
have responsibility for the final organization of the plan, even though it is likely that individual members of the group will contribute segments of the completed plan. These standards for organization would appear to bear on a written plan characterized by even a slight degree of complexity:

1. A summary of the plan should be provided. This summary should first state the major objectives and values sought in the plan. Then the summary, in general terms, should outline the course of action to be taken in the plan. This course of action should be organized around the chronology involved in the plan. The plan's summary should preferably be provided on pages separate from the body of the plan itself. Such an arrangement makes it possible for the summary to be detached easily from the body of the plan and perhaps given wider distribution than the plan itself is given.

2. The plan proper should lead off with introductory material to provide for full reader orientation to the total stimulus of which the plan is constituted. After a brief identification of the objectives of the plan, the introduction should cover such factors as:

   a. Identification of the medium of authorization for the plan (probably the letter in which the proposal for the plan was approved).

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Recognition is given here to the holding of Schutte and Steinberg that "If our executive wants only the summary, he can have his one-page memorandum. If he insists on the data as well, he is giving the writer an impossible task. To comply, the writer will either have to omit half of the statistics or dispense with the analysis. Or he will have to move higher on the abstraction ladder--to be more general--so that, dealing with fewer details, he will be able to 'cover' more ground in less space." William M. Schutte and Erwin R. Steinberg, Communication in Business and Industry (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), pp. 190-191.
b. Identification of the individuals who contributed to the plan, along with identification of the specific material each individual contributed.

c. A brief discussion of the significant historical events contributing to the need for the plan.

d. A discussion of research methodology used in gathering data for the plan, along with a discussion of any limitations of the data (e.g., it might have been impossible to gather certain significant data, a situation which the reader should weigh as he considers the plan).

e. A preview (especially in those cases in which the written plan is long) of the organization of the plan in order that the reader might place himself in a logical frame of mind to understand the plan.

3. Immediately after the introduction material, the plan should move into a presentation of the courses of future action proposed, utilizing the deductive organization pattern. Following this broad presentation should be the analysis and interpretation of underlying data justifying the action to be taken.

Because the written plan is among the most important reports prepared within the business organization, it should assume a formal format to distinguish it from routine day-to-day reports. Accordingly, the plan should be prepared in a format consisting of these parts (in the order presented):

1. Title fly (a page on which only the title of the report is presented).

41The format presented here is adapted from the long formal report format recommended in Chapter 7 of Hay and Lesikar's *Business Report Writing*. 
2. A title page, consisting of a presentation of:
   a. The title.
   b. Identification of the plan's authorizer and receiver, or identification of the individual to whom the plan is submitted for approval.
   c. Identification of the individual or group preparing the plan.
   d. The date the plan is submitted.

3. A letter of transmittal, written to the plan's receiver and signed by the individual responsible for final preparation and submission of the plan. The letter of transmittal should formally present the plan and perhaps include comment on the activities of the group contributing to the plan. The letter of transmittal, generally, should not outline the course of action recommended by the planning group. Recommendation context should include supporting analysis to avoid possible negative reader reaction to the recommendations.

4. A table of contents for the written plan.

5. A summary (as previously discussed).

6. The plan proper, consisting of (1) the introduction, (2) a general section outlining the course of action to be taken, and (3) the analysis of data which supports the course of action.

Presentation of the plan for approval. Where a complex written communication situation exists, supplementary personal contact with the message receiver on the part of the message sender aids the flow of information. Undoubtedly this general communication principle holds in the case of a plan. All planners who have contributed to the plan, therefore, should be given an opportunity to orally defend their work and clear up any misunderstandings on the part of the plan's readers.
It would seem, therefore, that presentation of the plan—from the standpoint of effective communication—should follow a somewhat formal two-step procedure. First, the plan should be presented to approving authorities by means of the letter of transmittal, a prefatory part of the plan itself. Then, after approving authorities have had an opportunity to consider the plan, a formal meeting of the planning group with the approving authorities should be held.

Planners should come to the formal meeting prepared to defend their contributions to the plan. Indeed, "sell" might be a better word than "defend." Presumably the plan itself is postulated on the basis of objective analysis of facts and data. This objectivity, founded as it is on the ideas of other men, is not always immediately apparent to the approving authority. Supplemental oral contact with the planners gives the approving authority an opportunity to sit in judgment of the plan while at the same time gaining insight as to the real capacity of the planners to influence the destiny of the company.

II. MANAGERIAL ORGANIZING AND COMMUNICATION

Jucius and Schlender express the view that the function of organizing is a step of the management process which follows planning:

42 At this time the plan receivers are experiencing the inference phase of communication. It should be recalled that one factor conditioning this phase is the communicatee's dedication to constancy, a zeal to maintain the status quo. Thus there is a need for a persuasive atmosphere to prevail as the plan is being defended because a plan almost invariably portends "change" for the business organization.
After plans are established, organizing is the managerial function of marshaling the various factors and resources necessary to carry out the plans. An organization structure must be established by which various executives and subordinates will be coordinated. Procedures and systems must be established to carry out projects specified in plans.43

Such a view seems logical for analytical purposes because organizing efforts must be directed toward furthering achievement or specified organizational objectives. And organizational objectives are isolated and communicated through management's performance of the planning function. Therefore, the approach taken in this analysis of organizing presupposes the establishment and communication of organizational objectives. Thus analysis of the communication aspects of organizing can be concentrated exclusively on the problems that arise after objectives have been ascertained and set for the firm.

It should be noted here that organizing is considered to be a continuing function of the manager. It is visualized as a function carried on by the manager on a day-to-day basis as objectives are set, modified, or changed throughout the firm during the planning function. Accordingly, the supervisor is regarded as an organizer when he takes necessary steps to provide for achievement of, say, the short-run objective of producing a "special" run of finished product that necessitates departure of his group from daily routine. For purposes of

the present analysis of organizing and communication, however, the organizing function is treated as though it could be extracted from the total management process at a given instant of time and analyzed. Also, for purposes of realistic limitation the analysis has its setting at the administrative management level of the organization.

The Establishment of a Formal Organization Structure

In the approach taken here, organizing is treated as a function which entails four major areas of activity dealing with the establishment of a formal organization structure: (1) isolating functions and establishing procedures; (2) assigning personnel and designating authority and responsibility relationships; (3) assembling technical resources; and (4) providing for coordination. First, brief consideration is given to each of these four steps involved in the establishment of a formal organization structure. Following this analysis is a presentation of communication standards as they would apply to a firm's organization manual, the traditional medium of communication originating with the organizing function.

Isolating functions and establishing procedures. In simple terms, a function can be defined as "any phase of the work of the organization that is necessary for the achievement of any proper or required organizational objective."44 In organizing, the manager's initial step must be one of isolating the functions which must be

performed to achieve organizational objectives. Then, once the functions are isolated, they must be grouped according to their similarities. Koontz and O'Donnel refer to this grouping as "departmentation by enterprise function." These authorities hold that "Functional departmentation is the most widely employed basis for organizing enterprise activities and is present in almost every enterprise at some level in the organization structure."\(^45\)

Analysis of the functions makes possible their subsequent arrangement into procedures, a necessary requisite for objective accomplishment in the firm:

Attainment of objectives is directly accomplished by the performance of functions. And the attainment is affected by the orderliness with which the functions are arranged into procedures.\(^46\)

A procedure can be defined simply as an orderly sequence of functions which is directed toward accomplishment of a specified goal. For example, the procedure to provide for fabrication of a bicycle wheel would involve an orderly sequence of functions:

Unless these activities are arranged so that first things are done first, and so on, each advancing the completion of the wheel in efficient order, a wheel will never be completed, or at least not completed with dispatch and economy.\(^47\)

\(^{45}\) Koontz and O'Donnel, op. cit., p. 103.

\(^{46}\) Jucius and Schlender, op. cit., p. 135.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. 7.
The organizing step of isolating functions and establishing procedures gives rise to a problem of communication which develops in the introspective phase of the process and accounts for later possible breakdowns in the formal organization structure. This basic problem is the manager's reaction to what might be regarded as an incorrect stimulus—a reaction to the people of the organization and their capabilities rather than the basic functions which the people must perform. Commenting on this problem, R. C. Davis states, "There are those who believe that responsibility should be divided primarily with regard to the specific capacities of the individual available in the organization."^{48}

The manager who establishes a procedure around people of given talents rather than around the most expedient functions builds into the organization structure he ultimately communicates via the organization manual a situation which can result in a subordination of primary service objectives to collateral service objectives.^{49} In such a situation a basic problem is fostered in which communication in the firm is unduly influenced by the human tendency, as pointed out earlier in the thesis, to be more oriented to functions themselves than to the relationships of the functions in obtaining the primary

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^{49}See discussion of primary service objectives and collateral service objectives on page 70.
service objectives of the organizational entity.  

**Assigning personnel and designating authority and responsibility.**

Logically, the assignment of personnel should be to functions rather than the obverse—assignment of functions to personnel—if the introspective communication problem just cited is to be averted. An orderly procedure by which this problem can be minimized entails first a specification of personnel requirements and then procurement of the necessary personnel to conform to the previously established specifications:

The problem of kind of personnel is best solved through a good program of job specifications for both operative and managerial personnel. Such specifications should indicate, first, what is done on particular jobs; and, second, what qualities a person should possess to fulfill the requirements of the jobs.\(^1\)

The designation of authority and responsibility relationships is a vital function of communication once functions have been related to personnel by means of job specifications. Defined as "the right to command obedience from others,"\(^2\) authority is a necessary requisite to the performance of functions. Similarly, responsibility—the obligation of an individual to be accountable for the exercise of his authority—is just as basic.

The view is taken here that an individual manager's basic

\(^{50}\)See discussion in this chapter of communication standards for the organization manual.

\(^{51}\)Ibid., p. 48.
responsibility and authority relating to his function should be communicated in the firm's organization manual. This view conforms to that of R. C. Davis who holds that the organization manual should "specify the organizational objectives, functions, responsibilities, authorities, accountability, and cross relations for each executive in charge of each group." Other media of communication should be used as needed to provide for extraordinary assignments of authority and responsibility for special, short-lived occasions. Provision should be made for amending the organization manual when new authority-responsibility relationships are of a permanent nature.

Assembling of technical resources. At least token acknowledgment should be given here to the step of the organizing function which entails the assembly of technical resources. Consideration of this step of the function does not reveal any particularly unique problems of communication that have not been brought out elsewhere in the study. Communication considered, however, it should be noted that the manager who is charged with responsibility for assembling technical resources necessary to the achievement of the firm's objectives is likely to be influenced by the many factors bearing on the various phases of the communication process. The office manager, for example,

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54 See, for example, the discussion on pages 136-138 relating to methods by which authority can be established for cross-contacts necessary for data gathering as the planning function is carried on.
who requests five additional new typewriters to provide for expansion of his operations to conform to a plan might well be reacting to his tendency toward undue preoccupation with his specific function. For example, an investigation might reveal that the office manager in fact needed only four typewriters, that he requested five typewriters because of his status anxiety,\textsuperscript{55} in this case an emotional drive to surround himself with symbols signifying his importance and responsibility.

**Providing for coordination.** Making provision for coordination is considered to be a step of the organizing function. The execution of coordination, however, is considered to be a part of the control function:

Coordination is a vital phase of control. It may be defined as the function of relating activities with respect to time and order of performance.\textsuperscript{56}

Coordination in a firm is carried on by means of communication. During his performance of the organizing function, therefore, the manager must provide for the formal organization structure a communication system which will link related activities requiring coordination in "time and order of performance." This provision for communication, it is submitted here, should be incorporated into the organization manual.

\textsuperscript{55}See discussion on pages 89-90 of the hierarchy of goals the individual pursues in the organization.

In Chapter III of the study a conclusion is reached that the greatest calling of communication in the firm is to make maximum contribution to organizational balance and stability. As the analysis presented in Chapter III reveals, however, certain factors bear on the communication process which contribute to imbalance and instability. The most basic of these factors is functionalization, the process by which the organization is divided into groups dedicated to pursuing objectives which ultimately contribute to achieving the firm's overall objectives.

The consequence of functionalization of the firm is a tendency for the participants to be oriented primarily to the objectives of their functions in precedence to the overall objectives of the organization. Since functionalization is a step (see pages 150-151) in the total organizing function, it seems logical to hold that problems stemming from this step can be anticipated and overcome as the managerial organizing function is carried on. The manager who recognizes that functionalization breeds miscommunication (thus organizational imbalance and instability) is in a position to abort this problem by establishing an environment to provide for ready and free information flow. The best communication medium for establishing this environment,

57See analysis of functionalization on pages 87-89.
it is submitted here, is the organization manual.

The organization manual should rank among the firm's most vital documents of communication. The findings of this study in fact indicate a need for this manual to be considered for preservation purposes in the realm of the corporate charter and bylaws. The organization manual should constitute an enduring written record, a record designed to give continuity to the firm as in its aging process changes occur in the people and functions making up the firm.

As treated in this study, the organization manual is defined as a permanent written record which sets forth basic authority, responsibility, and accountability factors relating to the firm's broad objectives. The manual, moreover, should designate the firm's broad objectives as well as the functions and functional relationships necessary to the achievement of those objectives. Thus the organization manual is visualized here as more than a presentation of "structural charts of the whole enterprise and its parts ..." and "summary statements of the assigned duties and the delegated authority of every manager."58 Indeed, the point is readily conceded that the approach taken here departs from a conventional consideration of the organization manual as a book which presents organization charts and brief descriptions of the parts of the organization. The organization manual proposed here is an integrated, detailed presentation of a complete description of the firm—ranging from the history of the firm

58 Koontz and O'Donnel, op. cit., p. 570.
to a description of the cross-relationships existing at lower levels of the organization.

Content and organization of the manual. The firm's organization manual should be regarded as something more than a basic source of information about functions and authority. Thus the manual proposed here is designed to aid the manager in coping with problems of communication originating with the conflict that exists between individuals and the formal organization. These basic problems, analyzed in some detail in Chapter III, 59 may be summarized briefly as follows:

1. Participants in the firm are prone to strive concurrently for self-identification and for identification with the organization--for recognition as individuals and for recognition as members of the group.

2. Organizational balance and stability cannot be achieved at the optimum level because communication is an inadequate tool for stimulating similarity of intent of the firm's participants and providing for satisfaction of the dictates of their interdependence.

3. There is a human tendency for participants in the firm to subordinate the firm's objectives to their personal objectives.

4. Functionalization of the firm--though necessary--results in orienting the thinking and communication efforts of the participants.

5. Functionalization of the firm results in a need for cross-communication, a need which is not generally recognized in the firm's formal organization structure.

59 See especially pages 72-76 and 89-91.
6. Cross-communication contributes to the 
existence of an informal organization which 
is superimposed over the formal organiza-
tion structure.

Taking into account these six basic problems, the organization 
manual proposed here is designed to aid management in performing four 
activities to minimize miscommunication:

1. Orienting participants in the firm to the 
totality of the organization, including its 
history and overall objectives.

2. Stimulating among firm participants an under-
standing of the relationships of specific 
function objectives to overall objectives.

3. Anticipating and overcoming problems attribu-
table to the need for cross-communication 
in the firm.

4. Providing a basic, authoritative statement 
of authority and responsibility relation-
ships to which the firm's participants must 
be held accountable.

As an instrument to aid management in performing these three 
activities, the organization manual should be divided into two parts. 
Part I should be designed to familiarize the reader with the history 
and objectives of the firm in order that he might know as precisely 
as possible how his interests may be identified with those of the 
firm. Part II should be a clear statement of how the firm is formally 
organized along functional lines and should provide due recognition 
of the need for cross-functionalization.

Part I--history of the firm and a statement of its objectives--is 
considered an essential part of the manual. This part of the manual 
should prove especially valuable as a tool for inducting new
participants into the firm as well as for correctly orienting old participants. An observable phenomenon of organizational behavior is a tendency for informal groups to emerge because of common knowledge about the firm existing among participants in the groups. Thus in a given firm there emerges groups of individuals who are vested with certain knowledge of the firm's history and objectives which has been gained from long experience with the company. Similarly, there emerges groups of new employees who have inadequate knowledge about the history of the firm and its objectives. For example, the firm participant who proposes a course of action and is told that such action is not sound because it "has been tried unsuccessfully before" might be reluctant to propose an alternative course in fear of a similar rebuff. As a consequence he might withdraw to an informal group of similarly situated individuals. Communication, accordingly, is stultified.

A basic communication problem cited earlier in this study (see page 35) grows out of the inability of the communicator to see the whole of a stimulus at a single instant of time. Provision of company history and a statement of the totality of the company's objectives in the organization manual should bring the advantage--at least in certain instances--of minimizing the effects of this introspective problem of communication. In a problem-solving situation, for example, a part of the whole of the stimulus might be facts about historical events of the firm. To the extent that the decision maker has available accurately recorded historical facts, he can reason correctly from word symbols representing the total stimulus. The problem-solving commun-
icator obviously should not conceive of the firm of 1961 (Firm_{1961}) as the firm of 1951 (Firm_{1951}) because of the impact of change brought with passing time. Without an adequate and correct store of facts about Firm_{1951}, however, the participant in Firm_{1961} might be inclined to react in the introspective phase to Firm_{1961} as though it were identical to Firm_{1951}; thus he would be reacting to only a part of the total stimulus.

The fact is not denied here that stores of historical data are available in company files. These data are undoubtedly used in given companies as contemporary decisions are made—as they well should be. Company files, however, are subject to detailed classification, the result being that extensive integration of the files must be made to secure broad perspective. Even the company annual report to shareholders, which integrates production, marketing, and financial data on an annual basis, is much too narrowly classified to provide broad historical perspective. The historical record proposed here to be preserved and periodically updated in the company organization manual, therefore, is considered to be a broad adjunct to the detailed historical data of a given company's files. This record should, accordingly, be written in a broad perspective which traces such things as:

1. The origin of the company, including a discussion of company founders. The desired effect here is to "personalize" the organization in order that current participants in the firm might identify themselves with people rather than with an impersonal, abstract organization.
2. The development (or, as the case may be, the regression) of the company through time. This discussion might be tied to such indicators of change as sales, income, or payroll figures as they are associated with calendar years.

3. The reaction of the company through time to external historical events. The company’s reaction to wars and other national emergencies such as depressions should serve to further personalize the company, thus build its image in the reader’s mind.

4. The reaction of the company through time to internal historical events. Internal historical events might be such things as new products, new production techniques, or any innovation which had influence on the company.

5. The changing objectives and philosophies of the company. The purpose here should be to emphasize that Company1961 is not Company1942, Company1937, nor Company1931.

Broadly speaking, the objective of the historical section of Part I of the organization manual should be to create on the part of participants an image of the firm and its philosophy. The creation of this image should result in reader conception of the company’s overall plan for existence, making it possible for the firm’s participants to more readily accept (or reject) the formal organization.

Because there is a vital need for the participant in a firm to identify his objective with those of the organization, Part I of the

60 It should be recalled here that a factor which significantly conditions the inference phase of communication is the communicatee’s dedication to constancy. Thus the firm participant who is taken with the idea that the 1930's represented the "good old days" might be prone to orient his thinking in 1961 to 1937 variables. See discussion on pages 62-63.
organization manual should include a concise, understandable, and current statement of the firm's objectives. Participant recognition of firm objectives should stimulate him to associate and compare his personal objectives with those of the firm.  

Part II of the organization manual should be designed to minimize communication problems attributable to functionalization of the firm. Thus Part II should take note of the basic functions and their specific objectives while showing clearly the interrelationships of the functions. In the introduction to Part II, therefore, a company organization chart should be presented which traces vertical authority-responsibility relationships by means of inked blocks and lines.

A logical organization for the balance of Part II of the manual would involve sections established to conform to the functions revealed in the organization chart. In a manufacturing organization, these four sections might be (1) Production, (2) Marketing, (3) Finance, and (4) Staff services not assigned under a basic function (Personnel, for example). Under each functional heading pertinent parts of the firm's organization chart should be extracted and displayed. These extracts from the chart should be expanded as necessary to bring to light all

61See discussion on pages 72-73 relating to the firm's goal of perpetuation and the need for organizational components to conform to its overall plan if this goal is to be achieved.
of the subfunctions within each major functional group. As far as possible, the need for cross-communication among the functions should be anticipated. Where such needs can be anticipated, the subfunctions should be connected (perhaps by means of dotted or colored lines) on the chart to indicate information flow.

Also in the sections of Part II relating to the broad functional divisions (Production, Marketing, Finance, etc.) should be included the formal vesting of authority and responsibility in the functions and the provision of necessary communication lines among the functions. The formal vesting of authority and responsibility should be as clearly stated as possible. For example:

The Custodian of the Keys has responsibility and authority for:

1. The issuance of keys to those individuals within the company who present a Key Request (Form AP601) bearing the signature of the Assistant to the Controller.

The typical organization chart does not reveal specific functions at the operative level. These functions should be revealed in the expanded versions of the chart for each major functional group in order that each individual might readily see his relationship to the formal organization. The rationale here is the finding of the study to the effect that individual personalities, in the previously-quoted words of Argyris, "Will always be striving for self-actualization while behaving as agents of the organization." Then, too, as pointed out by Gardner and Moore, "positions and functions in an organization are socially interpreted and classified by employees, which influences the individual who occupies the position, as well as those who must interact with him." See discussion of these factors on pages 72-73 and 89-90.

For example, the need under certain circumstances for lathe operators to coordinate directly with punch press operators on the line might be anticipated. Within the view of this student, this self-coordination should not be left to chance. Rather, official sanction should be given to the need by means of the chart and provision should be made for necessary later communication with supervisors to occur.
2. The maintenance of keys in a locked cabinet which is to be provided and kept in good repair by the Operations and Maintenance Department.

3. The preparation of certain periodic reports, namely:

The provision of necessary communication lines should be inherent in the vesting of authority and responsibility. As noted above, for example, the Custodian of the Keys is charged with responsibility for the preparation of certain periodic reports. Any anticipated need for cross-communication by the individual occupying a function should similarly be inherent in the vesting of authority and responsibility. For example:

The Custodian of the Keys has responsibility and authority for:

4. Issuing a duplicate key under conditions defined by himself to constitute an emergency. When a duplicate key is issued under emergency conditions, a report is to be submitted as soon as possible (and in no event later than two hours after the key is issued) on Form AP619 directly to the Controller.

**Authority for the organization manual.** The chief executive of the firm, standing as he does at the top of the organizational pyramid, presumably has the keenest concept of the organizational entity. Therefore, authority for establishing, maintaining, and changing the organization manual should be vested ultimately in him. The senior executive should review critically all changes proposed by participants in the organization, giving particular consideration to the impact of proposed changes on functional relationships. This need for high authoritative control of the organization manual is generated by the
fact that the manual is symbolic of the organization itself. Thus there should be high positive correlation between the symbol and that which the symbol represents.64

Access to the organization manual by firm participants. If the organization manual is to serve its intended purposes, it should be freely accessible to all participants in the firm. Copies should be maintained by all executive and other supervisory personnel. These copies should be readily available to all operative employees in the firm. Copies might also be placed at other strategic places—in the company library, for example, and in employee recreation and waiting rooms.

Format of the organization manual. Since the organization manual is subject to change, its format should be designed to make physical change easy. The manual should be presented within the hard (press-board or heavy card stock) covers of a loose-leaf binder. To facilitate reference to parts, sections, and paragraphs of the manual, a numbering sequence should be used. The decimal outline form provides such a sequence which would make for quick reference to any part of the manual:

1. Part

1.1 Section

64 It should be noted here that informal changes in the organization structure (resulting, for example, from cross-functionalization) should either be incorporated into the organization manual or eliminated as quickly as possible after such changes are observed. This action is necessary, of course, to keep the organization manual, symbolic of the organization itself.
Since the organization manual sets forth the basic objective of the firm and then stratifies the objectives according to functions, it is a valuable tool of control. The manual, in part, bridges between the manager's basic functions of organizing and control, the next function to be considered.

III. MANAGERIAL CONTROLLING AND COMMUNICATION

Although control can be extracted from the total management process for purposes of analysis, the point should be borne in mind that the roots of this function are firmly embedded in the other management functions. In fact, much of the communicating the manager carries on in the planning and organizing functions is designed to create an environment for later control of organizational performance. Thus at the point of management activity in which the control function as such must be exercised, communication has already played a dominant role. Communication in the control function itself, therefore, involves a relatively orderly information flow process if this proper environment has in fact been previously established. A consideration of some of
the relationships between managerial controlling and managerial planning and organizing reveals how this communication environment is established. Providing for Communication in Control

Control has been defined as "the analysis of present performance, in the light of fixed goals and standards, in order to determine the extent to which accomplishment measures up to executive orders and expectations." Inherent in this definition is a basic assumption of the prior establishment of goals and authority-responsibility relationships. The prior existence of these variables of control is determined by management's performance of the planning and organizing functions.

As previously noted in this study, one of communication's most basic roles deals with the setting of the firm's objectives. These objectives are set by means of communication during management's performance of the planning function. Ultimately these objectives provide a basis for the specification of goals and standards against which organizational performance can be checked. As noted by William H. Newman:

The general objectives of the company are broken down into objectives for individual departments and sections. From these we develop goals for quality, cost, and output, and supporting these figures should be production-time standards, sales quotas, cash-

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66 See the statement of conclusion on page 76 to the effect that the most basic role of communication in the firm is one of setting objectives and stimulating conformity to the objectives.
In addition to the need for established goals throughout the firm, there is a need for specification of authority-responsibility relationships among the firm's functions if control is ultimately to be carried on in any semblance of order. The establishment of these orderly relationships is a function of managerial organizing. The organization manual is the communication medium which should specify such relationships. Moreover, the organization manual should delineate the objectives of broad and specific functions in the firm. In the final analysis, therefore, the organization manual should specify the results of managerial planning and organizing. At the same time the organization manual can serve as a tool of managerial control in that actual performance of the organization can be checked for conformity to the manual.

The effective and proper establishment of objectives (by means of planning) and the proper creation of functional relationships (by means of organizing) for objectives to be accomplished results in the establishment of a communication environment in which control can be carried on. To the extent that this environment is carefully anticipated and established, communication in control is a smoothly operating process.


68 See discussion of organization manual on pages 156-165.
Information Flow in Control

This student submits that information flow in control should as much as possible utilize formal lines of authority and responsibility. This stand is based on a consideration of the need for absolute managerial control over performance which is directed toward accomplishment of organizational objectives. Informal cross-communication which, for example, had as its purpose the changing of previously established standards would cause a breakdown in management's organic function of control. It is submitted here, therefore, that communication in control should utilize formal, vertical channels except in those instances in which there is a horizontal flow of information resulting from the existence of formal functional authority.69

Actually the manner in which formal control information flows in the firm is influenced to a great extent by the leadership philosophy prevailing in the firm. If existing leadership philosophy relies heavily on the exception principle,70 information flow relating to control is likely to be light. Under such leadership there is likely to be great decentralization of authority and responsibility for the

69 As in the case, for example, in which an inspector possessing functional authority rules that a specific batch of completed product does not conform to qualitative standards.

70 The exception principle is stated thusly by R. C. Davis: "Only significant deviations of actual form planned performance should be brought to the attention of the responsible executive, in order that his time and abilities may be conserved." The Fundamentals of Top Management, p. 729.
3. **The report of deviations from standards.** Information relating to deviations from standards conceivably could flow two ways. Under autocratic leadership, note of deviations might be taken by the leader himself, in which case the report of deviation might flow downward; this report might be accompanied by a report specifying corrective action (Number 4, below). In a firm subscribing to the exception principle, on the other hand, the report of deviation from standards might be communicated upward in the firm, reflecting the responsibility of the originator to cite departure of performance from standards.

4. **The report of corrective action relating to deviations.** Like the report of deviations, the report of corrective action might be transmitted upward in the organization or downward, depending on the leadership philosophy prevailing in the firm. In the autocratic firm, for example, this report might specify the corrective action necessary and might specify the method by which the action is to be taken. In the firm which relies on the exception principle, the report of corrective action might be transmitted upward to indicate that corrective action of a certain type has been taken. In this latter instance the report of corrective action might actually accompany the report of deviation from standards (Number 3, above), revealing a case in which control authority was heavily decentralized to the point of function performance.

These characteristics of information flow as it relates to control considered, attention can now be turned to a proposal of communication standards to guide management in the performance of this
control function. Under highly autocratic leadership, on the other hand, there is the probability of a heavy flow of control information. A firm characterized by a philosophy of autocratic leadership is likely to be one in which top administrators reserve performance of the control function to themselves almost exclusively. Thus where autocratic leadership exists there is likely to be a detailed specification of conditions under which reports relating actual performance to standards must be made. Under leadership adhering strongly to the exception principle, in contrast, such reports would be made only in the event of deviations from standards.

Basically, information relating to control flows under four circumstances:

1. The establishment of standards at various places in the organization. In this instance information flows downward in the organization in the form of such specifications as budgets, sales quotas, and qualitative and quantitative production standards.

2. The comparison of performance with standards. In a firm characterized by autocratic leadership (with respect to control) the comparison of performance with standards generally requires that great quantities of information flow upward in the form of such media as periodic reports of expenditure from budgeted funds. In an organization which relies heavily on the exception principle, in contrast, there might be a light flow of information here—monthly reports of expenditures, for example, instead of daily reports.
basic function.

Communication Standards for Control.

Since the control function involves somewhat straightforward reporting in the organization via the written word, the standards for written communication cited earlier in this Chapter (see pages 118-126) should be adopted. Clear writing is especially essential to the control function in instances of downward communication with operative employees. The execution of performance to conform to standards obviously is dependent on the understandability of the standards to operative workers. This understanding can be facilitated greatly by writing which is characterized by effective organization, concrete word usage, relatively short sentences, and a style designed to hold the reader's attention. Especially are these attributes of clear writing essential to written messages which establish qualitative standards at lower levels of the organization structure.

Aside from the need for these standards of clear writing, the control function fosters other needs for communication standards in the various areas of information flow for control.

Establishing performance requirements. The process of establishing performance requirements involves a downward flow of information. If the organization is to proceed toward achievement of its goals in an orderly, coordinated fashion, there must be some correlation between actual performance and standards of performance specified. A breakdown of performance at one part of the organization results in breakdowns at other parts because of functional relationships and mutual dependencies.
Of paramount importance, then, is the need for clear statements of the level of performance that each component in the firm should achieve in order to give proper support to other components.

Communication which has as its purpose the establishment of performance requirements obviously should be clear and precise in its presentation. Such clearness and preciseness is relatively easy to achieve in a case in which quantitative standards are being communicated. There is little abstraction, for example, in a form report which establishes a specific numerical output of a specific component part for a specific machine in each hour of machine operation. Where it is possible for standards to be so quantified, there is little likelihood of communication breakdown attributable to the abstraction level of the symbols used.\textsuperscript{71}

In cases in which standards are not subject to quantification, communication problems are more numerous and more severe. For one thing, symbols used in designating standards tend toward higher abstraction levels. A certain canning company, for example, might stipulate for the guidance of vegetable inspectors that "Lima beans selected for Grade A canning must be small, green, young, and tender." Vegetable inspectors attempting to conform to such standards would be left to their own devices in drawing inferences from the qualitative

\textsuperscript{71}The possibility of communication breakdown is not totally eliminated, of course, because inferences drawn from the report are subject to various other factors conditioning the inference phase of communication. See discussion on pages 55-64.
symbols presented. However, if the specification of these standards were accompanied by means and tools for measuring lima beans as to size, color, age, and texture, inference error could be minimized. In the case of bean color, for example, a chart might be furnished to designate the specific shade of standard green sought. Other tools would include statistical sampling techniques and specific tests to which bean size, age, and texture could be applied.

The pertinent communication standard to be drawn from this analysis can be framed in this manner: Management should recognize that the establishing of standards of performance via a written medium frequently entails abstraction that can result in inference error on the part of the communicatee. Thus there is a vital need for statements of standards to be checked for level of abstraction. Where possible, the level of abstraction should be reduced through presentation of concrete tests and measurements.

Standard setting, of course, is not limited to situations in which qualitative and quantitative levels of achievement can be specified at a low level of abstraction. Standards of executive performance provide an example of such a case. Just as essential as are standards for operative performance, standards for executives generally are highly qualitative—thus highly abstract—in nature. These standards deal among other things with the decision-making process and the information which bears on this process. Two media for the provision of such standards are (1) the policy manual, and (2) the decision manual.
1. The policy manual. As conceived here, a policy is a guiding statement of executive action to be taken when certain generally specified circumstances prevail in the firm. The policy is a standard in the sense that it provides for standard action to be taken under standard circumstances. Like the organization manual, the policy manual should be a carefully organized and written medium of communication. Policies should be grouped in the manual, where possible, on a functional (departmental) basis in order that related policies will appear together. Written policies should be based on comprehensive consideration of the firm's objectives in order that each policy will further achievement of the objectives. Policies should be subject to frequent review for purposes of determining their consistency, timeliness, and appropriateness.

The statement of a policy should be as concrete as possible without imposing unnecessarily rigid specifications on the policy user. A too-concrete specification of details in the policy might defeat its purpose. In other words, the lower the level of abstraction on which the policy is expressed, the more rigid the policy becomes from the standpoint of its application. For example, a specification of "under generally unsatisfactory conditions" could be more expressly stated as "under the existence of Condition_1, Condition_2, Condition_3, ..., Condition_n," in which case application of the policy would seldom--if--ever--be appropriate. The most basic communication need for the policy, then, is an abstraction level which gives the executive some
latitude in its application. It should be pointed out that this need for an executive standard in many instances is in direct contrast to the need for an operative standard. In the latter instance there might be little or no flexibility given to the standard user; thus the abstraction level might approach the bottom of the ladder.

2. **The decision manual.** A companion of the policy manual, the decision manual sets forth standards of executive performance to the extent that it brings consistency to major decisions made throughout the organization. A decision recorded in the manual should include a description of the variables involved in the decision (for example, a description of the events leading up to the need for the decision). The manual should be freely available to all individuals making policy decisions and should be supplemented immediately after a new decision is made. Since the decision manual constitutes a statement of standards for the executive level, this manual—like the policy manual—should be checked for the appropriate abstraction level in order to give desired flexibility to its user.72

A critical need for any information flow designed to establish performance requirements is that the communication involved cite individual responsibility for the requirements. In this connection, the policy and decision manuals would not constitute exceptions. As Newman

72 These views on the decision manual are based on information gathered by the writer during an interview with an executive of New York Life Insurance Company, New York City, during the summer of 1958.
states:

The control of expenses . . . or any other activity becomes potent only when somebody does something about it. For example, knowing that telephone expenses are running over the budget . . . doesn't do much good as long as the item is treated as a general overall expense. As soon as responsibility can be assigned to specific individuals, however, there is a much better chance that corrective action will be taken.73

To the extent that the organization manual, a control device in itself, establishes goals related to functions throughout the organization, individual responsibility for performance requirements can be specified easily.

**Evaluating and correcting performance against standards.** Discussing the evaluative function of communication, Thayer cites a distinct relationship between plans and performance in the organization:

Given certain goals or objectives, the administrator, after a thorough consideration of the alternatives, decides upon plans that will achieve for his organization the desired goals. These plans consist of a particular organization and integration of functions or activities. These functions or activities must be performed, in the last analysis, by individuals. If these individuals perform satisfactorily the activities assigned to them at the specified time, the plans will be fulfilled; and if the plans are actually appropriate to the goals, the organization's goals will be achieved. Thus the efficacy of any evaluation is no greater than that of the plans which serve as criteria for the evaluation.74

Thayer's analysis of the role of plans in performance evaluation can be projected to a standard of control communication which might be

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74Thayer, op. cit., p. 162.
stated in this manner: Performance evaluation should not be limited to checking information relating actual performance to standard performance.

Actual performance is a function of many things other than an individual's exposure to standards. The executive who must evaluate performance against standards should attempt to comprehend the total stimulus which helps explain performance and standards and the relationships between the two. For one thing, the evaluator should recognize the impact of the total communication process on the variables to be evaluated. He should recognize, for example, that communication could have broken down as qualitative standards were imposed via a written medium of information flow. In the case of the vegetable inspector, for example, a "green" bean might have been one tinged with yellow, whereas the individual writing the specification of standards might have conceived a "green" bean to be one tinged with blue.

Then, too, the evaluator frequently must draw inferences about performance. In other words, he is not exposed to a direct observation of extensional objects. Rather, he reacts to written reports of performance which are subject to all the factors conditioning communication and making for miscommunication. These reports of performance should not be confused with performance itself because there might be vast differences in the symbols used to explain performance and what actual performance was. The simple truth to be drawn here is that frequently there is a two-step process involved in projecting from evaluation of inadequate or improper performance to the taking of corrective action: (1) Evaluate symbols of performance to draw inferences;
(2) Then evaluate performance on the basis of direct observation to confirm the inferences before corrective action is taken.

Newman recognizes the value of the second step cited above when he states that "There is no completely satisfactory substitute, especially in appraising intangibles, for direct observation and personal contact." Practical consideration must be given, of course, to the time factor of the executive who attempts to carry on personal observation necessary to the evaluative process. Newman suggests that the executive use a sampling basis to observe performance and "supplement his own observations with more comprehensive data."

It is essential in the area of evaluation that the manager recognize that he is functioning as both a communicatee and a communicator, whether his evaluation be based on observation or inference. Thus his reactions as an information sender and receiver are subject to influence by the various factors discussed throughout this thesis. For example, Thayer cites certain predispositions of the executive to act in an evaluation situation:

... There is always a temptation to evaluate a person's performance by 'the kind of guy he is.' ... There is also the temptation to consider certain mannerisms or graces in 'sizing a man up' for a promotion.

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75 Newman, op. cit., p. 421.
76 Ibid.
77 See discussion of the communicator's bias and prejudice on pages 37-40.
78 Thayer, op. cit., p. 166.
In the approach taken here, no great distinction is made between the actions involved in evaluating performance and correcting performance, the reason being that the nature of corrective action stipulated is a function of the nature of the evaluation. Obviously, faulty evaluation results in the stipulation of faulty corrective action. Thus the manager should recognize that in control his role as an evaluator is not divisible from his role as a communicator.

IV. MANAGERIAL MOTIVATING AND COMMUNICATION

Many writers in the management field do not isolate motivating as a distinct management function. It might be said realistically that motivating is not a distinguishable function of the manager, that motivating is a factor inherent in the more universal functions of planning, organizing, and controlling. The same might be said for such functions as staffing (inherent in organizing), directing (inherent in controlling), and coordinating (inherent in organizing and controlling).

79 R. C. Davis, for example, conceives the organic functions of the manager to be creative planning, organizing, and controlling (see The Fundamentals of Top Management, pages 154-157). Koontz and O'Donnel isolate five functions of the manager: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling (see Principles of Management, pages 34-36). Newman speaks of five basic processes of administrative skill: planning, organizing, assembling resources, directing, and controlling (see Administrative Action, p. 9).

80 Logically, the individual in a formal organization who accepts responsibility designated for him stands in no need of motivation. His acceptance of responsibility constitutes what amounts to a contractual obligation for him to pursue specified goals to meet his responsibility. Within this view of the formal organization, management is under no compulsion to perform a motivating function.
Certainly the provision of knowledge about organizational objectives to components of the firm can be considered a part of the motivating function. This provision of knowledge, as analysis in this study reveals, is accomplished at various times during planning, organizing, and controlling. For example, a major consideration of the plan is a statement of objectives; the organization manual restates the objectives as they relate to the various functions of the firm; the control process involves an interpretation of objectives in terms of specific function goals and standards. Previous analysis in this study also shows that effective communication practice dictates the need for association of the individual participant and his interests with firm objectives throughout the execution of managerial planning, organizing, and controlling.

Why, then, isolate motivating as a distinct management function for the purpose of the present analysis? The answer to this question is found in the fact that communication serves a broad, general area of the management process that is not readily apparent in a basic treatment of planning, organizing, and controlling. Motivating serves as a descriptive word for this broad area which entails management's stimulation of similarity of intent among firm components after plans have been made, components have been placed in proper functional relationships, and standards have been established to provide for
component conformity to objectives. Thus brief consideration must be given to motivating, as such, in this work.

The Basic Problem of Motivating

The basic problem of motivating stems from the reaction of the individual to the organization of which he is a part. Throughout this study the fact has been emphasized that the individual does not automatically identify his interests with those of the firm. In this connection, the reader's attention is invited particularly to that part of Chapter III (especially pages 87-99) which deals with miscommunication attributable to the individual's failure to subordinate his goals of self to the goals of the formal organization. The role of motivation is to create an environment in which the individual participant will feel compelled to forego immediate satisfaction of his own desires in preference to satisfying the goals of the firm. And motivation serves its role effectively to the extent that the individual identifies ultimate satisfaction of his desires with the organization's achievement of its objectives. As defined by Strauss and Sayles, "The basic problem of motivation is how to create a situation in which employees can satisfy their individual needs while at the same time working towards the goals of the organization." Communication's role in motivation, then, is to provide for information

81 See summary of communication's relationships to planning, organizing, and controlling on pages 78-79.

82 Strauss and Sayles, op. cit., p. 105.
flow which will stimulate the individual to recognize the relationships between his desires and the contribution he makes to the achievement of the firm's objectives.

Communication Standards for Motivating

Communication standards proposed earlier in this chapter, for the organization manual (pages 156-167) are basic to the establishment of a background for motivation by means of communication. The organization manual should serve as an authoritative source of information about firm objectives and how each observable function in the firm can be identified with those objectives. The organization manual, then, should serve as a nucleus around which a communication program designed for motivation can revolve.

In the interests of motivation the communication program\textsuperscript{83} of a given firm should be built on recognition of the fact that individuals in the firm do not mutely accept the formal organization. Thus from the standpoint of motivation, the broad objective of the communication program should be to fuse the individual personality into the firm.

Motivation provides the key by which an individual personality integrates his interests with those of the firm. Thus the motivation factor should be considered an integral part of the firm's

\textsuperscript{83} The firm's formal communication program would range from the house organ to day-to-day oral communication of an instructional nature. Within the program would be included such media as the company-wide annual employee meeting, bulletin board notices, special memorandums and letters to individual employees, formal and informal interviews, and any other communication contact the formal organization makes with the participants in the firm.
communication program. It follows that there is a need for motivation consciousness on the part of the manager as he communicates. This motivation consciousness should stimulate the manager to recognize that the message context he communicates has a motivating aspect which is corollary to the basic need of the message to inform, to instruct, or to influence or persuade.  

Motivation considered, then, every significant message encoded and transmitted by the manager should conform to such basic standards as these:

1. **The message should state or imply an identification of receiver interests.** Ultimately, every purposive message of significance originating with the manager is designed to stimulate behavior response on the part of its receiver. Behavior response is more likely to be stimulated if the message relates the response to affected receiver interests. This relationship, of course, is basic to motivation.

2. **The message should clearly specify the response anticipated.** A clear specification of the response anticipated by the communicator minimizes the possibility of inference error on the part of the message receiver. At the same time the motivation function of the message is served by the fact that a statement of action to be taken stimulates

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84 Thayer conceives of the basic functions of administrative communication as being informative, evaluative, instructive, and influencive and persuasive. Thayer, op. cit., pp. 135-197.

85 See discussion of agocentrism on page 74. See also discussion of corollary need for communication to promote identity of primary service objectives with collateral personal objectives, pages 72-76.
reaction on the part of the receiver. From the standpoint of effective organization, the statement of action to be taken should be placed at a point of primary emphasis in the message, preferably at the beginning or ending of the message.®

3. The message should provide for feedback. The best measurement of the effect of the manager's motivation efforts is observation of the degree and type of response his messages secure. Thus the message designed to stimulate response should provide for feedback in order that the effects of motivation may be determined.®

4. The message should, if possible, be personalized. A message addressed to the receiver by name aids him in associating personal with organizational objectives, thus contributes to his motivation.®

5. The message should be timely. Timely information has a motivating effect in that receivers associate current information with the need for current response. The timely presentation of information through formal channels also minimizes the possibility of the

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®See discussion of standard for message organization on pages 121-123.

®Recognition is given here to the basic factor of communication that management literature generally recognizes. See discussion of communication as a two-way process on pages 25-26.

®®As pointed out on page 74 of the study, the problem of harmonizing personal with organizational objectives is compounded by the fact that the formal organization frequently makes its impact on supporting personalities by means of generalities. See also discussion on page 161 relating to the need for the organization to be "personalized" by means of the organization manual.
information's being transmitted through the organizational grapevine.\textsuperscript{89}

6. \textit{The message should originate with appropriate source.} Source consideration is a factor which conditions the receiver's inference phase of communication. As earlier analysis in this study reveals,\textsuperscript{90} the receiver's specific response to a given message can be influenced significantly by the status of the originator with respect to the receiver. Receivers are undoubtedly motivated more strongly by messages originating with the chief executive than they are by messages originating with line supervisors. Where a high level of motivation (for example, motivation to improve the company's safety record) is desired, therefore, the message should originate with a high-level source of authority.\textsuperscript{91}

These six standards of managerial communication for motivating are provided in addition to various other applicable standards cited elsewhere in the study. As previously noted, motivating is a function which is a part of the sum and substance of planning, organizing, and controlling. It might be said, therefore, that all standards for managerial communication should anticipate the need for motivation of firm participants.

\textsuperscript{89}See discussion on pages 94-96 about the continuing need of organizational participants for information. See also discussion of organizational grapevine on pages 95-99.

\textsuperscript{90}See discussion on page 60.

\textsuperscript{91}An exception here might be a case in which a high-ranking individual were so far removed from the scene of performance that he received no particular consideration by firm participants.
This chapter's analysis of the communication process as it relates to the total management process results in a conclusion that information flow is a vital factor with which the manager must cope as he plans, organizes, and controls. At the same time communication is the basic tool used by the manager himself in carrying on his work. Thus in a strange sense communication is a two-headed monster to the manager, both heads of which demand care and attention since they are essential to the survival of the firm.

It is submitted that the manager's challenge in communication is threefold: (1) To exert necessary effort to understand the impact of information flow in the total organization; (2) To recognize that ultimately he is responsible for the quality of the information which brings relative balance and stability to his firm; and (3) To strive to become a better communicator himself. The manager who faces up to and overcomes this challenge does not necessarily achieve a complete solution to communication problems in his firm. But he does extract maximum service and efficiency from his somewhat imprecise and inexact communication tool.

The summary and conclusions presented in Chapter V, to which attention is now turned, are designed to focus keen attention on this challenge.
CHAPTER V

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

In this chapter the most pertinent findings of the study are concisely presented to establish a concept of communication as it is carried on in the firm. First is presented a brief re-examination of the basic problem. A review of the structure of the communication process follows. This review is designed to emphasize the fact that an instance of communication passes through phases, each of which is subject to analysis when miscommunication occurs. The managerial process of planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating and its relationship to communication is next considered in brief. The closing part of the chapter concentrates on a means for providing for communication improvement in the business organization.

The Problem Re-examined

At the time of the present study the most basic problem of managerial communication is one of gaining an understanding of the nature of the process and its impact on the business organization. Up to the present time the literature of both the management and business communication fields has been oriented primarily to the "how" of communication--techniques for clear writing and speaking, for example. In the interests of maximizing firm efficiency, today there is a need for greater managerial insight into the "why" of communication as well as a need for a better understanding of the specific role of information flow in the firm.
An attempt to satisfy these needs is made in this study through a consideration of the nature of communication as it has been explained in the literature of the behavioral sciences and semantics. Using this literature as a point of departure, an attempt is made here to provide a fundamental understanding of communication as it relates to the behavior of the participants in a business organization.

The Structure of the Communication Process

As established in this study, communication is a process which moves through the phases of introspection, encoding, transmission, and inference. Each of these phases is conditioned by certain human and language factors, any one of which can account for the emergence of a pattern of miscommunication—that is, communication which results in behavior response on the part of an information receiver that does not conform to the response anticipated or desired by the sender. Since the objective of a specific instance of significant communication in the firm is to stimulate human response, the definition proposed in this study holds communication to be the process which links two or more intellectual entities and provides for the transmission of expression between them.

Recognition of communication as a process which links two or more intellectual entities rather than a unilateral act of signal emission should make possible the manager's dealing with problems of information flow in the firm on a more orderly, analytical basis. Specifically, a given instance of miscommunication can be analyzed from standpoints other than poor writing and speaking since these
media of encoding constitute only a part of the total process. A basic familiarity with the introspective phase should, for example, stimulate the manager to look for such fundamental causes of miscommunication as perceptive and deductive errors on the part of information senders. And a deeper understanding of the encoding phase of the process should make possible the manager's understanding of why language is still a relatively imprecise tool of expression, even when skillful writing and speaking techniques are employed. Similarly, an understanding of the noise factor as it affects the transmission phase should aid the manager in isolating other basic causes of miscommunication resulting from the inadequacies of transmission media. Finally, the manager's contemplation of the inference phase of the process should result in his recognition that the receiver of information reacts to more than words as he responds to a given message.

Because the individual manager is a communication center in the firm, he must deal with both information inputs and outputs. As a primary source of information, he should recognize that he is ultimately responsible for clear and effective communication in his organization. Thus the manager's communicative responsibility is one of carefully evaluating information inputs for reliability; this same responsibility extends to his obligation to evaluate information outputs because of the essential relationships between the two. It is of cardinal importance, therefore, that the manager recognize his role as an information sender in the introspective, encoding, and transmission phases, and his role as an information receiver in the inference phase.
The Management Process as it Relates to Communication

As analyzed in this study, communication is an intellectual process carried on by the participants in a business organization for purposes of bringing order out of the chaos which would prevail in the absence of purposive information flow. Thus the primary role of communication is held to be one of setting objectives and stimulating participant conformity to the objectives. The ultimate plateau of order in the firm is conceived to be the perfect organizational balance and stability which could result from perfect communication. However, recognition is given to the fact that this optimum state represents an unattainable benchmark because human and language factors render communication less than perfect. Management's goal, nonetheless, should be one of bringing relative balance and stability to the firm through effective use of the communication tool in planning, organizing, controlling, and motivating.

A flow of timely and reliable information is a basic need of the planning function. Communication provides the means by which management assembles necessary information to ascertain the objectives of the firm. Then through the medium of the plan communication provides the means for making objectives known to the components of the firm. Standards for communication in planning proposed in the study are designed to minimize problems attributable to such things as the need for proposing and authorizing the plan, the need for cross communication as data is being gathered, and the need for effectively organizing and writing a report of the plan itself.
The managerial function of organizing is served by communication in that information flow makes possible the placement of organizational components into proper functional relationships. The interdependence of firm components is specified in the organization manual, standards for which are proposed in this study. The organization manual is considered in the study as one of the firm's most vital records. From the standpoint of communication, the manual serves as a symbol of the firm. Thus it should be a carefully organized and written record which reflects in addition to authority-responsibility relationships the firm's history, its hierarchy of objectives, and the specific relationships that exist among its components. In order to remain an accurate and up-to-date symbol, the manual must be modified to reflect changes in the organizational structure as such changes occur. Properly prepared and maintained, the organization manual can aid management in coping with problems of communication that originate in the conflict with the formal organization that exists in the minds of individual personalities.

In controlling, information flow provides the means by which standards are set to promote accomplishment of the firm's objectives. As analyzed in this study, control is characterized by a two-way flow of information when standards are set and actual performance is checked against the standards. The direction and extent of this information flow is influenced by the degree of decentralization to which control authority extends, a function of the leadership philosophy prevailing in the firm. In the firm characterized by
autocratic leadership great quantities of detailed control information is to be expected. In the firm characterized by leadership which relies heavily on the exception principle, a light flow of control information should occur. The study reveals abstraction to be a basic problem of information control, especially when qualitative standards are being set. Thus management should check statements of standards for levels of abstraction and attempt to provide concrete tests and measurements to reduce abstraction levels.

Providing for Communication Improvement in the Firm

The broadest conclusion drawn from this study is that communication is one of the most vital factors which must be dealt with in the business organization. Indeed, it can be said that a firm owes its origin to communication and survives to the extent that information flow integrates its participants into an orderly system dedicated to pursuing firm objectives. So important is communication to the firm that attention might well be given to a plan by which the efficiency of information flow can be improved. The plan proposed here suggests the addition of a specialized staff unit to the formal organization structure. This unit might be added to an already existing service department in a given company. The purpose of this staff unit would be to deal with communication problems as they arise and to provide for a continuing program of communication improvement.

The procedure to be followed. As an individual, the communication staff specialist visualized here would serve two broad functions. First, he would be available in the firm as a consultant on
communication problems, and, second, he would provide a continuing program of communication improvement.

In carrying out his first function, the staff specialist would be available for consultation in analyzing causes of any miscommunication which might arise in the firm and suggesting methods for eliminating the causes. For example, in the area of managerial control, the specialist might be called upon to assist in determining why production standards are not being met. In the area of motivating, he might be called upon to help determine why a large number of grievances is being submitted. In the area of planning, he might assist in setting up a communication system for gathering necessary data.

The specialist's second broad function—that of providing a continuing program of communication improvement—would entail a plan for regular audit of media such as letters and reports to determine their communicative effectiveness. On the basis of this audit, suggestions for improvement could be made. The audit would also extend to such basic media as the organization manual and the policy manual as well as such standard publications as procedure manuals, the house organ, and bulletin board notices. In addition to the regular audit, the communication improvement program should also provide for training courses for firm employees and executives in the communication process and in writing and speaking techniques.

Qualifications and authority of the communication staff specialist. The qualifications of the communication staff specialist should include education in the behavioral sciences as well as
advanced study of English, semantics, and communication. Since the specialist would do his work in a business environment, it would be desirable also for him to have had basic training in the functional areas of management and marketing. And, finally, he should be educated in economics if he is to have a philosophical as well as basic understanding of how the firm reacts as an economic, decision-making entity.

The communication specialist envisioned here should have broad staff authority to recommend and advise rather than line or functional authority. Communication is so basic to the existence of the firm that a specialist vested with absolute authority to exert his influence in the firm's flow of information would have power of dangerous proportions.
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VITA

David M. Robinson, the son of Mr. and Mrs. D. M. Robinson, was born in Texarkana, Arkansas, on August 20, 1925. He attended public schools in Arkansas and Texas and was graduated from John H. Reagan High School in Houston, Texas, in June, 1943.

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Date of Examination:

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