# Chapter 8

COMMUNICATION AND DECISION MAKING

Definitions

- **Communication** - the process by which people convey and receive information to and from each other

- **Decision making -** a process of selecting a particular course of action from among the options available

- **Problem solving** - the activity of generating a solution to a recognized problem
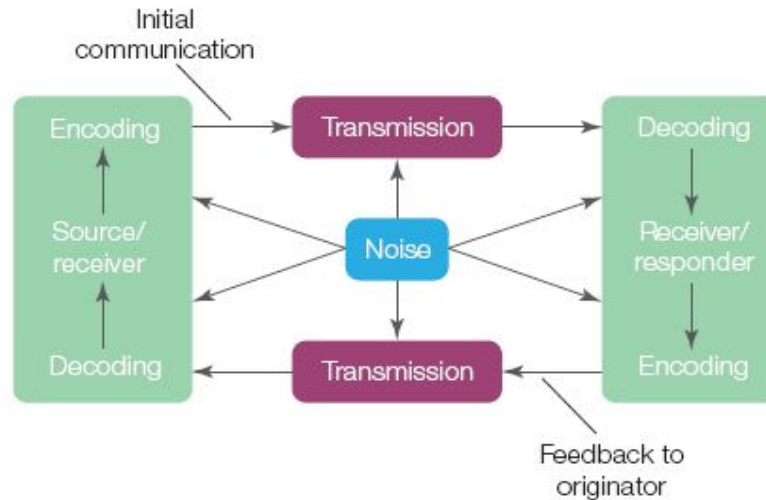
A model of communication

- Figure 8.1
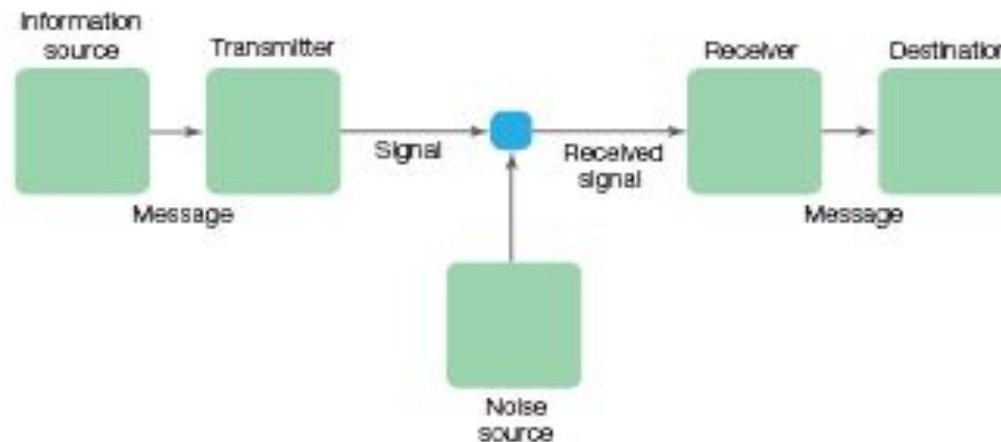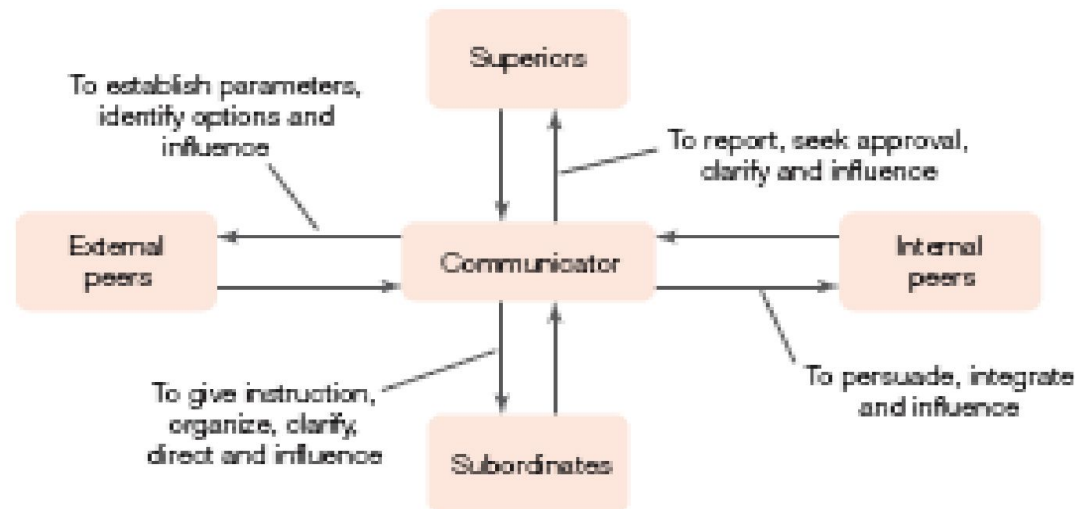

Source: Shannon and Weaver, 1949.

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Human communication

Figure 8.2

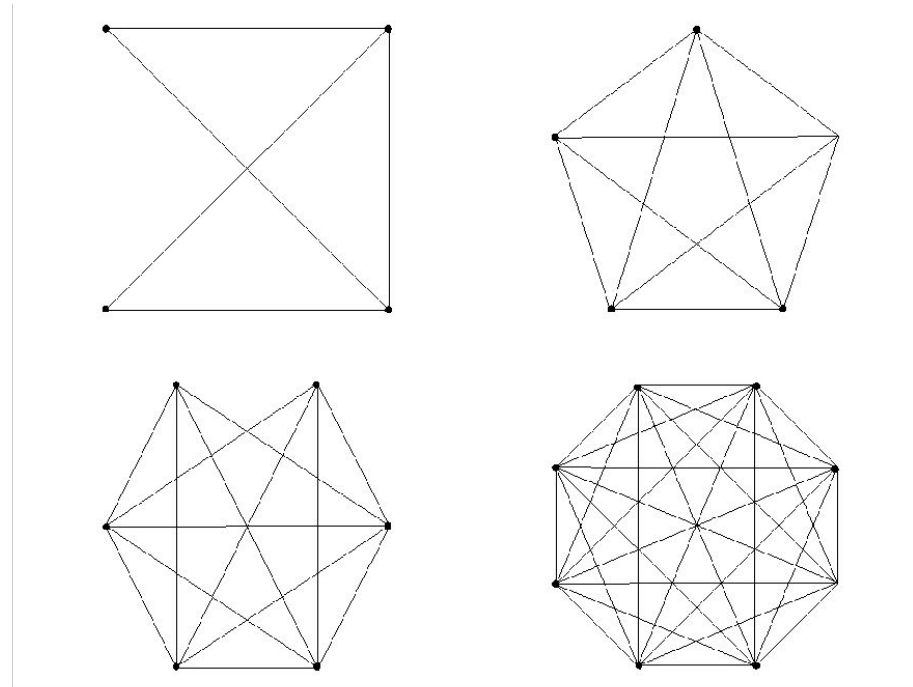# Human communication within organizations

Figure 8.3

The two dimensions of communications

- Figure 8.4

Increasing number and complexity of communication linkages

Communications within organizations

Communications in large organizations needs to be managed carefully:

- Limitation

- Procedure

- Teamwork

- Automation

- Separation

- Jargon

Communications processes

Communication - four general functions:
- Information processing
- Co-ordination
- Visioning
- Personal expression

Methods of communication:
- Written
- Oral
- Non-verbal
- Electronic

The manager's communication network

- Figure 8.6
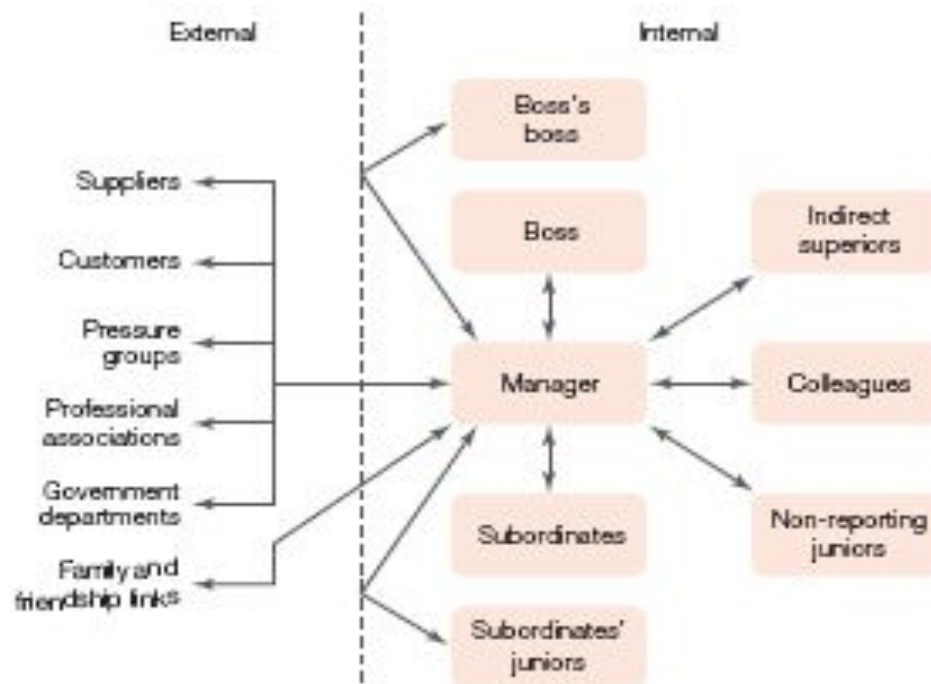
Source: Adapted from Hellriegel / Slocum / Woodman. *Organizational Behavior*, 5E. © 1989 South-Western, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reproduced by permission. www.cengage.com/permissions.

Seating arrangements for effect

- Figure 8.7
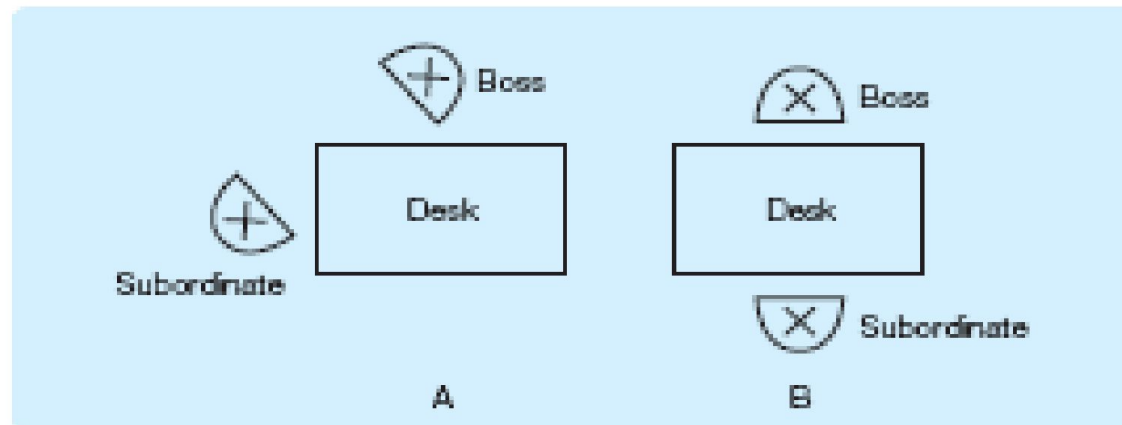
Non-verbal communications

- Table 8.2

Body language	Touching, eye contact, gestures, dress, etc.
Paralanguage	Voice tone, speed, pitch, etc.
Proxemics	Seating arrangements, personal distance, management of personal space, etc.
Environmental	Room design and facilities, etc.
Temporal	The use of time to create effect and influence

Listening Skill Sets

- Table 8.3

Attending skills	A posture of involvement
	Appropriate body motion
	Eye contact
	Nondistracting environment
Following skills	Door openers
	Minimal encouragers
	Infrequent questions
	Attentive silence
Reflecting skills	Paraphrasing
	Reflecting feelings
	Reflecting meanings
	Summative reflections

Source: Bolton, 1979.

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Guidelines for providing effective interpersonal feedback

•Table 8.4

Be specific and direct
Own your message
Support your comments with evidence
Separate the issues from the person
Focus on behaviours that the person can do something about
Consider 'sandwiching' difficult messages between more positive ones
Treat feelings as real
Check for clarity, both of others' behaviour and of your feedback
Deliver feedback close to occurrence
Make sure that receiver is open for feedback – never force interpersonal feedback on others
Use an authentic manner of delivery
Show respect!

Guidelines for receiving interpersonal feedback

• Table 8.5

Be open to the value that any feedback can provide
Prepare to be open for difficult feedback
Take notes of feedback and of your initial reactions
Be alert for and avoid defensiveness
Listen carefully
Do not start to argue – this is not the time and place for arguments and influencing attempts
Ask clarifying questions
Speak up if your limit for feedback is reached
Show appreciation for the gift of feedback (even – or especially – for messages that are difficult to accept)
Be respectful!

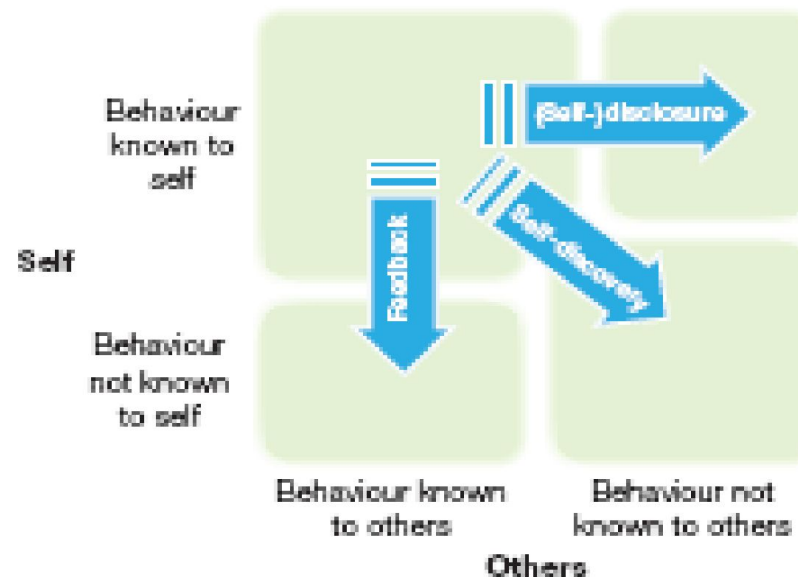# The Johari Window and the processes for increasing awareness (1)

•Figure 8.8a
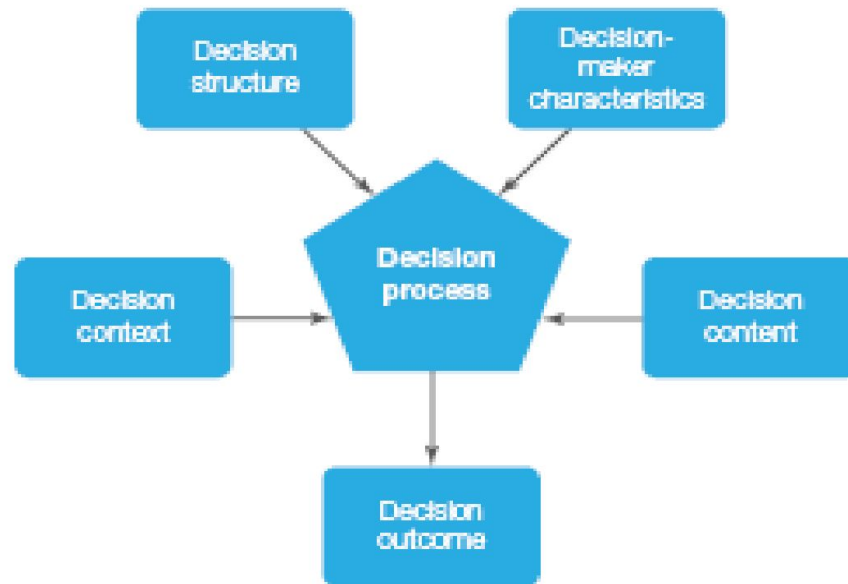
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The Johari Window and the processes for increasing awareness (2)

Figure 8.8b

Factors influencing decision processes and outcomes

•Figure 8.9

Decision making models

- Programmed and non-programmed decision making

- Rational model

- Bounded rationality model

Heuristics

Heuristics refer to mental shortcuts or cognitive 'rules of thumb'

Judgemental heuristics, biases and errors:

- availability heuristic
- representativeness heuristic
- prospect theory
- endowment effect
- anchoring and adjustment effects
- illusion of control
- hindsight bias
- implicit favourite bias
- nonrational escalation of commitment

Group-level decision making

- Concordet Jury Theorem

- Concordet's Paradox

- Group polarization (risky shift phenomenon)

- Groupthink

Symptoms of Groupthink

• Table 8.6

Illusion of invulnerability	Group members become overly optimistic and convinced of the group's invulnerability.
Collective rationalization	Any evidence or suggestion contrary to the accepted thinking is conclusively countered irrespective of the relative merit of the challenging arguments.
Moral superiority beliefs	Shared belief in the moral correctness of any accepted group decision.
Stereotyping of others	Individuals or groups with opposing points of view are frequently stereotyped as weak, stupid or evil, and information from these sources is automatically disregarded as irrelevant, contaminated or insignificant.
Pressure on dissenters	Strong enforcement of compliance and consent through social control in ways that provide the appearance of free speech while preventing active consideration of the views expressed.
Self-censorship	Members of the group self-censor their contributions and increasingly their thoughts to hide doubts and protect group cohesion. Individuals may engage in this deliberately for image-management purposes.
Illusion of unanimity	Members mistake silence for agreement and overestimate actual agreement among members.
Emergence of mind-guards	Informal mindguards to filter information flows and to protect the group from adverse comment. Collective responsibility is invoked as justification for supporting a decision and to marginalize any dissent.

Source: Janis, 1982.

Preventing groupthink

- Figure 8.10
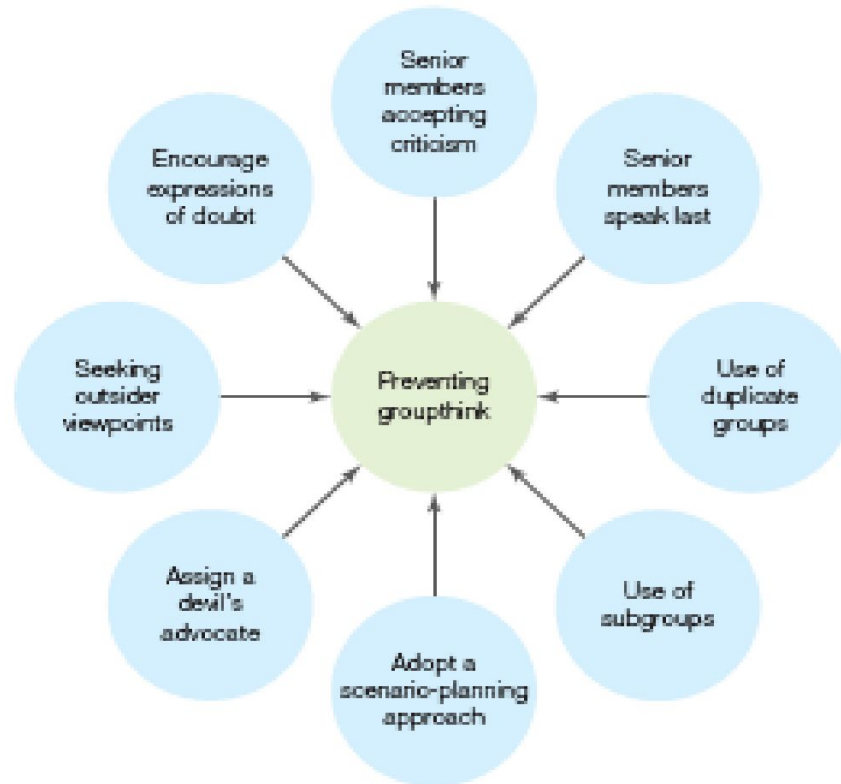
Improving decision making within groups and teams

- Janis (1982, 1989; Janis & Mann, 1977) suggests a decision making approach involving:
  - Identifying decision objectives and the requirements that make the decision successful
  - Developing as complete a set of well-defined options
  - Searching out extensive information regarding the relative merit of different options
  - Engaging in critical and reflective assessment of the options
  - Reconsidering and re-examining all the pros and cons of the alternatives
  - Assessing and if possible improving the costs, benefits, and risks associated with the preferred choice.
  - Developing implementation plans, monitoring of progress and appropriate action of risk factors interfere with decision implementation
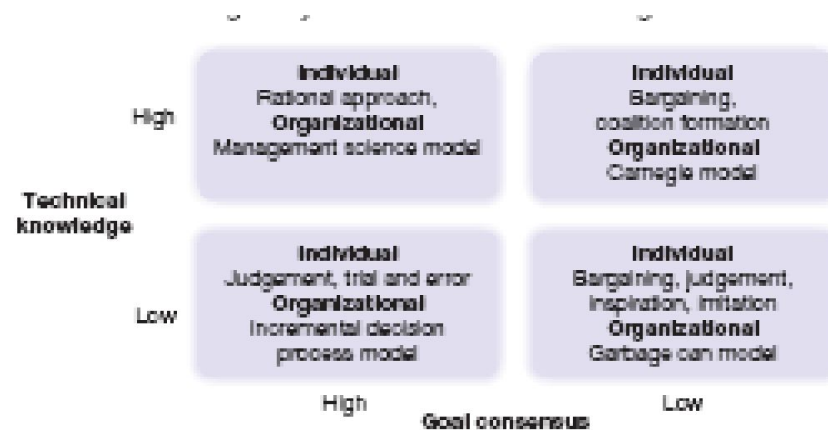
Improving decision making within groups and teams

- Devil's advocate
- Dialectical Inquiry
- Reflexivity
- Production paradox
- Brainstorming
- Nominal Group Technique
- Delphi Technique
- Stepladder technique

Models of organizational decision making

- Management science model

- Carnegie Model

- Incremental Decision Making Model (science of muddling through)

- Garbage Can Model

Daft's Contingency Framework for Using Decision Models

- Figure 8.11

	High	**Low**
High	**Individual** Rational approach, **Organizational** Management science model	**Individual** Bargaining, coalition formation **Organizational** Carnegie model
Low	**Individual** Judgement, trial and error **Organizational** Incremental decision process model	**Individual** Bargaining, judgement, inspiration, imitation **Organizational** Garbage can model

Technical knowledge

Goal consensus

Source: Daft, RL (2004) *Organization Theory and Design*, International Edition, 8th ed. © 2004 South-Western, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

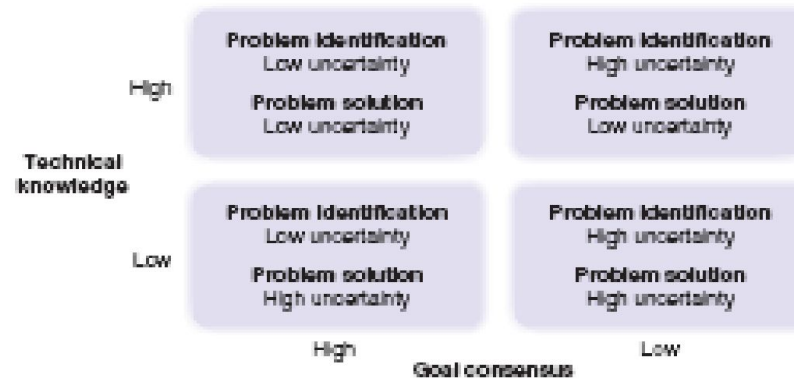# Conditions regarding technical knowledge and goal consensus

- Figure 8.12

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