Chapter 1

Communicating at Work

Changes Affecting the Workplace

u Heightened global competition

u Flattened management hierarchies

u Expanded team-based management

u Innovative communication technologies

u New work environments

u Increasingly diverse workforce

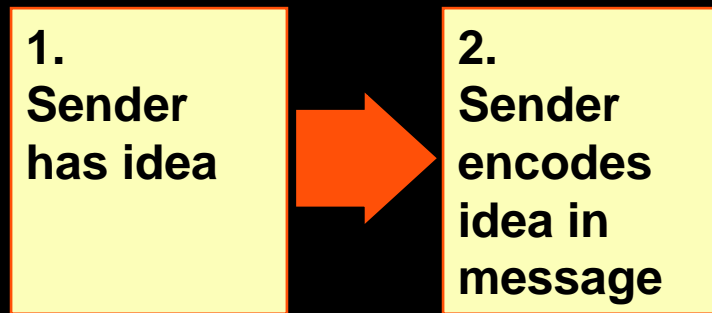Success in the new workplace requires excellent communication skills.

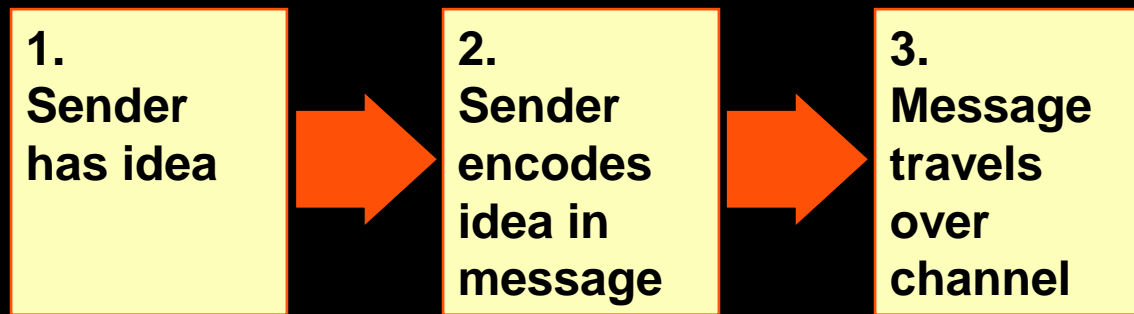# The Communication Process Basic Model

1. Sender has idea

The Communication Process Basic Model
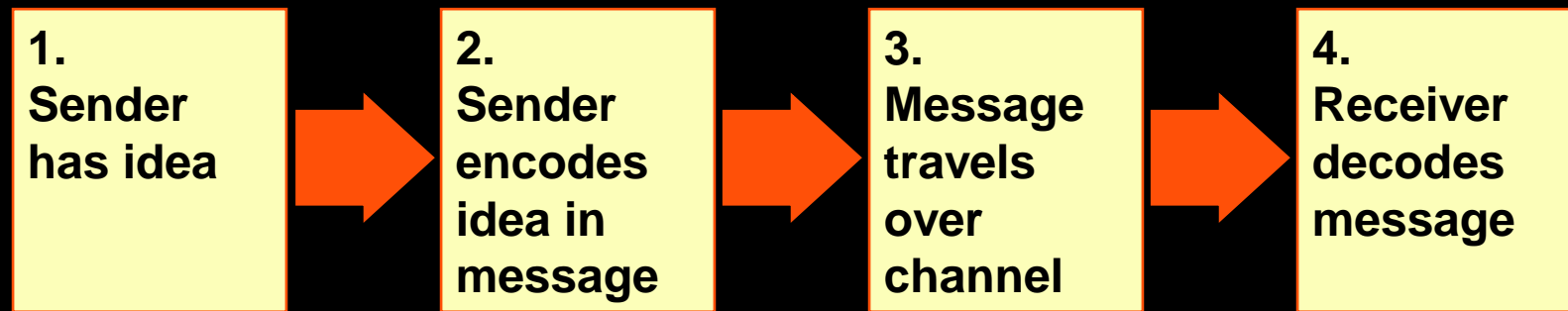
| 1. Sender has idea | 2. Sender encodes idea in message |

The Communication Process Basic Model

1. Sender has idea	→	2. Sender encodes idea in message	→	3. Message travels over channel

The Communication Process Basic Model

1. Sender has idea	→	2. Sender encodes idea in message	→	3. Message travels over channel	→	4. Receiver decodes message

The Communication Process Basic Model

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ 5.                  │
              ┌────▶│ Feedback travels    │◀────┐
              │     │ to sender           │     │
              │     └─────────────────────┘     │
              │                                 │
    ┌─────────┐    ┌─────────┐    ┌─────────┐    ┌─────────┐
    │ 1.      │ ▶  │ 2.      │ ▶  │ 3.      │ ▶  │ 4.      │
    │ Sender  │    │ Sender  │    │ Message │    │ Receiver│
    │ has idea│    │ encodes │    │ travels │    │ decodes │
    │         │    │ idea in │    │ over    │    │ message │
    │         │    │ message │    │ channel │    │         │
    └─────────┘    └─────────┘    └─────────┘    └─────────┘
```

The Communication Process Basic Model

5. Feedback travels to sender

1. Sender has idea

2. Sender encodes idea in message

3. Message travels over channel

4. Receiver decodes message

6. Possible additional feedback to receiver

The Communication Process Expanded Model

Stimulus

Sending Channel

Encoding
Understanding
Decoding

BARRIERS

Decoding
Understanding
Encoding

Feedback Channel
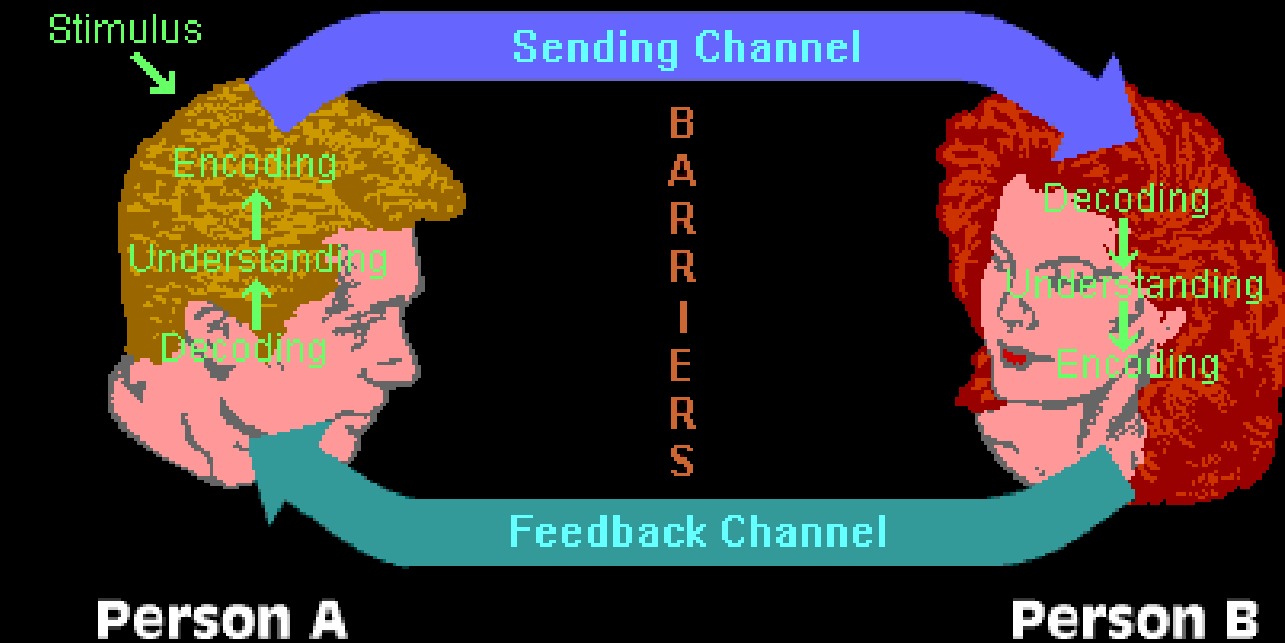
Person A

Person B

Barriers to Interpersonal Communication

- Bypassing
- Limited frame of reference
- Lack of language skills
- Lack of listening skills
- Emotional interference
- Physical distractions

Understanding Shaped by

- Communication climate
- Context and setting
- Background, experiences
- Knowledge, mood
- Values, beliefs, culture

Barriers That Block the Flow of Information in Organizations

u Closed communication climate

u Top-heavy organizational structure

u Long Lines of communication

u Lack of trust between management and employees

u Competition for power, status, rewards

Additional Communication Barriers

u Fear of reprisal for honest communication

u Differing frames of reference among communicators

u Lack of communication skills

u Ego involvement

u Turf wars

Overcoming Communication Barriers

- Realize that communication is imperfect.

- Adapt the message to the receiver.

- Improve your language and listening skills.

- Question your preconceptions.

- Plan for feedback.

Organizational Communication

u Functions: internal and external

u Form: oral and written

u Form: channel selection dependent on

  v Message content

  v Need for immediate response

  v Audience size and distance

  v Audience reaction

  v Need to show empathy, friendliness, formality

u Flow:

  v Formal: down, up, horizontal

  v Informal: grapevine

Communication Flowing Through Formal Channels
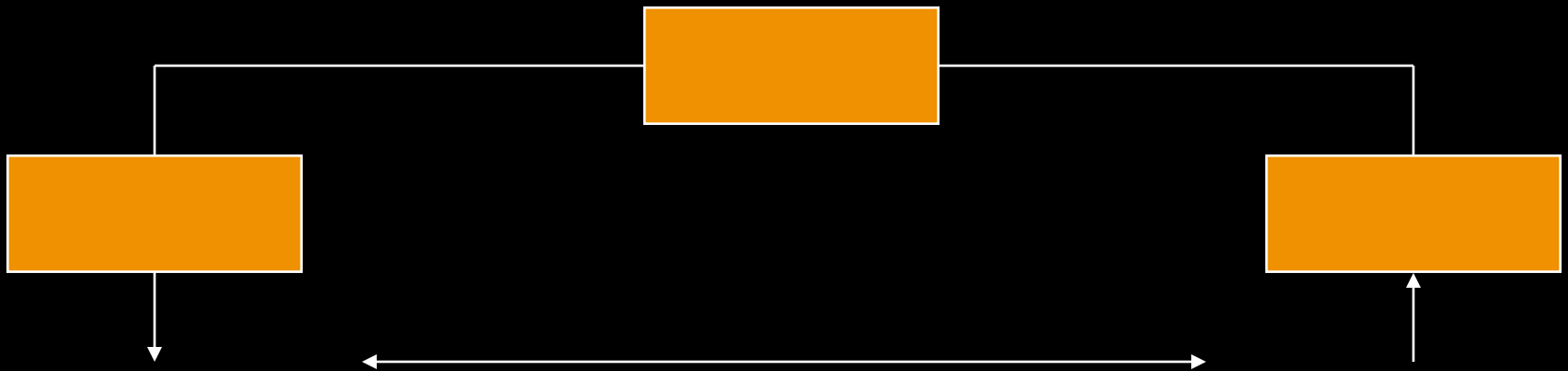
Downward
Management directives
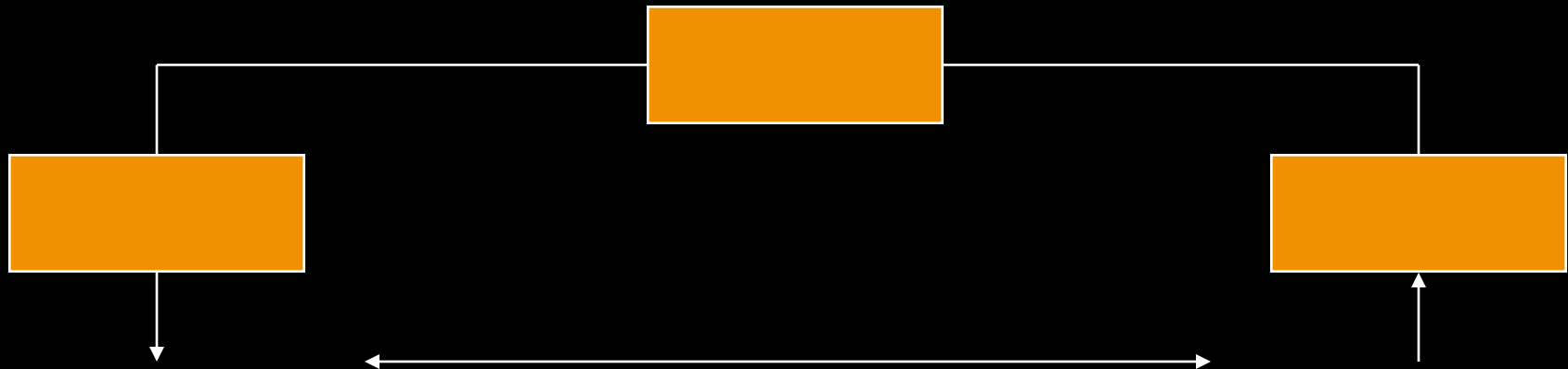Job plans, policies
Company goals
Mission statements

Horizontal
Task coordination
Information sharing
Problem solving
Conflict resolution

Upward
Employee feedback
Progress reports
Reports of customer
    interaction,
feedback
Suggestions for
    improvement
Anonymous hotline

Forms of Communication Flowing Through Formal Channels

Written
Executive memos, letters
Annual report
Company newsletter
Bulletin board postings
Orientation manual

Oral
Telephone
Face-to-face conversation
Company meetings
Team meetings

Electronic
E-mail
Voicemail
Intranet
Videotape
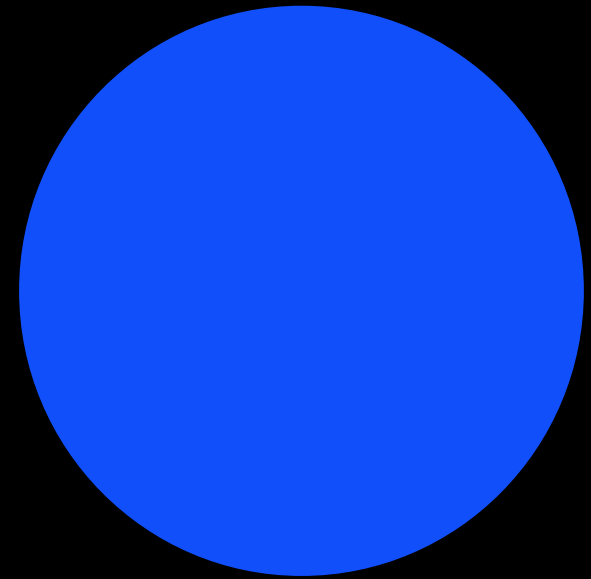Videoconferencing

Message Distortion
Downward Communication
Through Five Levels of Management
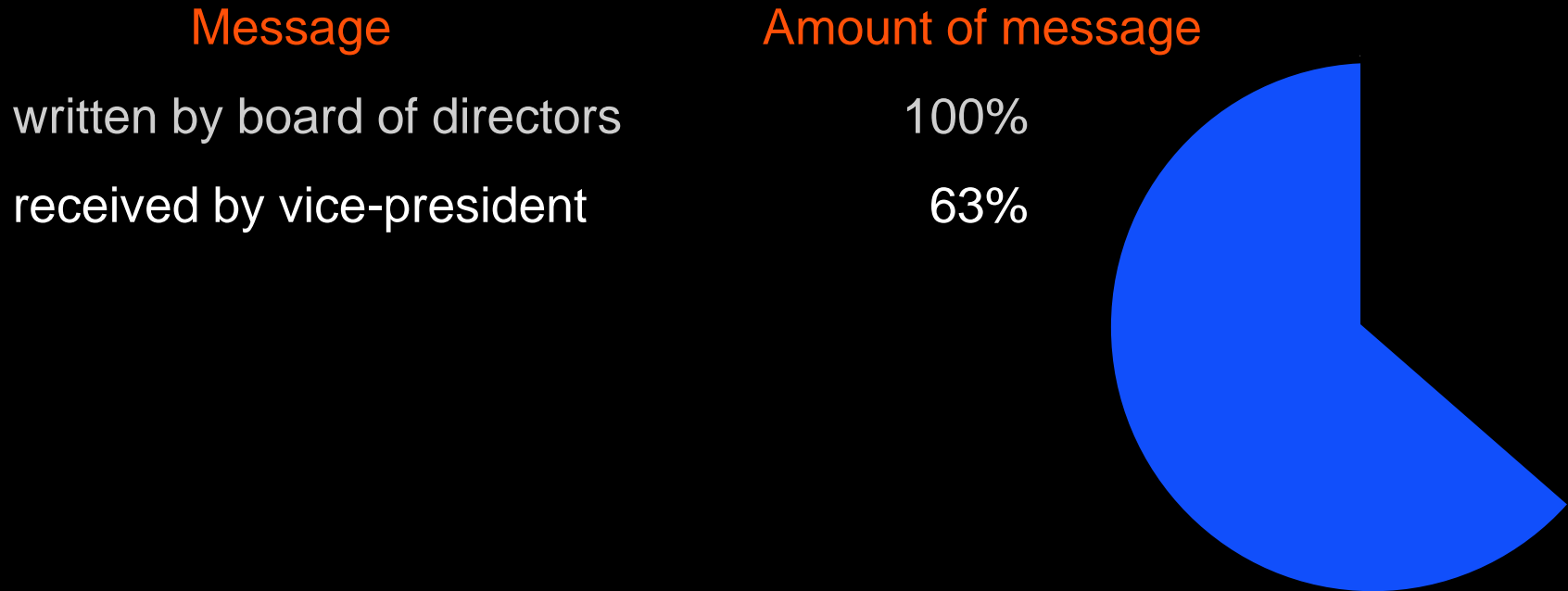
Message   **Amount of message**

written by board of directors   100%

Message Distortion

Downward Communication
Through Five Levels of Management

Message	Amount of message
written by board of directors	100%
received by vice-president	63%

Message Distortion
Downward Communication
Through Five Levels of Management

Message	Amount of message
written by board of directors	100%
received by vice-president	63%
received by general supervisor	56%
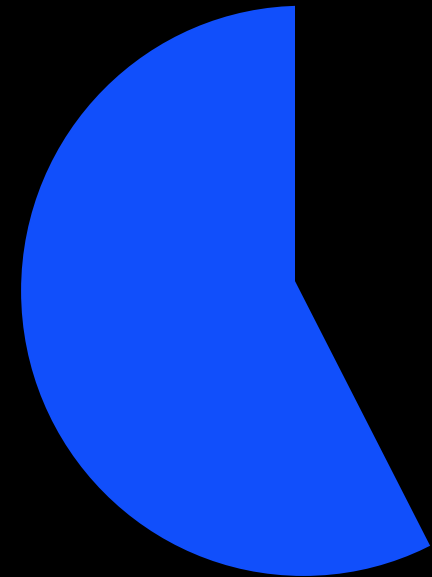
Message Distortion
Downward Communication
Through Five Levels of Management

Message	Amount of message
written by board of directors	100%
received by vice-president	63%
received by general supervisor	56%
received by plant manager	40%

Message Distortion
Downward Communication
Through Five Levels of Management
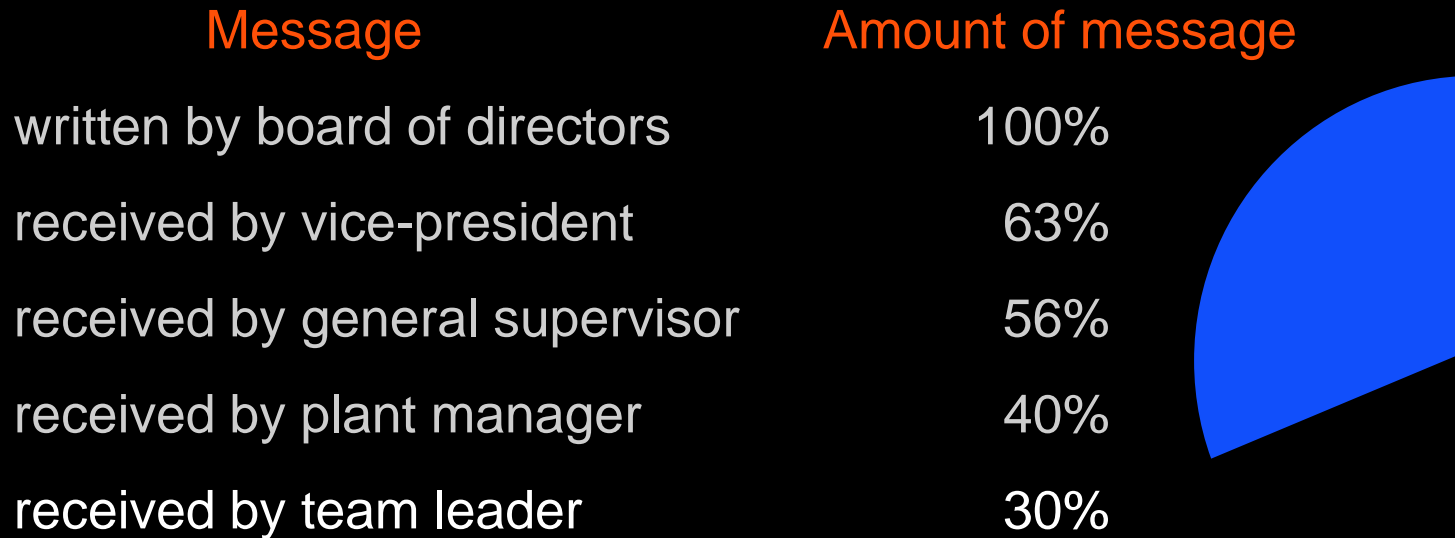
Message	Amount of message
written by board of directors	100%
received by vice-president	63%
received by general supervisor	56%
received by plant manager	40%
received by team leader	30%

Message Distortion
Downward Communication
Through Five Levels of Management

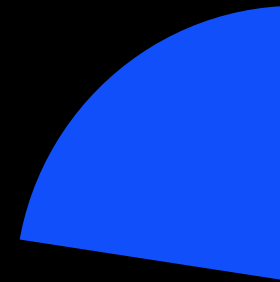| Message	Amount of message
written by board of directors	100%
received by vice-president	63%
received by general supervisor	56%
received by plant manager	40%
received by team leader	30%
received by worker	20%

Surmounting Organizational Barriers

u Encourage open environment for interaction and feedback.

u Flatten the organizational structure.

u Promote horizontal communication.

u Provide hotline for anonymous feedback.

u Provide sufficient information through formal channels.

Five Common Ethical Traps

u **The false-necessity trap**

   (convincing yourself that no other choice exists)

u **The doctrine-of-relative-filth trap**

   (comparing your unethical behavior with someone else's even more unethical behavior)

u **The rationalization trap**

   (justifying unethical actions with excuses)

u **The self-deception trap**

   (persuading yourself, for example, that a lie is not really a lie)

u **The ends-justify-the-means trap**

   (using unethical methods to accomplish a desirable goal)

Tools for Doing the Right Thing

u Is the action you are considering legal?

u How would you see the problem if you were on the other side?

u What alternate solutions are available?

u Can you discuss the problem with someone you trust?

u How would you feel if your family, friends, employer, or co-workers learned of your action?

End