

# PR SENSE

Communicate the communication

**India's First Corporate ezine**

Issue No 55– Sep 2010

Published by Prime Point Foundation



**Theme of this Issue**  
**Miscommunication**

**Guest Editor**  
**BVB - Business**  
**Communication Team**

**In this Issue:**

- P3 Miscommunication**
- P4 Major factors**
- P5 Samples of Miscommunication**
- P9 How to avoid?**
- P10 Interesting practices**
- P11 Avoiding miscommunication**
- P12 PRince Toon**

**Contact**  
[www.corpezine.com](http://www.corpezine.com)  
[editor@corpezine.com](mailto:editor@corpezine.com)



## PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Editor-in-Chief

### Miscommunication leads to crisis

---

While, many of us talk about communication techniques, we do not much discuss about the miscommunication, the wrong side of communication. Knowingly or unknowingly, many of us communicate wrongly leading to various problems.



If you closely observe, many of the crises happen due to miscommunication.

In this edition, we have attempted to explain the concept of miscommunication, how it occurs, some real-time sample

miscommunication and how to overcome such situation, etc. .

This edition is guest edited by the participants of Business Communication course of Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai. They have also created a podcast, sharing their experience.

We are confident that you will enjoy this edition.

*K. Srinivasan*



#### Miscommunication experience: Podcast

This issue is guest edited by the participants of Business Communication Course of Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai. This ezine is part of their curriculum to get hands-on-experience of online media.

One of the participants of this Business Communication programme Ms Bavicca Bharathi has set the music for the podcast. Others have shared their personal experiences on miscommunication. Please visit the following link to watch/listen to their podcast.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6R3pdAg1iGc>

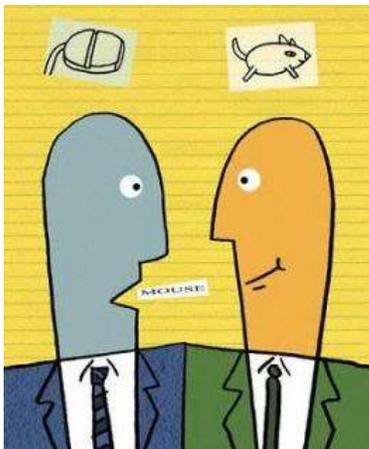


## Guest Editors



**Sitting L to R:** S Narayanan, M Sujatha, Capt. Bavicca Bharathi, R Janani  
**Standing L to R:** R Parthiban, S Sathish, S Vijayakumar, P A Kamalakanth,  
 A Rajadurai

## Miscommunication



An interaction between two parties in which information is not communicated as desired due to mistakes, ambiguity, inadequate or overloading of messages. Miscommunication happens when the sender's communication is wrongly perceived by the receiver. Sender sometimes takes it for granted so that the words he uses to communicate don't always clearly state the picture in his minds.

When Miscommunication is combined with misunderstanding and misinterpretation, it may lead to disaster or crisis.

Miscommunication happens due to environmental, physical, psychological, cultural, language and mental barriers.



## Miscommunication: A breakdown in the process

Sometimes a breakdown occurs in the communication process. The message that was sent is not the message that was received. This can be due to a number of factors that act as barriers to or interfere with effective communication. Some things that can affect the interpretation of messages are:



**The environment.** This includes room size, shape, lighting and colour, temperature and furniture arrangement. These factors can either facilitate or interfere with the communication process. For example, a small conference room is a more appropriate meeting place for a group of six to eight people than a large auditorium. Also, if the temperature is too cold or too hot, participants may be distracted and unable to focus on what is being done.

**The unique personal attributes** of the sender and receiver. These include things like appearance, educational backgrounds and the physiological state of each communicator at the moment. For example, we tend to listen more closely to someone whose appearance is clean and neat and who is educated, especially in professional settings. Also, a person who is calm is better able to receive the intended message than someone who is agitated or angry.

**Culture and psychological interference.** Culturally, people are different with different interpretations of the same phenomena.

Experiences in other cultures can lead to psychological interference in communication, that is, bias, prejudice and being closed-minded. These attitudes may arise from the region of the country a person grows up in; an ethnic, racial or religious identity; or a socioeconomic identity.

**The human tendency to perceive information selectively.** People often hear what they want to hear, especially if it reaffirms established beliefs and values or supports personal decisions. This is sometimes a problem in groups because some individuals are intolerant of others who interpret the information differently. Although many people feel they are open-minded, unprejudiced and able to see all sides of an issue, there is a tendency to maintain an expected view of reality and miss the objective truth. We select what we want to hear.

**Substitution, addition and simplification.** These things occur as messages are passed from person to person. Each receiver tends to alter the message unconsciously when he or she becomes the sender and passes it on to another. Members in a group can be told the same message at the same time; but, they will each "hear" it somewhat differently and, therefore, communicate it differently outside the group.

These factors can lead to a breakdown in the communication process, especially in groups where there is a greater likelihood that one or more of these factors will be present. When a breakdown occurs, the result is miscommunication. The receiver gets a different message than the one intended. The results are usually negative and can include (a) Time lost, (b) Feelings of resentment, (c) Rumours and (d) Poor relationships. Source: <http://ohioline.osu.edu/bc-fact/0006.html>



## Miscommunication through Information overload



Courtesy: <http://i119.photobucket.com/albums/o143/Naiadine/miscommunication.jpg>

## Miscommunication – language and culture



Normally, in South India, while leaving a place, people will never say "I am going". Instead, the culture is to say "I am coming", though it conveys opposite meaning. Sentimentally, they do not like to use the word "going", as they mean it as 'leaving the world itself'.

A Top Management Executive of a bank from Karnataka, took charge of the bank's zone at Delhi. On the first day, when he got down from the official car at his house around 8 pm, he told his driver in his usual way, "I am coming". The driver being a Haryana person, took the meaning literally and was waiting in the car till midnight, expecting the boss to return to the car. He thought, his boss would be going out again.

Since the boss did not turn up until midnight, he got restless and rang the calling bell of the house of his boss. The boss came out of the house in half-sleep and asked him as to why he rang the bell and what was he doing at that odd hour. Driver told the boss that he was waiting in the car, since he said "I am coming", while getting down.

Then only the boss realised the sensitivity of the cultural and language differences. He then explained to the driver about the practise in South India and regretted for the miscommunication.



### Miscommunication – Physical and physiological

Husband filed a divorce case against his wife with the reason that he hated the food prepared by his wife. His wife contended that she prepared all the food, since she thought that he liked them. She also said that she did not like preparing such food, as it was too difficult.



When the judge asked both of them, whether they had communicated their likes and dislikes of the food to each other, the response was negative. Lack of communication lead to an expensive lawsuit.

### Miscommunication – Contextual



Source: [www.failblog.org](http://www.failblog.org)



## Miscommunication – in transition and transmission

### **Memo from CEO to Manager:**

Today at 11 o'clock there will be a total eclipse of the sun. This is when the sun disappears behind the moon for two minutes. As this is something that cannot be seen every day, time will be allowed for employees to view the eclipse in the parking lot. Staff should meet in the lot at ten to eleven, when I will deliver a short speech introducing the eclipse, and giving some background information. Safety goggles will be made available at a small cost.

### **Memo from Manager to Department Head:**

Today at ten to eleven, all staff should meet in the car park. This will be followed by a total eclipse of the sun, which will appear for two minutes. For a moderate cost, this will be made safe with goggles. The CEO will deliver a short speech beforehand to give us all some information. This is not something that can be seen everyday.

### **Memo from Dept. Head to Floor Manager:**

The CEO will today deliver a short speech to make the sun disappear for two minutes in the form of an eclipse. This is something that cannot be seen every day, so staff will meet in the car park at ten or eleven. This will be safe, if you pay a moderate cost.

### **Memo from Floor Manager to Supervisor:**

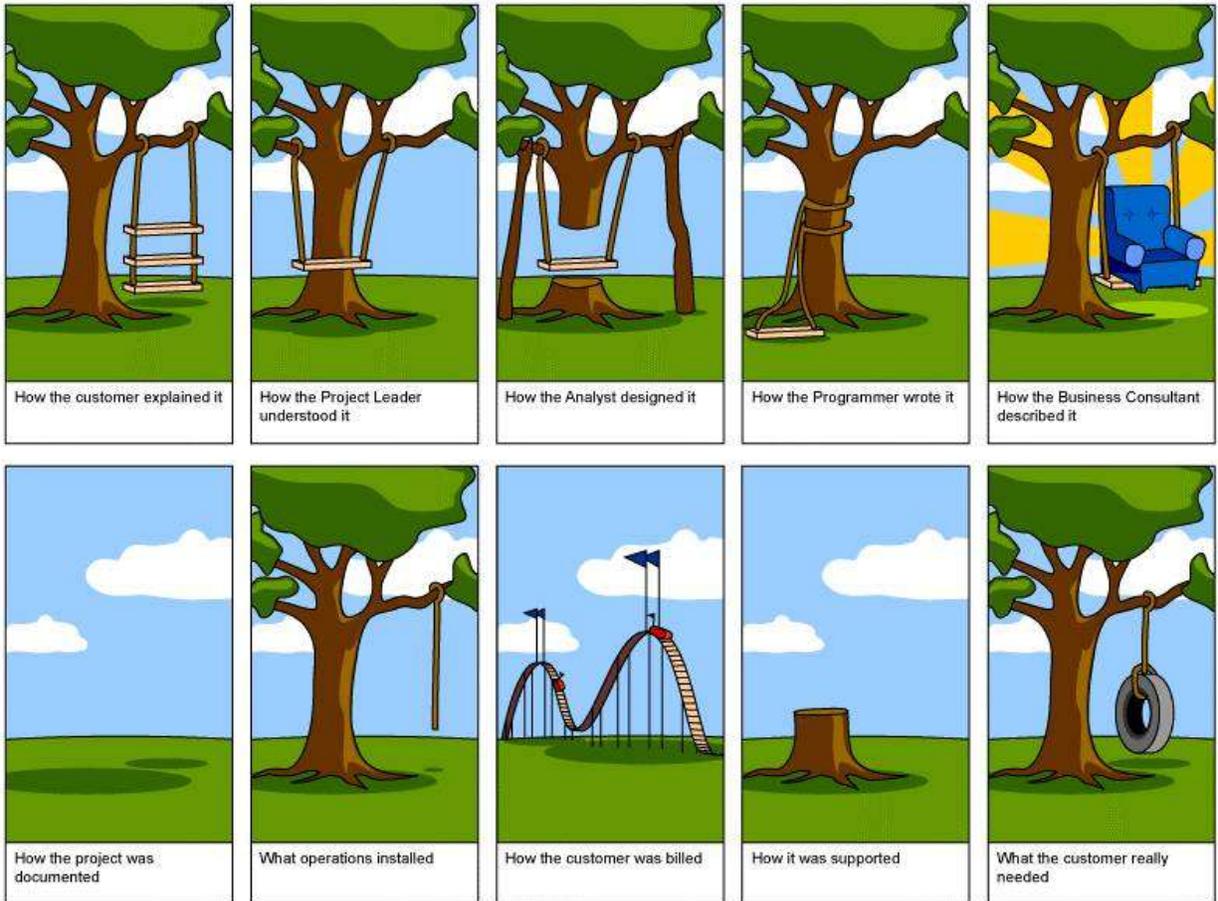
Ten or eleven staff are to go to the car park, where the CEO will eclipse the sun for two minutes. This does not happen every day. It will be safe, and as usual it will cost you.

### **Memo from Supervisor to Staff:**

Some staff will go to the car park today to see the CEO disappear. It is a pity, this doesn't happen everyday.



## Miscommunication – in perception



Source: <http://enterprise-architecture-wiki.nl/>

## National Media Conference 2010



Three-day National Media Conference 2010 was held at Mount Abu by the Media Wing of Brahmakumaris. Around 1500 media professionals across the country participated and shared their views. Justice G N Ray, Chairman, Press Council of India inaugurated the event.

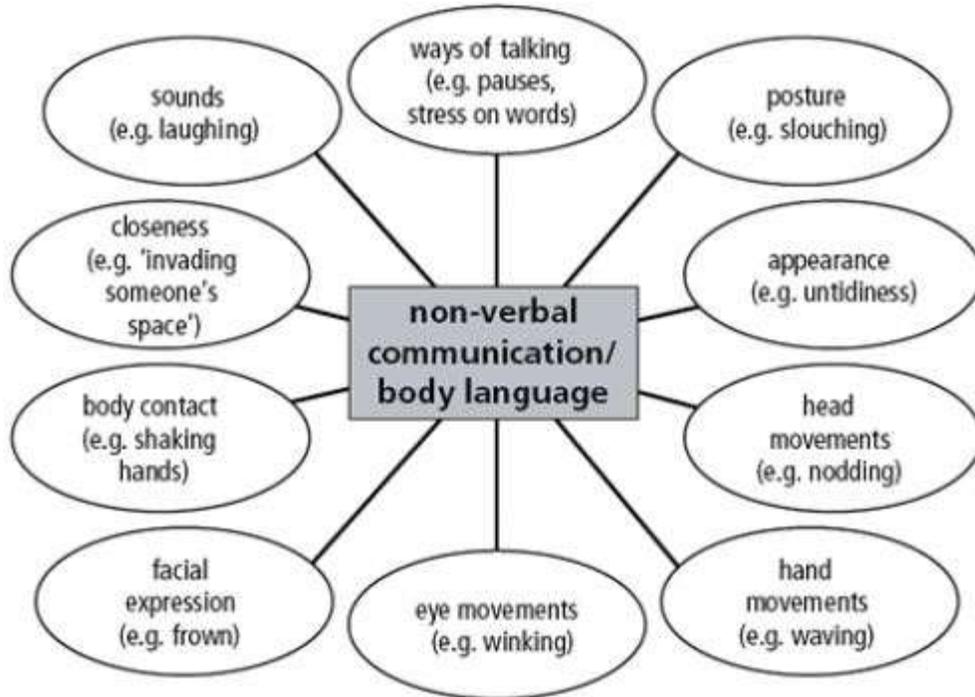
We did a live-blogging from the venue, covering all the sessions.

Please see all the live blogging posts at <http://prpoint.blogspot.com> .

A workshop on 'Podcasting' was also held during the event. Details may be had from <http://su.pr/1oGD3I>



## Non-Verbal Communication – Look completely to avoid miscommunication



Source: <http://hubpages.com/hub/BeReal>

## Important links of Prime Point Foundation

[www.prpoint.com](http://www.prpoint.com)

[www.indiavision2020.org](http://www.indiavision2020.org)

[www.imageaudit.com](http://www.imageaudit.com)

[www.action2020.co.cc](http://www.action2020.co.cc)

[www.corpezine.com](http://www.corpezine.com)

[www.eltf.co.cc](http://www.eltf.co.cc)

[www.poduniversal.com](http://www.poduniversal.com)

<http://prpoint.blogspot.com>

[www.kural.co.cc](http://www.kural.co.cc)



## Avoiding miscommunication – Interesting procedure in Indian Railways and Airlines



Two persons Loco Pilot and Asst. Loco Pilot will operate the Locomotive. Due to huge noise in the Cab (where pilots are seated), oral communication between the two is likely to be distorted. To avoid this, Indian Railways follow a wonderful system. The Asst. Pilot used to watch the signal positions and alert the Main Pilot.

When the Asst. Pilot watches 'Green Signal', half KM in advance, he will shout at top of his voice like a military command "Signal Proceed". On hearing this, the Main Pilot also will see the Signal and shout back in high pitch like a military command, "Yes Signal Proceed". Same way, they will also use the other commands like "Signal Caution", "Signal Attention", "Signal Danger". In spite of the noisy environment in the Loco, they will be able to get the command right. It is reported that so far, no accident has taken place due to 'miscommunication'. Any accident would have occurred due to 'mis-information'.

In Airlines, there are two Pilots (Commander and Co-Pilot) operating the aircraft from Cockpit. While, one of the Pilots will be in conversation with the ATC (Air Traffic Controller), the other Pilot will be monitoring the conversation.



Even at ATC end, one officer will be giving command to the Planes and another officer will be monitoring with his headset to avoid miscommunication and misunderstanding.

When ATC says "Air India 123 Mumbai Control Climb flight level three- six-zero", the Pilot from the plane will repeat the same words, while others monitor their conversation. To avoid miscommunication, they use three-six-zero, instead of three hundred and sixty.



## Avoiding miscommunication – Tips

### Sender of the communication

- Think before you speak or write. Organise your thoughts and choose the right words without ambiguity. Use simple words and sentences that could be understood by the receiver of your message.
- Speak loudly to enable the receiver hear your message correctly.
- Do not assume that the receiver has perceived the message, as you thought. Be alert to receiver’s body language. Confirm that the message is received properly. If required, summarise your message again.
- Be polite and not rude. Make the receiver comfortable mentally to perceive your message correctly. Keep your eye contact with receiver.
- Be conscious about your body language. The meaning of such gestures may vary place to place (eg: nodding of head)

### Receiver of the communication

- Be a good listener. Be attentive to the words and body language of the sender of the communication. Give feedback. Keep eye contact with the sender.
- Do not assume the message. When in doubt, seek clarifications and get the right message.
- If required, summarise what you have listened and get the confirmation.

### PLEASE REMEMBER

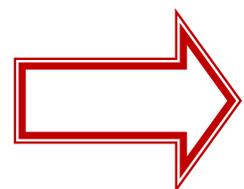
**Miscommunication**

+

**Misunderstanding**

+

**Misinterpretation**



**Disaster**

+

**Crisis**



# PRince

by- Triambak Sharma

[www.cartoonwatchindia.com](http://www.cartoonwatchindia.com)  
[cartoonwatch@gmail.com](mailto:cartoonwatch@gmail.com)



Miss + Communication = Miscommunication



## PResenters of *PReSENSE*



**K. Srinivasan**  
Editor-in-Chief



**V. Rajendran**  
Strategic Editor



**Triambak Sharma**  
Cartoon Editor



**A. Rekha**  
Coordinating Editor



**R Janani**  
Content Editor



**K. Bhavani**  
International Editor  
(South Asia)  
Singapore



**Archana Verma**  
International Editor  
(USA)



Divya Sessa  
International Editor  
(UK)



### Awards

Published by  
Prime Point Foundation

Feedback and sponsorship  
[editor@corpezine.com](mailto:editor@corpezine.com)

Past issues may be downloaded from  
[www.prpoint.com](http://www.prpoint.com)  
[www.primepointfoundation.org](http://www.primepointfoundation.org)  
[www.corpezine.com](http://www.corpezine.com)

Listen to India's first pod-magazine  
[www.poduniversal.com](http://www.poduniversal.com)  
one stop shop for podcasts on all subjects

To subscribe to this ezine.  
[www.prpoint.com/PR-e-Sense](http://www.prpoint.com/PR-e-Sense)

