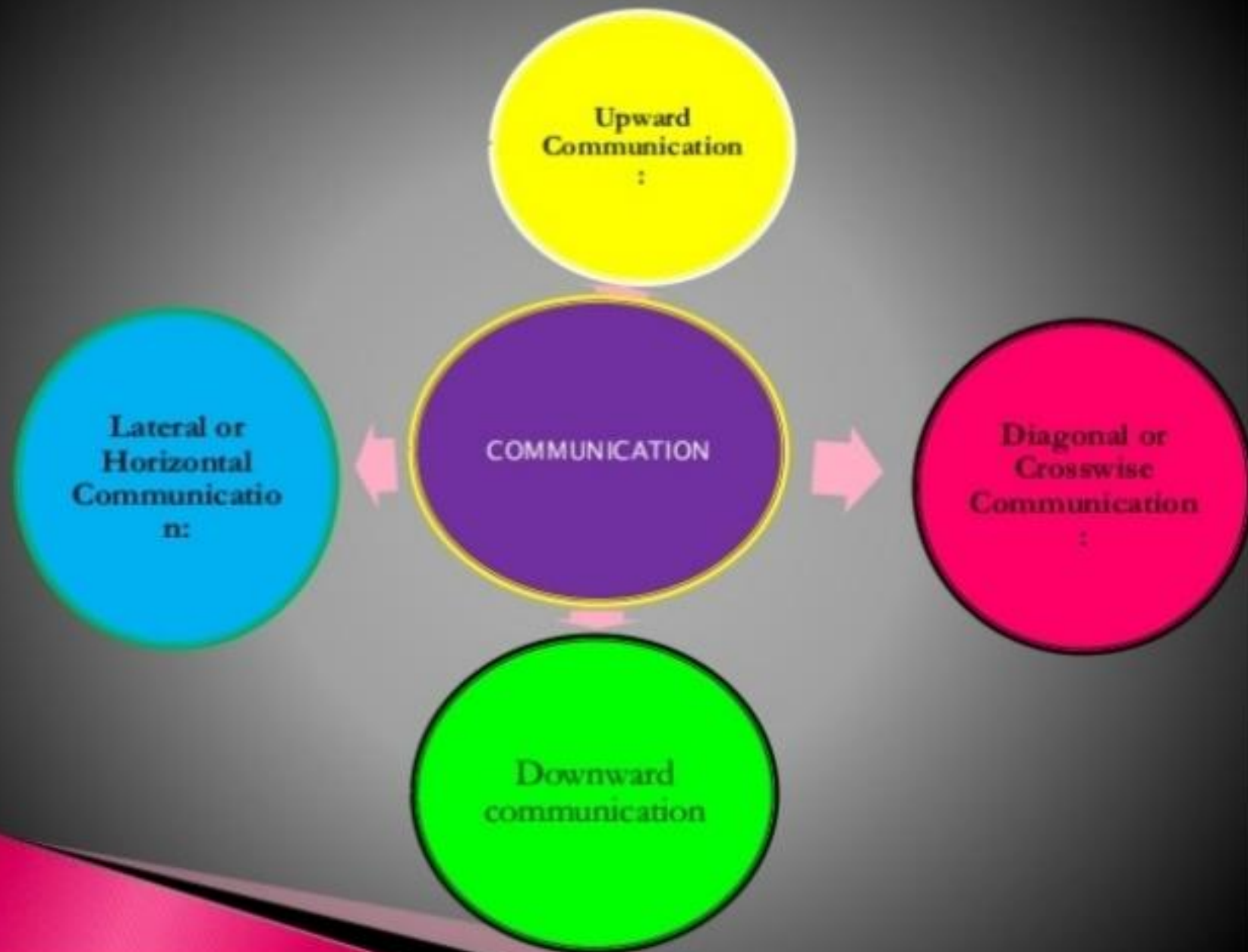


# Directions of Communication



# I. Downward Communication:

- ▶ Traditionally, the emphasis in business organizations has been on downward communication. This is because of the hierarchical nature of organizations where all communication basically and naturally flows from top to bottom. It is the communication that comes from superiors and flows down to the subordinates.

## Methods of Downward Communication:

- ▶ Downward communication can be written as well as oral. The oral communication is mostly through information channels. The written downward communication takes the form of orders, circulars, policy statements, memos and procedural documents.

# Example:

- ▶ a CEO (Chief Executive Officer) or a General Manager issuing instructions or sending letters to various departmental heads.
  
- ▶ **Objectives:**
  - ▶ 1. To give specific directions about a job
  - ▶ 2. To explain procedures
  - ▶ 3. To apprise subordinates of their performance
  - ▶ 4. To explain the significance of a job given to a subordinate with respect to the organization's goals



## II. Upward Communication:

- ▶ As the term suggests, this channel of communication pushes information upwards. It starts from the people at the lowest level of an organisation and reaches the top. An open-door policy, social gatherings, reports, direct correspondence, counseling, etc. are some common methods of upward communication.
- ▶ Managers have now recognized the importance of this channel of organizational communication. Until now, it was felt that the right to communicate had been vested only in the top management.

# Methods of upward communication:

- ▶ **(a) Periodical meetings:**

- ▶ These are regular meetings with the staff and subordinates conducted to invite suggestions, opinions or other ideas.

- ▶ **(b) Written Representations:**

- ▶ An example of upward communication is a written representation given by employees to their superiors as regards what they feel about the work environment and suggestions regarding improvement.

- ▶ **(c) Informal Gatherings:**

- ▶ **(d) Suggestion Schemes:**

- ▶ The employees are encouraged to give suggestions on the practices and the systems being followed in the organisation. For this purpose, a suggestion box may be kept.

# Objectives:

- ▶ **(i) Feedback:**
  - ▶ This channel provides the management with the necessary feedback. On the basis of the feedback, the management can ascertain whether the subordinates have understood a given set of directions properly.
- ▶ **(ii) Outlet for held-up Emotions:**
  - ▶ The employees get an opportunity to vent their problems and grievances when they communicate with the management.
- ▶ **(iii) Positive Suggestions:**
  - ▶ Quite often, this channel brings forward some very useful suggestions from the employees, which can be implemented for the organization's benefit.
- ▶ **(iv) Harmony:**
  - ▶ Upward communication creates a congenial atmosphere and brings the management and the employees closer to each other. It creates a positive psychological factor as employees feel involved.



### III. Lateral or Horizontal Communication:

- ▶ This kind of communication takes place between departments or people on the same level in an organizational structure. It is one of the most frequently used channels of communication.
- ▶ Face-to-face discussions, telephonic talks, periodical meetings, memos, etc. are the ways of carrying out this type of communication. It is very important for the smooth functioning of every organisation as it promotes understanding and coordination between various departments. Embarrassing situations can arise when there is a lack of proper horizontal communication.
- ▶ For example, the production and the marketing departments must interact with each other because marketing tactics and production planning go hand-in-hand.

## Objectives:

- ▶ (i) To create a friendly atmosphere in an organisation
- ▶ (ii) To cut across departmental barriers
- ▶ (iii) To ensure quick feedback

## IV. Diagonal or Crosswise Communication:

- ▶ Diagonal or crosswise communication envisages a horizontal flow of information as well as interaction across different levels of an organization's hierarchy. Communication flows across different levels in an organisation among people who may not have direct reporting relationships. Diagonal communication is used to speed up the flow of information.
- ▶ It makes effective efforts for achieving organizational goals. A great deal of communication does not follow the organizational hierarchy, but cuts across well-drawn lines. Channels of such communication are general notices, informal meetings, formal conferences, lunch hour meetings, etc.

## Objectives:

- ▶ (i) To help in proper coordination
- ▶ (ii) To communicate effectively whether laterally, horizontally and diagonally
- ▶ (iii) To improve mutual understanding
- ▶ (iv) To boost the morale of lower level staff through interaction across all the levels in the organisation