

# **CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION**

There are three main channels of communication:

- 1. SPOKEN:** Advantages: Can provide instant feedback; opportunity for discussion.  
Disadvantages: - Often costly to arrange in both time and money; no permanent record.

**Methods:** Face-to-face meetings, presentation, Interviews, Talks and Annual general meetings.

- 2. WRITTEN:** Advantages: Permanent record; suitable for both simple and complex messages.  
Disadvantages: Usually takes some time for the message to arrive; slow feedback, or sometimes none at all.

**Methods:** Public notices, Memorandums (or memos), Reports, Staff bulletins or magazines, Business letters and Annual Reports and accounts.

- 3. ELECTRONIC:** Advantages: Speed; accuracy; quick and instant feedback; message can be recorded.  
Disadvantages: Expensive; Whole systems sometimes crash.

**Methods:** Telephones, Personal computer (PC), Computer Software, Mobile Phones, Video-conferences, Fax and Internet.

**Visual Aids:** such as charts, graphs, diagrams, photographs and other illustrations are often used to support messages. They summarise information and present it in a striking way.

**Why Communications Fail:** Communications fail for a number of reasons. The cause may be the fault of (a) the sender, (b) the receiver and (c) the choice of channel.

**The Sender:** Sometimes the sender is to blame. The message may not be clear and accurate or simple enough to be understood by the receiver.

**The Receiver:** Receivers can also cause problems. They may be unwilling to take in the message because they are too prejudiced to hear the message clearly.

**The Channel:** The Choice of channel may also be the cause. For example, if you try to discuss a very complex contract with a colleague without giving him a written copy of the contract well in advance of the meeting. The written channel is more suitable for complicated matters than the spoken channel.