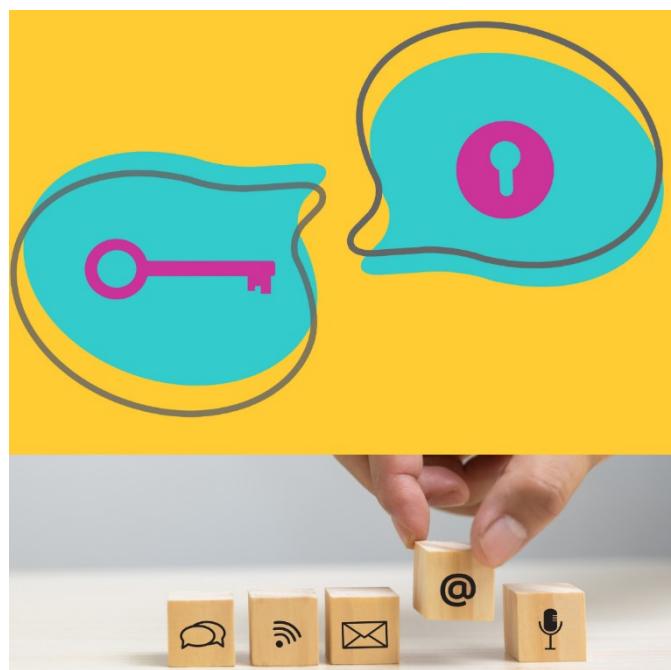


Topic: Economy

Communication – General meaning of communication and its various forms

By V a l v o, Claudio VISCORSOL LLC, 12.02.2026



I. Introduction

The topic of our February article is communication. What does communication mean in general, and what is communication in today's world, especially in light of digitalization with its diverse opportunities, but also with the difficulties it brings? We keep hearing that communication is to be replaced by AI and bots that mimic human language. One customer tells us and complains : "I never receive a response from public authorities, even though I've sent them letters and emails."

In our daily practice, we repeatedly see cases where meaningful communication fails or doesn't occur at all, even though it is urgently needed. Spirals of silence in the form of social conventions and constraints can certainly play a role in hindering or preventing communication.

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Furthermore, there is the choice of communication method: how do I communicate with my business partner or a public authority? Do I prefer to communicate my request in writing, or do I go to the public authority in person to directly address my request to the responsible employee in my presence?

Furthermore, we repeatedly see cases where the ability to simply listen to others without immediately making judgments or even immediately expressing one's own opinion without understanding what the other person is trying to say has been lost. This applies not only to external communication but especially within a company or enterprise.

Communication is therefore more than just the spoken or written word. Sometimes, communication also depends on who said or communicated what and when, and whether people are on the same "wavelength" or, to put it colloquially, speaking "different languages" and thus talking past each other. The social status and sphere of responsibility of the person who wants to communicate also play a role.

The saying "Speech is silver, silence is golden" should be questioned, especially when it comes to larger social spaces like companies. Companies, in particular, should allow employee participation and involve them in discussions on various topics, rather than relying on the aforementioned proverb. After all, silence does have a significance in commercial law among merchants, namely being interpreted as consent, even though silence is a passive behavior¹. However, passivity can prevent any positive change from occurring.

In this article, we aim to examine and explore the topic of communication in more detail. Furthermore, we want to raise awareness of how crucial communication is today for successful collaboration within a company, as well as externally, with third parties.

II. What is generally understood by communication?

The term "communication" comes from the Latin word "communicare," which contains the word "communis," literally meaning to share or have something in common. In essence, communication means conveying something to someone, regardless of the method of communication—whether through spoken words, images, writing, or any other means. Communication, therefore, involves an exchange, specifically an exchange of ideas between at least two people.

¹ In contrast, there is the right of remonstration, i.e., the right, accompanied by activity, to remonstrate when decisions are made or behavior is demanded that violate applicable law.

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1. Communication from a natural law perspective

Why is communication important, and why do we communicate at all ?! First, we must acknowledge that things in nature spontaneously form connections and thus share something with one another due to these connections². This occurs both in the microcosm, when atoms combine, and in the macrocosm, for example, when asteroids collide with a planet. As a result, a dynamic arises that gives rise to something new, such as a new chemical element or a new structure³.

We can observe precisely the same natural law in humans, as well as in animals and plants. Humans perceive their environment with their senses; that is, they reflect on what they perceive and then act within that space, either through active and conscious action or inaction. Most often, humans interact with others by verbally expressing their thoughts, thus creating a mental connection with the person who picks up on and acknowledges the thought through listening or reading.

These naturally occurring facts have implications for the legal system, namely that communication must be taken into account from a natural law perspective by enshrining the natural right to freedom of thought and expression in various legal sources. This means that, from a natural law perspective, not only is freedom of thought itself recognized and free, but also the expression of opinions to others, regardless of the mode of communication⁴.

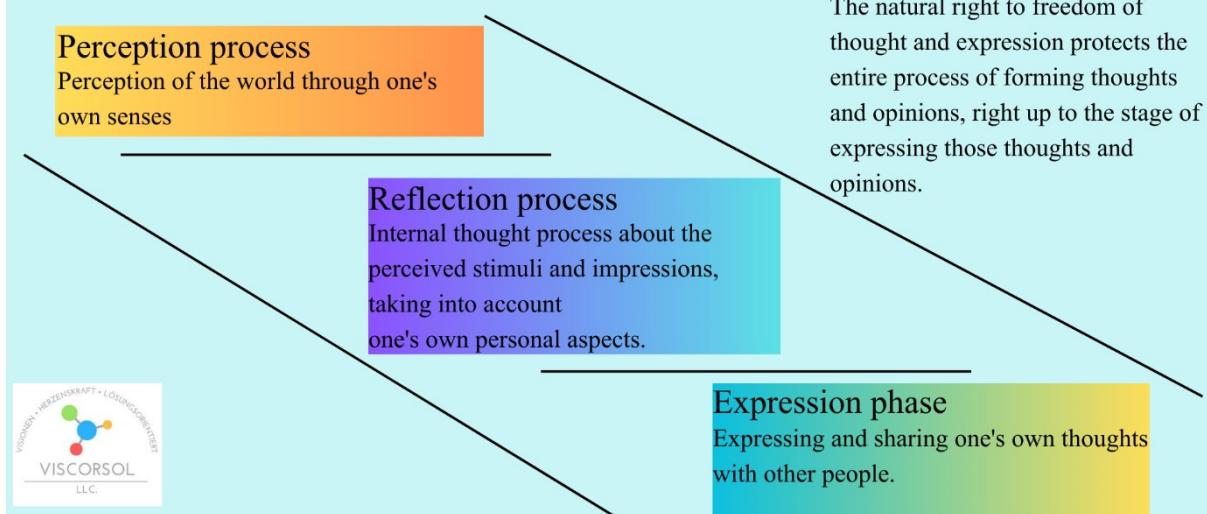
² Whether entering into a connection is advantageous or disadvantageous is a matter of perspective, but can initially remain unanswered. The crucial point is the act of entering into the connection itself.

³ "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," quote Aristotle.

⁴ See the diagram on page 4.

Diagram 1: Freedom of thought and of expression

Natural right of freedom of thought and expression



Furthermore, the natural right to freedom of thought and expression is an essential and fundamental natural right upon which all other natural rights are based. These include, for example, freedom of religion, artistic freedom, academic freedom, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. In addition, the right to a fair trial and a hearing, as well as the right to petition, should also be included, since they are broadly related to freedom of thought and expression and require communication.

The freedom to conduct business and the freedom to choose one's profession also encompass, in the broadest sense, elements of freedom of thought and expression, for example, when it comes to attracting potential customers through advertising. Furthermore, the natural right to general freedom of action includes freedom of thought and expression. Moreover, freedom of thought and expression is an integral part of human dignity, thus completing the circle regarding the natural law implications of freedom of thought and expression⁵.

⁵ It is about recognizing that humans are thinking beings equipped with senses, who perceive the world and its stimuli through their own senses, form their own thoughts, and share these with other people.

Diagram 2: Derived natural rights from freedom of thought and expression



2. Passive communication ; the imperative of listening⁶

As we have already established, communication involves at least two people who interact and exchange ideas within the context of concrete communication. This is distinct from monologue, which is communication with oneself, such as during an internal thought process and reflection. Once the thought process is complete and the thought is expressed externally, the reflection is finished, and the thought is conveyed in the expectation that it will be perceived by another person and an exchange of ideas will ensue.

Only with the perception of another person's thought does a dialogue arise. This initially requires the recipient to listen and thus create a space for understanding, to want and be able to comprehend the content and meaning of the thought. Especially in this phase of communication, it is important to give the other person space to express themselves without immediately judging or imposing one's own opinion.

⁶ The principle "Audiatur ad Altera pars": Listen to the other side.

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This passive aspect of communication, namely listening, is just as important as the active aspect, speaking, and is very often overlooked and underestimated. The reasons for this are varied, ranging from lack of time and misunderstanding to simply finding it uninteresting or unimportant.

This is where the wheat is separated from the chaff, and it should be the norm to let the other person finish speaking and to take the time to acknowledge and understand what they are saying, regardless of one's own perspective, social conventions, or constraints. After all, passive listening allows you to connect with the other person, which can lead to new insights and perspectives that you were previously unaware of or unaware of. Sometimes the economic principle "time is money" has to take a back seat in order to make sound economic decisions after a conversation has taken place.

Ultimately, we perceive the world through our own senses and experiences, not through the senses and experiences of others. Furthermore, expressing one's own opinion involves an act of trust, namely, allowing someone to share in one's thoughts.

Of course, there are exceptions, and the choice not to listen exists, but this should remain the exception and not become the rule within a company or organization. This also reveals the atmosphere within a company or organization and can indicate, for example, the presence or absence of a culture of learning from mistakes, as well as the presence or absence of a culture of silence.

Free speech, the underlying thoughts, and perceptions should always take precedence, even if it is sometimes difficult for oneself to listen or understand what the other person wants to communicate. Those who violate the principle of listening can destroy a great deal of trust and also the foundation for successful collaboration.

3. Die aktive Kommunikation; Ablehnung und Toleranzgebot⁷

Agreement or disagreement should always be expressed through dialogue and respect. Especially when it comes to disagreement due to significant differences in opinion, the process should be objective and argumentative, without denigrating the opposing viewpoint or resorting to personal attacks or political or social categorizations.

⁷ The principle of tolerance means : "I tolerate your opinion, which you have kindly shared with us, but I do not adopt it as my own for argumentative and factual reasons."; in contrast, concession means: "I adopt your opinion and act accordingly because it is argumentatively sound."

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One should respect the other person's opinion without adopting it as one's own. If necessary, one can present and assert one's own opinion with sound arguments, such as those concerning responsibility for decisions. One should be grateful to the other person for sharing their opinion, simply because they have given it thought, even if one disagrees with it on the merits and in terms of reasoning.

The way in which one withdraws from or ends an exchange of opinions is also of great importance. There is a kernel of truth in the saying, "It's not what you say, it's how you say it," because this is often where another problem in communication lies, leading to a chain of misunderstandings and failed communication, which can destroy trust and create a negative work environment. Therefore, one should always adhere to the principle of tolerance in communication.

Diagram 3: The relationship between listening and speaking



4. On criticism, praise, and a culture of error

Another important aspect of communication is the balance between criticism, praise, and the acceptance of a culture of learning from mistakes. In practice, we repeatedly observe that within companies there is an imbalance between criticism and praise, let alone a culture of learning from mistakes being tolerated.

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All of this contributes to successful communication ; praise is just as important as criticism when mistakes occur. If criticism is overemphasized and praise is neglected where appropriate, it can lead to misunderstandings and a poor working environment. Furthermore, this affects employees and can even lead to alienation from the company.

Similarly, exclusively praising can be detrimental, as it can create blind spots and cause mistakes to be overlooked. In the worst-case scenario, this can lead to a decline in the quality of the company's services and, consequently, to customers turning away.

Therefore, a balanced approach to praise and criticism is crucial, and a company's philosophy regarding mistakes should be developed. Mistakes, in particular, can have a positive effect by revealing weaknesses that necessitate improvement.

It's important to be aware that mistakes happen and are part of everyday business. What matters is how mistakes are handled, whether acknowledgment is accepted, and whether they are communicated within the company so that solutions can be developed and progress can be made.

III. Communications channels

Communication channels are particularly important for businesses and companies. Without communication, there are no contracts and no customers, but also no coordination and agreement within the company. What communication channels are there, and which one is appropriate for which situation? This is a difficult question that cannot be answered simply and depends on the specific situation. Therefore, we want to briefly and simply explain the available communication channels and their respective advantages and disadvantages.

1. Direct conversation in physical presence

The most direct form of communication is face-to-face conversation, either with several people or one-on-one. This is where communication is most comprehensive, as it occurs not only through words and language, but also through facial expressions, gestures, and physical appearance. Direct conversation is the most natural and honest form of communication, without aids or digital filters.

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When it comes to important topics and conversations, one should always rely on direct, face-to-face interaction, and this is also true when it comes to getting to know another person. Despite digitalization, conversations can still be held discreetly in person, keeping the public and the digital world out of the picture. Ideally, these discreet conversations should be combined with a walk in nature, without any digital devices. This not only clears the mind but is also beneficial for the soul and body.

2. The telephone conversation

Telephone conversations take place via telephone or mobile phone, allowing you to hear the other person's voice and have an immediate dialogue. This differs from voice messages, which are listened to later and then allow for further interaction.

Telephone conversations still have their place, especially when it comes to quickly and efficiently exchanging or receiving information with people you know.

The disadvantage of telephone conversations is that you can only hear your conversation partner, not see them. Furthermore, you usually have to take notes and listen carefully; this is different with a voice message.

Another disadvantage is the digital filter and the associated "waiting loops" caused by automated responses, which in the worst case can lead to a complete breakdown in communication. For complex conversations and conversations with strangers, telephone conversations should be avoided to prevent misunderstandings and communication breakdowns.

Furthermore, it should be noted that every telephone conversation involves a digital filter running in the background, unlike a classic telephone call with an analog line, so that biometric data is left behind which can be processed or otherwise analyzed and used by autonomously digitized methods.

3. Writing

Writing is and remains the primary means of communication⁸. In particular, traditional written⁹ communication with a handwritten signature provides legal certainty and clarity. Unlike face-to-face or telephone conversations, the written word is recorded on a physical medium and is therefore verifiable at any time.

⁸ "Vocat volat, Scriptum manet", the spoken word flies away, the written word remains.

⁹ We consider faxing to be a form of traditional writing, as it is printed on paper at the recipient's location; however, it should be noted that faxing uses digital lines and is not analog.

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However, due to technological advancements, it's necessary to distinguish between different types of written communication. Traditional written communication remains the printed document, signed by hand by the author. This differs from electronic communication, which remains in electronic form and is stored in a data space, either in a cloud or on an electronic storage medium. Even at this stage, legal uncertainties can arise, either because there is no handwritten signature at all or because the digital signature is not agreed upon by the parties.

A further distinction must be made regarding communication in chats and social media, as these have no legal standing, except that they can serve as evidence for a statement.

Nevertheless, traditional written communication or electronic correspondence should be preferred for complex matters and when communicating with unfamiliar companies and business partners. It is best to declare in advance whether you prefer traditional written communication or electronic communication. In case of doubt, traditional written communication always takes precedence.

IV. Ending

Despite a wide range of communication options, we repeatedly observe communication errors that impair or destroy relationships and trust. As we have seen, communication is the creation of a connection between people. Communication is a fundamental, universal, natural right, enshrined in the natural rights of freedom of thought and expression. From this fundamental, universal, natural right of freedom of thought and expression spring other natural rights, such as freedom of religion, artistic freedom, academic freedom, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, as well as the right to petition and the right to a fair trial.

The communication process involves an interplay between active and passive communication among the participants. As we have seen, passive communication in the form of listening is just as important as active communication through speaking and writing, and should therefore be given the same consideration. This applies not only to private life, but also, and especially, to large social spaces such as companies. Those who are aware of the interplay between active and passive communication will make fewer mistakes in their communication.

A reciprocal relationship also exists regarding the content of communication. As an example, we have considered the relationship between criticism and praise. It is important not only to criticize and constantly reprimand, but also to praise when work has been successful within the company.

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Conversely, one should not only praise, but also address and highlight mistakes within the company. Therefore, it is important to foster a culture of learning from mistakes within the company and to find a balance between criticism and praise.

The abundance of communication options doesn't necessarily make everyday life easier, whether private or professional. In fact, this very diversity can complicate communication and lead to legal pitfalls, which are, however, avoidable. Here, the principle of simplification and a return to traditional communication methods has proven effective. Traditional writing on paper and face-to-face conversation remain the preferred communication methods when it comes to clarifying complex issues or gaining a near-truthful understanding of the situation. While new digital forms of communication have their place, they should be chosen carefully, always bearing in mind that they are susceptible to misuse and distortion of reality.

- END OF ARTICLE -

Postscript: This article is based on human thought and will by the author mentioned above at the beginning of the article, without the use of digitally autonomous or other will-replacing procedures.

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