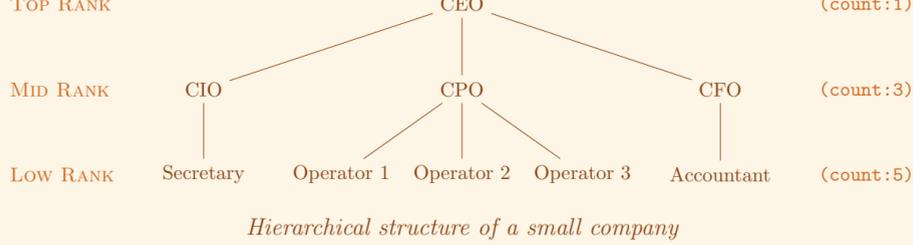


Note

Communication is crucial for all human relationships. Social circumstances usually involve protocols that are generally assumed, but professional situations demand formality and rigour that leave little or no space for ambiguity or errors. Nonetheless, arrangements must be tailor-made for every case.

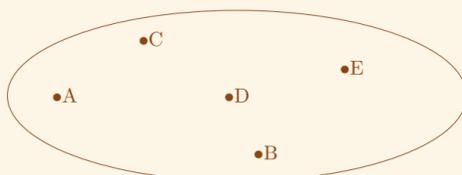
1 Organisation

A key condition that establishes the framework for formal communication is often a ranking or tier system known as ‘hierarchy’ (Perdicoulis, 2013).



Hierarchical structure of a small company

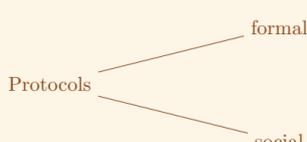
An alternative organisational structure is the ‘pool’, with no apparent or fixed ranks (Perdicoulis, 2015b).



‘Pool’ structure of a team of five members; mathematically, this represents a set

2 Protocols

Social protocols are usually not formal, but quite powerful — i.e. deeply rooted into mentalities and habits — so they may override formal protocols, most of which are relatively new.



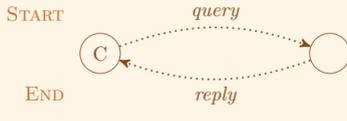
Key types of communication protocols

3 Archetypes

Communication is easily represented with information flow diagrams, or IFD (Perdicoulis, 2014, 2017), featuring dotted arrows (.....>). Formal communication conveys variable content, but it is generally useful to identify ‘channels’ of communication with ‘forward’ and ‘feedback’ directions.

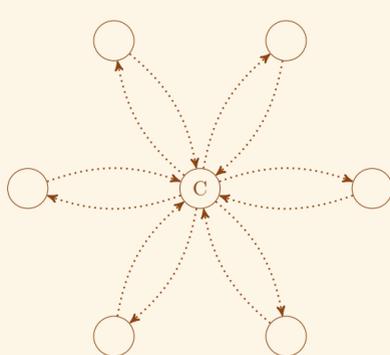
FORWARD — e.g. query, instruction, legal information

FEEDBACK — e.g. reply, voluntary information

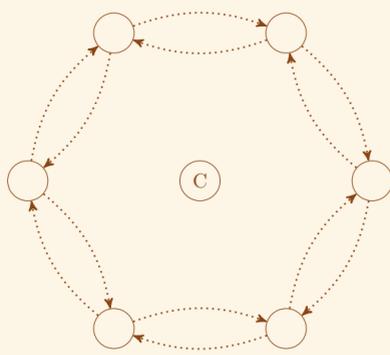


A single-iteration communication ‘channel’ between the coordinator (C) and a team member

Two notable extreme situations for group communication are the ‘daisy’ and the ‘ring’, with distinct implications for coordination.

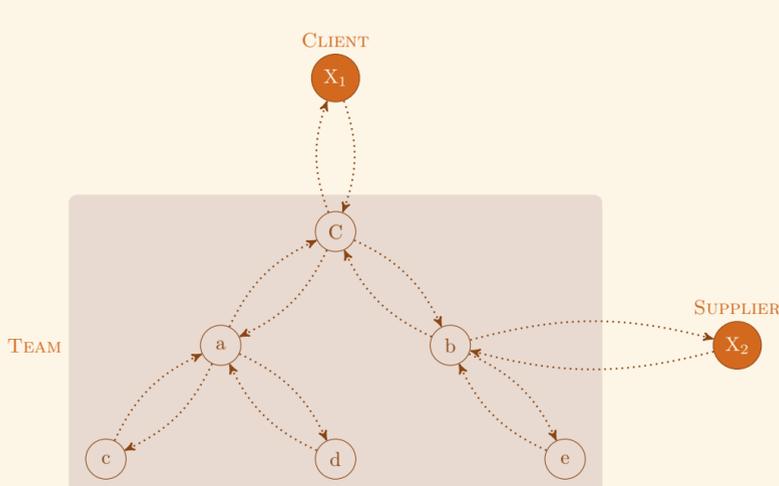


A ‘daisy’ is centrally coordinated, but rather heavy for the coordinator (C)



A ‘ring’ is self-organised, but may be missing out on the guidance of the coordinator (C)

4 Example



Sample communication in a project team

A complementary communications plan should specify the type and frequency of contact for each link, media (§ 5), roles and responsibilities, etc.

5 Media

Modern technology provides a wide variety of media to suit the needs of in loco or remote communication. The choice of the appropriate medium requires consideration of parameters — for instance:

WITH/ WITHOUT REGISTER — e.g. email vs. live conversation

SYNCHRONOUS/ ASYNCHRONOUS — e.g. telephone vs. email

LOCAL/ REMOTE — e.g. business lunch vs. videoconference

GROUP FACILITY — e.g. one-to-one vs. group videoconference

DEFINED/ AD HOC — e.g. scheduled vs. impromptu meetings

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