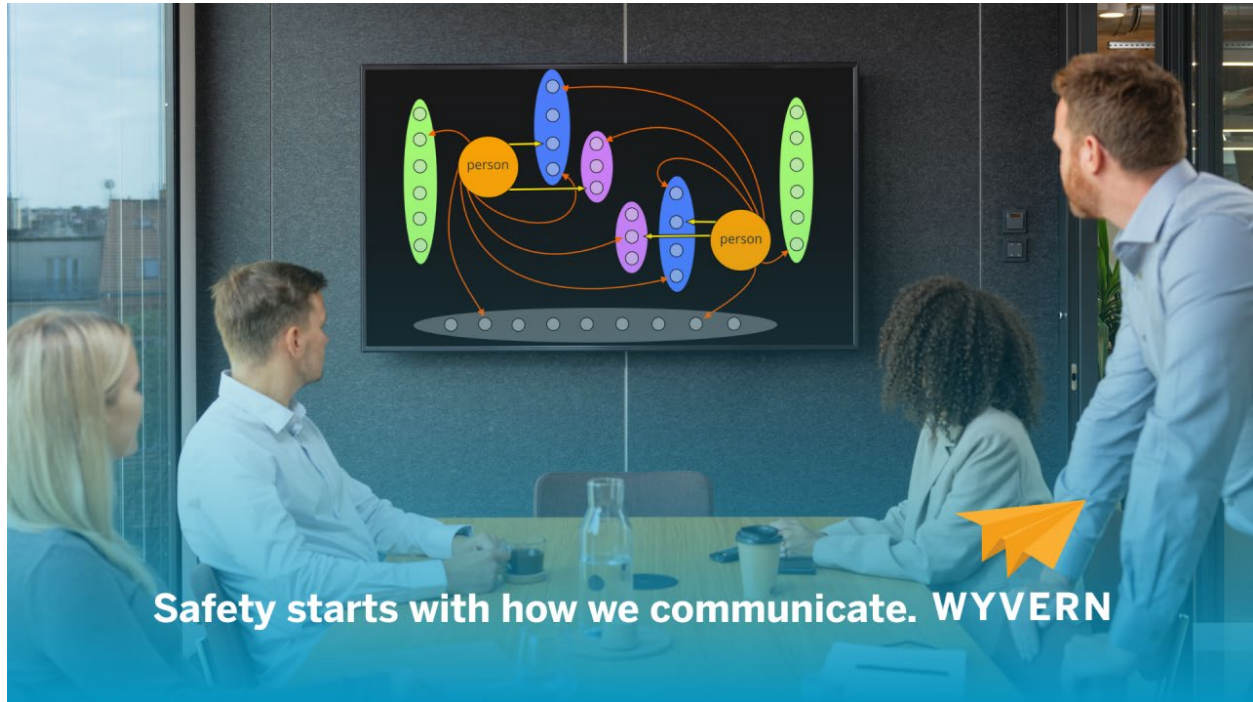


Effective Communication – Part 1: Beyond Sending Messages



Barnlund's model of interpersonal communication

Earlier this year, WYVERN was proud to serve as the host sponsor of the Flight Safety Foundation's Business Aviation Safety Summit (BASS). The theme, *Bridging Divides: Elevating Safety Through Communication*, highlighted a truth we see every day: communication is not just a process — it is **foundational** to both safety and leadership.

Clear communication builds trust on the flight deck, in the hangar, in the boardroom, and across the organization. Miscommunication, on the other hand, can weaken safety margins, erode culture, and undermine performance.

To continue this conversation, we are launching a new series on **Effective Communication**, guided by Dean Barnlund's *Transactional Model of Communication*. Barnlund reminds us that communication is not simply the transfer of information from sender to receiver. Instead, it is a **transactional process** where meaning is created together, in real time, through verbal and non-verbal cues.

Why Barnlund's Model?

Traditional models portray communication as linear: a message is sent, transmitted, and received. But in real life — especially in aerospace — communication is never that simple. Pilots, controllers, maintainers, and leaders don't just send messages; they interpret, respond, and adapt simultaneously. Every exchange involves perception, reaction, and

adjustment. A nod, a pause, or a tone of voice can shift the entire message — even before words are spoken. Barnlund’s model captures this reality, showing communication as **dynamic, continuous, circular, irreversible, complex, and unrepeatable**.

Leadership in Action

For leaders, this shift in perspective is powerful. It means that when you speak, your message doesn’t “land” in a vacuum. It is filtered through context, environment, and the listener’s own experiences. Effective leaders don’t just deliver information — they **engage in meaning-making**, checking for alignment and clarity. This is as true in a safety briefing as it is in a corporate strategy session.

Looking Ahead

In the coming weeks, we’ll explore Barnlund’s insights in detail — from the role of public, private, and behavioral cues, to why communication is irreversible, unrepeatable, and always evolving. Each piece will connect theory to practice, offering leaders tools to strengthen both safety and organizational culture.

If you are not subscribed to our weekly newsletters, subscribe now at the bottom of this page. For further resources and guidance on implementing Safety Management Systems, contact WYVERN, THE industry expert. Attend our [SMS Training Workshops](#) or ask about our SMS software. [Contact us for a FREE SMS demo!](#) Together, we can elevate aerospace safety and create a safer future.

References

- **Barnlund, Dean C. (1970).** *A Transactional Model of Communication*. In *Foundations of Communication Theory*, eds. Kenneth K. Sereno & C. David Mortensen. Harper & Row.
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