



# INTEGRATED INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

## Our Accreditations



## Our Standards





GRAPEVINE

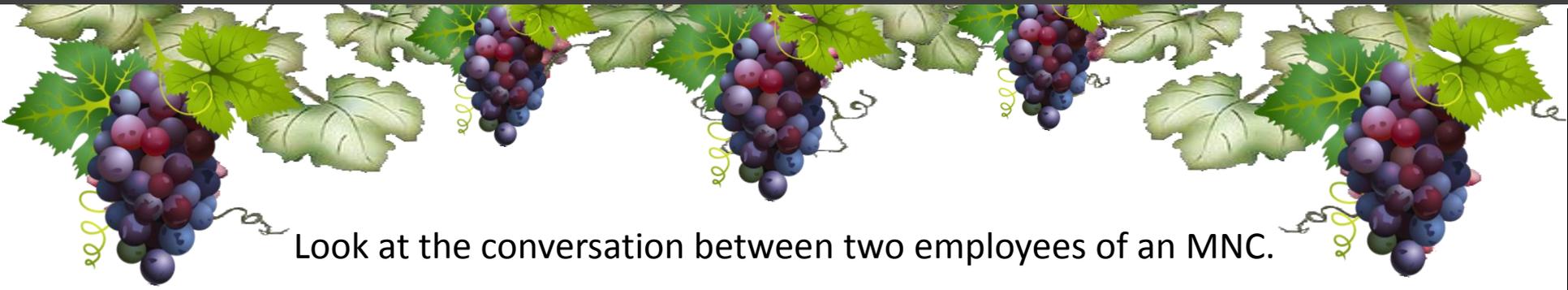
COMMUNICATION

# Course Objectives



- Explain what is Grapevine Communication
- Describe the Characteristics of Grapevine Communication
- Describe the Types of Grapevine Communication
- Explain ways of Managing the Grapevine Communication
- Describe the Advantages and Disadvantages of Grapevine Communication

# Introduction



Look at the conversation between two employees of an MNC.

# Introduction



You can see that John and Mark are talking about an upcoming vacancy and promotion that they do not have any official news about

It is evident that this is not the right way to talk about something they do not know about

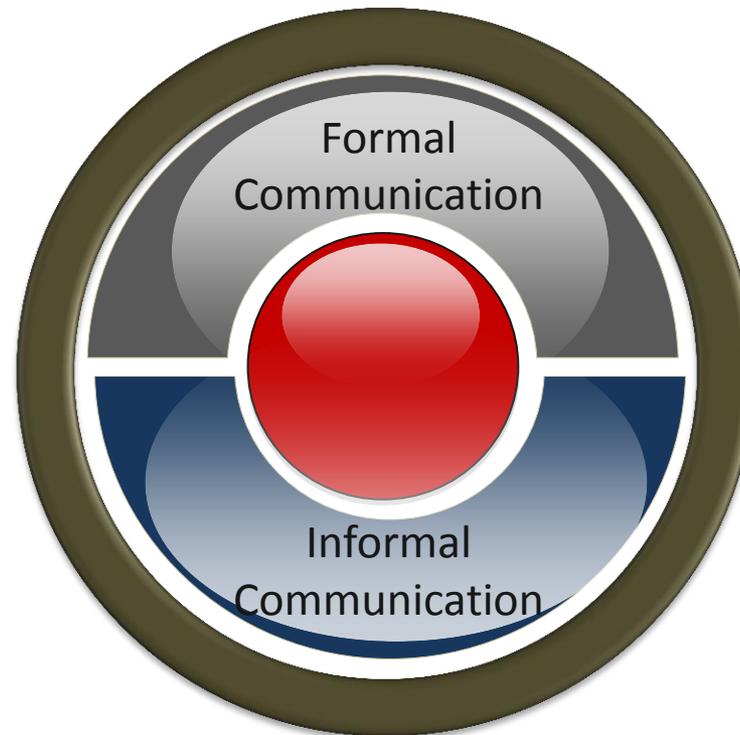
John and Mark are involved in what is known as grapevine communication

Let us learn more about grapevine communication

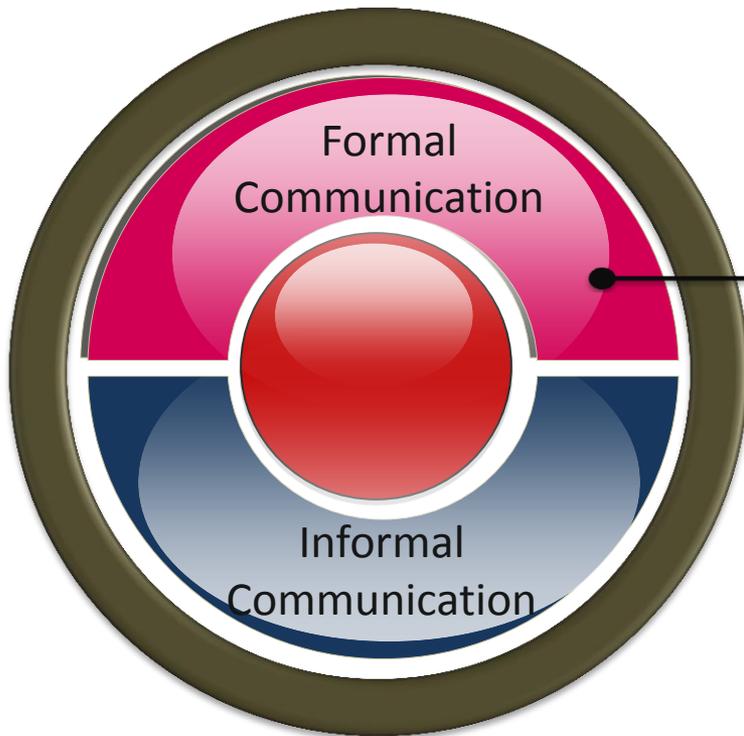
# Types of Communication



There are mainly two types of communication:

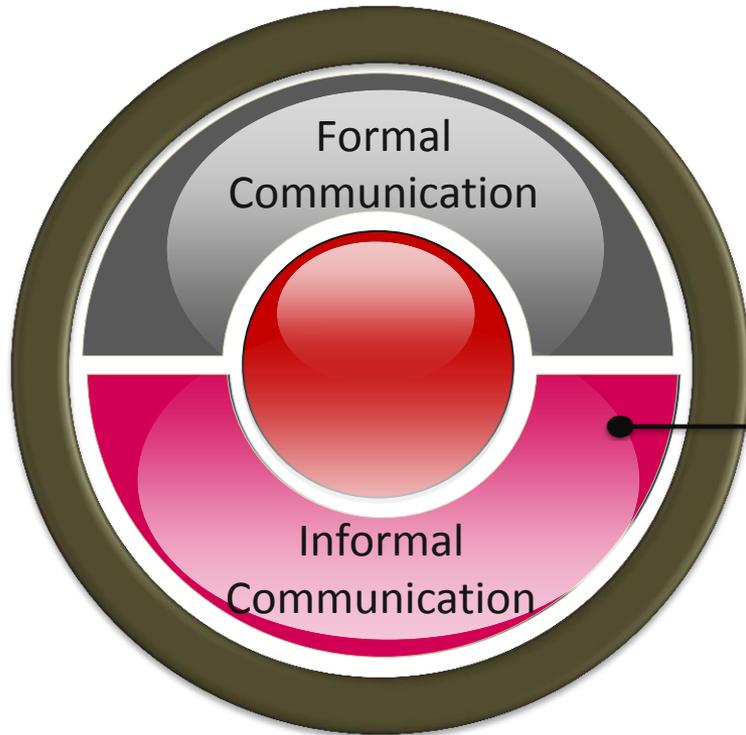
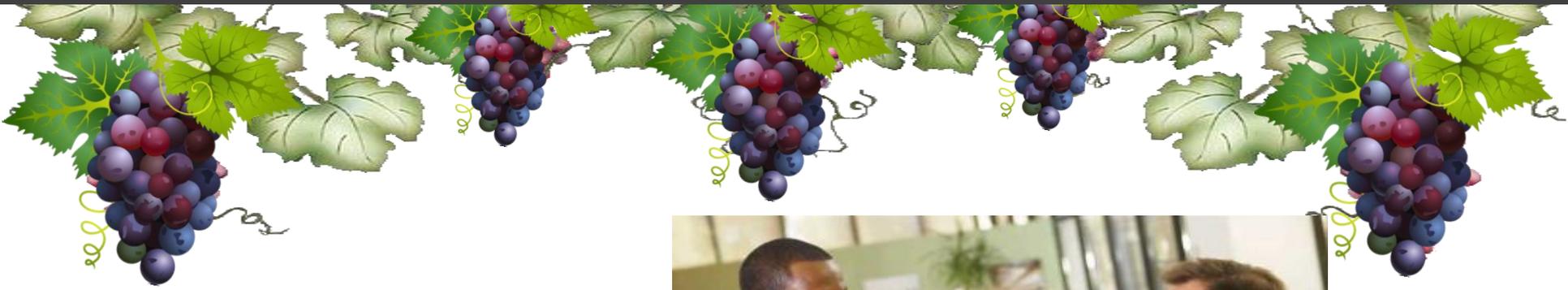


# Formal Communication



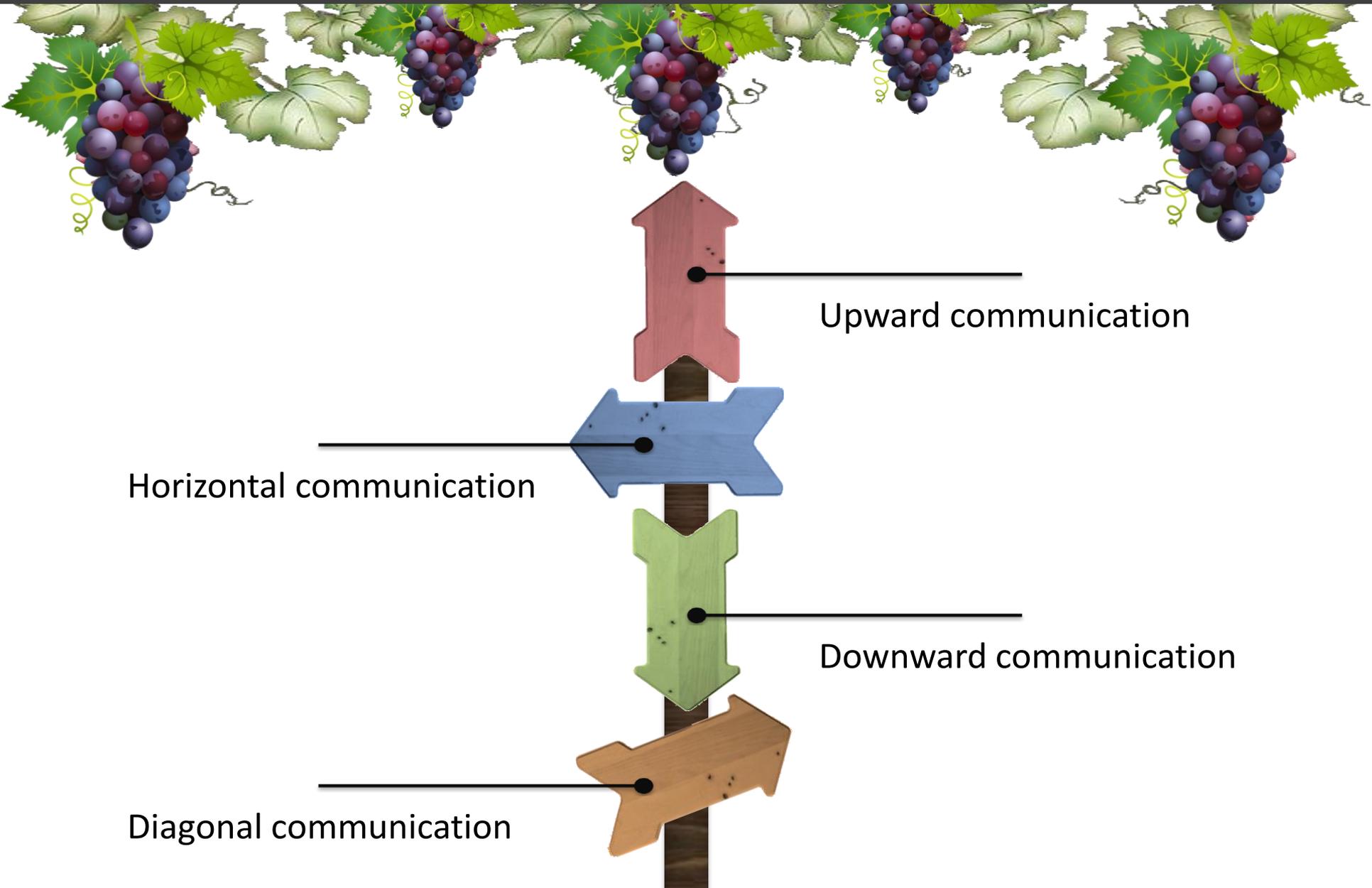
Formal Communication is the process of sharing official information with others who need to know it. It is done according to the prescribed patterns depicted in an organization chart. Such communication flows through formal channel and it is also known as line of command

# Informal Communication



Informal Communication forms the base of informal relation between two or more individuals. It is also known as grapevine. Such communications is not planned and organized. It may be done at both official or personal levels. Such communication occurs due to friendship or acquaintance

# Direction of Communication Flow



# Formal Media



Company newsletters



Employee handbooks



Company magazines



Formal meetings



Letters



Flyers & bulletins



Memos



Faxes



All-employees mailings

# Informal Media



Face-to-face  
discussions



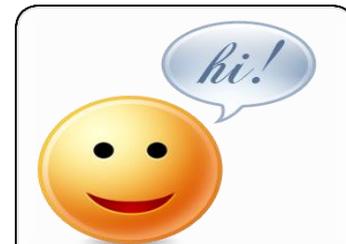
Telephone



Voice messaging  
(voice mail)



E-mail



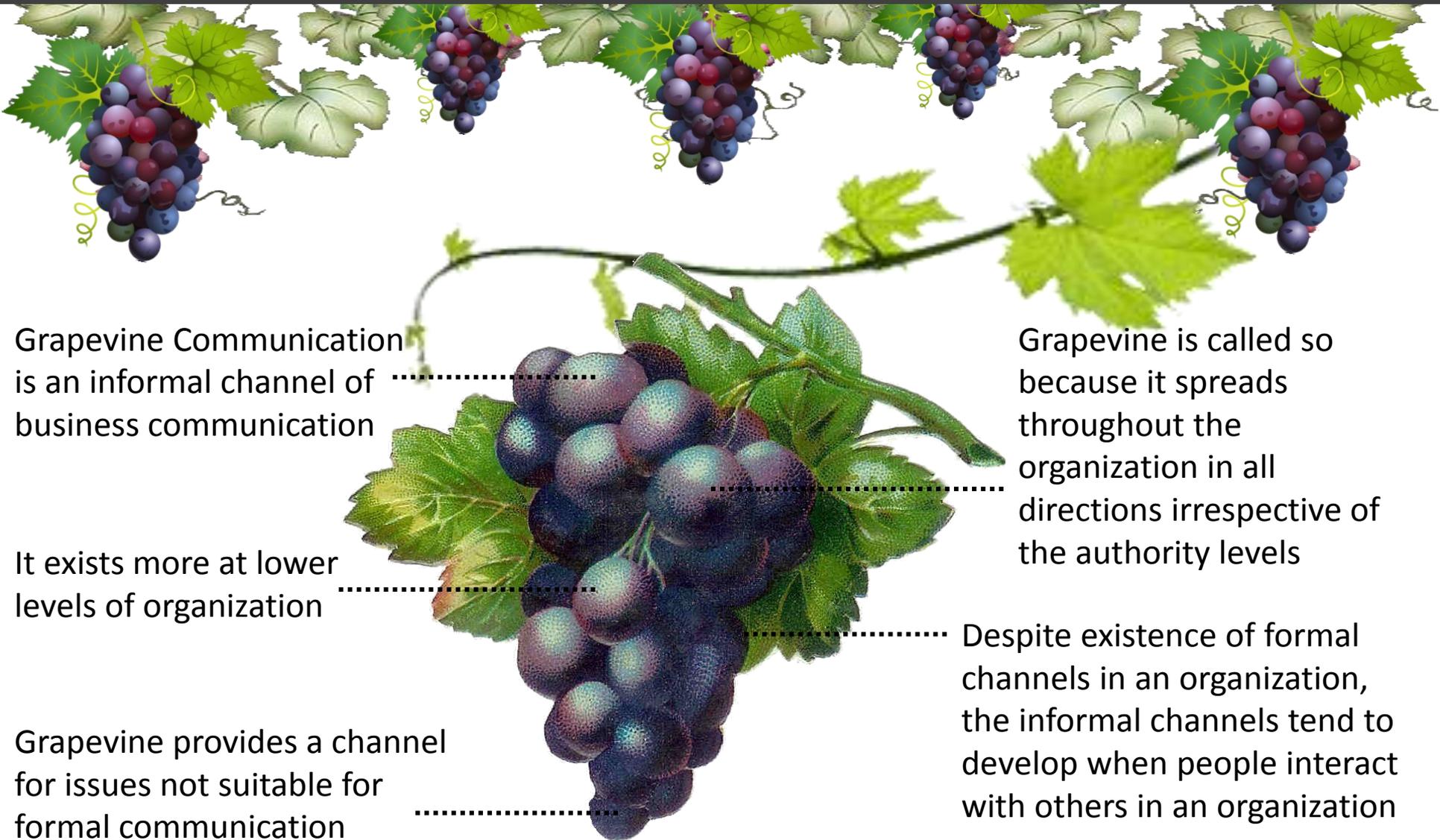
Instant messaging  
(chat)

# Objective



- Explain what is Grapevine Communication
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# What is Grapevine Communication?



Grapevine Communication is an informal channel of business communication

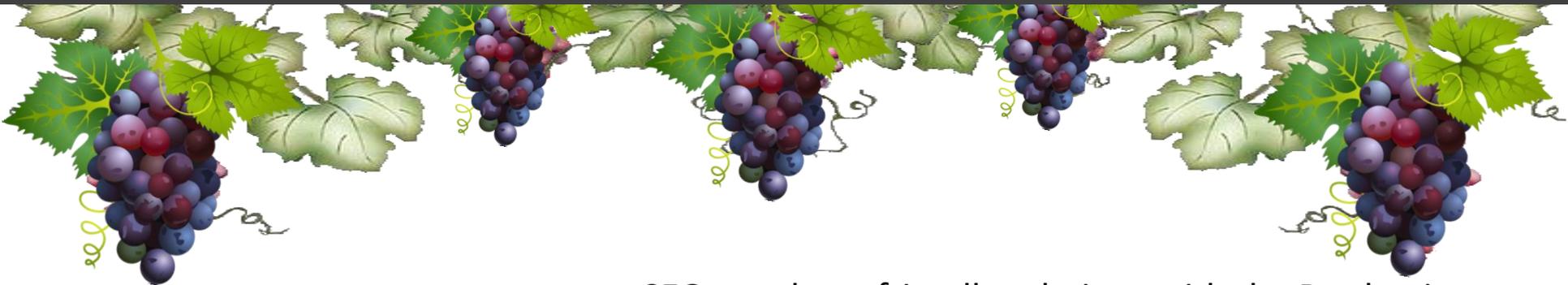
It exists more at lower levels of organization

Grapevine provides a channel for issues not suitable for formal communication channels

Grapevine is called so because it spreads throughout the organization in all directions irrespective of the authority levels

Despite existence of formal channels in an organization, the informal channels tend to develop when people interact with others in an organization

# Examples of Grapevine Communication



A company has not yet declared its annual profits. Yet, rumours spread about the figures of profit of the company and about the amount of bonus that will be declared based on such profits

CEO may have friendly relations with the Production Manager. The CEO may tell the Production Manager about an upcoming takeover of another company by their organization. The Production Manager spreads such news without the formal announcement of this news through the right organizational channels



# Objective

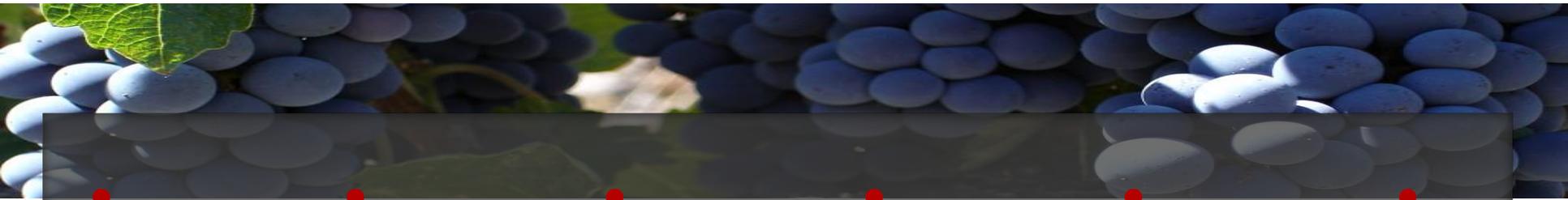


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# Characteristics of Grapevine Communication



The following are some of the characteristics of grapevine communication

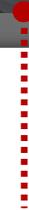
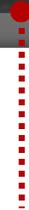
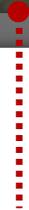


- Oral
- Mostly undocumented
- Open to change
- Quick
- Crosses organizational boundaries
- Inaccurate

# Characteristics of Grapevine Communication



The following are some of the characteristics of grapevine communication



Levels missing due to deletion of crucial details

Exaggeration of the most dramatic details

Informal and Spontaneous

Adjunct to formal channel

Multi-directional

Mostly intra organizational

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# Types of Grapevine Communication

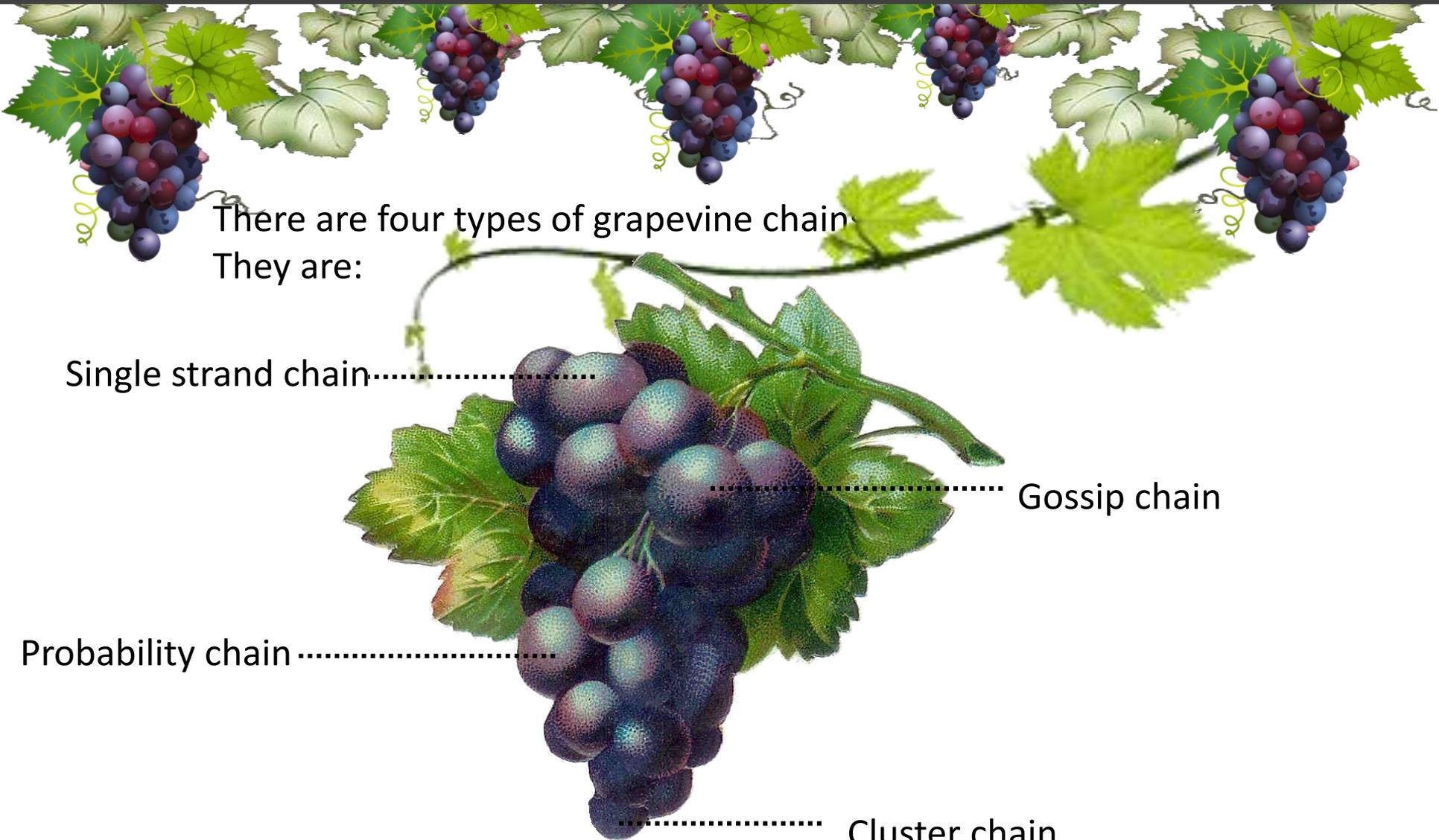
There are four types of grapevine chain  
They are:

Single strand chain.....

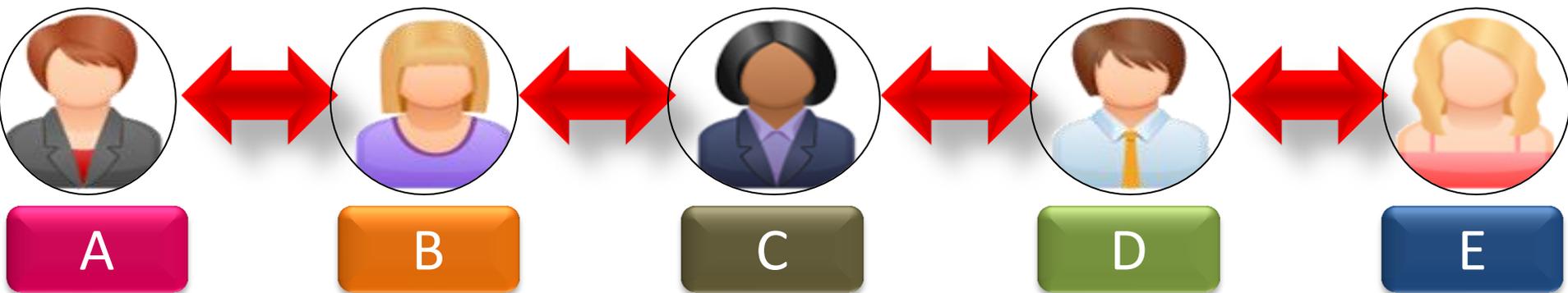
..... Gossip chain

Probability chain.....

..... Cluster chain

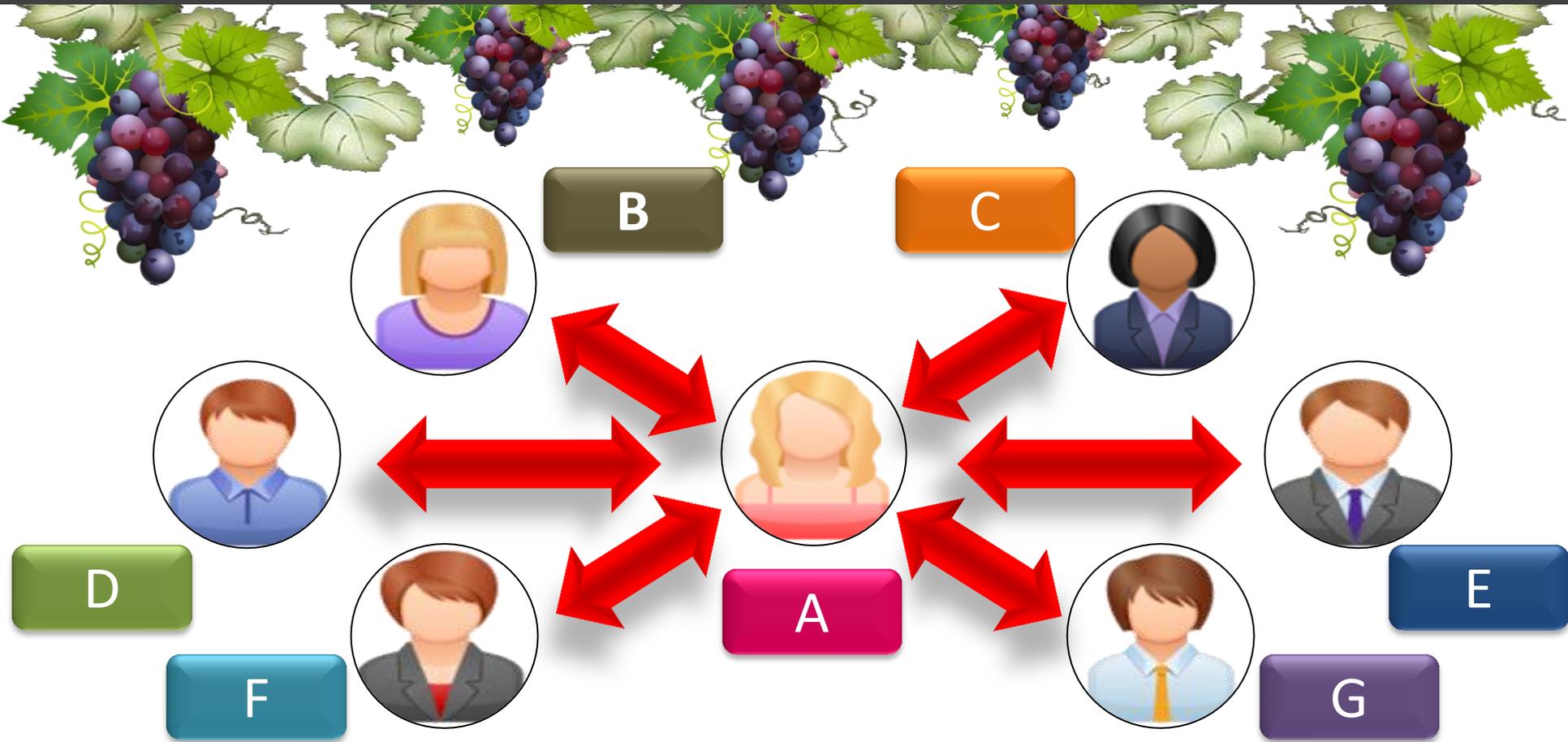


# Single Strand Chain



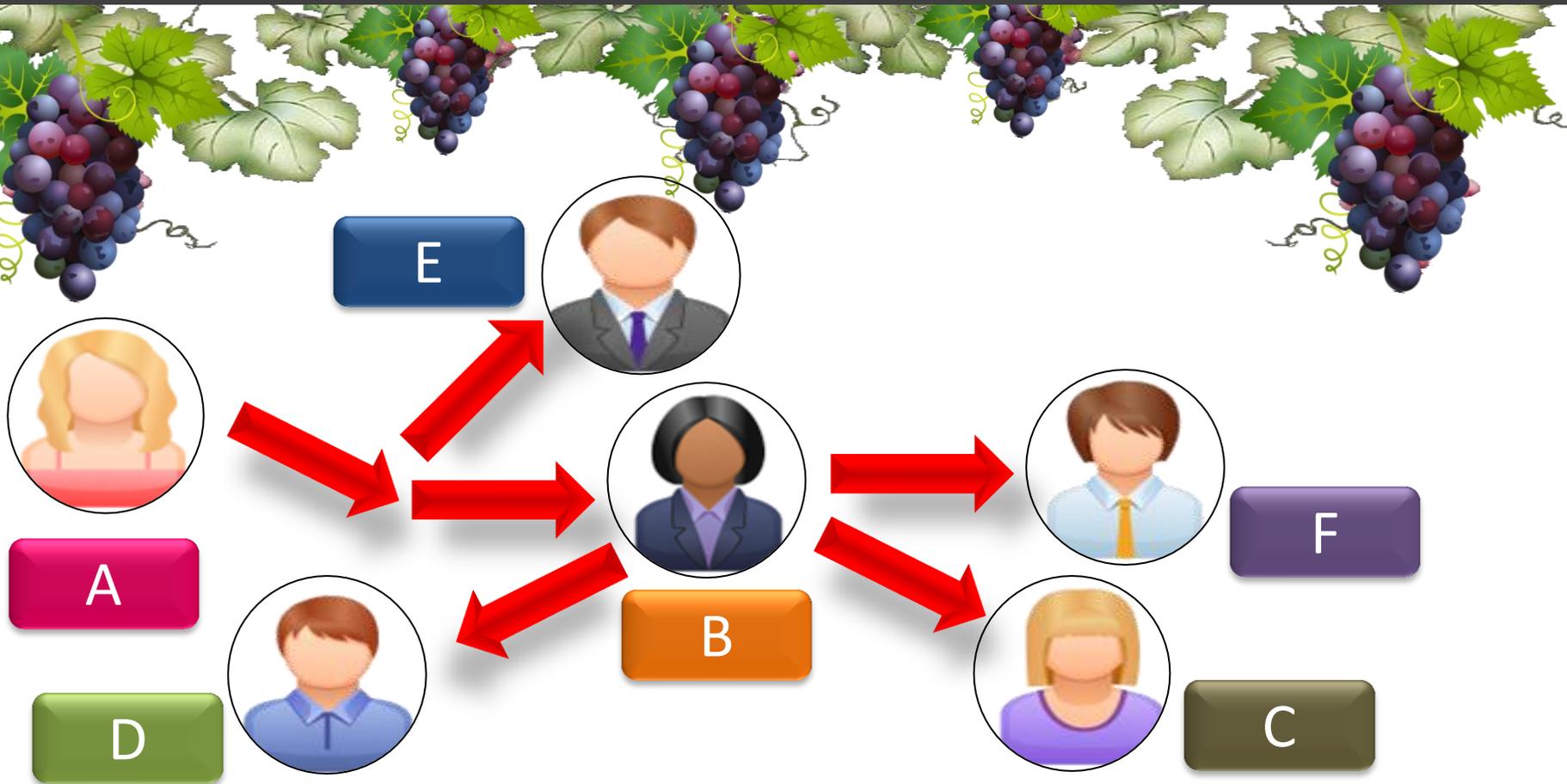
- ▶ A Single Strand Chain consists of one on one interaction. In such an interaction, A says something to B who then relays it to C and so on. It is the least accurate of the four chains and with the increase of transit points the chances of distortion and deletion increase

# Gossip Chain



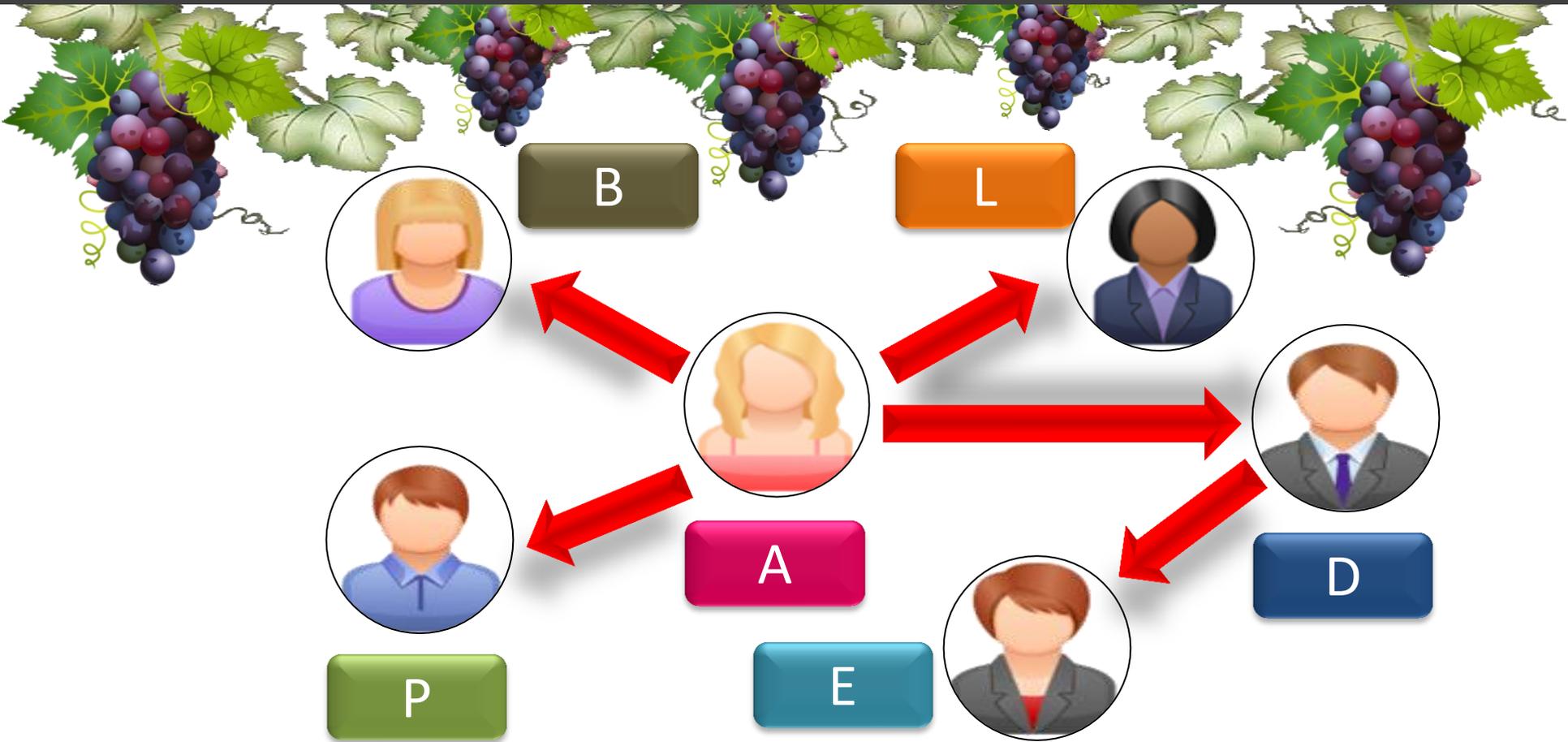
- ▶ The Gossip Chain is characterized by a group of people gathering to discuss matters of mutual interest. Here one person seeks out and tells everyone the news that he/she has gathered. It is used to relay interesting bits of news that may not be job oriented

# Probability Chain



- ▶ In the Probability Chain, the message is passed on randomly without direction or method. The choice of recipient depends on the sender's will, situation or context. Sender is indifferent to or not interested in the receiver he chooses

# Cluster Chain



- ▶ The Cluster Chain is the most popular grapevine pattern. Information is passed on a selective basis to a few members only. The first sender informs a few chosen individuals who again pass on the information to individuals of their choice or keep the information to themselves. Choice of recipient depends on the content and intent of the message as well as the relationship between the members of the group

# Gordon Allport's Formula



An important formula was given by Gordon Allport to determine the intensity of the rumours that are spread. According to Gordon Allport, the intensity of the rumours being spread depend upon two important factors. They are:

- Importance of the subject for both listener and speaker
- Ambiguousness of the facts



The formula given by Gordon Allport is:

$$R = i \times a$$

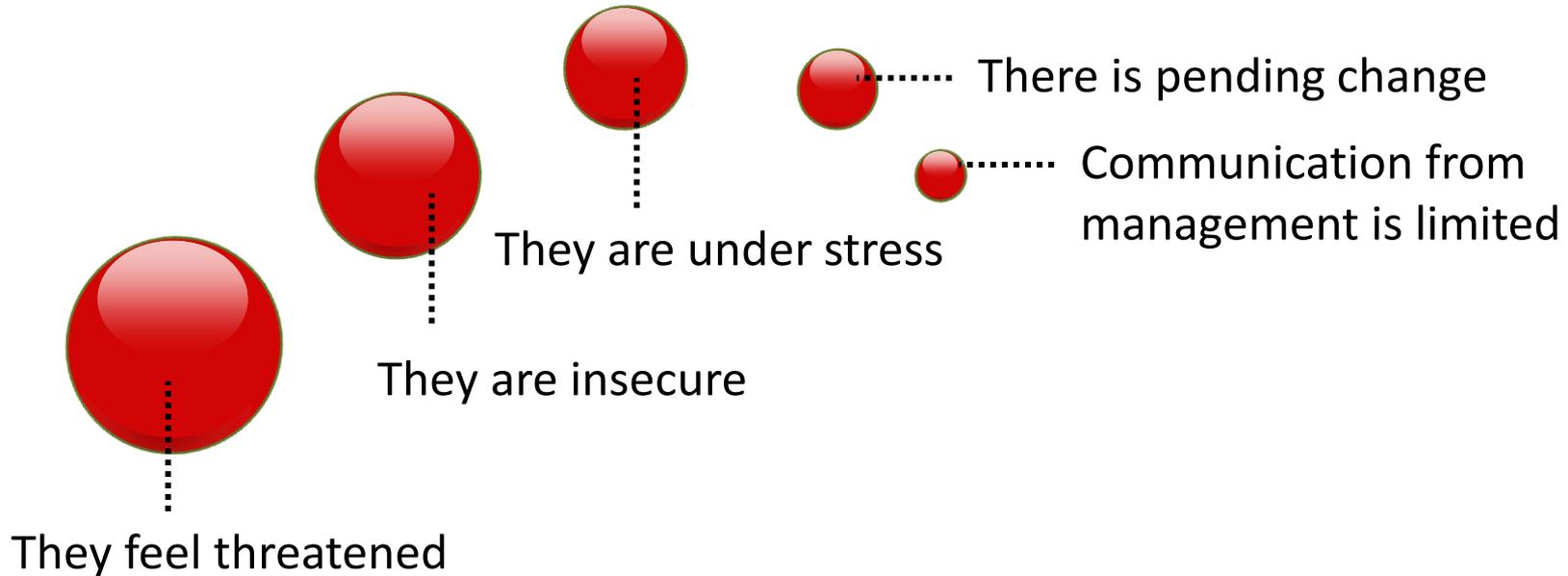
Where:

- R: Intensity of the Rumour
- i: Importance of the rumour to the persons
- a: Ambiguity of the facts associated with the rumour

# Reasons for Development of Grapevine



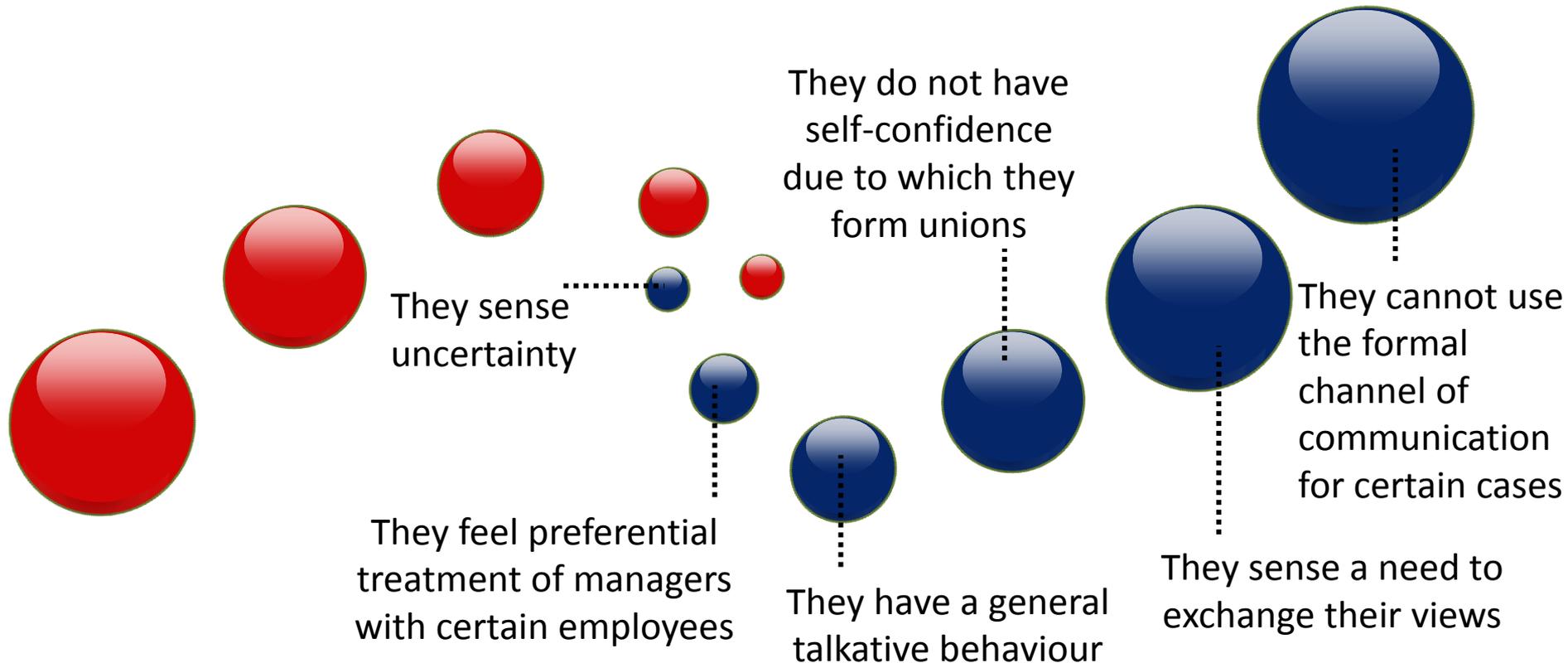
Employees rely on the grapevine when:



# Reasons for Development of Grapevine



Employees rely on the grapevine when:



# Objective



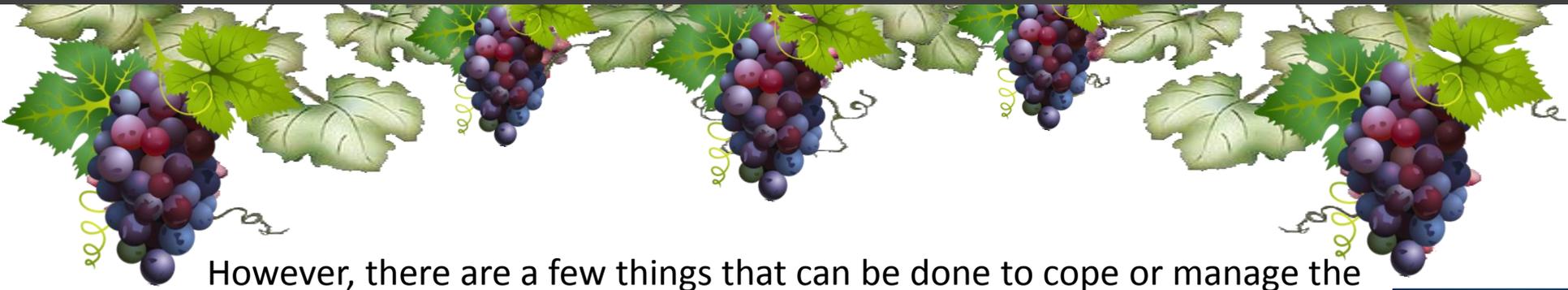
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# Managing the Grapevine Communication



**It is important  
to understand that it is not  
possible to completely  
abolish or stop the  
grapevine activity in an  
organization**

# Managing the Grapevine Communication



However, there are a few things that can be done to cope or manage the grapevine. They are:

Present full facts

Do not try to control or restrict it

Use it to supplement formal channels

Keep formal talks open and quick

Announce timetable for making important decisions

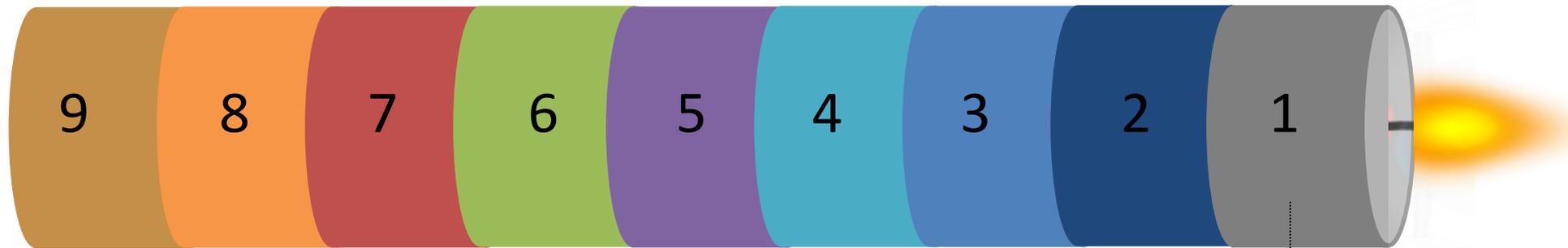
Openly discuss worst case possibilities as it is better than letting imagination loose

Explain decisions and behaviours that may appear inconsistent or secretive

Prevent rumours by providing information through the formal system of communication on important issues

Provide a steady flow of clear, accurate and timely information to employees

# Effective Use of the Grapevine

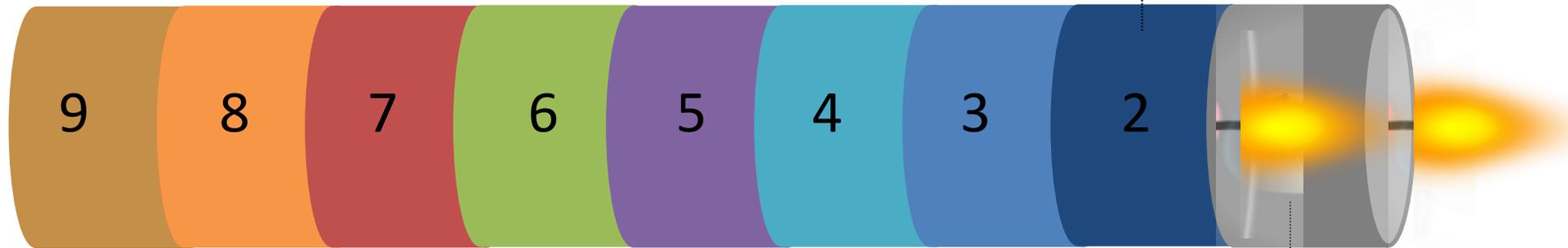


It can be used to keep employees up-to-date with organizational policy matter plans, and prospects in order to check speculation

# Effective Use of the Grapevine



An open door policy devoid of favouritism helps percolation of ideas

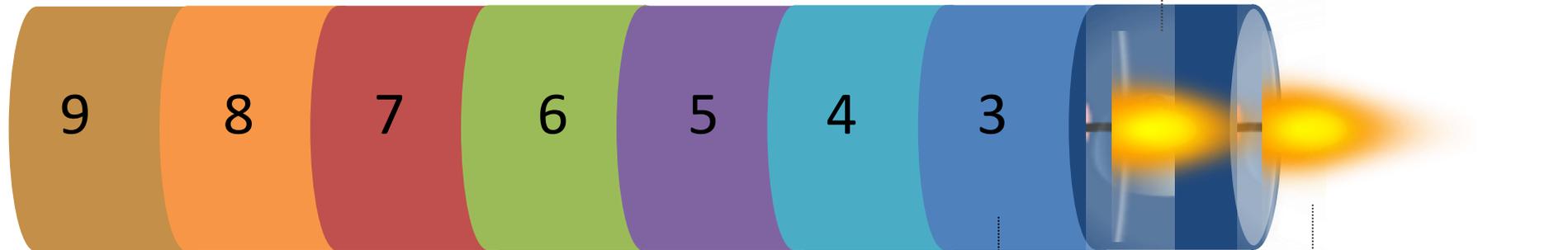


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Setting aside time for personal concerns and queries improves time management and productivity

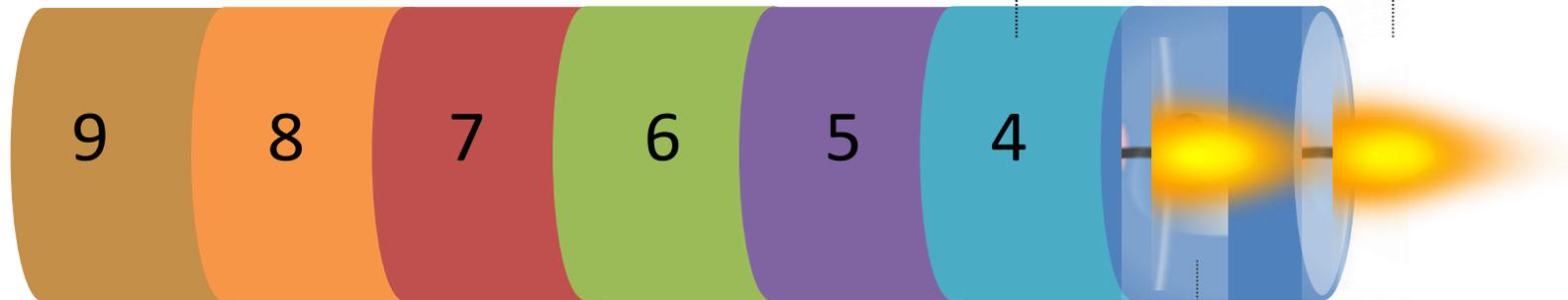
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# Effective Use of the Grapevine



Regular group discussions and brain storming sessions boost morale and self confidence as well as decrease small talk

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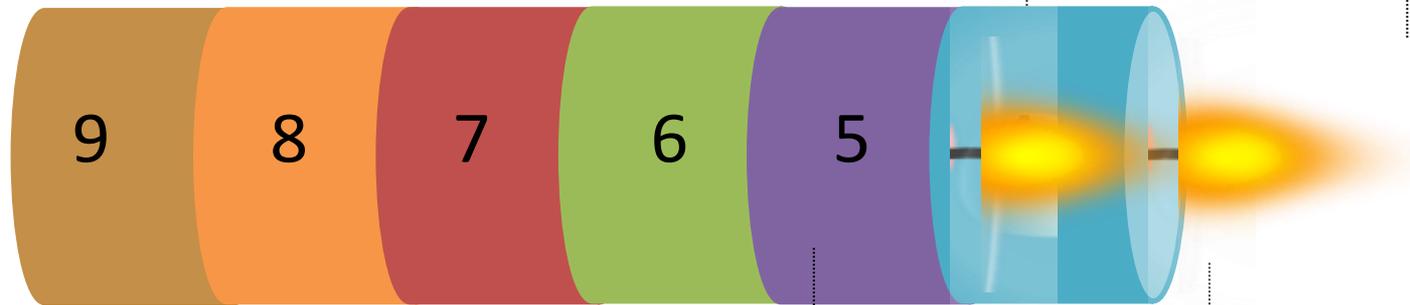
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# Effective Use of the Grapevine



Regular group discussions and brain storming sessions boost morale and self confidence as well as decrease small talk

An open door policy devoid of favouritism helps percolation of ideas



Managers can use feedback from grapevine to monitor their effectiveness and identify individuals for delegation of work

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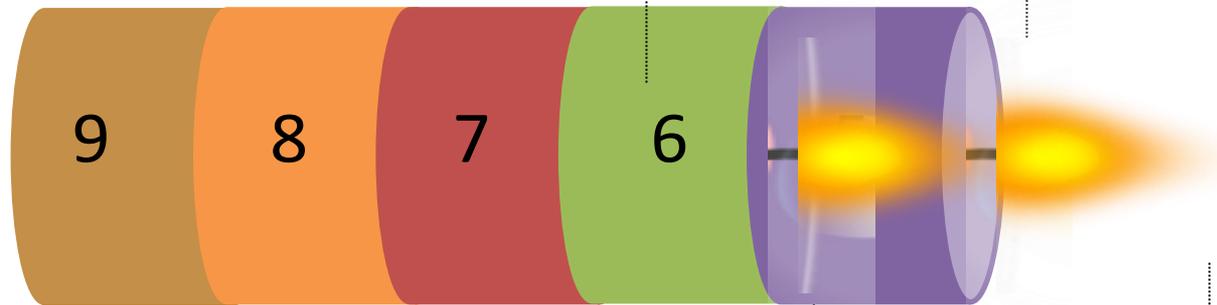
# Effective Use of the Grapevine



Before decisions are made opinions on grapevine can be taken into consideration. This brings in the double benefit of feedback from ground level and employee satisfaction

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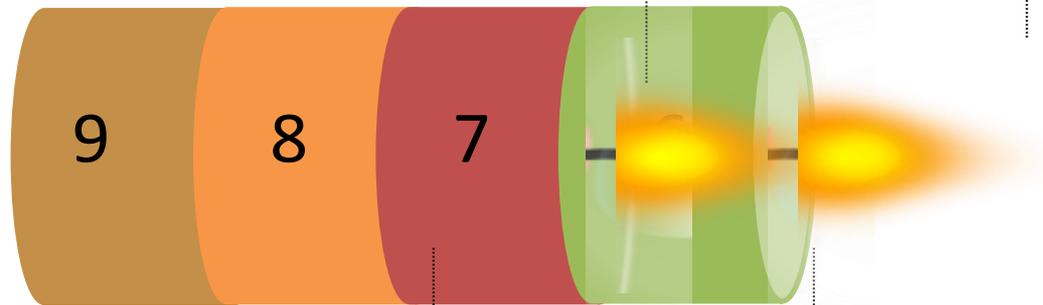
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9 It helps to identify and make use of key communicators of the group

8 Managers can use feedback from grapevine to monitor their effectiveness and identify individuals for delegation of work

7 Setting aside time for personal concerns and queries improves time management and productivity

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# Effective Use of the Grapevine

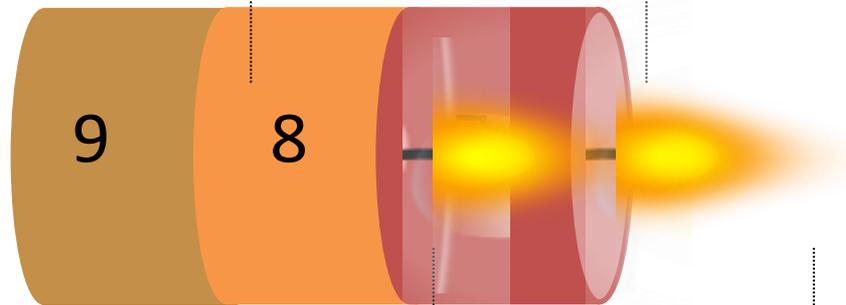


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Regular group discussions and brain storming sessions boost morale and self confidence as well as decrease small talk

An open door policy devoid of favouritism helps percolation of ideas

It can be used to monitor what is happening in the organization



It helps to identify and make use of key communicators of the group

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# Effective Use of the Grapevine

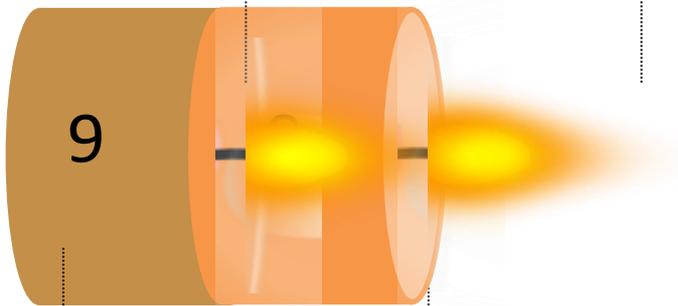


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Regular group discussions and brain storming sessions boost morale and self confidence as well as decrease small talk

An open door policy devoid of favouritism helps percolation of ideas

It can be used to monitor what is happening in the organization



The grapevine can be used to give new ideas a 'trial run'

It helps to identify and make use of key communicators of the group

Managers can use feedback from grapevine to monitor their effectiveness and identify individuals for delegation of work

Setting aside time for personal concerns and queries improves time management and productivity

It can be used to keep employees up-to-date with organizational policy matter plans, and prospects in order to check speculation

# Objective

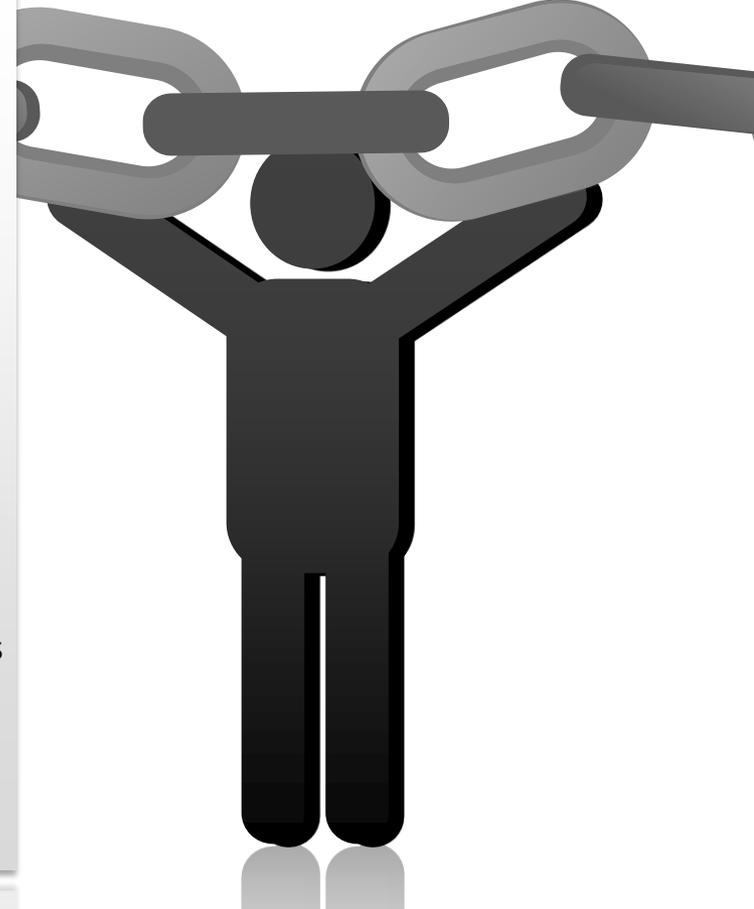


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# Advantages of Grapevine Communication

## Advantages

- ▶ **Speedy spread of information:** Grapevine channels carry information rapidly. The information passes from one person to another rapidly
- ▶ **Receipt of fast feedback:** The managers get to know the reactions of their subordinates on their policies. The feedback obtained is quick compared to formal channel of communication
- ▶ **Sense of unity:** The grapevine creates a sense of unity among the employees who share and discuss their views with each other. It helps to develop group cohesiveness
- ▶ **Provides emotional support:** The grapevine serves as an emotional supportive value
- ▶ **Free expression of ideas:** The grapevine serves as a means of free expression of ideas by employees



# Advantages of Grapevine Communication



## Advantages

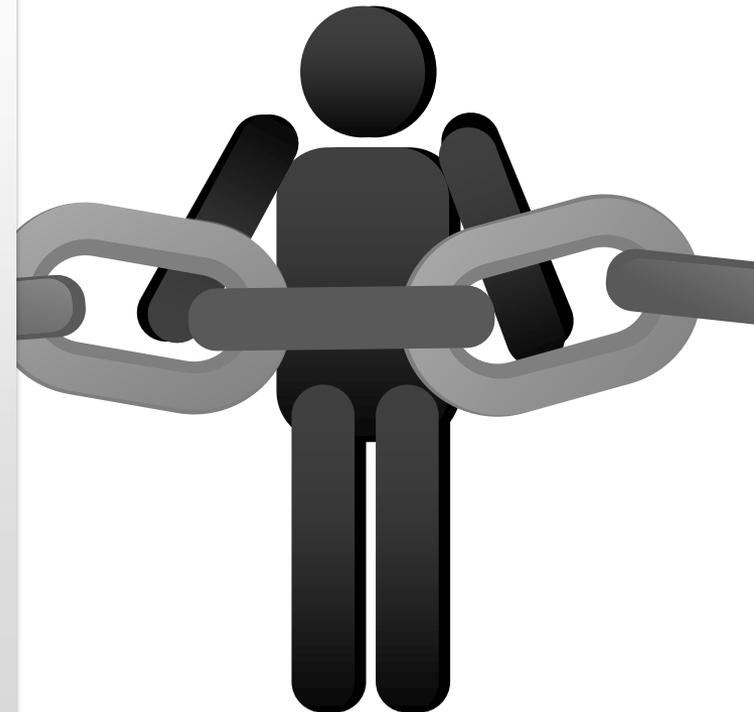
- ▶ **Supplement to formal channel:** The grapevine serves as a supplement to the formal channel of communication. The grapevine serves as a supplement in those cases where formal communication does not work
- ▶ **Psychological satisfaction:** Grapevine dispenses stress and tension and makes the work environment healthy. It is a channel for articulating frustrations, fears, reservations and elation
- ▶ **Builds relationships:** Grapevine helps to develop personal relationships beyond the purview of hierarchy can develop
- ▶ **Creates ideas:** Ideas and expectations in grapevine prove invaluable for decision making and planning

# Disadvantages of Grapevine Communication

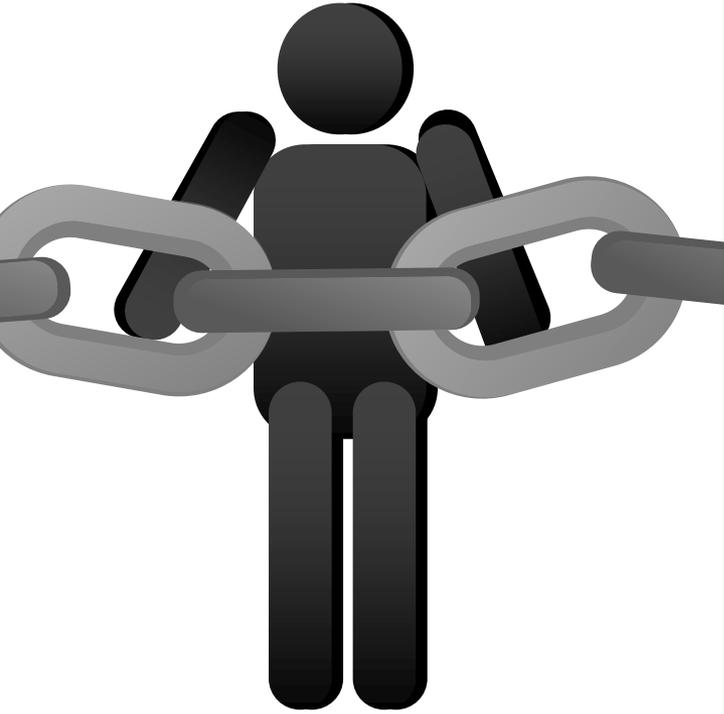


## Disadvantages

- ▶ **Partial information:** The grapevine carries partial information at times as it is more based on rumours. Thus, it does not clearly depict the complete state of affairs
- ▶ **Not trustworthy:** The grapevine does not follow official path of communication and hence, is not always trustworthy. It is spread more by gossips and unconfirmed report
- ▶ **Hampering of productivity:** Grapevine communication may hamper productivity of employees as they spend more time talking rather than working
- ▶ **Leads to hostility:** The grapevine may generate hostility among employees due to the spread of gossip and rumours



# Disadvantages of Grapevine Communication



## Disadvantages

- ▶ **Hamper goodwill of organization:** The grapevine may hamper the goodwill of the organization as it may carry false negative information about the high level management of the organization
- ▶ **Distorts information:** Grapevine distorts information as it is unofficial, informal, unauthenticated. Hence, information may get distorted in accordance with personal perceptions and relationships
- ▶ **Lack of accountability:** Rumours have no source point. Informal communication does not allow laying responsibility on anyone and in case of an issue, it is not possible to find the source of information

# Case Study



Zeus Infotech is going to be merged with Helium Software Services very soon. The formal decision, meeting of the board and formal announcement has not yet been done.



1. What do you think are the steps that Zeus Infotech should take to avoid spread of any rumours through the grapevine?
2. How can they ensure that there are no undercurrents happening during the entire process of Zeus' merger with Helium?

# Summary



In this module you learnt that:

Grapevine Communication is an informal channel of business communication

Grapevine is called so because it spreads throughout the organization in all directions irrespective of the authority levels

The four types of grapevine chains are:

- Single strand chain
- Gossip chain
- Probability chain
- Cluster chain

*Summary*