

# Chapter 11

## From Noise to Sense-Making: Problem Solving and the Transformation of Human Communication in Digital Contexts

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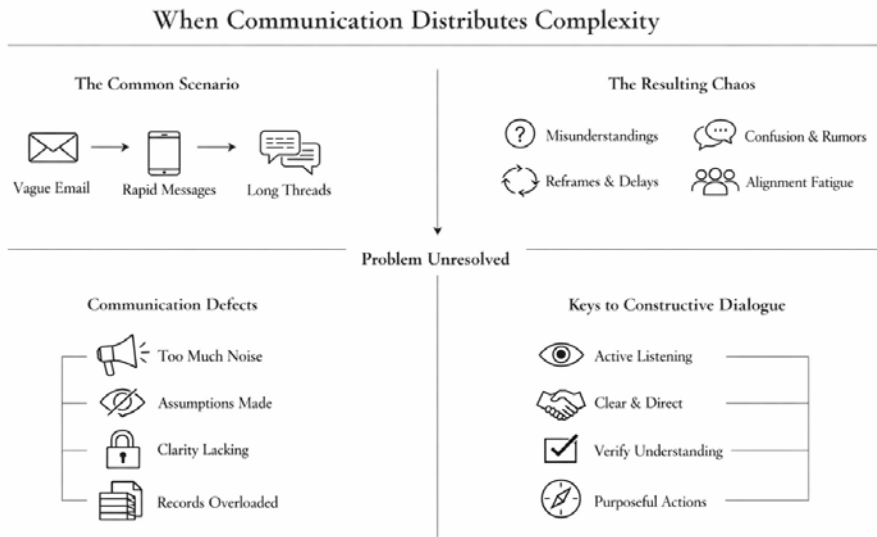
### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter reframes organizational communication as communicational problem solving rather than simple information transfer, showing how digital speed can amplify noise and spread complexity. It synthesizes research on coordination and verification to explain how constraints, channel properties, and interaction structures influence collective performance and misunderstanding in mediated settings. To support practice, the chapter proposes a Human-Centered Communicational Problem Solving (HCCPS) framework for hybrid and AI-mediated work. HCCPS structures a repeatable cycle—Diagnose, Match, Co-construct, Verify, Govern, and Learn—linking channel choice to diagnosis, making verification explicit, and treating human–AI collaboration as bounded delegation with accountability. The chapter concludes that lightweight artifacts and governance routines can stabilize meaning, improve effectiveness, and strengthen ethical defensibility and legitimacy under real-world trade-offs.*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION – COMMUNICATION AS A PROBLEM-SOLVING ACTIVITY

Figure 1. When communication distributes complexity



## 1.1 The Everyday Problem: When Communication Distributes Complexity Instead of Resolving it

A familiar scene plays out in many organizations. A sensitive topic - performance, conflict, a strategic shift - lands in someone’s inbox with the neutral tone of an “institutional email.” A few recipients read it quickly between meetings; others skim it on a phone while commuting. Someone forwards it with an anxious comment. Another replies-all, “Just to clarify...” and triggers a thread that grows legs. Two days later, people are still “aligned” only in the sense that everyone is tired. By then, the original issue has been reframed twice, diluted by assumptions, and complicated by the public record of what was said (and what was carefully not said). The problem has not been solved; it has been distributed.

93 *Voices for Communication* captures this everyday contradiction bluntly: communication is everywhere - personal and organizational - yet it can become “a blip,” powerful, “hyper-constructive,” or “devastating,” depending on context and intention. It also insists, with unusual directness, that “more than ever, we need less noise and more meaning.” That line can sound like an ethical preference, but it is also a practical diagnosis. Noise is not just an aesthetic flaw in communication; it is a

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